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TESTING THE FAITH

WND Exclusive

Van Impe ministry abandons TBN in clash over Islam

Network turned back episode that challenged leaders over 'apostasy'

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WND

A Christian ministry's decision to expose as "false teachers" several celebrity ministers it believes are corrupting biblical teachings has prompted a rift, with Jack Van Impe Ministries dropping plans to work in the future with Trinity Broadcasting Network, where it has broadcast for more than two decades.

"I Will Not Be Silenced! I will not allow anyone to tell me what I can and cannot preach," Van Impe said in a statement when TBN would not allow his program to air.

"When I see heretical teaching leading to apostasy, I will speak out," he said. "The Bible says 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness' (II Timothy 3:16). The Apostle Paul also gives instructions in Titus 1:9-11, 13 'Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers ... Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake... Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.'"

Van Impe said he immediately called his media agents and told them, "I no longer wanted to air my program on Trinity Broadcasting Network; we will take the tremendous amount of money that we were spending there to obtain new stations that will allow us to continue to reach every square mile of America with the truths of the Bible without this network."

(Story continues below)



Jack Van Impe

The dispute arose over the issue of advocating for "Chrislam" and other efforts that are designed to find "common ground" between Christians and Muslims. TBN declined to air one of Van Impe's programs that contained sharp

criticisms of leaders such as Rick Warren of "The Purpose Driven Life" fame and Robert Schuller.

In a statement from Van Impe Ministries today, Executive Director Ken Vancil said his organization rejected an effort by TBN to reinstate the programming and would work to develop alternative broadcast outlets where they were needed.

"We would not be able to minister effectively if we had to look over our shoulder wondering if a program was going to be censored because of mentioning a name," Vancil said. "While there is hurt over this incident, we hold no animosity towards TBN. Dr. Van Impe has often expressed his appreciation to Paul and Jan (Crouch, of TBN) and all that they have accomplished."

But he confirmed that Paul Crouch Sr. "cautioned" him as recently as Monday "regarding Dr. Van Impe's naming of names and publicly rebuking ministers and their teachings."

The dispute erupted just last week, when Van Impe's ministry planned to air sharp criticism of Christians who say they want to "reach out" by incorporating beliefs or practices of Islam into their Christian organizations.

The program specifically mentioned Warren and Schuller, prompting TBN to prevent the broadcast.

"We received a call from Matt Crouch of TBN informing us that they would not run that program. ... The reason he gave was that we specifically mentioned Rick Warren and Robert Schuller and that it is TBN's policy that broadcasters are not allowed to rebuke other ministries," Van Impe said.

"This is a rather hypocritical statement in light of the fact that they have never said anything in the past when we have rebuked others such as Bishop Spong, Bishop Pike, and in the past few months Harold Camping and Rob Bell," he continued. "They also stated that they would not run any future program where we offered our DVD Reclaiming & Restoring Biblical Christianity as a premium for a donation to our ministry. A DVD that exposes false teachers and the heresies that they proclaim."

TBN did not respond to WND's request for comment on the dispute.

Vancil said after TBN's decision not to air the program that there was no future between the two groups.

"This was not an easy decision; we have had a relationship with TBN for 23 years. ... But at this point we feel it is time to part ways," he said. "We have been able to over the years develop an independent network of broadcast stations all across America as well as broadcasting on TBN and Daystar. Our media agents have worked diligently and determined that we need to add 14 stations to be able to continue fully covering every mile of America."

"Praise God I am pleased to announce that negotiations have progressed in these 14 markets and that contracts will be presented to the Van Impes for approval in a matter of days," he said.

In the program that was cut, which remains available on the Jack Van Impe Ministries website, the ministry launches its campaign regarding "apostate ministers."

Van Impe explains that the Bible prophesies a one-world government and a one-world religion during the end times, and his concern focuses on the move among some Christian organizations to adopt some Islamic thought and incorporate elements of Islam into their worship.

"We've got too many of these mush-mouth preachers. All they're doing is two stories and a movie review," he said. But the Bible actually outlines that its messages also are to "reprove and rebuke" Christians for failing to live for God.

According to the broadcast, "Chrislam is a term that may be used more often among apostate churches."

Such Islamic and evangelical Christian leaders, the report explained, are working to find a way to promote "common beliefs the two religions supposedly share."

Specifically cited were Warren and Schuller.

During a subsequent broadcast, also available on the ministry's website, the advance of "Chrislam" thoughts and practices into Christian churches was described as a "tsunami of compromise."

"This compromise is going to permeate Christianity," Van Impe said. "I'm calling for the old-time religion to be restored.

"God called me to preach. And I will not stand down for any man, for any church, for any Christian organization," he said.

The report noted that there are some Christian missionaries overseas who have "eliminated 91 verses in God's Holy Word because they wanted to please Islam and the Muslims."

Those references identify Jesus as the Son of God.

Other developments include moves by some Christian churches to remove clear Christian emblems such as crosses.

He said what churches need today is that "old time religion" and less "self-esteem psycho-babble."

Criticized on the program were recommendations attributed to Warren that churches change music to a contemporary rock style, eliminate hymnbooks and the choir, eliminate the Sunday evening or Wednesday prayer services, remove the word "church" and refer to it as a "campus," and reduce the use of the words "unsaved," "lost," "hell" and "heaven."

Other ministries have voiced criticism similar to Van Impe's.

Joe Schimmel, senior pastor of Blessed Hope Chapel in Southern California and chief of the Good Fight Ministries, openly has questioned whether church leaders are affirming Allah.

Schimmel, who is best known for "They Sold Their Souls for Rock n Roll," which exposes satanic influences behind much of yesterday and today's popular music and how it negatively influences youth, suggested in a WND column, "Could it be that we are witnessing the formation of the prophesied one-world religion under the Antichrist? (Revelation 13:1-18) "

He cited Brian McLaren of the emerging church movement, who planned for an Islamic Ramadan celebration. And he mentioned Warren's agreement to address the Islamic Society of North America, which "the Department of Justice categorized two years ago as a co-conspirator in financing a foreign terrorist group!"

Another church leader, Tony Campolo, "a proponent of the so-called 'evangelical left' claimed that 'even if' Muslims 'don't convert, they are God's people,'" Schimmel wrote.

"Even more chilling is the fact that over 300 prominent Christian leaders signed a letter issued by the Yale Center for Faith and Culture claiming that world peace is dependent on Muslims and Christians recognizing 'Allah' and 'Yahweh' as the same God. This letter, titled 'Loving God and Neighbor Together,' was written in response to a signed document by 138 Muslim leaders titled 'A Common Word Between Us and You.' McLaren, Warren, Robert Schuller and Bill Hybels were just several of the signatories to this outright betrayal of Christ!" he said.

TBN previously had a conflict over its intolerance for criticism of Islam. It was in 2006 when Hal Lindsey, WND