

One of my wife's friends handed me a booklet and asked me to read it aloud to the two of them. The author designed and runs a spiritual retreat center for a great diversity of religions. People can connect with any or all of them. The booklet expressed his opinion regarding harmony among all faiths, noting that people choose whatever they feel fits them. I soon encountered statements about Jesus that contradicted Biblical perspectives. Unwilling to express those verbally, I changed them to what I believe the Bible says about Jesus. In retrospect, I should have acknowledged that I couldn't read it aloud as I didn't agree with the text. I could have told them I felt I would be dishonoring Jesus... but then I didn't know at the beginning what I was getting into.

Changing the wording didn't accomplish anything; in fact, my revision of the text offended my audience. After I finished, they asked me what authority I had to just change what this man was saying. I had taken someone else's work, put my ideas into it and passed them off as his work. They were right, and I apologized. In trying to control what was said, I had misrepresented the author and the text.

Sadly, I realized that this is also what we often do with the Bible, though we may not recognize it or want to recognize it. When that is the case with me, I may lead people to my version of god, instead of the everlasting God who created me in his image. It is not the god I create in my mind that I or anybody else needs, but we need the God who created us.