

The Courage to be IN/TOLERANT

Since we Christians are called to be both tolerant & intolerant, we need the courage to exercise critical intelligence in deciding (1) when which & (2) how to confront "the world" at points where faithfulness to the heavenly vision as we understand it demands our lived & spoken NO to what our society is in/tolerant of: we should have the courage to tolerate what society is intolerant of & to be intolerant of what society tolerates. This Thinksheet is to illustrate that proposition.

2 Today's CAPE COD TIMES' editorial page has both (1) a warning against the eroding of speech freedom by forces promoting **political correctness** & (2) a letter attacking me for being "judgmental," for which I deserve "the same damnation" the letter-writer says I call down upon homosexuals for their failure to share "God's view of homosexuality."

The letter neatly displays what the columnist says: "We [in America today] cannot mention homosexuality except in praise, or we are subjected to acrimonious denunciation." PC's "intellectual moral corruption hides under [such words as] 'multiculturalism' and 'diversity'."

3 Something does need to be denounced. It's the creeping taboo against unpopular speech/writing. The taboo first appeared as "speech codes" in schools; now increasingly it's being legislated as laws against "hate speech," & judges are already jailing some who've offended only with their mouths/pens/typewriters/computers. "Freedom of Speech" was the first freedom in the 1924 Constitution of the USSR, & it was the first to die. It can't happen here?

4 Now read my 7.11.01 letter, against which today's letter was written. The latter's writer cannot or will not distinguish "love" from "love-&-approve": God & I either love-&-approve-of-the-behavior-of homosexuals or we "damn" them! Then he triumphs over me by quoting Mt.7.1 as "Judge not [CEV, properly, "condemn not"] lest ye be judged"--currently, in the USA, the most abused verse in the first Gospel. I'm in good company: in today's CCT, both Mt. & I are abused.

5 The fear of being misunderstood & abused, + the fear of being understood & abused, stops the mouths of many a Christian. I should think, wouldn't you, that since the Christians' Lord was not only misunderstood & abused but also even killed, following "in his steps" but short of the danger of death should be a joy rather than a mouth-stopper. I am so frequently misunderstood --despite my best efforts to be clear & precise--that, duly but not deeply sorry for myself, I wrote #3037, "If I can be misunderstood, I will be." (It's first words are "Poor me,....") Speak up, take your lumps, & get over it....

6& have no hard feelings against your abusers. Some of them can't understand. Some are so imprisoned in their POV (point of view) that pre-judice (pre-judgment), when triggered, **shuts off** hearing-listening-reading. It's as though I begin a sentence & they treat it as a generic stem, finishing it in a manner condemning me. (The reverse of what your computer does when you begin to type an e-mail address that's in your "address book": it finishes it *accurately*.)

7 My letter, please note, counters permissiveness not only in society but also in my denomination. The fear

No approval inherent in God's love of all

Since only one of Cape Cod's 19 Congregational churches is "open and affirming," yet everybody is welcome to public worship in all of them, "open and affirming" must have some special meaning.

The pastor of that one church, First Congregational Church in Harwich, explained recently that the United Church of Christ slogan means that a congregation is "inclusive" of gays and lesbians because "all people are loved by God. . . . This is the heart of the Christian faith." Further, the denomination includes in "inclusive" the possibility of ordaining practicing homosexuals.

The false logic cries out for exposing. God loves everybody: That means God approves of everybody's behavior, no matter one's "sexual orientation." God loves bisexuals: Does that mean God approves of switch-hitting, male-female, multiple sexual partners? God loves pedophiles: Does that mean God approves of sex between adults and children? Human beings are naturally promiscuous: Does that mean God approves of sexual promiscuity?

Every "sexual orientation" has advocates. Only immoralists could claim a straight line between natural inclination and acceptable behavior.

WILLIS ELLIOTT
Craigville

Elliot  **Thinksheets**

309 Lake Elizabeth Drive
Craigville, MA 02632
Phone/Fax 508-775-8008 52¢ per year
e-mail wandie111@tomediane.net

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of being **isolated** in your own community is an even greater weakener of courage than the fear of being, in society, alone against the crowd.

8 Now let's look at this oh-so-politicized word "**tolerance**." A.J.Conyers, in his recent THE LONG TRUCE: How Toleration Made the World Safe for Power and Profit (Spence), distinguishes the Christian virtue (conviction-&-practice) of tolerance from the Enlightenment doctrine that religion should be bracketed out from the public sphere & not (!) tolerated when it affirms its right to witness & work for the public good in its own way. Since all truth is God's truth, Christian thinkers through the ages have been open to hearing the truth in the teaching of aliens & even of enemies, as the author profusely evidences in his FIRST THINGS (Sept./01) article "Rescuing Tolerance."

In American history, this bracketing out of religion is recent, being a further out-cropping of the 1934 Humanist Manifesto's Enlightenment doctrine, in line with the first (1918) Constitution of the USSR. Jn.Dewey, the primary author of the former document, predicted that in a few generations of his "progressive" public school indoctrination, our citizenry would sideline religion into the private sphere (which occurred, as R.J.Neuhaus showed in THE NAKED PUBLIC SQUARE). Two results: (1) Our public schools openly not only teach the Enlightenment version of tolerance (as in the national "TOLERANCE" curriculum/magazine) but pressure for matching legislation; & (2) As in most communist & all Muslim countries, Christianity is expected to be nonmissionary, i.e. not to seek converts--an intolerance I attack in my 6.27.01 letter (below). In our most-pagan-secular minds, evangelism is already in the category of "hate speech"!

9 But not to despair! While in the public & intellectual-cultural spheres the Christian mind is now minority, historically we Christians have, when in the minority, accepted from the Holy Spirit **the gift of courage**. Furthermore, **reason** is beginning a comeback, a counter-revolution. One evidence of the latter is that "natural" no longer = normal. Back, please, to the last ¶ in my first letter (page 1).

The heart of the gay movement's agenda is the false doctrine that natural = normal = healthy & should = acceptable & in all respects, including same-sex "marriage," legal.

Now notice again, in my first letter's penultimate ¶, this: "Human beings are naturally promiscuous." But civilization is impossible in a population with generally wandering genitals. Today's BOSTON GLOBE has a David Abel review of THE MYTH OF MONOGAMY: Fidelity and Infidelity in Animals and People (W.H.Freeman/01), by D.P.Barash & J.E.Lipton. "Monogamy is a social advance" against sexual chaos (which is the stuff of most soaps, dramas, films, & pop music--to this old pastor-teacher, all profoundly infantile & boring, as I'm a virgin except in marriage--excluding those rare occasions when this stuff rises, as it does in Shakespeare, to the level of art).

Again, "Monogamy is more democratic."

And again, "Monogamy is as rational for humans as polygamy [meaning, here, promiscuity] is instinctive." Tough luck, these highly competent researchers are saying: Your instincts, let loose, are bad news for you & others. Down with "natural"! Contra Freud, for decades I've said "Discipline [of self & society] is the systematic suppression of [natural, instinctual] feelings in the interest of a higher order." ("Follow your bliss" should apply to intuition, not instinct.)

(Hetero-) "marriage," as the historic ceremony says, "is to be held in honor among all [men]." "Thou shalt have no other" sex than in marriage, & no other "marriage" than hetero-. But all us sinners--all human beings--always stand in the need of the LORD's mercy.

Attack on Christianity weakened argument

The June 15 "My View" column by a recent Barnstable High School graduate opposes "Christianizing" Native Americans. Does Barnstable High teach against evangelism, or is this something he picked up somewhere else?

Politically correct "multiculturalism," now a dogma of America's public schools, teaches that one religion is as good as another. That teaching, besides being objective nonsense, violates the separation of church and state by virtually "establishing" a freeze on conversion from one religion to another -- the same freeze that exists in Muslim countries against Christianity.

Well, can't Christianity just give up on missions and evangelism?

Of course not. A fire exists by burning, the church exists by spreading the good news of the way God has provided in Jesus Christ for humanity's return to him in repentance and forgiveness.

I agree with the writer's cultural observation that power desensitizes the powerful to the feelings of the powerless, and Native American logos should not be used by sports teams. But he weakens his case when he attacks Christianity for wanting to share the gospel.

WILLIS ELLIOTT
Craigville