

Featured Views



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No Longer a Christian

by Karen Horst Cobb

I was told in Sunday school the word "Christian" means to be Christ-like, but the message I hear daily on the airwaves from the "christian" media are words of war, violence, and aggression. Throughout this article I will spell Christian with a small c rather than a capital, since the term (as I usually hear it thrown about) does not refer to the teachings of the one I know as the Christ. I hear church goers call in to radio programs and explain that it was a mistake not to kill every living thing in Fallujah. They quote chapter and verse from the old testament about smiting the enemies of Israel. The fear of fighting the terrorists on our soil rather than across the globe causes the voices to be raised as they justify the latest prison scandal or other accounts of the horrors of war. The words they speak are words of destruction, aggression, dominance, revenge, fear and arrogance. The host and the callers echo the belief in the righteousness of our nation's killing. There are reminders to pray for our "Christian" president who is doing the work of the Lord: Right to Life, Second Amendment, sanctity of marriage, welfare reform, war, kill, evil liberals. . . so much to fight, so much to destroy.

Let me tell you about the Christ I know. He was conceived by an unmarried woman. He was not born into a family of privilege. He was a radical. He said, "It was said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but now I say love your enemies and bless those who curse you." He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." (Matthew 5: 3-9) He said, "All those who are called by my name will enter the kingdom of heaven." He said, "People will know true believers if they have the fruit of the spirit--love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self control."

He knew he would be led like a sheep to the slaughter. He responded with "Father forgive them." He explained that in Christ there is neither Jew nor gentile, slave or free male nor female. He explained that even to be angry is akin to murder. He said the temple of God is not a building, but is in the hearts of those are called by his name. He was called "the Prince of Peace." His final days were spent in prayer, so that he could endure what was set before him, not on how he could overpower the evil government of that day. When they came for him he was led away and didn't resist his death sentence.

This is a stark contrast to the call of [the religious Christian right, who vote for war and weapons](#), and suggest towns and villages be leveled to bring freedom and peace to the people. They proudly boast this country's superiority, suggesting God has blessed our nation. Today, as I listened to a popular Christian news network, I was reminded that in the last days, even God's elect will be deceived, (II Timothy 3:13). When the religious media moguls preaching prosperity spout their rhetoric, I am reminded of the difficulty Jesus described of a rich man's ability to enter the kingdom of God. (Matthew 19: 24) (http://www.4religious-right.info/rr_economics.htm) Some who believe they are fighting evil will cry to the Lord, and he will say "I never knew you." (Matthew 22). They will have a form or godliness but will deny the power (II Timothy 3:5) to move mountains through prayer. (Matthew 17:20). Jesus explained that he has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind. (II Timothy 1:17) I wonder if the innocent moms and dads, brothers and sisters, and aunts and uncles, and grandmas and grandpas who were the victims of US military weapons (the never reported collateral damages we are protected from in the "liberal" nightly news) felt the love of Jesus with the shock and awe. I wonder if the surviving family members now understand His radical love and that they no longer have any need for weapons or defense.

The solutions to the social issues used to manipulate good, decent people have no resemblance to how Jesus responded to the social concerns of his time. He never once mentioned the "right to life" the year he was born King Herod ordered the execution of all babies. (Matthew 2:16). He knew that passing laws does not change the heart. As a follower of his teaching I believe in the right to life, including the children in Iraq who stumble onto land mines, cross the street at the wrong time, or who are snugly tucked within the warm bellies of their wounded or grieving mothers as US fighter jets fly overhead. These are living, breathing children. The killing of these little ones are never even reported, and our tax dollars pay for these bombs. I believe in the right to life for those in the United States who are unwanted and impoverished. I believe in the right to life of the naive kid who was promised by the recruiter they could choose a desk job and still get their education paid or could see the world or could accelerate their life or could play a very realistic video game from a cockpit.

I've worked at a shelter, and I know first hand the reality of unwanted children. I know the reality of this right wing rhetoric when week after week I begged and pleaded with people to give up only one night every three months to sit with these unwanted living children for a few hours while the overworked house parents had a

night off. Of the few I found, many changed their minds when they discovered that they would need to wear rubber gloves to change the babies diapers. These "believers" stand on the street corners holding right to life signs and then vote against medical assistance for the mothers and their unwanted children creating an impossible existence for them. The few of these abortion activists who might adopt some of these unwanted children generally want the white and the healthy. The ones with hydrocephalous, tracheotomies, emotional/mental problems and communicable diseases along with their life long medical expenses can be someone else's problems.

I cringe as many christians vote for policies that deny help to the poor in our own county, who vote to support the war and military strength, assuring the latest weapons are developed and that the heavens will be dominated by the military of the United States. We develop electromagnetic weapons to shatter skulls , split the earth (<http://www.raven1.net/emr13.htm>) and silently destroy a body as a thief in the night. Studies are even now searching for the frequencies to override the freewill. These unbelievable technologies are a reality and DNA specific weapons can or soon will target a specific nationality (<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/981116/1998111619.html>).I weep as the waters Jesus walked on become contaminated with uranium. (<http://www.greendove.net/resources3.htm>) I grieve as the missiles fly through the atmosphere on the continent where Jesus rose into the sky, defying death and the grave and where the Holy Sprit first descended. I cry out at the horrors of war and the indignity of the prisons so close to where He took captivity captive. So I am no longer a Christian if Christianity has become what is presented to us by our Christian president and Christian media. I cannot support the right of the United States and Israel to develop and use the most heinous weapons ever imagined. I want no part of a temple built on the blood of the innocent. The sheep have been lead astray by the teachings of prosperity and misinterpretation of the final battle between good and evil. Many no longer can recognize the voice of the good Shepherd.

Some "good Christians" even work at weapons facilities. It is not a stretch to say that a woman who tightens a last rivet on a shiny new missile just off the assembly line might be the same woman who licks the gold star on the attendance chart in morning Sunday school. The missile could be launched by the kid in the youth group who reads the invocation and it will find it's destiny at a "target of interest" which might or might not have been a result of good intelligence. The collection plate circulates children are taught to love their enemies and bless those who curse them.

The statements and lifestyle of Jesus are difficult for me to understand. What would he say to evil dictators? This God would not justify [15,000 or more](#) deaths. Even the wrathful jealous God of the old testament spared whole cities for a few righteous souls. For Christians, to support mass killings as a way to prevent future deaths is not at all like Christ. He would not say, "When I am talking about war I am really talking about peace," like the self professed Christian President proudly states. Who but God has the right to determine what price a people should pay for their freedom? The religious leaders on the airwaves today respond to the voices of the few brave peacemakers who dare to speak out. They say that pacifism is insane, and that it doesn't make sense, but what is forgotten is that logic and faith are separate entities. I believe in the example of Jesus and his admonition to love your enemies and bless those who curse you . Do I understand how this works on the global scale? Do I know what Jesus would say to all the world's leaders? No, nor do I totally understand how the example of Christ's life and his message of love works in the world today. That's why I need faith. Am I always correct in my assessments and actions? No, that's why I need grace. Am I brave and unafraid? No, that's why I need the perfect love that casts out fear. Some put trust in Chariots and some in horses but I will remember the name of the lord our God--the Prince of Peace. Perhaps politics has no place for imitators of Christ.

Who will show the face of Christ to the world? Who will speak His radical message? I hear from these so called imitators of Christ that the pacifists are a collection of kids, hippies, socialists and communists who haven't got a clue. Some of us, however, have come to our beliefs as a result of careful and prayerful study of the scriptures and admonishment from our elders. Many are Mennonite, Amish, Quaker and other Anabaptists, whose ancestors did not resist their torturers and were drowned, burnt at the stake and flogged for their pacifist stand. They truly followed the example of Christ, and their resistance against the catastrophic effects of the merging of church and state cost them a great price. Churches today have signed onto the government plan and have agreed to look the other way in exchange for tax free privileges. The true message of Christ still exists to some degree in the quiet of the land to peacemakers, but sadly these good people have been deceived by the angry words from a righteous sounding religious media majority broadcasting in cars and trucks and tractors all over our land ironically preaching the "good news of war for peace" and convincing 24-7 "liberal" bashing. I suspect there are many who share my sorrow at the loss of what it means to be Christ-like, but our voice is seldom heard. The blaring rhetoric drowns out the still small voice of the mighty God. Peace used be the opposite of war, Conservative used to mean the tendency to conserve resources. Liberal used to mean kind and generous, and Christian used to mean like Christ.

So I am no longer a Christian but just a person who continues trying to follow the example of Christ. I'll let him call me what he wants when I see him face to face. Until then, I will pray that someday people like me will be able to reclaim the meaning of Christ's identity, and the world will see the effects of the radical message of Christ's love--the perfect love that casts out fear.

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