

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
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They'll Know We Are Christians...

Facebooker Gets in Hot Water for Anti-Gay Remarks

By Paul Asay

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What Happened:

Oct. 20, 2010, was dubbed Spirit Day by some—a day in which folks were encouraged to wear purple in memory of several gay teens who recently committed suicide. Clint McCance, a Christian, wasn't about to wear purple—and he told everyone why in a Facebook post.

“Seriously they want me to wear purple because five queers killed themselves,” he wrote. “The only way im wearin it for them is if they all commit suicide. I cant believe the people of this world have gotten this stupid. We are honoring the face that they sinned and killed thereselves because of their sin. REALLY PEOPLE.”

McCance, a member of an Arkansas school board, quickly found himself at the center of a firestorm. He later apologized during an interview on CNN and resigned his position.

“I'm sorry I made those ignorant comments and hurt people on a broad spectrum,” he told Anderson Cooper on CNN. “I would never support suicide for any kids. I don't support bullying of any kids...I'd like to extend apologies to those families that have lost children, for all those children who feel that suicide is the only way out.” He added that he still thought homosexuality was wrong, but said that he would “give everyone a chance and try to love them.”

Talk About It:

“They'll know we are Christians by our love.” That's how the song goes, anyway. Sometimes, though, it's not “love” that marks us as Christians, but something altogether different.

The practice of Christianity is sometimes seen as blend of truth and grace: We must speak the truth, yet extend grace to those with whom we talk, just as God has extended grace to us.

Sometimes in our zeal for God and our love of what we see as righteousness, we can lose sight of that grace. Many Christians might agree—to a point—with McCance. The Bible doesn't pull any punches when it comes to homosexuality—just as it doesn't when it comes to stealing, lying, adultery, hypocrisy and a host of other sins the rest of us might be guilty of every day. But would Jesus encourage sinners to kill themselves? Often we don't even extend grace to each other if we feel they've strayed.

Jonathan Acuff, author of the blog and book *Stuff Christians Like*, says that most of his hate mail doesn't come from folks who are Satanists or atheists, but fellow Christians. "Which makes no sense," he writes. "After all, love is right there in our bylaws. We're supposed to love God, love our neighbor and love ourselves."

Christianity is, by its very nature, counter-cultural. Christians always will swim against society to some extent, and we often will disagree with those around us. Can we argue with our non-Christian friends and still show love? If so, how?

Have you ever felt unfairly judged by someone? How did it make you feel? Have you ever unfairly judged someone else?

Have you ever been fairly judged—had someone point out to you, rightly, that you were doing something wrong? How did you respond? What would be the best way to convince you to do something? Are you persuaded better when people yell at you? Insult you? Sit down and talk with you?

What the Bible Says:

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

"This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another... We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death" (1 John 3:11, 14).

"And this is love: That we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love" (2 John 6).