



Goodbye Civility?

Dr. Kelly M. Smith, Jr.

Executive Director, Sunday School Publishing Board

Pastor, Mount Olive Baptist Church, Knoxville, TN

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Iwonder if we need to say farewell to civility. I am beginning to wonder if people just don't care about respect, decency and decorum. I am beginning to believe that we have come to an age when we can say and do about anything we please and believe it is acceptable, even admired. And as much as I hate to admit it, there is no racial boundary on what appears to be the loss of civility.

How else can we gain some sense of logic from some of the forays we have seen or heard about in the public arena lately. You have Serena Williams, an athlete I enjoy watching and pulling for, losing it during the recent U.S. Open Tennis tournament. She disagreed with a call and literally threatened the official who made the call. You have Kanye West, who disagreed with the selection of an artist for a particular award, so he takes it upon himself, without invitation or even request, to come to the stage and grab the microphone and state his preference for who should have won the award. Then you have Joe Wilson, the Congressman from South Carolina, who shouts out "You lie" while President Obama addressed Congress on Health Care reform. Never mind that Congressman Wilson was not only wrong in how he did it, but he was also wrong in what he was accusing President Obama of lying about. Of course you must throw in alarmist parents who feel as is the President telling school children to stay in school and get their lesson is a message of trying to brainwash children. Then the ones which are most disturbing of the pastor of a church who preaches publically for the assassination of President Obama and the Facebook website that asked do you want President Obama killed.

Maybe all of us have lost our mind. Maybe no one has a clear corner on what is logical and what makes sense. Maybe no one knows what is decent and in order. It is so sad that we have gotten to this point. It creates a measure of frustration for me when there are those who refuse to try functioning within the boundaries of decency and respect. This does not mean you are expected to agree on everything. As a matter of fact you don't have to agree with anything. But one still need to function in such a manner that allows others to have their opinions, regardless of how radically different they are from others. There are civil ways to express ones disapproval in ways that still respects human beings. Serena, whether she had a case or not, could have expressed her disagreement as adamantly as she may choose, but to wish that she could shove her tennis ball down the official's throat and kill her is way over the line. Kanye could have written in his blog his favoring of Beyonce, but to commandeer the microphone and say what he wanted to say is hostile and inappropriate. And for all of the ones who have come after the President don't realize that their hostility towards him scrapes up a whole slew of undesirables who have even less regard for respect and discretion.

I am not sure how we got here, but I sure don't like it. One of the phrases that gets attacked in these kinds of discussions is being "politically correct." What the phrase means is that there are some things that we should not say or should not do because it may be insensitive or offensive. Those who attack the phrase state that the constitution gives us the right for free speech. They feel they should be free to call it as they see it. That may be true, but the Bible which is older than the constitution and is God's word gives us a different perspective. It tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:23-24, "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others." This tells us that though we may have the legal right to do some things, we may not have the moral right. The

greater right for us to consider should be what brings glory to God and not our just giving a piece of our minds. And then again the Bible tells us, “If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless” (James 1:26-27). Ultimately our object should be to win people over to the ways of Christ, even when they offend us. “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over” (Matthew 18:15). Keep in mind it is not about you and your way. It is about Jesus Christ, who we claim is “the way and the truth and the life” (see John 14:6).

There is a Christian virtue in our being civil and respectable in how we relate and respond to people even when we radically disagree with them and their position. If we believe that we can do all things through Christ, we can learn to conduct ourselves in such a way that will not compromise who we are and whose we are.

That’s How I See It.

Kelly M. Smith Jr.