

Numerous organizations actively campaign against discrimination and offer targeted support for sexual minorities and their families. This work helps to create a society in which everyone feels valued.

At the same time, we must also recognize that there are communities that are critical of certain sexual acts, especially those outside the norm of heterosexuality. As long as this criticism does not violate human dignity and is not directed against the person as such, there should also be room for this perspective in a climate of tolerance. Such an attitude is particularly widespread in Islam and some parts of Christianity.

True respect means accepting different beliefs. It is okay to have differences of opinion and to criticize the actions of other groups of people, including those of sexual minorities. A society can also grow with controversial debates and constructive criticism on such issues.

Prejudice exists on both sides, towards LGBTQ people and towards their critics. Such critical religious beliefs are not based on hatred or malice, but on traditional texts and teachings that reject same-sex relationships or transsexuality.

In fact, in the Bible, in the Old Testament, there is a historical union between two men. Nevertheless, this union would not have been described as homosexual in the traditional sense at the time. The bond between the two men could instead be described as something else, namely a kind of platonic love. They may also have been something like soulmates.

It is not love in the sense of a relationship, but it is also not a normal friendship that David and Jonathan had. It can be described as something between platonic love and soulmates. David and Jonathan are special because they broaden the spectrum of opinions in Christianity.

This is precisely the key: being able to bring opinions to a common denominator, no matter how far apart the positions may be. On many issues, we should also consider differing positions. For example, some Christians are unaware that they no longer have to adhere to the Jewish law in the Old Testament. Jesus invalidated this through his death on the cross.

Ephesians 2 states: Through Christ we have peace. He united Jews and non-Jews in his community, tore down the wall between them, and ended their hostility. By his death, he abolished Jewish law with its numerous commandments and requirements. Through Christ, we no longer live separated from one another, one as a Jew, the other as a Gentile. As Christians, we are one. Thus, he has brought peace between us.

Some people who refer to Old Testament biblical texts use certain verses to reject certain groups of people as human beings in principle, which is incorrect because, for example, Leviticus is merely a criticism of sexual acts: You shall not lie with a male as you would with a woman; it is an abomination.

1 Corinthians 6 also says something similar: Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Neither the sexual immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who indulge in homosexual acts, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. This is followed by an important addition: And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

This means that we are absolved from judgment if we live and act in the Christian faith. Just as here, many other Bible passages speak of immorality. By definition, this term describes anything that does not correspond to marital sexual intercourse for the purpose of procreation. It therefore condemns any kind of sexual act or intercourse except within marriage between a man and a woman.

Breaking down the Bible passage to only consider sexual acts that fall outside of heterosexuality is a flawed conclusion, as the passage also criticizes certain acts within heterosexuality.

It is clear that the bond between David and Jonathan in the Old Testament is strong and unbreakable. David was a young shepherd chosen by God to be the next king of Israel. He was brave and defeated the giant Goliath, who threatened the Israelite people. This made David famous and popular.

Eventually, David found himself in danger, as described in 1 Samuel 20. The then-reigning King Saul, Jonathan's father, became jealous of David's increasing popularity. Saul decided to kill David. Jonathan defied his own father to protect David, even though Jonathan himself was the heir to the throne. He sided with David, even though he could have become king himself. However, he recognized that David had been chosen by God and placed his close bond with him above his own career and power.

The bond between David and Jonathan was characterized by deep emotions, mutual respect, and love. The two men were tested by many difficult situations, but they remained faithful to each other until the end.

1 Samuel 18 describes: When David had finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan's heart was knit with David's, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and did not allow him to return to his father's house. And Jonathan made a covenant with David, for he loved him as his own soul.

After a while, Jonathan and David had to meet in secret. When it became clear that David had to flee from Saul, he said goodbye to Jonathan with tears. The Bible says that they embraced, kissed, and wept. This scene demonstrates how deep their bond was, knowing they might never see each other again.

After King Saul and his son Jonathan were killed in battle against the Philistines, David was devastated. He wrote a hymn about Jonathan's death. In 2 Samuel 1, David says the following: Jonathan, your love was more wonderful to me than the love of women.

This sentence supports the assumption that David's bond with Jonathan was something very special – something extraordinary, deeper than a classic friendship, yet different, like a kind of platonic love. It is clear that the two men had a connection that went beyond a normal friendship, but at the same time, it was not a classic romantic relationship in today's style. The same could be said – depending on one's personal view – for Jesus and John in John 13:23 (The disciple whom Jesus loved very much had this place very close to Jesus).

Such a bond is precisely what is far too little recognized in today's society.

When I tell other people that I do not want a traditional relationship, but rather a soulmate or platonic love, I am usually not understood. That is a problem.

Let us take a look at the present day, the 21st century. At the moment, the acceptance of different sexual orientations in conservative societies is increasingly leading to tensions that are erupting into political debates, protests and, unfortunately, violence.

There are concerns that issues such as LGBTQ could threaten traditional family structures and values. Such fears are particularly widespread in cultures that rely heavily on heterosexual models and traditional gender roles. Behavior at demonstrations, such as appearing naked, is often perceived as provocative and triggers strong reactions.

But instead of looking for a real solution, the fronts often only continue to clash. The solution is obvious: approaching each other instead of moving away. It is about creating space for dialog and understanding on both sides. Everyone has the right to their own opinion – and this deserves recognition as long as it does not lead to hatred or violence.

It is important that we learn to differentiate between actions and people. It is possible to criticize and question certain actions and opinions without rejecting the people behind them. Criticism of an issue must not turn into intolerance towards people. What we need is time and space for real conversations in which both sides are heard. The path to such a world requires courage – the courage to jump over one's own shadow and look for solutions together.

The discussion becomes particularly sensitive when it comes to dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity in schools. Many parents feel uncomfortable when children are confronted with sexual issues at an early age. At the same time, the debate is further polarized by differing values.

Religious communities often hold conservative beliefs and view LGBTQ issues as morally questionable from their perspective. But regardless of our perspective on this issue, one thing remains important: it is not about suppressing or dominating one side. Instead, we need to listen to all sides and then try to find a common denominator, however small it may be.

Such a dialog requires patience, empathy and a willingness to listen to uncomfortable perspectives. Only in this way can we create a society based on understanding, freedom of opinion and mutual respect – a world in which differences do not divide but enrich.

Religious freedom is a central building block. Everyone has the right to choose and practice their faith. This is enshrined in human rights treaties such as those of the United Nations. The US Constitution also protects this right and prohibits the government from favoring a particular religion.

Religious communities enrich our lives. They bring cultural diversity, new perspectives and deeper insights into faith. Many people find guidance in their religion for their values, their actions and for the turbulent times in which we live. Each individual can help us to be more open and compassionate through mutual exchange. This is exactly what makes our world a better place to live in. Religious communities are often a strong source of support for their members. Whether through church services or joint meetings – they create cohesion and support. It is not always easy to reconcile religious freedom with other social values. Sometimes conflicts arise, for example when religious practices clash with human rights.

A good way to resolve such conflicts is through open dialog. When representatives of all religions talk to each other, many misunderstandings can be cleared up. In multi-religious societies in particular, some religious communities feel disadvantaged or misunderstood. Examples include countries where only Muslims are allowed to enter certain religious sites – a big difference to most Christian churches, which are open to everyone.

We must never stop standing up for religious minorities. Their protection enriches our society. Standing up for the rights of all people is not only in line with the principles of human rights, but also with Christian values that are so important to us: Love of neighbor and respect for each individual.

Of course, there are many problems in the world. Politicians have a responsibility for this. But we are the ones who have to ensure that state support helps people without making them dependent on it. Incentives are

needed that promote personal initiative so that everyone has the opportunity to actively participate in society and take control of their lives.