

Weekly Encouragement

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Hypocrisy and Intolerance

By Rev. Peter Eng



"How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye." (Luke 6:42)

I am a little tired of hearing people call Christians hypocrites. In part it is because they use the word wrongly, in part it is because those who call us hypocrites are themselves hypocrites, and in part it is because we are too polite to hurl this epithet back at them.

In Jesus' day, hypocrisy existed in good measure. It is unpleasant to call someone a hypocrite, but Jesus did.

I would like to assure you that you are less of a hypocrite than others may rage against you. This is on account of their misunderstanding of the meaning of hypocrisy. Too many people today equate any inconsistency with hypocrisy. I hear American parents tied up in knots because they smoked pot when they were young, and now don't know how to tell their teens not to smoke pot because that will be hypocritical. It is not!

Inconsistency is not hypocrisy.

There is hardly any good in this world that we can say we kept perfectly. The Devil has somehow perverted truth and makes any assertion of any good hypocrisy unless we are able to keep it perfectly. This causes us to stop asserting good as good, with the end result that a new generation is left without rudder as they are tossed by a world that blasts temptations at them with increasing intensity.

We need to acknowledge our inconsistency (if asked), but inconsistency is not hypocrisy. And inconsistency is no reason to stop nurturing our children with what is good.

Jesus gives us a sample of what it means to be a hypocrite. Here we see a person with a log sticking out of his eye trying to help the one with a speck in his eye. The one with the bigger problem pretends he

does not have an issue, and picks on the one with a smaller problem simply because he is able to do so.

Christian willingness for self-flagellation makes us cower at every charge of hypocrisy and blind to the hypocrisy of those who call us hypocrites. And this charge comes mostly from intolerant liberals.

Liberal intolerance is more than an oxymoron. It is liberal hypocrisy. There are true liberals who allow all opinions, including those they do not agree with. In fact, true conservatives also welcome all opinions, even false ones, because they are opportunities for strengthening what is true.

As a general rule, truth is not afraid of investigation, and it is only falsehood that resorts to censorship because it is afraid of the truth.

Liberals in the highest places have set a tone of complete intolerance to any view other than their own. They are even crueler than the fundamentalists in their practices. A prime example is the recent action of Vivian Schiller in her firing of Juan Williams (a moderate liberal) for admitting that he feels anxious when he boards a plane with people in Muslim garb.

I don't necessarily agree with Williams for I would rationalize that a terrorist would not want to identify himself in this way. But in America, where freedom of speech is enshrined in the constitution, an extreme liberal in a position of power is so intolerant of what may be a statement that is not adequately sensitive towards Muslims, that she does not hesitate to fire a public figure for an innocent expression of anxiety. In addition, she feels at liberty to say Williams needs to see a

psychiatrist. This tells us the level of support she must have to be able to do this with impunity. She is an example of liberal intolerance, of liberal hypocrisy.

It is time that Christians rise up and denounce liberal intolerance. It is our duty to do so; not only because they are hypocrites, but also liberal intolerance has been eroding our courage to stand for truth and moral behavior. Our inconsistency in truth and moral behavior does not make us hypocrites; liberal intolerance is the beam that sticks out of their eye. Let's call it for what it is – liberal hypocrisy.

It is with deep sadness that I recently read a church that prides itself in allowing all religious traditions and will not allow any divisive assertions. They will tolerate everyone except the one who says there are truths that are more essential than unity.

This is not what Jesus taught.

They are not following Christ, but the spirit of this age, of liberal tolerance for every lie, immorality, and evil, and liberal intolerance for any assertion that there is a right and wrong. How did that happen? When did our brothers become advocates for the Devil's lie? Who deceived them, that they now deceive others? How can they be redeemed for Christ?

The post-modern thinking is that anything that is divisive is bad. This is a wrong ethic.

Jesus clearly divided himself from the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Truth cannot cohere with falsehood. All views, including falsehood deserves to be heard. But to suggest that "A can also be non-A" is inherently false.

The Church is the body of Christ based on certain spiritual truths. Those who deny these truths cannot be in the body of Christ. We can differ on what these truths are, but we cannot deny that belonging to the body of Christ means something. Not allowing for truth that can be divisive is to deny meaning to being in the body of Christ.

Churches that extol unity as the highest good are clearly wrong.

A church is a church because it belongs to the universal Church or the body of Christ. To admit different religions into the body of Christ is to deny it. Yet, some of these churches are the most intolerant towards this basic truth. They will tolerate falsehood, but not truth. That is liberal intolerance, liberal hypocrisy. American churches are nursing this viper their bosom. Beware!

Liberal hypocrisy has a strong foothold in many mainline denominations. Some in the mainline denominations are taking a stand and trying to regain their witness for Christ. Their efforts should be applauded and encouraged.

Liberal hypocrisy is also liberal cowardice. Liberals will not give a second thought to attacking Christians. [NPR](#) and other public media are openly anti-Christian in some of their programs (not all); unlike their [talking-heads](#) who are avowed enemies of Christ. They will insist on the need to be sensitive to Muslims, but also insist on the right to be blatantly offensive against Christians. This is cowardly behavior and Christians should not be afraid to call it.

Think of the enemies Jesus made when he openly identified the Pharisees as hypocrites. We need to live peaceably with all as much as it lies with us to do so.

Christians are slow to recognize there is no peace with liberal hypocrites. It is high time to identify liberal hypocrisy and denounce it.

Christian, take heart. You are not perfect, but you may not be the hypocrite others try to charge you with. Instead, it is more likely that it is a liberal hypocrite calling you a Christian hypocrite. Yet, if there is indeed hypocrisy in our own lives, we must respond to the call of Jesus our Lord, to root out all know hypocrisies in our own lives.

Follow Jesus! Courage! Truth!

Note: The ESV is used unless indicated otherwise.

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Rev. Peter Eng is an ordained minister from the Reformed Tradition, but he is truly global in perspective. He served the Lord in various capacities starting from his teenage years in the 70s. His undergrad studies were done in Singapore, his grad studies in the USA, and post-grad studies in the United Kingdom, with additional post-grad research in Germany.