Not a Fear **[1]**

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> Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering.
>
> Yoda, Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace

Earlier this month, another tragic collage campus shooting occurred in Oregon in the USA [2]. At the time it was widely reported [3] that the shooter singled out Christians to kill, although some have urged caution [4] about interpreting the story.

After the shooting, there were cries of and questions over "Christianophobia" on social media.

This needs to stop. If anyone is murdered in a cold and calculated way, whether because they are Christian, Muslim or homosexual, is not the result of a phobia.

A phobia, dictionaries will tell you, is an "irrational fear" of something, which "leads to a compelling desire to avoid it"1. When people, men and women, around me are paralysed with arachnophobia by the sight of a common rain spider [5], as docile and non-threatening as it is, it falls on me to safely remove it. In other words, people do not want to get near it (they tend to jump). Similarly, I shall happily stand on tall buildings or mountains, but am terrified of rickety ladders, even if only to climb up a couple of metres: my special kind of acrophobia inhibits me.

Those of us with phobias would rather not want to deal with it. Those who hate the spiders do not go looking for them and their nests to torch them (that duty falls on others). And I do not take an axe to my parents' ancient wooden ladder—I would rather leave it for someone who can deal with it.

An irrational fear is different from a hate—the one which drives you to carry out a deed so meticulous as the attack in Oregon. Despite the quote from Yoda at the top of the page, not everyone festers in their fear until it turns into hate.

If someone sees missionaries walking towards their front door, or finds out that they are seated next to a Christian on an aeroplane, and is overcome with dread (because they know that they'll soon be embroiled in a conversation which they'll rather avoid), *that* is Christianophobia. If people feel that it is necessary to ban minarets [6] lest their culture gets tarnished, *that* is Islamophobia. If someone

prefers to avoid someone who is known as a homosexual because that person's presence makes them feel uncomfortable, *that* is homophobia.

When people introduce laws and regulations to restrict people from objecting in any way to the virtue of homosexuality in a civil and orderly way, *that* is Christianophobia (and Islamophobia).

If someone gets shot in the head for no other reason than being a Christian, that is *hate*. If a Muslim gets lynched for no other reason than being a Muslim, that is *hate*. If a homosexual person gets butchered for no other reason than their sexual preference, *that* is hate.

The fear and the hate are not the same. And claiming that they are is [is poisoning the well] [7] to the end of furthering your own agenda.

The person who committed the Umpqua shooting was filled with hate. He did not have a difference of opinion with Christians. He did not seek debate or discussion. He wanted to murder because he had a disdain for life and the liberty of believing whatever one chooses to believe. His actions revealed this one things about him: he was not afraid.

Let us not play with words. Let us call out hate wherever we see it. And if someone claims to be open to discussion, let us engage with that person and seek a mutual better understanding of each other's position.

- 1. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/phobia?s=t [8]

Categories:

- In the Media [9]
- In the News [10]

Tags:

- umpqua [11]
- oregon [12]
- mass shooting [13]
- phobia [14]
- fear [15]
- hate [16]

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Links
[1] https://siyach.org/node/1120
[2] http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/02/us/oregon-shooting-umpqua-community-college.html?_r=0
[3] http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/10/02/oregon-shooter-said-to-have-singled-out-christians-for-killing-in-horrific-act-of-cowardice/
[4] http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2015/10/were_the_oregon_shooting_victims_christian_martyrs.html
[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palystes_superciliosus
[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss_minaret_referendum%2C_2009
[7] http://adam4d.com/segregation
[8] http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/phobia?s=t
[9] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/17

[10] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/16
[11] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/466
[12] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/467
[13] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/468
[14] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/469
[15] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/176
[16] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/470