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Fire Eater! Editor

The Offend-O-Meter

10 May 2005

> *The embracing and celebration of diversity is the ultimate goal of anyone living by the principals* [sic] *of All One Heart. We find that many others are still working from a place of intolerance. So, in order to reach those who might have just begun to challenge their beliefs, we offer a way to help them educate themselves to become more tolerant of diversity. Then, perhaps one day they too will embrance* [sic]*, celebrate and teach their children to live as All One Heart!*
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> *(All One Heart website at www.alloneheart.com, 10 May 2005)*

In April of 2005, a girl at a high school in Rancho Cucamonga, California, an affluent community 37 miles east of Los Angeles, was sent to the principal's office for wearing a t-shirt that read "truth is truth—homosexuality is wrong". The school "administrators" demanded that the girl, who is an A student, change shirts or leave the campus. They based their action on the school's policy of "tolerance and diversity", saying that homosexuals might be "offended" by the girl's shirt.

"Would it not be possible to invent a device for accurately displaying the precise lethal dose of offense lying in wait for the unwary homosexual?"

Now, I know you have had your fill of "tolerance and diversity" news. You probably don't even want to read any article, including mine, that talks yet one more time about "tolerance and diversity". You've had it with alarmist campanologists like me.

I, of course, am offended by that.

Tolerance and diversity. Let us wrap our collective noggins around that phrase. Let us, O brethren, "challenge our beliefs". We are supposed to tolerate diversity, according to the "All One Heart" liberals. OK, no problem there. I've been actively tolerating diversity and "challenging my beliefs" for quite a while now. A virtual one-man army of embracing and celebrating. No kidding. Why, just this morning, my wife said "Goodbye" to me on her way to work. Can you imagine? Can you grasp the enormity of her crime?

"Goodbye?", I screamed. "Have you no sense of tolerance

or diversity, woman?" I raised a phthisic finger to her face. "Do you not realise that the word 'goodbye' comes from the phrase "God be with you"? What on earth has gotten into you? Don't you know that you might offend someone? " She got the point. "OK, sweetie, I've learned from my ignorance. I'll never say "goodbye" again. I promise." I calmed down in a few hours after realising that I would probably survive the intolerant assault upon my diversity. A close call, however.

"A society armed with Offend-O-Meters would eventually end up in an OK Corral of Offenders and Offendees. Imagine the offensive words ricocheting off the walls like bullets from Doc Halliday's six-shooter."

I worry, though, about those poor homosexuals. I'm not a medical doctor, I admit, but I began to think about the possible dangers. What if homosexuals are chronically predisposed to heart failure when offended? What if the t-shirt worn by the Bad Girl From Rancho Cucamonga had the potential for life-threatening "offendedness"? I began to have visions, disturbing thoughts, of homosexuals falling to the ground like dying leaves, writhing in pain and grasping their offended chests. My days were haunted by the Ghost of Offended Homosexuals. I could not sleep but for the the leftist agony into which I was tossed like a dinghy on a sea of hypermoralism. Pictures of offended homosexual high-school students breathing their last passed through my tolerant and diverse mind. I hyperventilated thinking about the funeral ceremonies alone. I mean, what would one read at those funerals?

"He was a good man (well, pseudo-man) who did his best in life, getting offended only occasionally and even then not lethally. But these last offensive words were too much for him. He succumbed in the morning of his life to the words 'Homosexuality is wrong'. Brothers and sisters, let us weep. Unless weeping offends you, of course."

But then a Great and Tolerant Leftist Idea took hold of me. I trembled in my "progressive" revelation. There shone from on high a ray of hope for all those offended homosexuals. Perhaps, said I, we need to turn to technology to save them from imminent demise. Would it not be possible to invent a device for accurately displaying the precise lethal dose of offense lying in wait for the unwary homosexual?

The Offend-O-Meter.

Why has it not been already invented, distributed, and required by law? Who knows how much infinite good might rain down upon the wicked Offenders of Homosexuals? Think of it. A device that accurately measures the potential Offense Level of any given utterance. The scenarios of Infinite Goodness arose in my imagination: *"Uh, oh. We've got a 96 on the Offend-O-Meter Quick, post an advisory: All liberals and homosexuals are advised to remain indoors.*" Just thinking of the possible number of lives saved bade me bask in the sheer moral goodness of the idea.

But I began to have my doubts. What if, for example, homosexuals began offending the rest of us? Not that they would, of course. (I don't want to offend anyone.) But just suppose. Suppose liberals and homosexuals began to use the Offend-O-Meter against others? It's obvious, is it not, the devastating potential for social chaos? A society armed with Offend-O-Meters would eventually end up in an OK Corral of Offenders and Offendees. Imagine the offensive words ricocheting off the walls like bullets from Doc Halliday's six-shooter. Think of all those California high schools. Halls barren and shorn of

Offenders who have been sent home. Classrooms denuded of liberals and homosexual Offendees who just couldn't take the strain.

Best not to think about it.

By the way, the school in Rancho Cucamonga lost this one when the Pacific Justice Institute, a "public-interest law firm" (whatever that might mean) faxed over a letter to the "administrators". The letter said, in brief (for I wouldn't want to offend you by taking any more of your time), that the Bad Girl From Rancho Cucamonga had a First Amendment right to wear her anti-homsexual t-shirt to school. The head of the Pacific Justice Institute said, "One-way tolerance is not tolerance, but tyranny."

Naturally, this sort of offensive talk has ruined any chances for marketing my Offend-O-Meter. (Which shouldn't stop you from sending your $19.95 to me anyway, of course.)

Besides, what's a "Cucamonga" anyway? Or a ranch full of them? And what's this "all one heart" business? I prefer a multiplicity of hearts, thank you. The more I think about it, the more offended I get.

O the humanity of it all.