

From WSET:

Local Converts Speak About Islam And Christianity

Location: Lynchburg, VA

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Posted: March 26, 2006 11:57 PM EST

URL: <http://new.wset.com/news/stories/0306/313712.html>



Lynchburg, VA - Two Lynchburg men can relate to what's going on in Afghanistan. One of them was Christian and converted to Islam. The other was raised a Muslim and is now a conservative Christian. Others influenced both men in their decision to convert.

Ergun Caner is the president of Liberty University's Theological Seminary and converted from Islam in High School and was disowned for it.

Dean Ergun Caner, LU Theological Seminary - "It was one kid who with tenacity would not leave me alone."

Lynchburg College religious studies professor Jeffrey Burke also converted as a young man.

Prof. Jeffrey Burke, LC Religious Studies - "I spent two years at a private Presbyterian mission school in Cairo, Egypt."

They both condemn what's going on in Afghanistan. But that's where their similarities end.

Caner - "This is not unique in Islam, in Pakistan you have room 295C, in Iran, Afghanistan, any country called an Islamic Republic it is a death sentence."

Burke - "The Koran allows for different religious communities."

Burke says Islam is at its core a peaceful religion.

Burke - "The appeal for the downtrodden, for the people who are dispossessed and have compassion for all walks of life."

Caner disagrees.

Caner - "In the 1300 years since Mohammad died, Islam has not coexisted peacefully in any country where it was not the majority. Jihad is a way of life."

Burke's wife is also a Muslim and often wears the traditional headdress.

Burke - "I notice a lot of hostility anger downright disgust."

Caner - "When Christianity was fighting the crusades we made the same mistake. We were promising eternal damnation for infidels."

Both of them have hope the Muslim world will one day be at peace. In the case against the imprisoned Afghan man who converted to Christianity, Caner says it's common for people to claim they're insane to avoid being prosecuted.

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