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A current issue is one of tolerance and we are told it is a “British value” but we need to ask where does tolerance fit into the Christian faith? Is tolerance Christian?

In both the Church in Wales services and in the gospels Jesus Christ tells us in the gospel according to St Mark at chapter 12:

One of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

So Jesus tells us that we are to “... *love your neighbour as yourself*” and that it is a commandment for us to do that.

Loving your neighbour is NOT agreeing with them in everything we do. All of us are human beings and so we don't always get things right, so we are NOT commanded to agree with others, nor are we commanded to celebrate what others do, but we ARE commanded to “Love our neighbours as ourselves”. That then is the true tolerance when you don't agree with them, you don't celebrate their activities but you DO accept them.

In Romans chapter 13 St Paul talks of the law (i.e. the Judaeo-Christian law) and says the law is summed up in this sentence,

“You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

In the Gospel of Matthew chapter 5 Jesus says to us:

“...But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?”

Therefore we are even to love our enemies and that is real and absolute tolerance. We don't agree with them at all, but that is the true point of tolerance, you don't agree with them, you don't celebrate their activities but you DO accept them. So Felix Ngole in Sheffield in the UK at the beginning of this year (2019) and Israel Folau the Australian Rugby Star this month (May) show us that we should endure intolerance with love and without any hatred to those who enact that intolerance towards us.

As Jesus Christ says to us in the Gospel of John at chapter 15:

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

Tolerance is therefore in Christianity even from the time of Jesus Christ, long, long before it was a British value. When we are told to “Love our enemies” by Jesus then Christ is also telling us that others will be intolerant towards Christians and even hate them by getting them sacked, punished by the Courts and yet we are told by Jesus Christ to “Love our enemies” That is real tolerance of others.

So tolerance IS a Christian value and has always been one even when we have to suffer the intolerance of others around us.

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