

WHY IN/TOLERANCE OF IN/TOLERANCE? ----- ELLIOTT #1854

The mailwoman ("maillady"?) just stuffed into our RFD box two curious pieces for me. I'll tell you about them later; now, all I want to say is that they occasioned this thinksheet, which is like a child's maddening (to parents!) why? why? why? why? Yes, four whys, all of them in the title. Here they are:

1. WHY ARE SOME FOLKS TOLERANT OF INTOLERANCE? This question is doubly perplexing to me--inherently (i.e., its content) and constitutionally (the fact that I'm a Jungian ENFJ, a character who flies easily--"naturally" to passing Judgment, to Decision, to both Intolerance and Tolerance but more the former than the latter)...Why didn't Bonhoeffer decide earlier (in time?) to kill Hitler? ANSWERS: Because he was human...Christian...Lutheran (more the last, in my opinion). I was so enraged over "Vietnam" that I used D.B. as a negative example: the American people ought to learn from the German experience of Hitler to be ready to assassinate the head of state (in this case, Nixon). Why did this hit the fan? Because I said it in a national meeting ("a caste of thousands") of the National Council of Churches. I'm not backing down: some folks, esp. folks of power, need killin', and it's awful for everybody (but them) when they don't get it....In 1939, some of us--Gordon Cosby (later, Church of the Savior, Wash., DC), Clarence Jordan (later, Koinonia Farms), a few others, and I--closed down So.Bap.Theo.Sem. to force the acceptance of niggers (later, negroes, still later, blacks and Blacks) into class--and won. We were intolerant of some folks' tolerance of intolerance and of the Ky. state law against educational miscegenation. In my life-story, I'd be ashamed of a million other things before I'd be ashamed of that act of civil disobedience. (NB: Later that year, World War II began.)

2. WHY ARE SOME FOLKS INTOLERANT OF TOLERANCE? Because 27 cs. ago some Greek psychologists figured out that folks are genetically coded (they didn't use that language!) in five directions, and one of these dispositional "types" they described by a Greek word meaning something like inflammable-even-before-the-match-is-struck. Folks of this types just can't stand other folks' opinions. In Fact, they just can't stand other people. Maybe they love humanity (in Latin), but they just can't stand folks (in Angle-Saxon). I have a slight tinge of their misanthropy, so I hate 'em more: I just can't stand people who are up-tight about some folks' laidbackness....When I think of all the "tastes," preferences, prejudices, human beings have about human beings, I'm convinced that only by the grace of God is there so little strife in our species (though, as I write this thinksheet, 1,400 divorces are being granted and 44 wars and rebellions are in "progress").

3. WHY ARE SOME FOLKS TOLERANT OF TOLERANCE? Because (1) God has so predisposed ("programmed") them, and (2) because they have decided to agree with God. At parties, esp. not "dry" parties, these are my favorite people. They're no damn good when it comes to improving the world, but they're a wondrous warmth to a body that's been "out there," even out there with only one cold human being, praying-trying to make the world a little more spacious for human development and so for the honoring of the God who died for us in Jesus.

4. WHY ARE SOME FOLKS INTOLERANT OF INTOLERANCE? Because they are made "right," i.e., like me. For me, what is out of the game--the only thing out of the game--is ruling other folks' out of the game. This attitude of mine is based on (1) my genes, (2) my agnosticism, viz., my gut-conviction they none of us knows enough to abuse any of us, and (3) my natural love (from my parents and others) and (4) my supernatural love (from God through Jesus in the Christian community and beyond). Here come the two mailings (both on what photographers call "warm" paper): (1) Humberto Belli (former ed. of "La Prensa," Managua), detailing the death of pluralism in the Nicaraguan revolution;* (2) Joel Carpenter,*re-instating me as an evangelical scholar after the generation before him committed ideological ostracism against me.

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* June/84 IMPRIMIS.