

CHRISTIANS MUST 'LET GO' SOME BELIEFS FOR SAKE OF PEACE, THEOLOGIAN SAYS

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Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: The Bible predicts that in the last days there will be a great apostasy or “falling away” from the faith as the world is plunged into the deceptions of the Antichrist.

II Th 2:3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [of Jesus’ second coming] will not come unless the falling away [apostasy] comes first, and the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed, the son of perdition

The Bible also predicts that the world will be deceived by the Antichrist because he will promise global utopia and peace through the establishment of a world government and religion. It seems obvious from this article that the beginnings of this grand deception are upon us and we must be getting close to our Lord Jesus’ return. I have interspersed other italicized comments in the text below.

Larry Bridgesmith, Lipscomb's executive director of the Institute of Conflict Management, takes suggestions from people who attended the religious conflict gathering at Lipscomb University. JOHN PARTIPILO / THE TENNESSEAN



To live peacefully with Muslims and Jews, Christians must put aside the notion that their faith requires the creation of a Christian kingdom on Earth, a Lipscomb University theologian told an interfaith gathering at the university.

Pastor Kevin note - It is not a notion that Jesus will come again to establish His kingdom on Earth, it is a promise made by Jesus. The only question is if Jesus plans to (and is able to) keep His promise. A person

would have to be a fool to bet against the One who rose from the grave to demonstrate His power over death.

Luke 11:2 So He [Jesus] said to them, "When you pray, say: our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. **Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

Rev 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the **kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!**" 16 And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, (NKJ)

"We are not going to get very far in our relationship with Jews or Muslims if we do not let go of this idea," Lipscomb professor Lee Camp said at Tuesday's conference.

Jesus did not come to bring peace between all the religions of the world, but to bring the sword against the lies of Satan which deceive people away from the only truth that can save their soul.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am **the** way, **the** truth, and **the** life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (NKJ)

Matt 10:32 "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. 34 "**Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.** 35 "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' (NKJ)

Isa 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God. (NKJ)

Exod 20:2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 "You shall have no other gods before Me. (NKJ)

The unusual gathering of several dozen clergy and lay people was devoted to

resolving religious conflict in Nashville and around the world.

"We need to forsake the Christendom model," Camp said. "The most basic Christian commitment ... is that we say we believe in the Lordship of Jesus. But, if we claim that, how can a Muslim or Jew trust us, if we say Jesus is the Lord of all Lords?"

Because it is the truth!

Deut 10:17 "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. (NKJ)

1 Tim 6:15 which He [Jesus] will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. (NKJ)

Co-sponsored by the First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University, the daylong conference was prompted by a desire to begin a dialogue about global religious conflict.

After five years of rising gas prices, disturbing privacy issues that followed the Sept. 11 attacks and the fear of terrorism, it became apparent that everyday life in Nashville is directly affected by religious conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, conference organizers said. "We felt like the larger community is calling for this," said Larry Bridgesmith, executive director of Lipscomb's newly established Institute for Conflict Management.

Panelists representing different faiths presented their own views on how to begin to bridge the religious divide. For Kahled Sakalla, a spokesman for the Islamic Center of Nashville, some of the answers lie in better education about Islam in the non-Muslim world. Allah, the God Muslims worship, is the same God Christians and Jews worship, and the Quran recounts the same biblical stories of Mary and Jesus, he said. "Yes, we have differences, but it's important to focus on commonalities," said Sakalla, one of four panelists representing different faiths who addressed the Lipscomb conference.

Those who state that Muslims, Christians and Jews worship the same god are either ignorant of the Koran and the Bible, or they are liars. If Kahled Sakalla is a spokesman for the Islamic Center, then we should be able to rule out the idea he is ignorant of what the Koran teaches about their god as compared to the God of the Bible. Therefore, it is likely he is not being truthful; something the Koran teaches is acceptable when preparing to defeat the infidels in battle.

As a simple example of the differences between the false god of Islam and the true God of the Bible, the Muslim world boasts of tens of thousands of suicide bombers ready to serve their god, Allah. Why is it that the God of the Bible seems to be lacking in followers willing to blow up themselves and infidel women and children so they can enjoy dozens of virgin women in "heaven?"

Mohammed, in service to his god, Allah, spread Islam with the sword. The Apostles of Jesus, in obedience to His commandments of Love, spread the gospel of salvation by laying down their own lives. There is a very big difference between Allah (Satan) and the true God of the Bible.

Mark Schiftan, rabbi of the Temple in Belle Meade, said he also believes people of faith must begin to look for common ground. "If all of us believe we were created in God's image, then we have to believe that everyone else is also created in God's image," Schiftan said.

This misses the point that man was created in God's image with a soul that is destined to heaven or hell, based on whether a person dies in their sin or is forgiven based on faith in Jesus. There is no common ground on this issue. All religions of the world, except Christianity, teach that man must try and earn a place in heaven. Only the teachings of Jesus state that man is incapable of accomplishing works that will allow him or her to avoid death and judgment. Only those who humble themselves and trust (by faith) in Jesus for their salvation will be saved from the judgment to come.

This is why the world hates the Christian message. True Christianity rejects human pride and is exclusive. The only way to make the message of Christianity palatable to the masses and other religions is to pervert it in such a way that it no longer can be declared "Christian" at all.

Charles McGowan, president of the Christian group Operation Andrew said: "It's important to us in Nashville that we be proactive. Religious leaders must engage one another if we are going to experience in this city the peace and calm we all desire."

But the issues that have divided the world's religions for millennia are so deep and fundamental — ranging from the question of whether the land of Israel rightfully belongs to the Jews and whether there is one way to salvation — that tackling them will require both dialogue with other faiths and a more introspective look at one's own beliefs, panelists said.

God has declared in His word that the land of Israel belongs to the

Jewish people. The Muslims refuse to accept this truth. Therefore, how can there be peace between a Jew and a Muslim? The Muslim thinks every single Jew in Israel (over five million) must be deported or exterminated. Muslim peace is accomplished by the murder of all who don't agree with them, another example that they do not serve the same god as the Jew and the Christian.

Some liberal theologians have suggested that different faiths are all variations on one another and that beliefs are all basically the same, a position with which Camp deeply disagrees. Instead, he believes, Christians must not back away from their beliefs but further examine them and their own history. First, Christians must examine their "sins of omission," he said — such as not taking the time to learn about other religions. Then they must look at their "sins of commission."

If Mr. Camp means that by "learning about other religions" we are to accept them as equal to faith in Jesus then he betrays the fact he is not a true Christian. The true God of the Bible commands that we reject all other gods, because they are false gods.

God is not charging us with the "sin of omission" because we don't learn how to bow to Buddha or join the Muslims in praying to Mecca five times a day for the sake of global unity; nor will He rebuke us because we didn't lie to those deceived by these false religions by telling them that their beliefs were just as valid as faith in Jesus to deliver their souls to heaven.

Exod 23:13 "And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth. (NKJ)

I Jn 5:10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (NKJ)

"We have such short historical (memory) spans as white Christians," he said. "There is a history of anti-Semitism, the violence and bloodshed of the crusades and cultural imperialism. We have to deal with the reality of what Christians have done, which in some cases has been to kill people."

Biblical Christians cannot be anti-Semitic, since the Bible makes it clear that the Jews are a special people to God, and therefore should also be to all who serve Him.

The Crusades were conducted by nations who had their own agendas, not God's. Some of the crusades were conducted to stop the spread of Islam which was coming to Europe by the sword. In this case, the crusader nations were defending their people against the sword of Allah, something the Bible states as a responsibility of government (Romans 13:3-4).

At other times the Popes were launching crusades to increase their power and wealth. They were doing so without even one biblical verse to support their actions. The New Testament does not encourage Christians to conquer nations for God, or to take back Jerusalem for the "church."

True, biblical Christianity is motivated to convert the heart of man, not to take land and nations from others. This also applies to America's current escapades to control the Middle East. Our actions are based on the desires of man, not on the commandments of the Biblical God.

Camp described himself as a conservative Christian but conceded his opinions may be viewed as "radical" by other evangelical Christians.

Actually they are viewed by biblical Christians as anti-Christian.

I Jn 2:18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. (NKJ)

Christians must shed the idea that they need to promulgate a worldwide Christianity, he said. "If I hold to a model of Jesus ... what I've committed to in my baptism is loving my enemy," Lee said. "I'm committed to not killing you, but to serving and honoring you. It's an exclusive commitment to the way of Christ, not to the exclusive authority of Christ."

In other words, his Jesus has no authority to declare that He is THE way, THE truth, and THE life. I think that the real Jesus of the Bible would disagree with Mr. Camp.

Sakalla said there may never be reconciliation on the fundamental

theological divisions.

"Every religion has different teachings," he said. "For Muslims, it's: Do you believe in one God and that Muhammad" is his prophet? "I don't think we can teach individuals that the way you go to heaven in other religions is OK. You have to teach differences."

According to Jesus, it is these differences that determine whether someone is damned or forgiven. If there is only one God, then there is only one way. But how can one know the true way? Who is right? Who is wrong? These are admittedly very difficult questions and the proposed and conflicting answers are creating conflict and suffering in the world, just as Jesus said there would be. But the true answer to these questions can be found by looking to the one (and only one) who left an empty tomb, His name is Jesus.

Matt 7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (NKJ)