

Some Thoughts On “Phobes, Phobic and Phobia”

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Those who oppose homosexuality are called “homophobes.” Those who oppose illegal immigration are called “xenophobes.” Those who oppose Islam are called “Islamophobes.” The habit of many when making, and especially when *losing* an argument, is to resort to name-calling. Rather than address the substance of the argument, the labeler seeks to discredit and marginalize the person who his making it. We witness this cowardly practice in all realms and types of controversy. One’s motives are impugned, his appearance and mannerisms are ridiculed and his character is assaulted. There is, of course, no victory in this type of ad hominem assault, for it fails to honestly address the actual point of disagreement.

Making matters even worse is the fact that such labeling is often designed to misrepresent the opponent’s real position. This is being done in the present cultural battle over issues like immigration, islamization and homosexuality. Those who oppose homosexuality are called “homophobes,” which is an absolute misrepresentation of them and of their position. Liberals don’t use the term in its true meaning. Their purpose is to misrepresent their opponents and to prejudice the minds of others against them. “Phobia” is fear (not *opposition* to some behavior or situation). Christians and traditionalists are not “afraid” of homosexuals: They merely oppose their behavior.

“Homophobes”

“Fear” is not the issue, but the Greek word “phobos” means fear! Hence, the actual meaning of the word “homophobic” does not mean “opposed to” homosexuals (as persons), but afraid of homosexuals (as persons) or of the practice of homosexuality, which is a misrepresentation of facts.

Gay activists and their liberal enablers in the media use sophistry to turn the term “phobia” into the idea of one’s being opposed to some perceived personal liberty, and thereby prejudice the public against honest people who oppose the arrangement or activity itself as immoral. The labeler is wrong on two counts: (1) Bible believers do not oppose genuine *liberty*, but are strong proponents of freedom of will and expression. It is actually gay advocates who stifle free expression by their mischaracterization of their critics. (2) Bible believers do not *fear* homosexuals; they oppose homosexuality. Opposition is to sexual deviancy, not to persons. Passages like Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10; Jude 7; Genesis 19:1-5; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 condemn same-sex (sexual) relationships. Of course, the Bible also condemns other types of illicit sexual relationships including adultery, bestiality and pre-marital sex (fornication).

“Xenophobes”

With increased attention being given to illegal immigration and border security, we are seeing increased attacks against those who insist upon the enforcement of immigration laws. One is called a “xenophobe” if he opposes *illegal* immigration. This is another example of false labeling. “Xenophobic” does not mean opposed to strangers (illegal immigrants) as persons, but afraid of illegal immigrants. While it is true that some illegal aliens are dangerous and should be feared by law-abiding citizens, this misses the point of the objection and misrepresents the facts. The opposition is to law-breaking, not to persons themselves. But supporters of illegal immigration charge those opposed to law-breaking with being xenophobes! As with the term “homophobe,” this prejudicial term is used by those who wink at violations of border law to disparage those who insist upon the rule of law in immigration.

“Islamophobes”

This expression is being bandied about more and more of late. The labeler seeks to marginalize his opponent by framing him as a bigot. In this case as in those above, he misuses the word “phobes.” By definition, an “Islamophobe” would be one who *fears* Islam. The issue, however, is not a *fear* of Islam, but the rejection of a political ideology that is opposed to our Constitution, culture and biblical worldview. People are not afraid of Muslims (though some particular Muslims are personally dangerous). Rather, they *oppose Islam*, with its system of Sharia law, which when implemented, will by its very nature supplant all existing legal and political systems. Sharia law is utterly incompatible with the US Constitution and the biblical concepts from which it was conceived.

Exposing The Sophistry

Let us turn the sophistry on the sophist. Since the sophist likes to attach the words “phobia, phobic, phobes” to various Greek words, let us attach it to a few other Greek words and see what happens.

1. “Pornophobes?” Before discussing homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9, the apostle cited “fornication” as one of the behaviors that will keep people out of heaven. The Greek word “ pornos ” is translated “fornicators.” This is the general word for all types of sexual immorality, from unmarried sex to bestiality. By suffixing the Greek word “ grapho ” (writing) to the Greek word “ porno ” we get our word “pornography.” If one is opposed to fornication or pornography does that make him a “pornophobe?” Since those who oppose homosexuality are called homophobes, one would assume this to be the case. Of course, “phobia” means *fear*, not *opposition*. People are not “afraid” of fornicators or fornication, they are *opposed* to fornication.

2. “Moichophobes?” Paul also said that “adulterers” would not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9, 11). The Greek word for “adulterer” is “moichos.” Is one guilty of “moichophobia” if he opposes a man’s having sexual relations with his neighbor’s wife? Many “progressives” have no objection to homosexuality or fornication, but even many of them will agree with us on this point. If so, is such a progressive a “moichophobe” for objecting to adulterous behavior? Does he *fear* adultery, or is it that he simply opposes its shameful and destructive practice? If the progressive can see the point with respect to adultery, then why can’t he see it with respect to homosexuality?

3. “Kleptophobes?” The Scriptures oppose thievery (Eph. 4:28; 1 Cor. 6:10). Jesus said that the thief comes to “kill, steal and destroy” (Jn. 10:10). If one is opposed to thievery (Gr. “klepto”) does that make him “kleptophobic?” Are liberals (progressives) “kleptophobes” for condemning thievery? If not, does that mean that they are in favor of stealing? We know that many of those who favor gay sex and marriage call their opponents “homophobes.” Will they be consistent here? Is bank-robbing merely an “alternate economic lifestyle” in making a living? No. It is sinful and wrong. Those who oppose stealing do so, not because they are “afraid” of stealing, but because they *oppose* it.

4. “Pseudophobes?” The Scriptures oppose lying (Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:25; Rev. 21:8). If one is opposed to lying (Gr. “pseudo”) does that make him “pseudophobic?” Are liberals “pseudophobes?” If not, does that mean that they are in favor of lying? Is lying merely an “alternate style” of describing an activity? No. Lying is sinful behavior. Opponents are not “afraid” of lying; they simply *oppose* it.

5. “Methophobes?” The Scriptures oppose drunkenness (1 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3). The Greek word for drunkenness is “methuo.” If one is opposed to drunkenness does that make him “methophobic?” Are liberals (progressives) “methophobes” if they oppose drunkenness? If not, does this mean that they are in favor of drunkenness? As we observed above, those who favor the Islamization of America call others “Islamophobes.” Those who favor homosexuality call others “homophobes.” Those who favor open borders call others “xenophobes.” According to this rule, opposers of drunkenness must be “methophobes!”

Conclusion

Bible believers will never be treated right by all secularists and liberals. By many of them they will be hated, misrepresented and maligned (Jn. 15:19; Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 3:12). The cowardly misuse of labeling of one’s opponent simply exposes the falsity of his contention. Labeling is good and necessary for example in the commercial world, but it must state and

represent facts. Many companies have been prosecuted for mislabeling. But the ungodly and worldly-minded create their false labels, mis-define them, and hurl them at others freely. Where is the prosecution for this?

The ungodly population truly are “aphobes,” meaning “without fear” or respect. In Jude 12 we read of such that existed in the first century. They need to be “phoberous” (“fearful,” Heb. 10:31).

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