

Showing God's Love to the LGBT Community

When I walked away from the **church** into the **lesbian, gay, bisexual** and **transgender** (LGBT) community, it was because I felt like they offered a more appealing, better-tasting, longer-lasting love. At church, I couldn't wrestle with my **sexual identity** because of the shame and fear of rejection. But the LGBT community offered something different.

They never rejected me through my struggle with **sexuality** and **spirituality**; in fact, they encouraged me and walked with me through my journey, and I found I was paralyzed by their overwhelming love. I believe the LGBT community often has out-loved the church.

While some churches have changed their theology and doctrine on the subject of homosexuality to become what the world wants, I believe God is calling us to a greater change in which we increase our ability to **love** others beyond our own comfort.

For me, my **freedom** came when I encountered the love of God at a new level. It's a love not often seen expressed by the church. But if the church can offer this love—this authentic, real, true Jesus love—if the church can pour out this love on people we disagree with, on broken people, on people living in sin, then our Jesus love has the ability to be so overwhelming and addicting that even those who disagree with the church won't be able to deny the love they experienced.

God's Word says they will know we are His disciples by our love for one another (John 13:35). If there is one sin the enemy has been able to use to keep people separated from the church and feeling outside of God's love, it is homosexuality. Alcoholics, gluttons, drug addicts, adulterers and idolaters

feel more welcome in most churches than someone struggling to figure out his or her sexual orientation.

Our call is to preach the gospel everywhere, which includes the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. However, many churches do not feel equipped to do this and thus haven't equipped their church members with how to respond when a homosexual couple does attend their church.

The need for us to be equipped and to educate others is great. With families being torn apart, media pushing its sexual agendas and political structures turning and pushing away from God, it is time for us as a church to join together in **unity** and be trailblazers in our communities.

God is calling and asking for us to make a change, to do a new thing, but are we ready? Have we succumbed to handle this subject as we always have, or is there a better way? Pastor Caleb Tyler said, "We can't keep doing ministry the same way if we want to reach our community."

Northwest District Supervisor Dave Veach said, "Change! It's what's required of me every day. What is the Lord asking you to change?" This is not a call to change doctrine, but this is a call to action in love, and it will require leaders to lead change in an area that a lot of people are not yet ready to move.

Instead of pushing these people whom God is pursuing out of the church, we can begin to love them into the church. Instead of allowing for shame and rejection to speak, we can allow these people to seek God in a safe environment and watch His love transform their lives as it has our own.

Let's be careful to not **judge** people out and start loving people in—into wholeness through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Yes, this will require some change. It will take courage to stand up as we declare that we will not be out-loved.

Reposted by permission of The Foursquare Church. **Stephanie Singer** *is the founder of Will Not Ministries and an active member of a Foursquare church in Southern California.*