

“The Prince Of Peace”

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One striking difference in Christianity and the other world religions, especially the religion of Islam, is the promotion of peace. As you know, Isaiah wrote, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, *The Prince of Peace*. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7, emphasis added).

Not all Christians in the world enjoy peaceful conditions for worship. We are desensitized to the news reports of unspeakable violence because there is so much of it in this wicked world, and so instantaneously do the reports of it come into our homes and places of work. This past Lord’s day one service in Northern Nigeria was disrupted by such violence and our brethren lost their lives. While reporting on a series of attacks, the news report included,

A later attack in the northeast city of Maiduguri saw gunmen open fire at a Church of Christ in Nigeria chapel, killing five people, including a pastor preparing for Communion, witnesses said (*Huff Post, World*, April 30, 2012 by Salisu Rabiou and Jon Gambrell).

Now, we know the people who write these reports do not know New Testament teaching and call the preacher the “pastor,” but the content of the incident has been verified and the local officials are looking into the matter.

What can we do about such acts? Our remoteness to the situation does not render us helpless. We don’t even know the names of these five Christians at this point, but we certainly can pray for their families and the local church there in Maiduguri, Nigeria where this happened. Paul pled, “Brethren, pray for us” (1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1). We are confident “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

Also, we need to prepare ourselves for the world in which we live through edification and evangelism. Through edification by instructing our congregations on the basics of the warring religion of Islam showing its rejection and militancy against Jesus Christ and His church. Like Paul we must be “set for the defense of the gospel” (Philippians 1:17). Through evangelism by knowing how to convince Muslims of the error of their way in following the prophet Mohammed (Psalm 119:104).

Peter’s quotation of Moses got him into trouble with the Jewish leaders of his day, got him scolded like an errant child, and got him beaten like a mad dog (Acts 3:22; 5:40). What caused these radical reactions? In Jerusalem Peter preached,

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have

likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities (Acts 3:22-26).

We must, following the teaching and example of the apostles themselves, address the fact that while the Muslims like to refer to Mohammed as, the Prophet, they are mistaken about it. Many who work with Muslims in the prison system in America suggest referring to Mohammed as the Prophet to gain favor with Muslims in an effort to win them to Christ. However, to do so is to depart from apostolic teaching and practice. The example in the news from Nigeria shows that the result is the same with the Muslims once they know you do not really believe Mohammed is the Prophet.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of our five brethren in Maiduguri, Nigeria who lost their lives Sunday when they assembled to worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).