

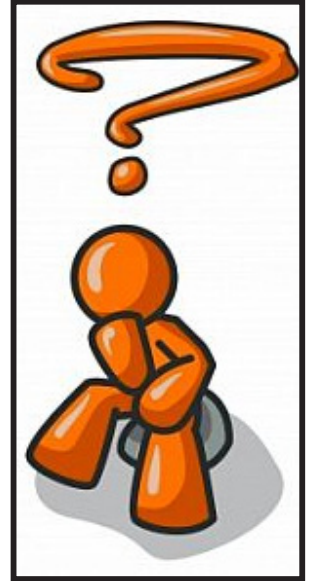
What About ... The Idea That Religions should Coexist ?

BY DR. DAVID A. DEWITT

The coexist symbol was created by Polish graphic designer Piotr Mlodozieniec with the purpose of promoting religious tolerance in 2001. It was popularized by the global Ver-tigo Tour of the rock group U2 and has since then been claimed by several others with much profit and controversy. Here are the meanings of the letters:

- The Islamic crescent is in the place of the “C.”
- The peace symbol is in the place of the “o.”
- The male/female symbol is in the place of the “e.”
- The Jewish Star of David is in the place of the “x.”
- The wiccan/pagan symbol is in the place of the “i.”
- The Chinese Ying-Yang is in the place of the “s.”
- The Christian cross is in the place of the “t.”

A popular “Christian” view is expressed by Lance Steinhibel [enochmagazine.com]. “COEXIST is a way to demonstrate your support of religious freedom, tolerance and understanding.” He adds, “Now I don’t think that’s very evil, it actually sounds like something I would love to have for what I believe. If Christians believe in love, then we have to love everyone, even those who believe in different gods.”



Coexist does not promote understanding. Accepting an opposing teaching is not based on understanding, but a lack of it. And if Steinhibel wants tolerance for Christianity, then he is talking about something different than the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. If we define Christianity as the teaching of Christ and the apostles, then the coexist idea must be seriously questioned. Was it God’s solution that Noah’s family should coexist with the unbelievers before the Flood? Did God suggest that Lot should coexist with the homosexuals in Sodom? Was Joshua told to coexist with the Canaanites in the Land? Did the prophets say that the Israelites were to coexist with the gods of Baal and Ashtoreth and Moloch? Did David decide he should coexist with Goliath?

But didn’t Jesus preach peace? Yes, but not a “coexist” tolerance. When Jesus was born, the angels said, *Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased* (Luke 2:14). Jesus said, *Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division* (Luke 12:51). When He addressed His disciples before sending them out on a ministry trip, He said, *if the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace* (Matthew 10:13-14). In the upper room, Jesus told the disciples, *Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give*

to you. And these things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation (John 14:27; 16:33). In Revelation, Jesus complimented believers who *cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false... But [to other believers He said] I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray* (Revelation 2:2, 20).

Of course, we physically coexist in this world with many false religions. Christ and the apostles never suggested we physically go to war with them. Physical territory on this planet, political influence, and economic advantage were never the goals of Jesus. But Jesus and the apostles never tolerated the theology, teaching, or influence of other religions on believers. Every New Testament book, except Philemon, denounces false prophets and false teachers. The love for those in other religions was expressed by telling them the truth, not coexisting with their beliefs. To suggest we should tolerate the Islamic denial of the deity of Christ, wiccan/pagan Satanism, and the eastern pantheistic denial of a personal God and absolute morality, is contrary to the teaching of Jesus and the apostles. “*Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,*” says the Lord (2 Corinthians 6:17).