

Is the Bible Fueling Hate Groups?

Is the holy Bible a hate manual inspiring the actions of hate groups in America?

Don't be too quick in rejecting this rhetorical question. Such accusations could arise quicker than you might imagine.

In the Feb. 24, 2019 edition of the *Denver Post* newspaper (14th highest circulation in the U.S.), we read that Colorado is on pace with the entire nation in a rapid rise of hate groups. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, some 1,020 active hate group locations now infest the country, an increase of 7 percent over prior years (an all-time record).

A Law Center press release claims its definition of hate groups is similar to that of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The FBI, it states, defines hate groups as those who ascribe to beliefs which attack or malign a class of people.

On the "naughty" list are "ideological" groups defined as anti-Muslim, anti-LGBT, white nationalist, neo-Nazi, black nationalist and, most alarming, Christian identity ideologues, amid others. We find the malleable words "ascribe" and "malign" to be most disturbing, because they can be arbitrarily tweaked to describe any behavior enforcement authorities might choose to declare as hate-driven speech or activities.

The Bible speaks powerfully in condemning false religions because they are a sure path to ultimate death. Sexual perversion is also treated strongly as a no-no in verses such as: "A man lying with another man, or a woman with another woman, is a shameful act "(see Ezek. 22:11, Rom. 1:26-27, Rev. 21:27.) In today's world of moral relativism and enforced

tolerance of any and all variances to normal, historically-accepted and biblical social behavior, voiced or written opposition to “deviant” behaviors might soon be deemed criminal.

It is true to say Christianity harbors no hatred toward any groupings of our fellow humans. Indeed, attributes of love and forgiveness characterize all those who will spend eternity with the author of these honorable goals. But it is also true that the lost world perceives hatred in the speech and actions of many people claiming to be Christians. The world can be forgiven its confusion, as it is confusing to us believers as well.

The tragedy would be complete if persecution of the church arises from these deteriorating social trends, aided and abetted by sisters and brothers poorly schooled in the teachings of Jesus. And it is difficult for me to see how pastors and teachers can get around potential legal problems arising from foundational teachings of biblical principles without compromising their calling to spread truth and light.

“The world will hate you as they hated” me is a promise from our ultimate rabbi. (see Matt. 10:22 and 24:9) It seems we might all be heading into biblical promises of persecution, and tough choices now paving the “right way.” Some will swerve off course; some will stay the straight and narrow—paying the temporary, worldly price of obedience.

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