

RECONCILIATION

By Dr. Rex Duff

Why globalization requires the Western world to expand their definition of reconciliation.

We live in a world where we have instant access to the universal church family at any time, do to globalization. The universal church also has instant access to the western philosophy of church doctrine that has penetrated Christianity since early Catholicism and latter during the reformation. When one considers the doctrine of reconciliation, the third world church's cry out for change, due to Western nationalism, patriotism, and imperialism which has often planted the Christian faith by the sword. It is time for the Western church to repent, and admit that Biblical Christianity, never taught love your enemies by killing them. Therefore, a reexamination of the New Testament teachings of Jesus is necessary.

I. What is globalization, and why is it important?

Globalization in a spiritual context is looking at the universal church family from the view of all people and nations, with their spiritual problems and views having equal footing with the Western church (Cook, et al. 2010, pp. 143-148). It is important because the 3rd world churches are crying out for theological changes that reflect a more Biblical center approach to the teachings of Christ. Each culture has its own unique problems, and these problems need to be addressed from an application of the Bible, that relates to them. Some have called this a fuller understanding of God's truths as revealed in the Bible (Cook, et al. 2010, p.151).

II. What has cause the Western world for a need to revise its theology concerning reconciliation?

In 1492 the European world began colonization of the Americas. It did so with a Bible in one hand, a case of gin, and a sword in another. In 1498 the colonization of Asia began. During this same time India was colonized by Portugal, a western European country. In 1625 Western Europe moved into Africa, resulting in colonization, and removing blacks from their home lands as slaves to serve Western Europeans, and Europeans who had immigrate to the United States. From 1521-1898, both Western Europe and later the United States colonized the Philippines. All of this western nationalism, patriotism, and imperialism were done by professing Christians from Western civilizations (Cook, et al. 2010, p.153). The philosophy of expansionism by professing Christians, continued in the United States by the destruction of the Indian nations and the planting of American military even today around the world, where they have not been invited. These conquered nations are now crying out if Christianity (like the Muslim faith) uses the sword to make converts, can we give your Western Bible back to you, and you go home, as reportedly said by the Andean Indians (Cook, et.al. 2010, p.153)? The result of Western imperialism has left nations that are impoverished, with

“mounting injustice, political oppression”, ecological problems, wealth distribution gaps, and cultures that have been lost (Cook, et.al. 2010, p.145). All of this cannot be blamed on Western expansionism, but for the average person, whose future looks pessimistic, the missionary who conquers you with the sword and the Bible, appear to be one and the same? Is it any wonder that third world countries, want to use Asian philosophy and religions, with love and charity for the poor, to try to relate better to the gospel (Cook, et.al. 2010, pp.148- 161)? Has the Western world so distorted the Biblical message of Christ, that in order to sell the gospel message, a more peaceful message from other religions need to be used?

III. What are some of life situations today, from a local prospective that can be solved by reexamining the church’s definition of the doctrine of reconciliation?

If we are honest to begin with, the boundaries between local and the world are quickly disappearing. This author lives in Phoenix, Arizona where out of 6 months a year, visitors attend our Plymouth Brethren Church from not only many States, but a few foreign countries. Many visit us from what they learn from the web. Personally, this author receives emails from Africa, South America, and Asia, concerning various doctrines and the application of these doctrines, from articles posted on his web site, that all can read (Anabap.com). Because many visitors both in person, and from the web are seeking answers concerning life’s situations, like divorce, the military, voting, patriotism, nationalism, a loving salvation, and what Jesus taught on these subjects, not a Western cultures imperialistic view-point, it is time for the Western church to repent for its actions towards third world Christian nations.

IV. A refined doctrine of Reconciliation needs to say what?

One part of the gospel is that God has reconciled man to Himself, (Nave, 1973, p.1118) by the saving merits of Christ on the cross (2 Cor. 5:18-21; Eph. 2:15-18; Col 1:20; & Hebrews 2:17). It is time for the Western church to expand the doctrine of reconciliation to include the relationship between Christians and the world, their enemies, even their competition. Jesus said in Matthew 5:43-45, “You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you, and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven” (NKJV). Could it be time for the Western church to admit, that the use of the sword, was never a part of true Christianity, and we repent!

References:

Cook M., Haskell R., Julian R., & Tanchanpongs N. (2010). *Local Theology for the Global Church*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library

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