

## Multiculturalism, Moral Relativism, and Tolerance

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 8-3-16

### Multiculturalism

Definition: The coexistence of diverse cultures.

2 kinds:

- \_\_\_\_\_ multiculturalism
  - Certain values are grounded in our common humanity
  - Values the study and understanding of diverse cultures and subcultures in the search to discover knowledge and truth wherever it may be found.
  - Does not assert all cultures are equal. Additionally, truth and knowledge do not depend on where they have originated.
- \_\_\_\_\_ multiculturalism
  - Based on 2 philosophical assumptions
    - No single culture, thinker, or group has discovered “objective” truth.
    - Every judgement can be reduced to a “cultural perspective.”

Self-refuting claims: When a statement fails to \_\_\_\_\_ itself, i.e. conform to its own criteria of validity or acceptability.

- Examples:
  - “I cannot say ‘word’ in English.”
  - “I do not exist.”
  - “There are no truths.”
- “Every judgement can be reduced to a ‘cultural perspective’” is a self-refuting claim, since it too is a judgment and as such can be reduced to a cultural perspective.

### Analysis

- Weak multiculturalism - recognizes the \_\_\_\_\_ value of all cultures.
- Strong multiculturalism - \_\_\_\_\_ the value of any culture.
  - Leads to the \_\_\_\_\_ of culture altogether

### Moral Relativism

2 kinds of right/wrong - \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

- Examples:
  - $2 + 2 = 5$  vs. murdering another person
  - Which one justified punishment?
- Moral right/wrong is the foundation for \_\_\_\_\_.

2 kinds of truth - \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

- Subjective = something that is true for the \_\_\_\_\_, not for the object.
  - Example: Chocolate ice cream is the best flavor.
  - Matter of preference.
- Objective = realities in the external world that we discover and cannot be changed by our feelings/tastes/preferences.
  - Example:  $2 + 2$  always equals 4.

## Moral relativism vs. moral absolutism

- Moral relativism teaches that **when it comes to morals there is no absolute truth that applies to every person.**
  - Matter of preference/taste.
- Moral absolutism **maintains that a moral rule is true regardless of whether anyone believes it.**
  - It is neither created nor destroyed by conviction.
  - Universally binding in all situations.
  - Are not invented, but rather discovered.

\_\_\_\_\_ is a key virtue of relativism

- Law of Moral Neutrality:
  - Complete impartiality
  - No judgements
  - No “forcing” of personal views (proselytizing)

## The 7 Fatal Flaws of Relativism

1. Relativists can't accuse others of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Relativists can't complain about the problem of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Relativists can't place \_\_\_\_\_ or accept \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Relativists can't \_\_\_\_\_ their morality.
6. Relativists can't hold meaningful \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Relativists can't promote the obligation of \_\_\_\_\_.

## Christian Tolerance

1. The Bible acknowledges only one God (Deuteronomy 6:5)
2. The Bible teaches exclusivism in that there is only one way to know God—through Jesus Christ (John 14:6; cf. Acts 4:12)
3. There is a difference between religious liberty and religious pluralism
4. We need to know where to draw the line
  - Scripture > tradition, reason, experience
  - Must resist the temptation to become bogged down in disputes over trivial matters (2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:9)
5. When disagreeing, we must always exercise restraint and show respect.
  - It is one thing to disagree with a position; it is quite another to disparage a person.
  - Jesus was full of both grace and truth (John 1:14)
  - Cf. 1 Peter 3:15; Ephesians 4:15
  - In essentials, unity. In nonessentials, liberty. In all things, love.
6. We must engage

## **Appendix I - Tolerance and Love**

By Josh McDowell. Excerpted from Focus on the Family magazine (Colorado Springs, CO: 1999)

We must humbly pursue truth. It may be difficult to speak the truth in today's climate, but Jesus said, "The truth will set you free."

Pursuing truth in this context means countering the new doctrine of tolerance. It means teaching our children to embrace all people, but not all beliefs. It means showing them how to listen to and learn from all people without necessarily agreeing with them. It means helping them courageously but humbly speak the truth, even if it makes them the object of scorn or hatred.

We must always remember, however, that when the apostle Peter told us, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have," he added, "But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).

We must aggressively practice love. Everyone loves love, it seems, but few recognize how incompatible love is with the new tolerance. Tolerance simply avoids offending someone; we must help our children live in love, which actively seeks to promote the good of another person.

Tolerance says, "You must approve of what I do." Love responds, "I must do something harder; I will love you, even when your behavior offends me."

Tolerance says, "You must agree with me." Love responds, "I must do something harder; I will tell you the truth, because I am convinced 'the truth will set you free.' "

Tolerance says, "You must allow me to have my way." Love responds, "I must do something harder; I will plead with you to follow the right way, because I believe you are worth the risk."

Tolerance seeks to be inoffensive; love takes risks. Tolerance glorifies division; love seeks unity. Tolerance costs nothing; love costs everything.

I believe the dreadful potential of the new tolerance can be averted, but only with a renewed commitment to truth, justice and love. And, as it happens, that powerful trio of virtues can do more than prevent disaster; it can bring about true community and culture in the midst of diversity and disagreement.