

RELIGIOUS CLEANSING IN AMERICA

By

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As Christians today we find ourselves with minority status in a culture that is determined to homogenize all religions into a pagan philosophy. While most people are horrified at the ethnic cleansing that has taken place in some nations, they seem to think that it's okay to negate the fundamentals of the Christian faith – in the name of pluralism - and reduce it to nothing more than another powerless world religion.

Christians love peace, as Paul admonished: “As much as in you lays, be at peace with all men.” (Rom. 12:18) Christians seek the welfare of others, regardless of their religion. We do no harm to our enemies, but pray for them, and try to return good for evil. Why, therefore is there such hostility to the Christian faith, and why, of all religious people, are Christians targeted for ridicule and persecution?

Could it be because, of all religions, the Christian faith is the one that cannot be homogenized, and therefore, the creators of a pluralistic society must eradicate it?

THE REASON

I. The Christian faith is exclusive. Jesus said, “No one comes to the father but by me.” (John. 14:7) The apostles declared, “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.” (John. 17:3)

Those who uphold these claims are labeled as bigots, and are regularly under attack in the media by Jews, Muslims and others. Many noted evangelists and church leaders, to escape such criticism, now say that there are, after all, other means of salvation, which, if true, would make the Christian faith redundant.

II. According to Jesus all sin is under condemnation. All have sinned, and unless forgiven on God's terms, will ultimately suffer the punishment of final death. Such forgiveness requires belief and admission that Jesus is Lord and Savior. No other religion has as part of its doctrine a day of judgment and final destruction of those who reject God. Therefore the Christian faith cannot be combined with any of the other religions to form a synthesis of world religion.

III. Jesus demands repentance and a change from the practice of sin in order to be forgiven. The homosexual community knows that as long as Christians are free to speak we will label homosexuality as evil, just as God does, and will try to protect children from their influence. Hence they militantly oppose Christians and any church that stands for biblical truth.

IV. By His resurrection Jesus upstaged all the religious leaders of the world, and gave proof of His claim that God has given Him all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matt. 28:18) If Jesus has all authority, then none is left for the Talmud of the Jews, for the Koran of Islam, or for the book of Mormon.

His claim leaves nothing but to either acknowledge Him as Lord or to live in rebellion against Him. To confess Him to be Lord is to admit that He is to be obeyed. It also means that we will not commit ourselves to the world leaders to support their plans to build a world-wide Babylon, or New World Order.

Ultimately the question is whether one will serve God or the state. In ancient Rome the officials didn't care how many gods one worshipped, as long as his final allegiance was to the Emperor. When Christians put Christ before the state, with allegiance only to Him, it was seen as treason, and worthy of death, so that they were hunted down and put to death in the cruelest manner. Today the state has become god to a vast number of citizens, including many church members who seek the approval of the world and the security which the state promises. The time may come when even some who profess to be Christian will look upon the faithful disciples of Jesus as radicals and enemies of society.

V. Evangelism is an integral part of the Christian way. It was Jesus who told the disciples to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19-20). It is the clear teaching of Jesus that all who are not reconciled to God through Him are without hope. It is not possible to be a Christian and still be silent concerning this truth. Once a person realizes that the only way to have eternal life is through Christ, he is compelled by a fervent compassion, as well as a sense of duty, to warn those who are still un-forgiven and thus in mortal danger of dying in that condition. To refuse to do so is not only disobedience, but it indicates that either one doesn't believe Jesus' message, or he is shamefully unconcerned with the fate of his fellow man.

The implications of this message are not welcome to the unbelievers and consequently they are opposed to any evangelistic efforts. They say that Christians should shut up about our faith and just keep it to ourselves. Many churches have yielded to this pressure and now "market" the church as an activity and entertainment center with "show time" every Sunday morning. Faith is presented as a means to improve one's image, raise one's self-esteem, and help one reach a goal of worldly success, influence, and happiness. Instead of calling for repentance and obedience as did Jesus and the apostles, the sinner is told to "invite Jesus into your heart." Churches are building huge assemblies, without bringing people to humble obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE RESPONSE

In view of the hostility to the Christian faith and the effort to reduce it to the level of the other world religions, our task is clear. In praying for His disciples Jesus said, "I pray not that thou should take them from the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil one ... Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. As thou did send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world" (John 17:15, 17-18). To "sanctify" means to "set

apart.” We are to saturate our minds with the truth that we may be able to stand firmly and decisively on that which God has revealed. We are not to be like the world around us, but to be lights for that world. “That you may become blameless and harmless children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you are seen as lights in the world, holding for the word of life.” (Phil. 2:15, 16)

It is the truth of the gospel, the good news revealed by Jesus, that changes hearts and minds, and through these, whole nations. The lies of pagan religions can be displaced only by the truth found in the revealed scripture. This doesn’t mean that one has to become an erudite Bible scholar with a solution to every puzzling verse of scripture. I don’t understand every verse in the Bible and I don’t know anyone who does. I’m still learning, and at my age I’m sure there are not enough years left to learn it all. But I understand that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that He died and rose again, that God made Him Lord of all, and that there is an appointed day in which God will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus whereby he has given assurance to all men in that he has raised him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31)

We must stop relying on an ordained clergy to get this message across. The truth does not depend on skilled oratory or entertaining sermons. It can be told by anyone who has come to know it, and once proclaimed, the gospel takes care of itself. Paul said it is “the power of God unto salvation.” But it has little power as long as it is restricted to a thirty-minute display inside a church building once a week.

The promotion of “pluralism” and “multi-culturists” gives believers in Christ an opportunity to present a well defined contrast between the Way of Jesus and the ways of the world’s religion.

Peter and John were thrown into jail for preaching the crucified and risen Christ, and when they were released they were charged not to speak any more in the name of Jesus. But when they met with their company of believers and noted how the scripture had been fulfilled concerning the opposition to their message (Psalm 2:1-2), note what they prayed for. “And now, Lord, look upon their threatening: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness...” (Acts 4:29). No fear, No anxiety, just the desire to make known the truth of the Christ.

Later, Peter was to write: “But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, wherein you are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ.” (I Pet. 3:15-16)

Paul’s word to all who face opposition and persecution for their faith is: “But, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” Rom. 8:37).

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