



I'm Offended!

By Alfred B. Davis
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"Why do you have hate speech on your table?" asked the voice behind me.

I turned to see a rather petulant woman standing in front of our display table at the county fair. It was opening day and I was still setting things up in the rest of our church booth.

"Hate speech?" I said while walking over to the display table. Having a fairly good idea of what tract she had issue with, I asked innocently, "What do you mean?"

Just as I expected, she pointed to a black card with a series of religious symbols spelling out the word "CONTRADICT", much like the popular "COEXIST" bumper stickers. Underneath, the word "CONTRADICT" it said in all caps, "THEY CAN'T ALL BE TRUE."

She angrily huffed, "You're saying if someone does not believe what you believe then they will suffer for all eternity. How judgmental! You can't tell people that what they believe is wrong. That's hate speech! I'm offended!"

I responded by saying that Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*"

Even though the verse was quoted on the front of the card, complete with the reference of John 14:6, she cut me off and demanded where Jesus ever said that. I decided to play along and answered, "In the Bible."

"Where?" she demanded.

"In the Gospels," I answered.

"Which one?"

"John."

"That's right," she snorted triumphantly, "The Gospel of John, which was written nearly 150 years after Jesus lived. Jesus never said that. Some man made it up. It's not true. It offends me!"

I responded that Jesus really did say, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,*" but she would have none of it. She piously informed me that she had been studying the Bible and how it came to be since she had first learned to read and that I didn't know what I was talking about. That led to a short discussion of Bible translations where she tried to argue that the Bible has been change so many times that you can't really trust any version. I

countered by agreeing that modern Bible versions are corrupt and that that was why I only use the King James Bible, which, to her, only proved my ignorance.

I took a moment to look at her before continuing. She looked to be about 30 something and was picking up another card that had the word "PRIDE" in big, rainbow-colored capital letters across the front of it.

I continued, "Well, I'm offended! You came over here and called me a hateful, ignorant bigot. Who are you to tell me that what I believe is wrong? You are offending me!"

I know, how dare I accuse her of doing what she claimed I was doing. Fundamentalist Neanderthals like me are not supposed to be able to see the hypocrisy of such enlightened religious luminaries as her.

Anyway, she looked somewhat taken aback. She quickly regained her composure, however, and attempted to change the subject. Looking at the "PRIDE" card she asked, "Why was homosexuality added to the King James Bible in 1946?"

Having several King James Bibles, many printed well after 1946, I assured her homosexuality was never added to the King James Bible. She continued to argue that it was but when she realized the "PRIDE" card that she was looking at said absolutely nothing about homosexuality or the LGBTQ+ lifestyle she decided to change subjects again, trying to get me off balance by rapidly throwing a number of issues and questions at me and not giving me time to answer any sufficiently. She only paused briefly when another woman came up to tell her that the therapy dog demonstrations would begin shortly.

She began to get frustrated because I kept going back to John 14:6 and hammering the point that if Jesus really did say, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,*" and that if what Jesus said is true, then any religion that is contrary to or denies what Jesus said is wrong and that it would be hateful to say otherwise. Growing more and more frustrated, she kept denying that Jesus ever said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,*" and proceeded to inform me that Jesus was all about love and how we are all to love one another. After all, the other three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all record Jesus as saying that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. With that, she picked up a stack of Bible tracks and angrily threw them on the table and stomped off.

"Hey!" I said, "Don't mess with our stuff!" Then, succumbing to temptation, (I know, confession is good for the soul) I quickly stepped out from behind the table and called after her, "Thank you, I feel the love!" Well, at least I managed to refrain from adding, "Enjoy the therapy dogs!"

So, what can we learn from this encounter?

Well, several things. First, we can see just how clueless people on the left can be. Apparently, she had no idea that she was doing exactly what she was accusing me of doing. The irony of her telling me that what I believed was wrong while telling me that it was wrong to tell someone that what they believe is wrong was lost on her. After all, if everybody should be allowed to believe anything they want to believe and nobody should ever tell them that what they believe is wrong, how is it that she could come up to me and tell me that what I believe is wrong and I should not believe the way I believe? After all, isn't calling me judgmental being more than a bit judgmental on her part?

Second, we can see how illogical people on the left can be. They absolutely believe that there are no absolutes. When I tried to explain that Jesus' statement, "*I am the way, the truth, and the*

life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," in John 14:6 excludes any other way but Him, she would have none of it. When I tried to explain that two mutually exclusive statements cannot both be true, she refused to accept that, insisting, instead, that all beliefs are valid. I even tried to get her to do a logic exercise with me by saying that if Jesus was right, then any other way to God other than Jesus Christ was wrong but if Jesus was wrong then other religions could be right. Apparently, it was too logical for her, and she grew frustrated and attempted to change subjects.

Third, we can see how ignorant people on the left can be. President Ronald Reagan once observed, "It isn't so much that liberals are ignorant. It's just that they know so many things that aren't so." Take, for example, her insistence that homosexuality was added to the King James Bible in 1946. Now, this is a demonstrably false statement. I could have taken any of the several King James Bibles sitting around our booth, each of which was published after 1946, and asked her to show me where homosexuality was added, and she could not have done it because it never happened. No matter to her. She was insistent that I didn't know what I was talking about. She was right and I was wrong. Never mind the truth, homosexuality was there because she believed it was there.

Fourth, we can see how domineering people on the left can be. She began her tirade with a shock and awe attack. "Why do you have hate speech on your table?" "I'm offended!" When that didn't work, she then began to accuse me of being a hateful, ignorant bigot. I was supposed to be intimidated and apologetic. Unfortunately for her, that didn't work so she began hitting me with a number of questions and then changing the subject to try to get me off balance and confused. All tactics designed to dominate and intimidate.

And finally, we can see how thin-skinned people on the left can be. When I interrupted her tirade to say that I was offended and accused her of judging me, she paused, took a step back, and looked startled, even confused. She tried to back pedal, denying that she was telling me that I was wrong or accusing me of being judgmental. She quickly recovered, however, and went right back to accusing me of being a hateful, ignorant bigot. But when I continued to tell her that she was offending me with her accusations she became increasingly irritable. Finally, when she realized that she was not going to get me to budge on my assertion that Jesus Christ is the way the truth and the life and that no man can come to the Father but by Him is a true statement and that it was, in fact, actually said by Jesus, she got more frustrated, more irritable, and even began to become agitated. She testily pointed out that Jesus said that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, threw a stack of Bible tracts down on the table, and stomped off.

So, what can you do to prepare for encounters like this? Let me suggest three things: (1) Know what you believe, (2) Know why you believe what you believe, and (3) Trust who you believe in.

As to the first, knowing what you believe means studying the Scriptures. Or, as Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:15, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

As to the second, Peter indicates how in 1 Peter 3:1, saying, "*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*". In other words, you should spend time not just studying but also thinking and meditating on God's Word so that you know why you believe what you believe.

And, as to the third, Jesus tells us in John 14:26, *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”*

In closing, let me add one final piece of advice given by God to the Prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 2:6-7:

“And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.”

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