

RELIGION IS THE ENEMY OF TOLERANCE

Tolerance is putting up with something you consider bad in the hope that it will go away by itself or because you think that if you show anger at it you will only make it worse. Tolerance and acceptance are not the same thing - they are completely different. Tolerance has a message, "You do your own thing over there and we won't bother you so long as you don't bother us".

When we talk about tolerance, we must remember that there are different types. Religious tolerance. Social tolerance. Legal tolerance.

Society needs to reduce the need for tolerance by being as libertarian as possible. Religions with all their rules that we don't want or need only ruin tolerance in the name of tolerance.

Those, and that means religionists and many secularists, who preach religious tolerance are really thinking, "That religion is too big and there is strength in numbers so we must tolerate it." If you were your own religion and very evangelistic see how much tolerance you will get. The tolerance the bigger religions are getting is more bigoted resignation than tolerance.

Tolerance is a necessary evil. It is wrong then to go out of your way to give people more stuff to tolerate as if there isn't enough as it is. So you have to discourage anything that increases the demand for tolerance. You fix as much as you can of what is wrong in society so that there is no need to tolerate those things. There is enough to tolerate without religion and magic making a contribution.

Tolerance is a two-way street. If you demand tolerance for your views you must demand it for your opponent's views as well.

Tolerance means you have a discouraging attitude to something.

Tolerance has a breaking point. It is irresponsible to test patience too much.

Religion as community and community as intolerance

A community without some intolerance cannot function. There will be no community where thieving is tolerated. The human community is liberal but bans things such as child abuse, rape, theft and so on for these destroy the community. They have consequences beyond the immediate harm they do. For example, thieves lead people to doubt one another more easily.

It goes without saying that religion tries to make a community of a different sort. It will ban more than just the things that stop people getting along. It will ban things that threaten it not as a community but as a religious community. Thus not attending services or believing what you are ordered to believe or failing to pay money to the clergy will be considered disruptive and evil and anti-community. The more doctrines and rules and worship opportunities a religion ordains then the worse it is. Even if it seems to do no harm there is a principle at stake. Harm always starts with bad principles or with good principles not being revered. Harming principles is implicitly doing harm to people as well.

You may persist that some religions are good. But people have more in their lives than religion so other things in their lives might diffuse or prevent the religion harming. That does not mean the religion is good - it is still bad.

The religion will claim to have the infallible message of God. It will claim to be his representative on earth. It is harmful to make something the truth if it is not for the truth is not about us. Truth is about itself.

The enablers and perpetrators of violence often do not think of themselves as sinful or doing wrong. The fact that they collectively do this harm reinforces this sense of goodness and virtue. They are proud and feel they gain status for translating ideology into action.

Some Ways Religion leads to violence

By teaching that your religious view should be tolerated for it is not your view but came from God - thus you cannot insist on equal rights for your opponent's view and yours. If you do, you do it on practical grounds and not on principle. If the other person has no right to contradict God there is nothing anybody can do about that but in principle it is a pity they cannot be stopped. When the believer's polite rage against the unbeliever spills over into violent action, the believer blames her own weakness and not the principle. Religion never lets you blame its principles.

By demanding the right to discriminate against people in the name of conscience. A bakery run by Christians is a business

not a religious organisation and thus has no right to refuse to bake wedding cakes for gay couples and use the Bible ban on homosexuality as an excuse. But some businesses run by Christians claim that very right!

By using "we are offended" or worse "God is offended and the law must respect God" to try and stifle free speech when it calls the religion's truth claims into question. Actions can never be as free as speech and yet all agree that free speech is the hallmark of a free and healthy society.

By teaching that evil violent books are God's word

By teaching that other religions are the enemy

By teaching that if God commands violence we must obey for he knows best and he uses evil to bring good out of it.

By admitting that extremists who have joined are still members - eg an extremist Muslim is not an extremist self-styled Muslim - and then refusing to take responsibility for the other side of their religion. The dark side belongs to all even those who would never be violent.

By prayer. Prayer is making yourself feel you have done good when you have not. People who like prayer get that buzz. That is why they like prayer. It has led to the extraordinary spectacle of terrorists and abortionist Catholics coping with the evil they do by saying prayers.

If you look after your neighbour for the sake of God that implies, "Pity I have to do this but I have to please God." Your neighbour is seemingly just tolerated. This is not tolerance but being forced to put up with the person. Mild force is still force. You can be forced a little. You don't need the gun to your head.

We are all socially pressured and legally pressured to be tolerant. And we fear the bad results of intolerance. To force a person to be tolerant is as impossible as forcing them to be loving. It cannot be done. You may manage to make them seem to be tolerant but that is all. It follows then that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as tolerance. Tolerance is just the label we put on people being unable to give free rein to their hate. But how long with the prevention hold up?

Christianity says you must hate sin absolutely for it is an act of contempt for the boundless love of God but it cautions that you are still to love the sinner. As the problem with sin is what it says about the sinner as a person, it follows that you must be very sure there is a God and take care not to be seeing sins where there are no sins and take care not to make sin out to be worse than what it is. You cannot call yourself tolerant of the sinner if you fail to do these things. And who succeeds? Is there anybody?