



Preacher, author emphasizes peace, justice

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Jim Wallis will speak at Wartburg and Loras

Bringing his crusade for social justice to Dubuque, evangelical preacher and activist Jim Wallis quotes the prophet Micah and Pope Paul VI.

“Micah says they shall beat their swords into plowshares, but he follows that by saying every man will sit under his own vine and fig tree,” Wallis said in a telephone interview Friday with the Telegraph Herald. “If you want peace, you have to make sure people have their own grapevines.

“If you want peace, work for justice, as Pope Paul says.”

A best-selling author and regular on national radio and TV programs, Wallis will be keynote speaker and receive an honorary doctorate at Wartburg Theological Seminary’s commencement on Sunday. On Monday, he will speak to the public from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. at the Loras College Alumni Campus Center.

The Loras event is being sponsored by Iowans for Sensible Priorities, in conjunction with the Father Ray Herman Peace and Justice Center at Loras. Sensible Priorities is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing wasteful defense spending and addressing social needs.

“The Sensible Priorities campaign is so focused and so clear,” Wallis said. “Sixty billion dollars is really serving no useful purpose, instead being spent on old, outdated weapons.”

Lawmakers are afraid to go after the waste for fear of looking weak on defense, he said.

“The problem is that if people don’t have their heads around all the facts, they hear a \$60 billion cut in defense and say, ‘Oh, my goodness, we can’t do that,’” he said.

The U.S. could be using that money for education and children’s health care, to rebuild schools, cut our dependency on foreign oil and save children’s lives overseas, he said.

It isn’t just that we should not be wasting billions on outdated Cold War-era weapons, Wallis said. America could use that money to target poverty in parts of the world where terrorists are being recruited.

“There are different ways to ensure security,” Wallis said. “Military weapons aren’t the only way.”

The Bible contains many injunctions that warn against putting our trust in military might, he said. It calls on Christians to “only go to war with great lament and many tears.”

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