

I'm Not The Radical Left, I Am The Humane Middle
Pastor and Activist John Pavlovitz (from his blog, "Stuff That Needs To Be Said")

Apparently, I've been radicalized and I wasn't aware.
Certain people call me the "radical Left" all the time.
I never considered myself radical before.
I just thought I was normal, ordinary, usual.
I thought equity was important to everyone.
I imagined America was filled with people who took that Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness stuff seriously—for all people.
I thought the Golden Rule was actually mainstream.
Recently I took an inventory of my positions, screening for the extremism:
I believe in full LGBTQ rights.
I believe we should protect the planet.
I believe everyone deserves healthcare.
I believe all religions are equally valid.
I believe the world is bigger than America.
I believe to be "pro-life," means to treasure all of it.
I believe whiteness isn't superior and it is not the baseline of humanity.
I believe we are all one interdependent community.
I believe people and places are made better by diversity.
I believe people shouldn't be forced to abide by anyone else's religion.
I believe non-American human beings have as much value as American ones.
I believe generosity is greater than greed, compassion better than contempt, and kindness superior to derision.
I believe there is enough in this world for everyone: enough food, enough money, enough room, enough care—if we unleash our creativity and unclench our fists.
I'm not sure how these ideas became radical, though it seems to have happened in the last few years.
I grew up being taught they were just part of being a decent human being.
I grew up believing that loving my neighbor as myself, meant that I actually worked for their welfare as much as my own.
I was taught that caring for the least in the world, was the measure of my devotion to God.
I thought that inalienable rights of other people were supposed to be a priority as a decent participant in the world.
I don't think I'm alone.
In fact, I'm pretty sure that most people reside here in this place alongside me: the desire for compassion and diversity and equality and justice; that these things aren't fringe ideologies or extremist positions—but simply the best way to be human.
I think most people want more humanity, not less.
I think the vast middle is exhausted by the cruelty of these days.

That these aspirations seem radical to some people, is probably an alarm that they've moved so far into the extremes of their fortified ideological bunkers and been so poisoned by the propaganda, that normal now seems excessive, that equality now seems oppressive, that goodness feels reckless.

Maybe the problem is, these people are so filled with fear for those who are different, so conditioned to be at war with the world, so indoctrinated into a white nationalistic religion of malice—that they've lost sight of what being a human being looks like anymore.

I am pretty sure that I don't represent the "radical Left," but the vast, disparate, compassionate, humane Middle; people who are not threatened by someone else's presence, who do not see another person's gain as their loss, who don't worship a Caucasian, American god.

I suppose humanity feels radical to inhumane people.

In that case, I'll gladly be here in my extremism.