

Duck Dynasty Drivel

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

Fanaticism: The enthusiasm of the stupid. - Ambrose Bierce

In the January 2014 issue of *GQ* there is a fascinating article on stars from the *Duck Dynasty* reality television show that appears on the A&E network. The program features what the article refers to as some of the most recognizable people in the U.S. - Christian patriarch Phil Robertson and his family.

The title of the program gets its name from the fact that the family has made millions of dollars from their business and careers that are centered around duck hunting. However, due largely to Phil's denunciation of homosexuality, he has been put on hiatus from the show. Among other statements, Phil dropped these pearls of godly wisdom:

"It seems like, to me, a vagina - as a man - would be more desirable than a man's anus. That's just me. I'm just thinking: There's more there! She's got more to offer. I mean, come on dudes! You know what I'm saying? But hey, sin: It's not logical, my man. It's just not logical." (p. 76)

People were also upset about Robertson's statements about Blacks. Many interpreted his remarks to mean that he was claiming that Blacks were happy-go-lucky people under Jim Crow. However, whether this is what he actually meant is highly debatable, in my humble opinion. (It should also be noted that the article revealed that family member Willie Robertson "and his wife, Korie, adopted a biracial child named Will and are dedicated advocates of the practice.") p. 77

In any case, many people tend to judge people based on their statements, rather than on their worldview. The fact of the matter is that if someone has a reactionary or conservative worldview rooted in a "sacred text," that person almost certainly will have some bigoted views. The Robertson family has a borderline reactionary worldview rooted in the Bible. It should therefore be *expected* that they would have some bigoted views. What the world needs is more courageous people to come forward to acknowledge that the Bible clearly contains bigoted ideas, and to recognize the importance of combating those ideas.

Robertson's views are biblically correct and morally repugnant. This could only seem to be a contradictory statement to those progressives that have conned themselves into believing that every message in the Bible is good and true.

On the other hand, there is no shortage of religious conservatives that know very well that the Bible - written by homophobic patriarchs - routinely condemns homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22, for example.) Indeed, patriarchy and homophobia go together like mustard and hot dogs.

Predictably, religious conservatives have come out of the woodwork to whine about alleged political correctness and violations of free speech in defense of Robertson. The cartoonish Sarah Palin posted a photo of her with the Robertson family on her Facebook page, along with the words, "Free speech is an endangered species."

What these apologists for bigotry and intolerance do not understand is that words have consequences. Employers have the right to punish employees for speech they deem harmful to their organizations. Bigots are free to go elsewhere to spread their bigoted messages. The government will not persecute them for doing so. *That* would be in violation of the First Amendment.

Those buzz words of bigots - political correctness - even sucker in progressives that should know better. About the only time one is likely to encounter those words is when bigots are trying to rationalize bigotry and intolerance. One of the simplest and most succinct responses to grumblers about political correctness I have ever read came in a letter to the editor of *The Buffalo News*. Ruth B. Pace wrote:

“[A letter writer] correctly deduces that political correctness means to not offend someone. What is wrong with not wanting to offend someone?... political correctness actually means respect - respect for people who do not look like you, think like you or worship a different way than you.”
(December 14, 2013, p. A7)

Indeed, only a bigot could whine about political correctness. Everyone else just refers to it as common courtesy.

Perhaps the worst aspect of this *Duck Dynasty* business is the glorification of hunting, a.k.a., the killing of innocent animals for fun and profit. However, not surprisingly, Phil Robertson refers to the Bible to justify his belief that shooting innocent animals to death is part of his loving God’s plan:

“The Almighty gave us [the wilderness], Genesis 9 is where the animals went wild, and God gave them wildness. After the Flood, that’s when he made animals wild. Up until that time, everybody was vegetarian. After the Flood, he said, ‘I’m giving you everything now. Animals are wild.’” (*GQ*, January 2014, p. 76)

The Bible does say that “man” is supposed to subdue the Earth. However, the idea that humans should kill other animals for fun and profit is downright barbaric. (Incidentally, it is clear that Robertson does not understand that human beings are also animals.) Moreover, it is absurd to blame other animals for being wild if “God gave them wildness.” Further still, why would a perfectly loving God make them wild just so that humans could kill them? Where is the sense or justice in such a scenario?

What we are dealing with here is bigotry wedded to ignorance - a most dangerous combination. Someone once said that “the mind of the bigot is like the pupil of the eye. The more light you shed upon it, the more it contracts.” This is especially true of know-it-all religious bigots. However, it is still important to combat bigotry and intolerance by any means necessary. Many people actually will come to understand the error of their ways if enough enlightened people come forward to show them the way forward.