

"TOLERANCE"

Sunday, April 24, 2016

OBJECTIONS

By: Allen Coleman

[VIDEO - College Kids Say the Darnedest Things]

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Plausibility Structure

- (1) There was a time that we were required to abide by the laws of rhetoric and logic. As a culture we appreciated how reason and classic logic fit into any intelligent argument structure. In doing so, we could argue for the validity of any thought with winsomeness and confidence.
- (2) We also needed to know, that if we were going to hold onto an idea, we needed to know **why** we held onto it, and the implications for doing so.
 - (i) To others, the culture at large, not just for ourselves.
 - (ii) This process is called a **plausibility structure**.
- (3) Coined by Dr. Peter L. Berger | Sociologist
 - (i) *"Structures of thought widely and almost unquestionably held throughout a culture"*
- (4) In a monolithic culture like, Japan, plausibility structures are usually very complex because they are built over centuries of interlocking stances inseparable from one another.
- (5) By contrast, in a highly diverse cultures, like the American West, plausibility structures need to be more simple...more restricted. Reason being, is there are very few stances held in common.
- (6) So the plausibility structures that do remain, are held onto with extra tenacity, ferocity, without questions...and very often, argues Dr. Berger, inconsistently and illogically.
- (7) Tolerance is one of those newer plausibility structures here in the West.
- (8) Last week: relevance I can't you at least be "tolerant"
- (9) Newer?

2. Old vs. New Tolerance

- (1) Definitions of the Old (verb form)
 - (i) **OED** - to endure; to sustain; to put up with
 - (ii) to allow to exist with authoritative interference
 - (iii) **Webster** - to allow; permit; not suppress



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- (iv) to recognize, respect without necessarily agreeing with
- (v) **Encarta** - accept existence of different views
- (vi) So far so good, right?
- (2) Definitions of the New (noun form)
 - (i) a subtle change appears
 - (ii) **Encarta** - acceptance of different views
 - (iii) this change is subtle in form; massive is substance
- (3) Old Tolerance had three assumptions:
 - (i) there is objective truth out there; it is our duty to pursue it
 - (ii) the various parties in a dispute think they know what the truth in a matter is, though they sharply disagree what that is, thinking the other party is wrong
 - (iii) nevertheless, they hold the best chance of uncovering the truth by the unhindered exchange of ideas, no matter how wrongheaded some of those ideas seem. Which demands opponents not be silenced or crushed.
- (4) **Old Tolerance:** *"I disapprove of what you say; but I defend to the death you have the right to say it."*
- (5) In removing these assumptions:
- (6) **New Tolerance:** *"Keep your mouth shut unless you accept what I say or what I'm doing."*

3. *Whatever Culture*

- (1) The best way I can clear all of this up is with my favorite word, as a parent. Unfortunately it was given birth by my generation, X...but you millennial have perfected it.
- (2) When the very word itself is spoken, I shudder at its implications, even though everyone in the room usually thinks it innocuous.
- (3) Whatever
 - (i) You want to permanently implant metal divots across your forehead... whatever.
 - (ii) You don't think pets should be property...instead you want to call yourselves guardians...whatever.



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- (iii) You believe that Kim Kardashian is a good role model...whatever.
- (iv) You think Sam Hunt is actually writing country music...whatever.
- (v) You don't think you should have to be tied down to your family because you fell in love with someone who really "gets you" ...whatever.
- (vi) You needing to feel embraced and tolerated as evidenced by the right to go into whatever bathroom you want unquestioned and without restriction giving no regard to the consequences?...it's all just sort of whatever.
- (4) And when all of this "whatever" culture smacks right into the Christian worldview, we have a problem.
 - (i) Because no one wants to be branded intolerant.
 - (ii) Most people think Christian intolerance is: "You're wrong; I'm right" | "You're evil; I'm good"
- (5) And according to the New Tolerance, anything apart from either our full embrace and celebration; **or** our complete silence, is intolerant.
 - (i) Which is a very intolerant position; Intolerance in the name of tolerance
- (6) So, we as followers of Jesus, want to be more consistent that that...so we need to be prepared to explain our position.

[1 PET. 3:15 - ...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...]

II. WHATEVER CULTURE, MEETS AN EVER-INVOLVED GOD

1. More Than Morality, Identity

[GEN. 1:27]

- (1) Identity produces activity
- (2) Whatever culture believes activity is identity.

[GEN. 2:16-17]

- (3) Part of their very identity is He is Creator God, you are creation.
- (4) Eden had boundaries that served to reflect this reality. To remind our first parents that they were not God.
 - (i) Human flourishing proceeds from Christian identity



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(5) Moral submission, evidences spiritual identity.

[GEN. 3:1-7]

(6) Do what is right in your eyes. Not God's eyes.

(7) Satan is reorientation their identity, through their autonomous activity.

[GEN. 3:8-13]

(8) Here we have an ever-involved God, coming into a whatever culture reminding them of who they really are.

(9) Moral submission, evidences spiritual identity.

[JN 1:14 - *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*]

[MT. 7:21 - *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*]

(10) Here we have, once again, an ever-involved God, stepping into a whatever culture.

(11) Calling us back to our identity evidenced through moral submission.

2. Not So New

[JUDGES 17:6 - *...Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*]

(1) This is the kind of culture Jesus stepped into.

(2) This is the kind of culture we find ourselves in.

(3) Eden and the incarnation of Jesus are evidence that God is ever-involved in a whatever culture.

(i) Whatever is uninvolved. Whatever is hands-off.

(ii) But this is not what God is like.

(iii) He is holistically involved with His creation.

(4) He cares:

(i) What we do with our words

(iv) What we do with our time

(ii) What we do with our desires

(v) What we do with our bodies

(iii) What we do with our money

(5) Therefore, is untenable for Christians to embrace the new tolerance, if for no



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other reason, we are to be the visible reflection of the invisible God who is no "whatever" but "ever-involved".

- (6) But another reason, perhaps more persuasive to the modern mind, is the new tolerance, is quite simply intolerant.

3. *New Tolerance Is Very Intolerant*

(1) ARTICLE

- (2) "Whatever" is not actually passive, but active.
 - (i) Not to object...is a decision, not indecision.
 - (ii) Therefore, to be tolerant of one thing, is always a decision to be intolerant of another.
- (3) For example:
 - (i) To tolerate an employers abuse, is to be intolerant of a safe work environment.
 - (ii) To tolerate his adultery, is to be intolerant of her expectation of fidelity.
 - (iii) To tolerate their sexual promiscuity, is to be intolerant of sexual health (both medically and spiritually)
 - (iv) To tolerate injustice, is to be intolerant of true justice.
- (4) You simply cannot be completely tolerant of all without being, at least in part, intolerant of some.
- (5) Intolerance, not as defined by the culture, but as defined by the Bible, actually serves the greater good.
 - (i) We are intolerant of children being abandoned and abused, therefore we build an orphanage.
 - (ii) We are intolerant of people being alone and adrift, so we engage them in community.
 - (iii) We are intolerant of sin reigning, ruling and wrecking havoc on people we love, so we confront.
 - (iv) On and on it goes. Our identity informing our activity, not the other way around.

III. INTOLERANCE OF THE NEW TOLERANCE



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1. God Is Very Intolerant With Sin

[2 JN. 1:10-11] - *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his **wicked works.***

- (1) God is so intolerant of sin that gave Himself up as a propitiation.
- (2) Sin is the reason for all moral ambiguity, for all social inconsistency, for all personal agony and for all global tragedy.
 - (i) Sin is the love language of "whatever".
- (3) But you are not "whatever"
 - (i) The Bible reminds us that He knows the number of hairs on your head, he determined the places you'd live, and directed the steps of your plans.
 - (ii) He is very involved. Ever-involved...not whatever.
 - (iii) And so...

2. God Is Very Tolerant With Us

[PS. 145:8] - *The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

[ROM. 2:4] - *Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?]*

- (1) Though He is intolerant of sin, He is very tolerant of us. So much so, that Jesus is the means of our pardon and the guarantee of our perseverance.
 - (i) For the non-Christian, God's wrath against sin is building across time and cultures, like a moral tsunami. His patience is like the burning wick of a candle. It burns slowly, but will eventually run out. What this means is you are not too far gone to turn to Christ in faith and repentance, so that you too might know this patient God.
 - (ii) For the Christian, this means that we sin over and over again and God remains patient with us on the basis of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

- (2) Finally, because He is tolerant of us, we are to be tolerant with **others.**

[EPH. 4:1-2] - *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, **bearing** with one another in love,*



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- (3) You see that...patience so that they'll *"walk in a manner worth of the calling to which you have been called."*
 - (i) Not tolerant of their moral rebellion...but their dignity, worth and value, having been made in the image of their creator.
- (4) You can't just give off the impression that this is just a moral disagreement and not an issue of deep person and spiritual identity.
 - (i) Grieving the loss of getting to explain ourselves.
 - (ii) You have to explain more, not less in a "whatever" culture.

IV. CONCLUSION

1. Standing Strong In An Intolerant World

[**JN. 16:33** - *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*]

- (1) When a whatever culture, meets an ever-involved God, we can be assured that He has overcome the culture.
- (2) More than that...

[**MATT. 28:19-20** - *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, **I am with you always**, to the end of the age."*]

[**RO. 8:31** - *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*]

- (3) Have confidence, loved ones.
- (4) That though we may be branded as intolerant, though we may be misunderstood and maligned in a whatever culture...our God remains ever-involved in our plight.
- (5) So remain faithful by being very tolerant with others...while remaining holistically intolerant of the sin that separates from the God in whom we have our living and being. Beginning with ourselves, this morning.

