

American Council of Christian Churches
71st Annual Convention, October 23-25, 2012
Cedar View Independent Methodist Church, Kingsport, Tennessee
Resolution on Evangelical and Islamic Syncretism

Burdened over the lost spiritual condition of a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, with whom the Jews had no previous dealings, our Lord asked her for a drink for the purposes of introducing her to the living water that would enable her parched and sinful heart never to thirst again (John 4:1-14). After the Lord bluntly asked her about the adulterous life she had lived, the woman at the well attempted to turn the discussion toward a more pleasing, less confrontational, religious dialogue about the commonalities and differences between her own religion and that of this visitor, whom she perceived to be a prophet (vv. 15-20). Jesus cut short the diversion. His lack of patience for a discussion of that kind became immediately clear: "Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews" (v. 22).

In violation of this example of evangelistic love, the politics of political correctness have become the regulating principle of the gospel ministry of some evangelicals to Muslims in need of the living water of true conversion, which our Lord proclaimed. *Syncretism* is the theological combination of different religions. Syncretistic overtures from nominal Christianity to Islam are nothing new for apostates. The 2004 Parliament of World Religions in Barcelona is one flagrant example of the way these efforts have been promoted under the declarations of false prophets who claimed, "All religions are true and equally true" and "all religions preach peace" [Ralph Colas, "Parliament of the World's Religions," *Major Reports* (July 2004)]. As the enemy builds the one-world church of antichrist, this form of ecumenism is no longer surprising.

More distressing are examples of the same error from professing evangelicals. The enthusiasm of signatories for Yale University's document titled, "Loving God and Neighbor: A Christian Response to 'A Common Word between Us and You,'" presented as a full-page ad in the New York Times, signaled the willingness of evangelical leaders to join their liberal counterparts in this form of ecumenism. Names listed among a Who's-Who of theological liberalism and Roman Catholicism included Leith Anderson, President of the National Association of Evangelicals; Timothy George, Dean of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University; Bill Hybels, Pastor of Willow Creek Community Church; John Stackhouse of Regent College; and Rick Warren, Pastor of Saddleback Church. The document applauded Islam's "unique devotion to one God, indeed the love of God, as the primary duty of every believer." It declared that because Muslims and Christians serve this God, they together avoid serving idols, and that the "dual common ground of love of God and neighbor" they share serves as a basis for future cooperation.

Rick Warren has been a leader in this cooperation. In his 2009 address to the Islamic Society of North America, Warren listed secularists, the media, political parties, extremists, opponents of free speech, and what he calls the "five global

giants” as the common enemies of Christians and Muslims. The bond between Christians and Muslims found expression in statements like the following: “Secularists, those who don’t believe in God, don’t understand really, how deeply your ability, my ability, and other people of faith, how our identity is tied to what we believe. They just don’t get it. Now, of course, you understand that” [http://blog.beliefnet.com/cityofbrass/2009/07/transcript-pastor-rick-warre.html#ixzz282aF3L5Y; accessed 10/1/2012]. Many of those whom Warren calls *people of faith*, the Lord Jesus would have called *people of unbelief* in need of saving faith (Matt. 13:53-58). Earlier this year, Saddleback’s outreach to Muslims included an initiative called the King’s Way, which was so weakened by compromising double-speak that both the Muslims involved and the media trying to report on the effort came to conclusions about the church’s intentions that their pastor subsequently had to deny. “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 Cor. 14:8).

One further tragic example of this uncertain sound of syncretism between Evangelicals and Muslims is the new Arabic translation of the Scriptures done by the Summer Institute of Linguistics for the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Influenced by a misguided desire to lessen the offense of the gospel in the Islamic world, this translation’s tampering with the Divine familial terms of the Trinity (God the *Father* and God the *Son*) has been rejected by many Christians throughout the Middle East as yet another syncretistic betrayal of God’s truth. Even the Bible Society of Pakistan has severed relations with Wycliffe over this issue.

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches, at its 71st Annual Convention, October 23-25, 2012, in the Cedar View Independent Methodist Church, Kingsport, Tennessee, rejects the political correctness of these evangelical overtures to our Muslim neighbors as syncretistic perversions of the clear saving gospel of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to the task of calling the unbelief of unbelievers *unbelief*—not *faith*—and we recognize that the same clarion call to repentance from this unbelief, which our Lord shared at the well in Samaria, is the gospel preacher’s truest expression of love for his neighbor’s needy soul. We recognize the power of the gospel to conquer the rebel nature of the sinner’s heart at enmity with God—whether he is professedly Muslim or professedly Christian—apart from dubious human efforts, and we purpose to preach that gospel with the directness, sacrifice, compassion, and honesty exemplified by our Lord, who commissioned us to do so. We affirm that He alone gives the increase.



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