

THE LIES OF TOLERANCE

**By
Glenn Meldrum**

One evening while ministering in Vermont I saw a commercial aired during the evening news. It was filled with children and teens pleading with the viewers to be tolerant with those of different races, religions and lifestyle choices. They sounded so sincere, so guileless. The message was simple and appealing. Their statements held a certain validity. And yet, underlying this seemingly innocent commercial was a propaganda based upon lies to engineer society.

THE HYPOCRISY OF TOLERANCE

The sad irony about the tolerance movement is that it is not tolerant. The moment you disagree with those who believe in the secular version of tolerance, you are labeled a bigot, homophobe, extremist or worse. This is actually a justified form of hate advanced by the politically correct. While visiting some relatives a discussion about homosexuality arose. I presented the Biblical view that homosexuality is sin. When my relative's arguments broke down she turned to personal attacks by labeling me a homophobe. Though she claimed to be open-minded and an active proponent of tolerance she demonstrated that she was extremely intolerant.

Let me illustrate this further. A friend of mine who pastors a church on a major university campus held a series of lectures at the church. He brought in noted Christian speakers on major world religions who opened the floor for questions after each lecture. The meetings were well received until the night of the lecture on Hinduism. Hinduism has 330 million deities. Here is a religion that prides itself on diversity and tolerance. That is, until Christ's exclusive claims to truth and salvation are presented. The Hindus in the meeting were enraged. They proved that they are not tolerant.

Noted apologist Ravi Zacharias clearly defined the core convictions of the mass-produced propaganda of tolerance. "Philosophically, you can believe anything, so long as you do not claim it to be true. Morally, you can practice anything, so long as you do not claim that it is a 'better' way. Religiously, you can hold to anything, so long as you do not bring Jesus Christ into it. . . . A journalist can walk into a church and mock its carryings on, but he or she dare not do the same if the ceremony is from the eastern fold."

The problem with the tolerance movement is not in the promotion of tolerance in and of itself, but in its philosophical foundations. This non-Christian belief system is predominately the by-product of naturalism, humanism and moral relativism, each of which is antagonistic to Biblical Christianity and the health and well being of society. I will briefly outline these three philosophical points and then address how they relate to the

secular concept of tolerance.

NATURALISM

Naturalism is the atheistic belief that reality can be explained through mere natural terms. Evolution, realism and determinism are foundations of naturalism. Naturalists claim that the character and behavior of human beings are wholly determined by heredity and environment. Humanity is nothing more than an evolved species that struggle with instinctive drives, such as hunger and sexuality, along with external social and economic influences. Though the formal philosophy of naturalism began in the late 19th century and was short lived, it has become the common belief of the majority of Americans. It is aggressively taught in our schools.

Evolution is a theory which purports that the material world came into being through time and chance. In other words, time and chance is the creator of all that is and through that same impersonal random act life came forth from lifeless matter. Actually, naturalism and evolution are faith based explanations of the existence of man that has removed God from the equation.

HUMANISM

The Greek philosopher Protagoras of the 5th century BC gave us the definition of humanism, “Man is the measure of all things.” This sentiment became the driving force of the 14th century Renaissance that began in Italy. The Renaissance removed the Christian influence from the study of ancient Latin and Greek authors. This brought about a compartmentalizing of the person. The intellectual, worldly and temporal was removed from the spiritual and eternal.

As with naturalism, humanism has evolved and trickled down from the intelligentsia to the mass of western civilization. It is so thoroughly incorporated into our society that it is hard for us to comprehend its depth of influence. Modern humanism attempts to offer dignity to the human race without God. If man, and the pleasure of man is, as Protagoras claimed, the measure of all things, then God is either removed from society or compartmentalized to an insignificant part of life. Morals are then left to the dictates of the individual and the powerbrokers of society.

RELATIVISM

Moral relativism works hand-in-hand with naturalism and humanism. Relativists reject the Biblical standards of morality by claiming that there is no such thing as self-evident moral principles that are true for everyone. Morality is determined by traditions and customs. This means that whatever society determines is right is right. Morality is then decided and engineered according to whatever is considered beneficial for that society no matter how evil it may be.

Relativism is both pragmatic and existential. Pragmatism asserts that whatever works is right, while existentialism claims that morals change given each situation. Relativism taken to its logical conclusion would produce social chaos. It would be a world where nothing is good or evil, where justice and fairness are meaningless and where moral improvement is irrelevant. It is a bankrupt philosophy that is thoroughly illogical.

THE LIES OF TOLERANCE

If humanity is only the product of time and chance, and if man is the measure of all things, and if morals are only the pragmatic and existential results of society, then how do you get people to tolerate each other? The moral relativist would say through education and law. For the Christian, hate and prejudice are part of our sinful nature and will never be eradicated by education, laws or propaganda.

When deviant moral practices such as homosexuality, premarital sex, and pedophilia are deemed legitimate lifestyle choices by special interest groups they aggressively strive to legalize the sin, and manipulate the populace with propaganda so they believe the lie. However, history proves that immorality is always destructive to society because sin is destitute of the power to accomplish good. Notice that, as God is further removed from American life society grows more corrupt. When we reap the whirlwind of our wickedness we can see the worthlessness of moral relativism, that is, if we have eyes to see.

Relentless reports on the violence in our schools burden our hearts. Relativistic morality offers nothing more than commercials on tolerance and laws to prohibit violence and hate. Yet the hearts of the people have not changed. When godless philosophies overran the classrooms the standard for morality was driven out as well. The violence and disrespect in our schools are at unprecedented levels. Moral relativism is not working. Propaganda and legislation will never be able to curb our natural propensity to sin and evil.

Only through Jesus is there power to change the character of man. Left to ourselves we are self-absorbed people who want to justify our sinful lifestyles and even propagate them. The Scriptures plainly state that morals are not relative because they are based upon the character of God who does not change. That is why He told us to, “Be holy, because I am holy” (1 Pe 1:16).

God is truly the only tolerant being. He tolerates our sin while calling us to repent. His tolerance is never a justification of sin, for He is also the Just Judge. The wages of sin will be distributed with eternal justice unless the sinner turns from his sin through repentance. God’s tolerance gives us space to repent. If we refuse to repent then we are left to face His holy justice.

There is no dignity in man if he is only an evolved ameba that was once slime on the sea. God created man in His own image and for His own good pleasure. We were created with a purpose that does not change: to love God first and foremost and then to love others as ourselves. Only as we are rightly related to God can we correctly love others. Jesus did not ask His disciples to be tolerant, but to love others as He loved them. This is

the high calling of a Christian.

Genuine Christians learn true tolerance as they become more like Jesus. There is no place for hate and prejudice in Christ's kingdom. Jesus told us that by our love the world will know that we are His disciples (Jn. 13:35). Throughout church history the cause of Christ has been slandered when those who call themselves Christians walk in hatred and prejudice. As Jesus said, "a tree is recognized by its fruit" (Mt 12:33).

A person is not born a Christian but becomes one by surrendering his life to Jesus as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). Since Christians were once rebels against Christ they ought to be Biblically tolerant of those who do not know the Savior because they once lived as the unbelievers now do. Paul told us, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. 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" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Christians are never called to justify the sins of others, but to call them out of their rebellion against God by turning to Jesus with all their heart. Notice that the commercial stated at the beginning of the article did not ask the viewers to love each other, only to be tolerant. Godless philosophies are powerless to change human nature. Underlying the commercial was relativism's approval of alternative lifestyles no matter how evil and destructive they are. This is done, not out of charity, but out of the propagation and love of evil. These godless philosophies cannot transform the evil in men's hearts, so they legitimize them. Evil can only be what it is, and if it is left unrestrained, will endeavor to accomplish its end—the infliction of pain and suffering, both temporally and eternally.

The secular version of tolerance is a lie and will never be able to accomplish what it propagates. Jesus is the only remedy to the sin sick soul.

Glenn Meldrum has been a national evangelist since 1997. Prior to his calling as an evangelist he pastored for 15 years. He is ordained and holds an M.A. in theology and church history from Ashland Theological Seminary. Visit www.ihpministry.com for articles, sermons, books and information on Glenn Meldrum and In His Presence Ministries.

First published in "Unchained" November 2004