



"Tolerance becomes a crime when applied to evil."
—Thomas Mann

31-Jul-09

Tolerance and Love

For the past twenty-five years or so, tolerance has been a powerful theme of secular preachers of political correctness. In fact, it has become a "buzzword" of those influenced by the New Age movements. Unfortunately, it has also become a theme of messages in mainstream-Protestant congregations, and surprisingly, of late among evangelicals too! We need to understand this subject because the tolerance preached on the public scene is not found in Scripture except in a very narrow circumstance.

The word "tolerance" makes not even one appearance in the King James or the American Standard versions of the Bible. Why? Because, before 1960, translators could find no place that it fit. It was not until the New International Version and the New American Standard Version made their appearances that "tolerance" also made its first appearance, and even then, in less than five places. Why? Because the older versions used terms better suited to those narrow contexts: "forbearance," "endurance," "patience," and long-suffering.

Tolerance has a number of common usages in our time: "the capacity to endure hardship or pain"; "the endurance of the presence or actions of objectionable persons, or the expression of offensive opinions"; and "the capacity for or the practice of recognizing and respecting the beliefs or practices of others." By themselves, none of these are objectionable to a Christian. The problems lie in the modern twist given to it by those who use it so frequently in advocacy.

[Revelation 18:4](#) challenges us to come out of [the world](#), a most difficult task because we live our lives physically immersed in the world. No matter which way we turn in the activities of life—whether in employment, entertainment, schooling, government, and religion—we are confronted by the world's conduct, attitudes, beliefs, and programs for actively maintaining its cultures. In every level of society in this multicultural world, a Christian meets tremendous diversity head-on.

And indeed, it is in every culture and every aspect of society that the Christian's loyalty in exercising his [faith](#) in the laws and principles of God's way of life is being challenged, for God's way touches on every facet of life. At the same time, most of this world's beliefs and practices are anti-Christ. The religions of this world are clearly anti-Christ, but concepts and practices drawn from false religions permeate this world's governments, schooling, entertainment, and employment.

Virtually every day we see clear examples in the news of an energetic movement to remove every concept of the Christian [God](#) and His commandments from government, schooling, and entertainment. Yet, what is replacing Him? He is being replaced by the god of secularism, which is man himself. Secularism is a religion people practice, accept, and adhere to, even though it has no formal congregations or places of worship. The same is true of evolution, which is in reality nothing more than random and blind chance, and yet this false god dominates academia, especially the sciences. Much of the modern movement within environmentalism is a New-Age-driven worship of Gaia, the so-called earth goddess.

It is here that the modern twist in the usage of tolerance has strong influence. In the minds of many, tolerance is acceptance on an equal level, not merely forbearance or putting up with something. If one does not accept according to this worldly standard, he is then accused of having a lack of love. Can a Christian honestly tolerate, that is, accept outright paganism as being equal with the God of creation and His moral and spiritual absolutes? Can a Christian wholeheartedly accept the writings of Buddha, Mohammed, or anybody else under the influence of a demon as being on an equal level with the Holy Bible?

God's own Word will clarify this. [1 John 4:8](#) reads, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." No single word describes the character of the God of creation any better than the word "love." In [Deuteronomy 7:2-6](#), as the [Israelitish people](#) were about to enter their inheritance He commands them:

And when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor

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show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

The same Personage who became Jesus of Nazareth and out of love died for the sins of the world gave these commands. The Bible says, "[Jesus Christ](#) is the same yesterday, today, and forever" ([Hebrews 13:8](#)). In His command, He does not tolerate evil in the least. Instead, in telling them to destroy evil, He expresses His overwhelming love for His people. Most of us have stopped observing [Christmas](#) and [Easter](#) because we are convinced of their inherent evil. Though associated with Jesus, both are outright lies with roots buried deeply in paganism.

Jimmy Carter, President of the United States from 1977-1981, recently resigned a sixty-year association with the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest organization of American Protestantism. He did so, charging them with discrimination against Southern Baptist women, and at the same time accusing its male leadership of doing so to perpetuate their ascendant positions within the religious hierarchy.

In his July 12, 2009, article announcing his resignation—other than [Galatians 3:28](#), which does not answer his objections at all—he cited not a single scripture to back up his accusations. He claims that all are equal in God's eyes—a very slippery slope on which to step. Were the people in Deuteronomy 7 all equal in God's eyes? In fact, [Romans 9:13](#) quotes God as saying, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," which certainly does not suggest equality. Many other similar statements appear throughout God's Word.

Mr. Carter's main grievance is that men are perceived as superior and women as inferior. Scripture says no such thing, and Southern Baptist Convention teaching does not support that position either. However, God clearly assigns governmental *responsibility*. "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" ([1 Corinthians 11:3](#)). There is no equality here. Similarly, God has assigned "unequal" duties within the church. However, is God ever unfair? Is His judgment ever perverse?

As his creed, Mr. Carter quotes Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights verbatim. He announces that he has become associated with the "Elders," an independent group of eminent global leaders who come from many faiths and backgrounds. Brought together by Nelson Mandela, they offer their influence and experience to support peacemaking efforts. This is an example of the new application of tolerance in which people of many faiths—except for the true one—have banded together in an equality that will eventually produce the [False Prophet](#) and a one-world religion.

Do not be tricked into accepting this modern tolerance of sugar-coated, sinful paganism. We must not tolerate such concepts in our lives.

- John W. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Forbearance](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Richard Ritenbaugh, echoing a radio commentator's observation, "we wear our bones too tight" suggests that we are much too sensitive and litigious, greatly lacking in forbearance, tolerance and patience. A major part of God's character is forbearance, patiently putting up with over 700 years of covenant breaking by our ancestors, patiently refraining from giving them what they deserved. God put up with the foibles of Abraham, Samson, David, Job, and many others, allowing them space to repent and build character. We need to develop the godly trait of forbearance, having the capacity to have mercy on others while we wait for them to change. Forbearance when applied to our brethren leads to unity; lack of forbearance leads to scattering.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Judgment, Tolerance, and Correction](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

A common mantra, even among Christians, is "You shouldn't judge." Is this a biblical concept? John Ritenbaugh exposes the fallacy of this belief and explains how righteous judgment should be done.

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