Sharing the Gospel of Hate or of Peace?

Am I confused, or do we hear people sharing all too often the gospel of hate, rather than the gospel of peace? Have you ever been part of a conversation that started out simple enough, but the moment someone gave a differing point of view on any given subject, the finger pointing begins?

It's the old "I'm right and you're wrong!"

Suddenly, ideas start flying and you learn that the person you are speaking with has created God in their own image, with their own ideas of who God is, and if you don't share that same exact image of God, or believe in the God they have created, or worse, the concept of God they've
inherited, then you are somehow not a genuine believer. The same is true in many aspects of life, but when it comes to religion, people seem to really get a bit too hostile.

It is easy to see why, often, the gospel of peace and good news becomes the gospel of hate or worse.

I have come to the conclusion that we should not be surprised at all, since Jesus had the same problem with the organized religion of His day, and the Apostle Paul had the same problem in his world and in the churches that he visited.

Did you ever wonder what Jesus meant when He said to His own disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation"? (Mark 16:15).

In Luke 4:14-21 we read the following:

14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through the whole countryside. 15 He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised Him. 16 He went to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day He went into the synagogue, as was His custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. Unrolling it, He found the place where it is written:

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

20 Then He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on Him. 21 He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Jesus was reading from Isaiah 61:1-3:

"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, to provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor."

All too often I hear people tell others how they believe God wants other people to live, or to believe, or to change. It rarely sounds like very good news. In fact, it often sounds like bad news. Crushing news. Oppressing news. At times, people are left in more despair than before a well-meaning individual started speaking to them.

It seems to me there is something wrong with this picture. As we share the Good News of the Gospel, perhaps we should remember that in fact it is Good News. That Christ came "to proclaim good news to the poor." He was sent "to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free. . ."

Remember, the organized religion within which Christ wanted to minister had enough rules and regulations to burden and break the back of even the strongest packhorse. Could it be that offering people rules is not what the Gospel is all about? Perhaps the character of a loving God, of an accepting, sacrificed, and resurrected Savior is what we should be sharing; perhaps we should leave the life-changing power and work of a transformed life to the Holy Spirit.

In New York City or any place we speak or meet people, we must always try to share the good news with those who are hurting and seeking and have a spirit of despair and do our best to point people to "the oil of joy." If we allow the Spirit to do the work, with care and delicate ministry in the lives of individuals and our own, we will find in due time, the promise fulfilled "They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor."

If you are in New York City this coming Saturday, June 2, at 11:15 a.m., please stop by The Chapel At Union Square (123 East 15th Street) as we gather together for a Conversation with the Word--"Sharing the Gospel of Peace." Please scroll down for more information.

May God bless you and bring you His lasting peace, and may He abundantly shower you with the "oil of Joy."

Best regards--Tony Romeo, Pastor / The Chapel At Union Square / REACH-NYC

P.S.: You can always contact me at reachnyc.romeo@gmail.com.


**Individual and group Bible study sessions are always available. "Cafe Reach" will be reopening soon. For more information write to:** reachnyc.romeo@gmail.com.

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**This Saturday, July 2, 2011**

**The Chapel At Union Square / 123 E. 15th Street / 11:15 A.M.**

**Looking for a loving and intimate church family?**
Saturday Morning, July 2, 2011 / 11:15 A.M.
The Chapel At Union Square
123 East 15th Street / NYC / Between Irving Place and Third Ave.

Arrange at 11:15 a.m. and enjoy a relaxing meditation as our resident musician and organist, Eiichi, plays hymns in praise of God on the pipe organ.

11:30 a.m. Worship Experience / Music / Prayer
-- A Conversation with the Word --
"Sharing the Gospel of Peace."
Tony Romeo, Pastor
Meet together with our group of nice, loving people this Saturday to share in the message of hope that Christ came to give each one of us.

Join us for a simple vegetarian luncheon
in the Mezzanine / Library after the service at 12:45 p.m.
Invite your friends to enjoy a relaxing morning with us in the peaceful atmosphere that is The Chapel At Union Square, New York City

The Chapel At Union Square.
Where thinking and Jesus Christ are always welcome.
together studying the Word in a quiet, country setting under the stars.

Some of our friends will be traveling to a camp meeting held in Upstate New York this Saturday. If you can't get to a camp meeting, we invite you to spend this Saturday with us here in New York City.

No need to travel by horse and buggy. Just take the bus or the train.
We will have a nice lunch waiting for you!

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Traveling here by car?
There is a parking garage on the south side of East 18th Street, in the middle of the block between Irving Place and Third Avenue, where you will be able to park your vehicle from the time you arrive until 7 p.m., for the reasonable fee of $11.00.
(See attendant for details.)

There is also street parking with payment via metered parking machines located in the area.

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Click on the link below to view the REACH-NYC website:
reach-nyc.com

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