

The Spirit of Truth

- For several years now, UCF Professor of Psychology Charles Negy has gone viral on the internet with an email to incoming students concerning religious bigotry.
 - > Negy writes: “Students in my class who openly proclaim that Christianity is the most valid religion...portray precisely what religious bigotry is. Bigots never question their prejudices and bigotry. They are convinced their beliefs are correct.”
 - > Negy also states: “If you believe that you have the only truth, you are a religious bigot.”
- As a Christian, I will not return his inflammatory use of the term bigot. Instead, as Jesus taught, I will pray for him even as we pray for all those who choose to become our adversaries.

I will strive mightily to remember that:

 - > People who disagree with me are not necessarily idiots, jerks, or bigots.
 - > Even if they are, they are sometimes right!
 - > We are called to bring light, and we must be Christ-like to reflect his light.
- And so, I will begin by agreeing with three premises suggested by his line of reasoning:
 - > First: There are many truths in life—if we're speaking of “truth with a small t.”
 - + Buddhism, Hinduism, and other faiths share many teachings that certainly are truths about how we should live and how we should interact with others.
 - + Even those hostile to faith may help us by sharing truths which challenge our hypocrisies, our prejudices, and our inconsistencies.
 - > Second: People with whom we disagree invariably have something to teach us:
 - + The persistence of Jehovah's Witnesses
 - + The family focus of the Mormons
 - + The generational loyalty of Roman Catholics.
 - > Third: It becomes Christians to be tolerant and understanding of others and other viewpoints. Yes, I would rather be a church welcoming converts than one chasing our heretics!
- At this point, however, I part company with Dr. Negy:
 - > Dr. Negy and his ilk believe that Christianity should be held to a standard that none of them can, in fact, reach themselves:
 - > If you believe that you have the a corner on religious truth, he says, you are a bigot.
 - + Of course, HIS religious truth is exempt from scrutiny!
 - + HIS opinion is true and all others are false.
 - + Can you hear the irony? I can almost smell it!
- I believe that Jesus is the center of all history and all meaning. Dr. Negy believes that the center of all meaning is the firing of the neurons in his brain.
- I believe that there IS Truth! Truth with a capital T!
 - > It doesn't change because of intellectual musings and reasoning.
 - > It doesn't change based on the number of adherents.
 - > It doesn't change with the times—it does not depend on fads or trends.
- The truth of Jesus Christ—Our truth—is not a hammer!

Our truth is not bigotry!
Our truth is hope, joy, and good news!
- The Spirit of Truth generates generosity, not judgment.
- The Spirit of Truth preaches piety, not propaganda.
- The Spirit of Truth teaches tolerance, not terror.
- The Spirit of Truth leads with light, life, and love, dwelling not on the low or the loathsome.
- The Spirit of Truth glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit speaks to all who have ears to hear:
 - > I have seen the Spirit of Truth bring delight to the eyes of a Maasai chief, discovering the Bible for the first time.
 - > I have seen the Spirit of Truth lift the darkness from the hearts of a remote tribe in the Amazon.
 - > By the Spirit of Truth I have known the overwhelming presence and peace of the one and true Risen Lord and savior.
- Sorry, Dr. Negy. but we know the truth, we embrace the truth, and we're going to share the truth!
- And that's the truth. With a capital “T.”

John 16:12-15

- 12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.
- 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.
- 14 He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.
- 15 All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.



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