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From the office of the Executive Director: Regarding Peter Voss, Directorial Etiquette

On Thursday, June 16th, 2022, 12:13am EDT, I received notice of a report regarding the etiquette of fellow director, Peter Voss, occurring on January 7th, 2022. Peter has been an active team member for BibleBot since May 2020. Over the past 2 years, Peter has proven to be a reliable asset to our ministry and service, which led to his promotion as Community Director in December 2020 – one of 4 people to ever have the title of director, which grants partial ownership stake in Kerygma Digital.

Given the nature of the report, which I'll discuss shortly – I am taking executive decision in hopes of resolving a rather trivial matter.

A Treatise on Profanity

In most references to profanity in Scripture and church fathers, the consensus on the usage of profanity is that it is sinful, mostly on principle of it (typically) serving no edifying purpose.^{1,2} Amongst church bodies, the Catholic Church classifies it amongst the venial sins, that being a sin that does not result in separation from God as opposed to an unrepentant mortal sin³), whilst the Orthodox Church (which does not have a formal distinction) generally treats profanity as something sinful but not necessarily an immediate obstacle to the pursuit of holiness.

Of course, this is a general statement regarding profanity and does not tie into nuances like habit, intention, and audience. A profane exclamation after getting injured is not on equal footing as the usage of profanity in careless colloquialisms, as it is not on equal footing with profaning matters of the divine – God, Scripture, the Church, etc.

Therefore, it is worth considering the context of the situation – not only the usage itself but whether there is a habit, what the intention is, who the intended audience is. Unwillingness to do this results in a strict legalism that is not truly thoughtful of the means of obtaining peace and tends to cause needless ostracization of the person at fault, which in turn could lead to spiritual turmoil and further sin – caused solely by a well-meaning but inconsiderate response. In other words, the appropriate way of addressing someone else's profanity is not to treat the matter as if the person is irrevocably condemned, but rather bringing to attention the problematic nature of profanity and offering a gentle sense of direction toward virtue.

¹ [Ephesians 4:29](#)

² [Wisdom of Sirach 27:14](#)

³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs 1854-1863

True Charity and Conflict Resolution

Ultimately, I find a lot of oddities in the context of the report. To start, the report concerns behavior that occurred just over 5 months ago – an image post, one that in most interpretations would be sympathetic to those employed in food service, which as many of us are aware is a very thankless field. While I won't go into detail about intention, I'll note that the post is innocuous and sympathetic at best – and only a very critical viewing of it would lead to where we are now.

Which, to note, holding this over someone's head for 5 months is ridiculous when you consider those 3 aforementioned factors (habit, intention, audience). In the context of the charity and forgiveness required of Christians, it seems antithetical to what we hold to be true as Christians (and realistically, Puritanical) that the situation persists today. While undesirable behavior that would ultimately tie into sin, scrupulosity is a sin all the same – sinfulness amplifying when being scrupulous over someone else's behavior. The quest for purity is not one of persistent reminders of past mistakes with little relevance – in fact, I'd argue that such judgment becomes a deeper moral issue and more likely to lead to condemnation by conventional measures.

I will note that while throwing rule numbers around, from both the reporter and Peter during this situation, is not beneficial to the situation – it must be addressed that the responsibility of acting on rule-breaking situations (and even making point of them in public discourse) is the sole responsibility of our community managers. Privately reporting rule-breaking behavior is one thing, acting as the arbiter of the rules is another. Let our managers manage. If concerns arise regarding another director's behavior, take it up with a different director. Do not presume authority upon yourself by social status, social obligation, or some other self-assumed authority.

Conclusions

Ultimately, I cannot find myself compelled to act on the situation beyond this statement. While the cause of the situation was undesirable, the response and later report appears just as irresponsible and careless, if not more so. We as directors should realize our responsibility as authorities and role models for others within the team and within the community – reasonably following the rules that we have created, but accountability should originate from stronger moral character, with thoughtful consideration, and appropriate methods of conflict resolution.

In so far as it concerns the users involved in this conflict – this situation is to be considered resolved by all moderation and administrative authority. This statement is not an invitation to continue discussing the merits and measuring the morality of this situation. Do not invite yourself to reignite a debate (lest rule 10 need to be truly invoked) – forgive and move on.

In Christ,
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