

In search of...



Truth & Right

Volume 08 Issue 36

September 8, 2013

Tolerance In Religion

The idea of "tolerance in religion" is often extolled by men who have no Bible concept of the exclusive authority of Jesus Christ. There seems to be an almost universal yearning for an "ecumenical" broadmindedness. Some churches pride themselves on the fact that people of ANY religious faith can have fellowship with them without giving up any cherished position. Much publicity is given in our day to mergers and compromises among denominational bodies. The so-

called "Community" churches and the "Interdenominational" churches are of the type claiming to allow great liberty of conflicting beliefs on the part of members. It seems that men are determined to believe whatever THEY wish and have lost sight of GOD'S will as set forth in His word.

Ordinarily our friends who talk so freely about tolerance simply mean that we should have "love" that is big enough to embrace ALL of men's beliefs as being equally acceptable. It may

be that some will even remark, "Well, we are all children of God; therefore, we should just overlook all differences among us and love each other. " Or it may be the old worn-out slogan, "Let us MINIMIZE our differences and EMPHASIZE our likenesses." Generally this notion is expressed, "It doesn't make any difference what one believes as long as he is honest and sincere." Surely there is a great need to study this matter of "tolerance" to determine what the will of God is.

Tolerance Misunderstood

In order to have a proper understanding of the issue before us, I suggest two basic factors. These are supported by Scripture.

1. Tolerance does not mean APPROVAL of everything that goes on. No one is under the obligation as a "tolerant" person to be a "yes-man" to everything paraded under the name of "religion." Many doctrines labeled as the Word of Christ are in reality the "doctrines of devils," according to Paul. (1 Tim. 4:1-3.)

2. Tolerance does not imply an obligation to REMAIN SILENT. The general denominational idea is that "if you criticize us, you are intolerant." With such words they would stifle all objections and would eliminate all efforts to show the falsity of some doctrine they cherish. Hence, all

of Paul's "disputing" in the synagogues and marketplaces must be counted as "intolerant" even though he was seeking to convert these ancients from false idols to the true and living God. (Note Acts 17:17.) The RIGHT TO OBJECT to any church, religious doctrine or practice which violates Bible teaching is perfectly consistent with both the teaching and action of Jesus and his apostles.

Jesus and His Apostles

Perhaps the idea of very many people is summed up in a question a radio listener once sent to me. "Should we not all love each other and quit talking about one another?" Let us see what the Bible teaches. Ponder the following questions and answers:

1. Did JESUS love others? Who can doubt it for a minute? (John 15: 12, 13.)

2. Did Jesus ever talk about others in the sense of condemning what they believed and practiced? YES. Read Matthew 23 and observe how specific Jesus was in pointing out the errors of the scribes and Pharisees. These hypocrites were often the target of his criticism. Instead of viewing Jesus' criticism of these people as the lack of love, we ought to be able to understand that it was evidence of the fact of his love for them. Otherwise he would have not cared what they

did.

3. Did the APOSTLES love other people? YES? John did. (1 John 4:7.)

4. Did John ever say anything "against" what others taught and did? YES. Take a close look at 2 John 9-11 and 1 John 4:1-6. It was his claim that not all people taught the TRUTH; that some were "false prophets." He even went so far as to say that any who do not abide within the teaching of Christ do not have God. Would you say it was his LACK of love that prompted such strong language? Or would you not rather say that the FACT that he loved them prompted his warnings?

Therefore, as stated before, both Jesus and his apostles loved men everywhere. Consequently, they taught men the TRUTH even when it meant exposing the errors they were holding.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) He also declared, "Thy word is truth." (John 17:17.) It is clear that the word of God is the standard of truth. Every doctrine must be measured by it. No person should allow himself to become so "broadminded" or so "tolerant" as to ignore this fact. Not everything one hears preached is right. Let every sincere person follow the example of the Bereans, who

searched the Scripture to test the preaching Paul did in their city. (Acts 17:11.)

Barney Keith

That article was suggested by brother Harold because it is timely and in need of being discussed. We should always be thinking about what is being taught, how it is being taught, and the attitude that is being shown by our words & actions. As Christians we are to let God's light shine before others, which means reaching out to them and explaining to them what is truth. Our meeting that begins today is just one such opportunity to do so. Prove that labels of hatred or intolerance do not apply to us or to God's Word! Show that the Lord does not approve of sin, and how He offers forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus. Lord willing, all this week, brother Steve Wallace will be presenting lessons from God's Word. Be here to hear them. Bring others. Support the truth!

Jarred Currence

This bulletin is published by the
WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST



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- Great crowds were accompanying Jesus (Luke 14:25)
- He said to them, "If anyone comes to me..." (vs. 26)
- "...and does not hate his own father and mother..." (vs. 26)
- "...and wife and children and brothers and sisters..." (vs. 26)
- "...yes, and even his own life, he cannot..." (vs. 26)
- "by my disciple." (vs. 26)
- Who, wanting to build a tower, does not count the cost? (vs. 28)
- Otherwise he can only lay a foundation and not finish (vs. 29)
- All who see it would mock him (vs. 29-30)
- A king would see if he could defeat twenty thousand (vs. 31)
- If not, he would send a delegation and ask for peace (vs. 32)
- One must renounce all that they have to be His disciple (vs. 33)