

An Open Letter to Rachel Maddow About My Trip to Israel

Dear Rachel,

I'd like to set the record straight about my recent headline-making trip to Israel and clarify that Bryan Fischer's remarks do not represent David Lane, and most importantly do not represent the pastors to whom he ministers or the many Christians like myself who follow Jesus Christ.

Let me also clarify, I am neither a Republican National Committee member nor a registered Republican. As I have already written, I went on the "much ado about nothing" Israel trip and met people from all backgrounds, races, religions and non-religions, ages, and economic and educational backgrounds. Many who went had little knowledge about Israel or Jesus Christ—yet—they were open-minded enough to come and learn.

Which is why, Ms. Maddow, I must remind you that by making broad generalizations that lump all Christians (or all Republicans) into a category represented by inane and hateful comments is unfair, inaccurate, intellectually dishonest and misleading at best. And such generalizations would be no different than me claiming all homosexuals (or all Democrats) are pedophiles.

A claim that could easily be made when considering the "Open Secret in Hollywood," Bill Clinton's involvement with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, Sen. Menendez's and Democratic financial donor Salomon Melgen's alleged relationships with underage prostitutes, and many other high-profile crimes being investigated—that most news organizations and highly paid attorneys and lobbyists are aggressively trying to keep hidden.

I detest Fischer's remarks, but I detest even more a news industry that covers up crimes committed against children that are too horrible to fathom. No Christian I know is seeking to cover up pedophiles' crimes. The question is why would *MSNBC*? And when it comes to crime, do you approve of *MSNBC* glorifying Al Sharpton on television obviously aware that he owes millions in taxes when others go to jail for owing less, or that *MSNBC* profited from the non-Ferguson protestors who looted and burned innocent people's homes and businesses?

Ms. Maddow, I appreciate your advocacy for human rights and your track record for calling out hypocrisy. But consider this: Obama has directed our State, Defense, Education and Homeland Security departments to advance an ideology ingrained in the oppression of women and children and genocide of non-Muslims. Instead of turning a blind eye to Obama's directives that are causing indescribable suffering worldwide, why not expose the hypocrisy of America's first Muslim president? Why not demand that our government stop funding Islam—especially within the context of “separation of church and state”?

By remaining silent you ignore the reality that you and others in the gay community are prime targets. Know this: Islam's victims are singled out because of their ethnicity, religion, non-religion and gender. No lesbians live in Muslim countries; they are all dead. Yet your news organization continues to propagate the lie, if it mentions it at all, that only “extremists” or “radicals” commit violence, when nothing could be further from the truth.

Let me explain why I went on the Israel trip and why I'm sure David Lane and many others would be more than willing to take you or any other Democrat to Israel.

First, the Middle East is volatile. I witnessed an explosion near the Israel-Syrian border and heard gunfire along the Israel-Lebanese border—conflict I understand within a biblical

and historical context. However, this past week's conflict is specifically a result of several years of Obama Administration and Congressional action that has financially and militarily contributed to regional political unrest. What your viewers may not know is that American tax dollars are largely responsible for ISIS and the terms, "moderate Muslim" and "radical Islam" are misnomers.

Second, it was Muhammad's followers who in the seventh century invaded present-day Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, France, Spain and many other countries. And they still are brutally killing non-Muslims—including lesbians—because of what the Quran states.

Third, the only line of defense between you and the Muslim Brotherhood are Christians—and in particular, ministers like those who attended this trip. They teach repentance, forgiveness, restoration to wholeness, and affirm your value as a person because God created you and gave you a free will to believe and behave as you choose. The Constitution neither originates your value to society nor your human rights. Rather, it safeguards your already existing God-given human rights.

On the Galilean hills I just visited, Jesus brought together men, women and children of varying backgrounds, like those on this trip, teaching them about genuine heart change. In Capernaum, which means "place of comfort," Jesus sought out the lowest of the low, the "least important," the "less than" and the unwanted, offering them comfort and healing. In what is now the West Bank, Jesus referred to the Good Samaritan—convicting his followers to understand the significance of loving their neighbor and their enemy. Jesus responded to violence with nonviolence and suffered, bled and died on the Mount of Olives, an area where he often found solace amid laborers pressing olives above garbage-strewn streets.

If you knew David Lane, you'd know he often says his life was full of "drugs, wine, women and song. I deserved judgment. But God gave me mercy." You'd also know that Lane does not know Fischer and he is loving to everyone, especially one of his early mentors and his minister's sister, both of whom are gay.

It was because of Lane's spirit of humility that he invited a group of people to Israel, who were largely unknown to each other and who represent the best and worst attributes of Americans. Which is why it was so important for everyone to hear from ministers who repeatedly emphasized God's mercy.

We all want justice—we want those who've wronged us to be held accountable. And we are offended when we think they aren't, feeling robbed because the offender "got away" with wronging us. But the reality is that all people are equal in God's eyes. "Being a less bad person doesn't make a good person," one minister reasoned.

That's why the beauty of forgiveness, mercy, and grace are such profoundly priceless gifts. Our worst offenses deserve judgment, but instead Jesus, and only Jesus, offers a better way. God offers mercy, meaning we don't get what we deserve. God also extends grace, meaning we receive what we don't deserve. That message of mercy and grace is what Lane reminded us of on this trip.

A trip, I should note, not made possible by any organization, but solely by an anonymous donor's generosity.

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