

**Christians And The New World Order**  
**Presented at the Community Fellowship Church**  
**in Mitchell, MB, on March 19, 2005**  
**by Curtis Penner**

***Preamble:** I am publishing this sermon on my web site because I believe what Curtis Penner is saying needs to be heard throughout the Christian church, especially in North America. Curt has graciously given me permission to spread the word via [www.Edgework.ca](http://www.Edgework.ca) . It seems to me that more sermons in our churches should be critiquing what Curt calls The New World Order in the light of Jesus' ethic. Too many of us are reciting the mantras of an evangelical world that misses the heartbeat of God. I hope you are shocked, disturbed, angry, moved or at least unsettled after reading this sermon. May we as Christians wake up and begin advocating values congruent with the Kingdom of God. (Jack Heppner)*

One of the blessings of speaking in this church is that there doesn't seem to be any pressure to do it exactly like you are taught in Bible School. So, I want to try something new this morning.

One of the first rules in homiletics is that the scripture reading comes at the beginning or somewhere near the beginning of the sermon. This is usually then followed by three points and a conclusion. It's kind of like, you start off with a Scripture verse, and work your way down from there. For this particular sermon, however, I want to try reversing that order. I want to start at the bottom and work my way up. So I will be reading the Scripture passage right at the very last.

Years ago, I heard some great advice about writing which has always stuck with me. The advice was: *Always write in such a way that you can't possibly be misunderstood.* In communication, whether it be speaking or writing, there always exists the potential that what you think you are saying may not necessarily be what people are hearing. I am keenly aware that this might be a potential problem this morning. Therefore, I want to do some explaining before I begin.

If, at any point in this sermon, you are starting to hear that I am on an "anti-business" rant, then I am not communicating properly. I want to say right up front that this sermon is not intended to be anti-business. Small business is indeed a great blessing to, and an essential component of, any local community. I am all for small business. On the other hand, multi-national corporations, who, like Pac Man, eat up everything in their path, are a different story. These, I believe, are a scourge not only to local community, but also to the entire earth.

My sermon this morning is dedicated to the many who deliberately stay away from church these days. And they are staying away, in many cases, because of what we as Christians have allegedly come to see as respectable Christian behavior. I am not necessarily talking about "unbelievers," I am talking about people of faith, and people of potential faith – people who would love to believe in God – but who find it very difficult to stomach what is going on in His name. Bono says, *Many people are cynical . . . not about God, but about God's politics.* I personally know many such people.

What I am about to say this morning is motivated by great concern. Concern for where our world is at. Concern for where our continent is at. And concern for where the Evangelical church is at. We are living in critical times. And yet, many Christians seem blissfully unaware of just how critical these times are.

What I am about to say this morning will no doubt sound controversial. In fact, I suspect, that I would have a riot on my hands were I to present this sermon to some other churches in our area. But I'm betting that Mitchell Community Fellowship is good-natured enough that it won't happen here. At least, I am confident enough that I decided to leave my old Roller Derby equipment at home this morning.

I am well aware that what I am going to say runs completely counter to our culture's prevailing credo and to what many see as sound Christian dogmatics. But I feel that as a Christian, I cannot keep silent. We have swept this issue under the rug and hoped it would go away for much too long now.

I don't know about you, but I am growing increasingly alarmed by what is happening in Evangelical circles. Many Evangelicals seem to have an extremely difficult time distinguishing between Christian faith and the growing neo-conservative movement. Unfortunately, many have come to see the two as synonymous.

To be fair, it should be noted that the neo-conservative movement has become more than just a conservative phenomenon. It has long since crossed party lines and enjoys bi-partisan status. The two traditional political parties, Liberal and Conservative – in practice at least, if not in rhetoric – have grown virtually indistinguishable. This growing similarity is due, I believe, to the growing allegiance each feels towards the burgeoning neo-conservative movement.

Some of you may have no idea what I am talking about. So maybe at this point I should give a brief history of the neo-conservative movement. It's a movement that goes by several other names: some call it globalism, some call it Reaganomics, and curiously enough, in Latin America it is referred to as neo-liberalism. Neo-conservatism first gained public prominence in the early 1980's, when Ronald Reagan became president of the United States. His presidency coincided with the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

President Reagan proudly announced that the world was standing on the threshold of a new era - an era of unprecedented peace and prosperity. To use his words, we were standing at the dawn of a "New World Order." He didn't elaborate much on what he meant by that phrase, but from that point on western society began to rotate around one unwritten creed: "If it's good for business, it's good."

Not long after Reagan's prediction of eminent peace and prosperity, American backed militia moved into Central America and began efforts to restore a "good business climate" there. You see, many people in Central America - most of whom were indigenous - had been hoping for a better life. They were hoping for more than just a subsistent living. They were working towards social, economic, and environmental justice.

The problem, however, was that the aspirations of these lower class Central Americans, ran counter to the aspirations of the multi-national corporations operating in Central America. Social, economic, and environmental justice don't look so good on the profit margin. And so, acting on initiatives which came directly from the White House, American trained and sponsored terrorists moved throughout Central America, systematically exterminating anyone they believed was linked to the social justice movement. In many cases, whole villages were eradicated. In Guatemala alone, some 200,000 Mayans lost their lives to this American led effort to create a good business climate. With an irony all too reminiscent of Orwell's *1984*, the American sponsored terrorists were nicknamed "*Freedom Fighters*."

Have you ever wondered why bananas, which come from Central America, cost only 50 cents a pound, while apples grown right here in Canada cost \$1.50 a pound? There is a reason for this. It's due to the "good business climate" which has been established over there. Businesses are managing to keep their costs down.

Every American President since Reagan, as well as every Canadian and British Prime Minister since Mulroney and Thatcher – regardless of political stripe – have worked to further Reagan's vision of a New World Order. An Order which, it is becoming increasingly apparent, is really about building Empire. An Order which seeks the domination of the entire globe. An Order which translates into the systematic rape and exploitation of the world and it's people. By and large, the New World Order has enjoyed the wholehearted support of the North American public. People who normally might have been opposed to global injustice have been strangely silent.

Why? Much of it, I suppose, can be attributed to a lack of awareness. You don't hear about injustice on the corporate news stations. But some of it, I suspect, has to do with the fact that we enjoy a standard of living, as well as pension plans and investments with annual double digit gains, which rely heavily on the systematic rape and plunder of the world. To criticize the system would be to shoot our own selves in the foot.

I believe that the New World Order is something that we, as Christians should be deeply concerned about. Because if ever there was an anti-Christ movement today, this would be it. Ironically, it's a movement that loves to dress itself up in sheep's clothing. Many Christians support this movement as though it were commissioned by God himself.

The New World Order is, in fact, currently being *presided* over by none other than self-proclaimed Evangelical Christians. It's most visible proponents are the current President of the United States and his powerful inner circle – many of whom are very vocal about their commitment to the Evangelical expression of the Christian faith. Incredibly, George W. Bush, who sits in the most powerful office in the world, believes that God himself has placed him in power and commissioned him with the burden of "ridding the world of evil." Apparently the Lord has left it up to him, however, to decide who is – and isn't – evil.

It should be noted that the last person who suffered from such a delusion was a man by the name of Adolf Hitler. In the aftermath of World War II, many people asked the question, *Where were*

*the good people of Germany when Hitler was gaining prominence? Where were the Christians? Why did no one speak up against the Third Reich? How could there have been such a mass delusion?*

I want to ask today, *Where are the good people of North America? Where are the Christians? Why does no one speak up against the New World Order? How can there be such a mass delusion?*

I feel Christians ought to be very concerned about this New World Order. Why? Because it runs entirely contrary to the principles of Christ. It is anti-Christ. It's a pseudo-gospel. The New World Order's themes are exploitation, accumulation, status, power, consumerism, and individualism. Its proponents passionately proclaim that greed works as a force for good in the world.

How is it that so many Christians appear to have been deceived into believing that these are Christian principles in operation? Obviously, it has been a while since they've looked into their Bibles. Because God's vision runs entirely counter to the neo-conservative agenda. God's vision is shalom – a future where God, people, and nature live in harmony with one another. God's vision is justice for the poor, peace for the nations, the redemption of the Earth and its people, a restoration of community, and a renewal of creation.

Wendell Berry writes, *I see some virtually catastrophic discrepancies between biblical instruction and Christian behaviour. I don't mean disreputable Christian behaviour, either. The discrepancies I see are between biblical instruction and allegedly respectable Christian behaviour.*"

Lets look at some of those discrepancies. Today's Jesus has undergone an extreme make-over, courtesy of the neo-conservative movement. A make-over which brings him more closely into line with the aspirations of New World Order. Let's take a look at what the new Jesus looks like. Today's Jesus believes that the rich aren't rich enough, and that the poor aren't poor enough, so he is advocating for policies designed to further the gap between the rich and the poor. So the forces of globalization, Free Trade Agreements, GATT, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization are all designed to ensure that the world's wealth ends up where it rightfully belongs - in the hands of the wealthy, of course.

Today's Jesus believes in simple solutions. He has come to see that there isn't a problem that can't be solved by increased production and consumption. He has discovered that greed works as a force for good in the world. After all, greed is self-regulating. If only it is allowed to do its good work everything else automatically falls into place.

Today's Jesus has come to understand that the poor really have only themselves to blame for their predicament. Everyone knows that God sides with those who have helped themselves. The poor simply lack initiative. They're just too darn lazy.

Today's Jesus believes that anything a government can do, a corporation can do better. And so, he's working on a plan to replace sovereign governments with multinational corporations. After

all, corporations have always had the people's best interests at heart. Besides, why should some bureaucrat be making two hundred thousand dollars a year, when he can be replaced by an executive making two and a half million a year? It makes good economic sense.

Today's Jesus likes to "help" third-world nations. He has found that "developing" nations are best helped by sending multi-national corporations over there, bribing their leaders with millions of dollars, which in turn buys them unfettered access to exploit their people and their resources. It's a great investment opportunity! Their governments have no environmental or human rights standards by which to abide. It all translates into windfall profits for corporations as well as cheap products for Walmart, Old Navy, and Michael's Arts and Crafts! It's a win-win situation for everybody!

Today's Jesus has changed his mind on materialism. Materialism brings to the Christian faith a "prominence" and "power" which it would not otherwise have. It puts us on the map – it boosts our image. It makes our "faith" more visible. Besides, if God didn't want us to be materialistic, why in the world would he have given us all this stuff in the first place?

Today's Jesus remains steadfastly pro-life. Except, of course, in the case of those people who don't deserve to live. Like, death-row inmates, for example, or gays, or people in other countries, especially those infidels who happen to be standing between us and the oilfields which are rightfully ours.

Today's Jesus is concerned about healthcare reform. So He's pushing for privatized medicine. After all, why should God's people have to stand in line alongside the poor and undeserving when we have the money to bump us up to the front of the line? Good grief, it just doesn't make any sense!

Today's Jesus sees natives, single parent families, the poor, the incapacitated, and the disenfranchised as parasites because he can tell that they are not pulling their fair share of the load. If you're not producing and consuming to your maximum potential you are, of course, a parasite on today's wonderful society.

Today's Jesus is deeply concerned about North American spiritual life because powerful homosexual lobby groups threaten to destroy our "righteous" continent. God's judgement is pending. If we don't find a way to get rid of the gays they are going to drag us down with them. Let's rid our good nation of this scourge!

Today's Jesus says you can have it all! Get up and get on board! You, Jesus and the New World Order! It's a winning combination!

I want to ask you a question: Are you shocked by what I have just said? I hope you are! Because you ought to be! This is the shocking, behind-the-scenes reality of what North America has become. This is the New World Order envisioned by Ronald Reagan so many years ago. This is what much of the Evangelical world subscribes too wholeheartedly. This is our life. And yet, when one puts it down on paper, and reads it out loud, it sounds extremely crass and vulgar, doesn't it?

This certainly is not the kind of world envisioned by the Jesus of the Gospels. I find it shocking that so many allegedly respectable Christians loudly and belligerently promote this world-view in coffee shops, in lunch rooms, in newspaper columns, on Christian TV and Radio, in corporate boardrooms, and even in the White House.

How is it that so many Christians have come to see this world-view as, not only normal and good, but even as a God-ordained? How do they reconcile the values of the New World Order with the values of the Gospel? Are they reading the same New Testament I'm reading? Because the New Testament I am reading finds Jesus advocating for precisely the opposite values.

Listen to the opening words to the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5-7 - a sermon which Jesus gave to demonstrate what the Christian life looks like.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

These are the aspirations of Jesus. You won't find any support for the New World Order here. We don't have time here to discuss each beatitude individually, but notice that Jesus concludes the beatitudes by saying that Christians can expect persecution. Have you ever wondered why Christians in North America aren't experiencing any persecution? All over the world Christians are being persecuted, but not here. I have an idea. I suspect it is because we are silent. We don't speak up. We are silent like the good people of Germany were silent during World War II.

Do you want to start experiencing some persecution? I can tell you the quickest way. You don't have to move away to another continent. Just start doing what Jesus did. Start speaking out on behalf of the poor. Start sticking up for the disenfranchised and the underdog. Start exposing injustice and hypocrisy. Start speaking out against power, greed, and corruption. Start living a counter-cultural life like Jesus did. But I should warn you, the establishment is going to take offence. You will be persecuted.

Young people, do you want to experience some persecution? Start doing what Jesus did. Do it right at your school. Defend the poor. Stick up for the disenfranchised. Be a friend to the outcast. Speak out against cruelty. Speak out against injustice and inhumanity. Show kindness to the immigrants and the unpopular kids. Live counter-cultural lives. In other words, live like Jesus lived. But I want to warn you, you will be persecuted.

Do you know why the authorities put Jesus to death? Because he lived his life in a counter-cultural manner. His life was an affront to the establishment of his day. He defended the poor. He befriended the outcast. He spoke out against greed and injustice. He exposed hypocrisy. And in doing so, happened to offend those supporting the establishment of his day – all of whom had a lot to gain from a system founded on greed and injustice.

In closing, I want to reiterate the two questions I have been asking in this sermon.

The first is this: How is it that so many Christians vocally and actively support the ambitions of the New World Order? What do the aspirations of Empire have in common with the aspirations of Christ?

The second question is this: Why are so many of us silent? Why do we choose to look the other way?

To be a follower of Christ means to follow in his steps. He would not be silent.

And now, for today's Scripture passage. It comes from Matthew 7:15-27.

*Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*

*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*

*Therefore whoever hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*

Amen

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