

John's Gospel was written near the end of the first century, or maybe even later. By that time, the persecution against the Christian communities was in full swing, and the Christian community that produced John's Gospel was in the thick of it, too.

"The Jews" to whom John refers are actually the religious leadership, whom the other three Gospels identify as the scribes, high priests, and the Pharisees. These religious authority figures confronted Jesus, and demanded to tell them plainly, whether Jesus was truly the Messiah for whom they have been waiting, as he was rumored to be.

Turn the clock fast forward to the modern day. Today, the Muslims reject the belief that Jesus is the Messiah. Instead, they believe that Jesus was a prophet. They deny that Jesus is God, and therefore, reject the doctrine of Trinity. The Jews also reject that Jesus is the Messiah, or the Son of God, and are still waiting for their Messiah to arrive. We Christians are the

only ones who believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, as prophesied in the Scriptures.

My question is: What difference does it make in today's world, if ordinary people believed Jesus to be the Messiah, or a prophet, or an imposter?

We know that, historically, there have been religious strifes among the believers of these three religions, precisely because of the question posed above, whether or not Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. There is the tragic irony: Jesus came preaching love, so that we might have life and have it abundantly, but exactly the opposite has taken place among the believers in the world.

When will there be peace in the Middle East? When will the Muslims, the Jews, and the Christians stop hating each other and kill each other, and co-exist in peace?

I have been wondering what Jesus would do, given the

following choices: Would Jesus prefer the bloodshed and the destruction of the earth in his honor, or peace and harmony in someone else's name, or to some other religion's credit? Would Jesus say, "If I don't get the credit for the salvation, no one gets saved! After going through all that work, even dying on the cross? Pssh, no way!" What about God? If we do not sing praises to God, will God break out in a rage and punish us? "Love me, you wretches! Praise me, you sinners, or else!"

I do not know, whether it would offend Jesus or God, if people did not give credit to either. But I believe Jesus and God do mind, if people hurt one another and hate one another.

It is dogmatically correct to proclaim that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the anointed One, but that proclamation alone, so far, has failed to bring the desired effect, such as peace among different faiths.

Whether Jesus is the Lord or not, or the Messiah or not, it means

nothing to those who are not willing to subscribe to our religious claim, no matter how true it may be.

If we expect lasting peace on earth, and if we believe that Jesus is the Christ who will bring true peace—then the Christian believers may need to take another look at their ways of waging peace, or their way of making disciples. They may not need to look far into the foreign countries, but our own.

I was watching a documentary, Food, Inc. There is a big slaughter house in Tar Heel, NC. The working condition has been bad. The poor blacks used to work there. But now the workers are mostly undocumented immigrants from Mexico. The company buses these docile workers from as far as 100 miles away. The government used to turn the blind eye to the practice, until anti-immigrant sentiment flared up in the country.

Since the immigration agency needed to do their job, the

company made a deal with the local police: the police would not raid the business, or arrest the company managers, but would raid only the trailer parks where the workers have been living for as long as 10, 15 years. They arrest no more than 15 people per day, so that the production line would not be affected.

But who are these undocumented immigrants? Why are they here, anyway? It turned out they used to be mostly corn farmers back in Mexico. But they lost their jobs, because the imported corn price was so low. They could not compete against the corn that was imported from the U.S. Remember North American Free Trade Agreement?

Then, the meat packing company advertized in Mexico to recruit these unemployed farmers, and they bused them to U.S. The immigrants have been working here since.

The U.S. corn undersold the Mexican corn, because the U.S. government subsidizes the U.S.

growers to overproduce. Then the corporate farms buy the corn at below the production cost, and feed it to their cattle. That is why the corn and meat prices are so cheap. We pay high taxes, in order to subsidize these mega corporations, and to keep the food prices artificially low.

This handful of huge, international corporate meat producers has the stranglehold of the U.S. legislature, so that the current law favors them. Did you know that USDA has no authority to shut down the meat processing plant that repeatedly caused E. Coli outbreaks that killed many people?

What is good and profitable for the U.S. corporate farms has its socio-political and economic consequences. Not just in Mexico, but also in our own nation, where the poor must fight with one another, in order to survive, while the mega corporations continue to rake in mega profits. These corporations have direct access to the lawmakers through the lobbyists,

many of whom are also the former lawmakers in the Senate and the Legislature. And their former lobbyists have been appointed heads of the regulatory agencies.

Incidentally, there are currently 47 of lawmakers to retire from Congress, and how many signed the pledge that they would not become a lobbyist after they leave the government? Zero. No wonder, their starting salary as a lobbyist can be as high as \$500,000, compared to \$174,000 they receive, representing "We the People."

Can Jesus the Messiah do something about the poor and the oppressed, about injustice and suffering? What difference does it make, whether Jesus is the Savior or not, if Jesus is incapable of doing something about them?

How useful is the savior who is incapable of saving the poor and the oppressed from what is wrong with this world? How useful is the Savior who would

save those who are busy drowning other religions by outshouting that Jesus is the Messiah, while perpetuating the very injustice and suffering that prompted God in the first place to send the Savior to this world?

What is the point, if Jesus told us plainly that he is the Messiah? His believers elect their representatives, so that they might continue to bilk the poor, lay the groundwork for further poverty, suffering, and strife among the poor, and to legislate profits for the rich and the powerful.

Yes, Jesus is the Messiah. But Jesus might just surprise his disciples, if he would appear before them today, by choosing not to be on *their* side. And this time, I believe, that Jesus would tell his disciples plainly. Surely, this time, the Messiah will require not only the social justice, but the economic justice from his disciples for their salvation, as well.