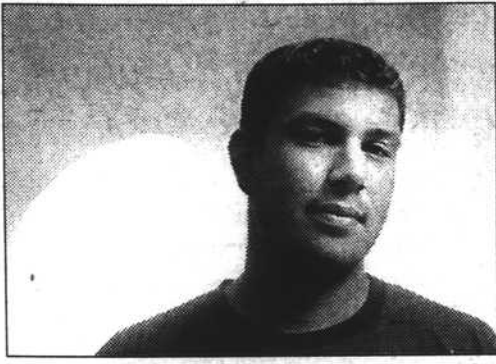


# The 'T' word

Ron Brown's comments show true meaning of tolerance



"Absolute tolerance is altogether impossible; the allegedly absolute tolerance turns into ferocious hatred of those who have stated clearly and most forcefully that there are unchangeable standards founded in the nature of man and the nature of things." — Leo Strauss

I've had about enough of tolerance. Tolerance as "they" define it, mind you. They, the gatekeepers and loyal henchmen of political correctness, have perverted the word's true meaning.

They've distorted it, misshapen and molded it into something of their own. Now, as columnist Cal Thomas says, "Tolerance is just a fancy word for people who don't believe in anything."

And it's true. If you believe in anything, in anything having to do with the Judeo-Christian values this nation was built upon, and you're brave enough to say so, you are in grave danger of earning from those loyal henchmen the label "intolerant."

Indeed, in this day and age, it seems as though the label may be applied to only those Christian-conservative-type people who won't back down from the idea that there is an undeniable moral law written by God upon the hearts of man that is not meant to be altered or tampered with.

Nowadays, the brave soul who attempts to make any kind of moral judgment, however sound and justified it may be, is automatically castigated and pegged either as intolerant, hateful, bigoted or all three at once.

Case in point: the Ron Brown controversy. In late September, the Husker Receivers coach and outspoken Christian made comments regarding homosexuality on his weekly radio show. His words ruffled the feathers of some local gay rights activists and organizations.

Not surprisingly, the comments prompted Brown critics to use the I-word, as well as "bigoted" and "homophobic," in describing the man.

So just what did Brown say to get everyone's panties all up in a bunch? He said Christians should take a new approach in dealing with homosexuals.

Less of the harsh rhetoric and more of the love that Christ espouses in his teachings.

He used the example of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Brown compared Christians today who denounce and dismiss homosexuals and their behavior to the priest and the Levite who not only ignored the beaten, half-dead man alongside the road but crossed it to avoid the situation altogether.

Just as the priest and the Levite left the beaten man, Brown said, Christians "have left the homosexual on the side of the road, beaten and hurt, to a politically correct world that honors this lifestyle, that evangelizes them into a lost existence, who exhorts them with its liberal religious clergy and provides mercy to them from its government in the form of dollars, media time and accepted entry into school curriculums.

"But the Good Samaritan didn't cross the street," Brown continued. "He ministered personal love and attention to the hurting man."

Brown concluded by offering advice to fellow Christians: "Fear and hate won't do it ... It's going to take the up-close intimate love of Jesus through you and me to win the homosexual to Christ ... And it will be Christ who will show them what the real lifestyle is supposed to be."

Do these comments make Brown intolerant? Apparently to some, they do.

In their careless and reactionary use of the word, condemnation of Brown's comments

hailed from an assortment of gay organizations and gay "religious" leaders.

But Brown is unmoved. "Homosexuality is a sin," he said in an interview with the World-Herald last Thursday. "... Give me a version of the truth that you believe, show me in Scripture where homosexuality is correct and right, and then I'll reconsider my position."

"If that makes me intolerant, then people have a false definition of intolerance," Brown said.

Amen, I say. Ron Brown is an honorable man — a man who serves his God, his players and his community with the utmost in respect and integrity.

He is a man unafraid to profess his faith and defend the word of God in a world always in conflict with it.

Brown, and many, many Christians like him, believe that what the Bible says is the true word of God. Actions taken in violation of the Scripture are deeds done in the violation of God's word. Period.

Some people just can't seem to tolerate that.

"An open mind, in questions that are not ultimate, is useful. But an open mind about ultimate foundations either of theoretical or practical reason is idiocy. If a man's mind is open on these things, let his mouth at least be shut." — C.S. Lewis

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# Rednecks, Christians and old men

Landscaping job leads to redefinition of stereotypes



K. B. Masterpiece

with Karen Brown

And God said, "All onions shall be created equal," (or was that my boss at the deli)? I'm pretty sure it was the former.

1. Definition of a Redneck — someone of lower intelligence (perhaps through inbreeding) put on this earth to make fun of because of his or her "silly" accents, Wranglers and belt buckles so big you can go sledding on them.

2. Definition of a Christian — someone so detached from reality that that person can't live his or her own life with his or her own passions and feelings. Instead, that person has to live through (and for) someone else who didn't exist in the first place.

3. Definition of an old man — someone unable to function mentally and physically because he isn't as quick and sensory-enhanced as the rest of the world. The only thing he knows how to do is slobber on his shirt and forget how to shave.

It doesn't matter who said all onions are created equal because someone, (and I won't mention names, God), was snoozin' the day the Landscape Services crew on East Campus was created.

I've never seen a more diverse group of beings on this planet, and that's exactly the reason I just bought beach-front property on Mars — I need to get away from this madness.

My brain is overloading from the apparent differences among people who I have been forced to encounter since I started landscaping two summers ago. It's their fault I'm moving to Mars because they didn't fit my popular pre-conceptions.

Physically they fit my categories, but seeing them as real people is quite a challenge.

You may think I'm a pretty liberal gal, but I have my doubts about the world and the things that grow and blossom within it.

Shriners are one of my biggest fears — you know them, they're the old, white men at parades who ride the little go-carts and wear the funny hats with tassels — but the other fears are far too vast to describe.

I have fears that I try to conquer and understand every day, but working on East Campus

has become a challenge because we are all so different.

Or, at least it appears that we are all completely different — on the surface, anyway.

My challenge, as it has been for the last two years, has been to redefine the definitions given above. These are my definitions, considering these are how I feel about people who are different from me.

It's a fact that I didn't think too highly of the idea that I would be working closely with a Christian. Or a "crazy Christian," as I like to call her.

My philosophy is that I know enough Christians already, and I didn't want to have to explain my life choices with someone whose views differ greatly from my own. It's too exhausting, and I believe that it's futile to talk to these people.

Well, Sally has helped open my eyes in the only way she knows how. No, not by nailing me to a cross and singing "Jesus Loves the Little Children," but through raising direct, personal questions and making me see where she is coming from.

I still don't understand where she's coming from when she says that by asking for forgiveness I will be saved, and she doesn't understand why I have body piercings and a tattoo, but I listen to her with all honesty, and I don't dismiss the idea of Christianity as a lifestyle.

Just not right now. Sally and I search to figure out who or what made us into the persons we are, and it does get frustrating at times, but this confrontation strengthens our own viewpoints and ideals.

In my mind now, it is no longer futile to carry on extended conversations about topics I can't grasp.

Perhaps in 10 years the insight she has given me will change me for the better. The mini-calendar she gave me with the Bible verses on the back helps this process immensely.

Also on my crew, as per the definition above, is Mike Zwingmann, the redneck of all rednecks.

Before I had met Mike, I heard about him from the other employees, and I wasn't pleased.

"Oh no," methinks. I worked for 18 years to get away from these people, or whenever my contempt for hicks began; whenever it was socially "uncool" to reflect the area in which you were raised.

He does fit the part of the redneck, whom I crack jokes at just for fun. No, he doesn't wear a 10-gallon Stetson and reek of manure and Jack Daniels, and nary does he wear cowboy boots (he finds tennis shoes feel better), but he does have a belt buckle the size of a small island.

Despite all this, after the second hour of working together, we discovered we had too much in common. He is like a second big brother, and as he listens to me talk about Andre Bazin's theory of auteurism, I smile at his bragging rights on how many "steers" he's "roped" in the last week.

It just doesn't make sense that we should get along so well, and as Mike waves to anyone and everyone on East, I feel ashamed because of my hidden attitude about this guy and this type of guy.

As for old folks and their drooling, there is no one better than Floyd. Floyd is our mechanic out on East. That man is full of the most amazing stories this side of the equator, (and he doesn't really drool).

Also among the East-enders is Rich, the shy one, and he gets too much flak for his lack of verbalized communication. I am forever in debt to him because he did teach me how to landscape, and that is an invaluable lesson. I know that I talk his ear off in the summertime, but because he doesn't talk much, it's his fault that he hired me.

East Campus, in my humble opinion, has some of the nicest people on Earth, both in the Landscape Services and the students who inhabit the land.

They don't stare at me and throw bananas in my face (like on City), but they wave and say "Hi" just like in a "Leave it to Beaver" skit.

I guess I will cancel my reservation for beach-front property on Mars and start

accepting Earth as the planet that was meant to be my home.

Rednecks, old folks, Jews, Italians, red-headed gays — I will welcome you all into my life, and pretty soon I will mold you all into the ultimate stereotype of exactly what I want you to be.



MEGAN CODY/DN

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