

Which is More Tolerable, Bigotry or Anarchy?

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A rightwing Christian colleague once said to me, "America needs a left wing and a right wing. Otherwise, we can't fly." This is similar to the saying, "If you're not a liberal when you're young, you don't have a heart. If you're not a conservative when you're old, you don't have a brain." Put another way, with clearly defined boundaries, there can be bigotry, but without clearly defined boundaries there will be anarchy.

Let's take physical, national boundaries as an example.

The moment you have these boundaries, you have insiders and outsiders, us and them, the legal and the illegal. And with such boundaries, it's easy to demonize the "others," the ones who are not like us, the ones who potentially threaten our stability and safety. But without boundaries, we have chaos and anarchy.

Boundaries must exist, otherwise we do not have nationhood and we cannot exist as a people.

Or let's consider the subject of same-sex "marriage" (and yes, I'm still using scare quotes, despite the passage of the "Respect for Marriage Act"). More broadly, let's think about LGBTQ rights.

From the viewpoint of solidarity with those who identify as gay or bi or trans or other, what is there to discuss? These are fellow-human beings who simply want to live their lives. They want to form relationships, have families, go to work, enjoy life and be treated like everyone else.

For those who are same-sex attracted, they would say that their love for each other is as natural as is the love between a man and a woman.

They care for each other deeply. They want to spend the rest of their lives together. They would give their lives for the children they are raising together. In short, aside from some of the ways they perform sexual acts and the fact they are biologically the same sex, they are like any other heterosexual couple.

In keeping with this mindset are sayings like, "Love is love." And, "Love wins." And, "I have the right to marry the one I love."

Accordingly, if you have a gay friend or relative and if you have no moral or religious reason to reject same-sex relationships, of course you celebrate his or her happiness. Of course you attend their wedding. Of course you recognize the validity of their relationship. Why wouldn't you?

Your friend or relative is happy. Their spouse is happy. Together, they make a great couple, and they will likely make great parents.

Are you going to tell me that we should reject the validity of their love and commitment because of what they do (or how they do it) in the privacy of their bedroom?

Other than homophobia or religious bigotry, why would anyone reject their love? And isn't it the religious people who demonize the LGBTQ community as if they were all sex-crazed, pedophile-supporting groomers?

On the other hand, the moment you remove or minimize the God-given boundaries of male and female and the God-given plan of male-female marriage, you have anarchy and chaos. In short, the trajectory of LG soon moves to LGB to LGBT to LGBTQ to LGBTQ++.

It leads to an attack on the religious freedoms of those who cannot affirm same-sex "marriage."

It leads to aggressive, LGBTQ curricula in our schools, from preschool to university.

It leads to 13-year-old girls getting full mastectomies and 10-year-old boys getting chemically castrated for life (because of puberty-blocking hormones).

It leads to biological males trashing biological females in sports competitions (and costing the potential scholarships, not to mention fulfilled dreams).

It leads to drag queens shaking their hips for toddlers in libraries and engaging in inappropriate touching in gay bars.

It leads to a boy who claims to identify as a girl raping a girl in the girls' restroom.

It leads to an 18-year-old girl telling me, "Before the Lord changed my life one year ago, I was gender fluid, omnisexual and polyamorous."

It leads to reality TV shows celebrating polygamy (think of "Big Love" or "My Five Wives," for example). After all, if marriage is not limited to male and female, why limit marriage to two?

The list goes on and on. In fact, it is endless.

What, then, are we to do? We cannot exist without boundaries. Yet bigotry will also destroy us.

Still, the solution is simple. We must have clearly and rightly defined boundaries while still committing to love our neighbor.

On a national level, this means that we have secure physical borders while recognizing the beauty and diversity of other

cultures and while continuing to employ compassionate immigration procedures.

On a relational, societal level, we must recognize that there is a fundamental, God-ordained order to human relationships and families (only one order can reproduce biologically) without rejecting the humanity and worth of others who deviate in some way from that order.

We can treat our gay neighbors with respect and love while still believing that God has a better way, just as we can treat our Hindu neighbors with respect and love while rejecting their polytheism.

We can maintain our convictions without demeaning others, recognizing them as people created in God's image and not minimizing the positive aspects of their character and gifting.

In sum, if we deviate from clear societal boundaries, our society will soon implode. If we deviate from treating others with compassion and kindness, our humanity will quickly degenerate.

The goal, then, is boundaries without bigotry and clearly drawn lines with love. {eo}

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Dr. Michael Brown () is the host of the nationally syndicated Line of Fire radio program. His latest book is "The Political Seduction of the Church: How Millions of American Christians Have Confused Politics with the Gospel." Connect with him on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.