

Jeff Hayes' Oral Response to

"Early Gentile Christianity, Conversion, and Culture-Shift in the New Testament," by Terence Paige Presented at BtD 2011, supplementing Hayes' written response sent as pre-reading.

Last Friday, I was invited to give thanks before dinner including a group of Somalis. I ended by praying in the name of Jesus the only intercessor. Immediately one imam objected to my praying in Jesus' name, since they don't pray in Muhammad's name. I showed them from the Qur'an that Jesus is indeed the only mediator/intercessor, and their only response to my Qur'anic proof was to quote from their traditions. By their traditions they made void the Qur'an.

In Mark 7:13, Jesus said that the Pharisees and scribes had by their traditions which they pass on made void the Word of God, and the Somali imams by their traditions had made void the words of the Qur'an.

In my paper, I referred to the book Pagan Christianity by Frank Viola and George Barna. Many of you did not get to read this. In their book, they research and document the pagan and cultural origins of much of 21st century "Christianity." Among the aspects of modern Christianity from non-Scriptural sources they mention in their book are:

- A) Church buildings, sacred places, steeples, pews, pulpits, balconies
- B) Order of worship, Sunday morning worship, altar calls, individual salvation, the sinner's prayer, pre-tribulation theology, the sermon, and the processional
- C) The priest, one pastor, clergy, ordination
- D) Clerical robes, choir, choir robes, dressing up for church
- E) Minister of music or worship team,
- F) Tithing, clerical salaries,
- G) Baptismal issues, "personal savior," a truncated Lord's supper instead of a meal
- H) Christian education, theologies, seminaries, ordination, Bible college, Sunday school, youth pastors

I believe that much of this is what is being presented as "Christianity." These things can serve to make void the word of God.

When I was praying about whether to come to this conference, God told me, "Yes. Be my witness. Defend those who cannot defend themselves – those Muslims who want Jesus and are being offered Christianity."

I greatly appreciate Terence and Georges and their papers, as well as the many others. As a result of reading them, I think some issues are more clear.

First, I want to make clear what (it seems) that Insider Movement proponents and opponents agree upon:

- 1) The gospel involves transformation, change, dying to self, being born again by the Spirit, surrendering all to Christ, trusting him as Lord and Savior, repentance, acknowledging sin and rebellion, turning from idols and sin to holiness and God, putting off the old nature and its practices, and putting on the new nature in a new creation. Georges' T1-T6 areas were very helpful and we agree totally. If there is no transformation, there is no saving faith.
- 2) There must be a transfer of allegiance to Christ from everything else.
- 3) Anything that is demonic must be renounced and rejected. For Muslims, this would include any views of Muhammad as a savior, mediator, or intercessor, view of the Qur'an as a final authority, plus anything that is in contradiction to the Bible.
- 4) We do not encourage Muslim followers of Christ to be secretive of their faith, but rather to identify with Christ and confess Christ as Lord. They are generally bold witnesses for Christ as they openly follow Him. We don't encourage them to avoid persecution for the sake of Christ.
- 5) We do not encourage new believers from Muslim background to go to the mosque for their fellowship or spiritual growth.
- 6) We do not believe Christian-background workers among Muslims should become Muslims.
- 7) Translation should be done from the original languages, not from another translation, such as English. Any changing of the meaning of the Greek/Hebrew/Aramaic words and phrases in translation is wrong, whatever the motivation.
- 8) We believe that the Islamic and Qur'anic view of Christ, salvation, and redemption is sub-Biblical and not salvific. Muslims who trust Christ as Lord and Savior must develop a Biblical worldview in core beliefs and values.
- 9) We believe that unity with the Body of Christ is important for new believers from all backgrounds.

Second, I want to try to make clear the areas we may disagree on:

- 1) We do not believe that everything in Islam is demonic, or that "formal Islam" equals idolatry. We believe that when an issue is not directly addressed in the Bible, the believer is free to act according to his own conscience on the matter. We believe he may follow his culture to the extent that it is compatible with the Bible.
- 2) We do not believe that Islam is the enemy, but rather Satan is the enemy. Ephesians 6:12.
- 3) We do not believe that 1 Corinthians is of lesser value than other epistles like 1 Thessalonians in the Islamic context. For one, 1 Corinthians is the only epistle that has two different audiences: the Corinthian church, and everyone everywhere who calls on Jesus Christ as Lord (1:2). Second, Paul's exhortation to remain in the state in which believers are

called is repeated three times for three different aspects of life (socio-demographic, religious/cultural, and socioeconomic). And Paul further universalizes this when he states that this is his rule for all the churches. 1 Corinthians 7:17.

- 4) We do not believe that “taking off the old” means that Muslims who trust Christ should cease to be part of their families, communities, cultures, and societies, but rather that their changed new life in Christ and their words should be a witness to their families, communities, cultures, and societies.
- 5) We believe that Jesus’ statement that families will be divided over him is not a command or a goal, but rather a prophecy about what happens in some families when only some of them put their trust in Jesus. We believe that the primary goal regarding a Muslim follower of Christ toward his family and culture is to be a witness to it, not to leave it.
- 6) We do not believe that all persecution a believer receives is because of Christ. Some persecution is for dishonoring parents or culture, or for insensitivity.
- 7) We believe that the Holy Spirit in the heart of the new believer in Christ as Savior and Lord from Islamic background is fully able to guide him how he should relate to his culture/society/religion – what to keep and what to change or renounce, and that outsiders do not need to encourage him to change or leave communities.
- 8) We believe that Christianity as it exists today is very different from what Jesus intended his church to be, and that imposing the name “Christian” and the “joining Christianity” on Muslims who trust Christ are not New Testament mandates. Rather we fear that those who add those requirements to the gospel are actually preaching a different gospel.
- 9) We believe that the gospel is Jesus plus nothing – not plus circumcision, not denominations, not the title “Christian”, not joining “Christianity,” not adopting Western theological formulations.
- 10) We see a difference between “being ashamed of Christ” and “not using the title ‘Christian’ to self-describe.”
- 11) We do not believe that that the gospel necessarily implies socio-religio-cultural change.
- 12) We believe that Muslims who have trusted in Christ and are following Him as Lord and Savior are already part of the Body of Christ, whether or not they retain their Muslim identity. We do not believe that Christian religious forms, traditions, and identity are required for salvation.
- 13) We believe that unity with the Body of Christ does not necessarily mean unity with all organizations that call themselves “churches.”
- 14) We believe that the Bible is the final authority, not the Bible as interpreted by the various traditions, church history, confessions, doctrinal statements, etc.