

RESIDENT ALIENS

INTRODUCTION: This morning I would like for us to consider a very difficult concept. It is not a difficult concept to understand. But it is a difficult concept to consistently apply in our daily lives.

I want to talk to you about how you see yourself. But not in the way that has become so popular today. I do not want to talk to you about having a positive self-image or how you feel about yourself.

I want to look at this matter of worldview using a different focus and emphasis. I want to talk to you about your perception of how you and the world relate to one another and how your particular worldview translates into everyday life specifically in the areas of stewardship of your time, your talents, and your treasures.

It is interesting that in life a worldview is really no where formally taught. Unfortunately, for most people worldview is informally learned over a long period of time, constructed in much the same way that we put together a jig saw puzzle; one piece at a time until your “worldview” picture is complete and makes sense to you. And once your “worldview” picture is put together, your prevailing attitudes, your daily actions and your life goals will all be the direct result of the worldview you have assembled. I believe there are essentially three radically different worldviews – one of which is adopted by every human being on the face of this earth.

PROPOSITION: Which of these three worldviews we adopt will lead us to totally contrary lifestyles and totally different destinies.

I. THE FIRST WORLDVIEW IS THAT OF A “NATIVE”.

A. What is a “NATIVE?”

1. Romans 12:2 “Be not conformed to this “WORLD”...
2. “Cosmos” –World in the New Testament is not referring to a place, it is referring to a group of people. The word Cosmos means, “Those who are neutral to or opposed to God.”
 - a. So, it is not just those people like the late Madeline Murray-O’Hare, the ACLU, and many others who actively seek to dismantle Christianity and rid the planet of any evidence of it that are included in this definition.
 - b. It may also be that nice person down the road who is morally upright and friendly, but has no time or interest in God or the things of God.
 - c. These people are what Paul calls the COSMOS. These people are the WORLD. These people are the NATIVES.

B. What is a “NATIVE’S” worldview?

1. The Native says flatly, “This world is all that there is.”
2. That is why they want to...
 - a. save the whales
 - b. save the rain forest
 - c. save the darter snail
 - d. save the spotted owl.
 - b. save the environment
 - c. save our mother... the earth
3. They have slogans that reflect this worldview.
 - a. “You only go around once in life, so grab all the gusto you can”
 - b. “America, love it or leave it!”
 - c. “The one who dies with the most toys - wins.” They miss one very important

- point. The one who dies with the most toys – still dies.
4. The Native lives solely for this life and what it provides.
 5. The Native will “eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow he will die.”

II. THE SECOND WORLDVIEW IS THAT OF AN “ALIEN.”

- A. What is an “ALIEN?” “A foreigner that has gone to a foreign country for a purpose.”
 1. It could be he is leaving something unpleasant behind in his homeland or he is looking forward to an opportunity in the land to which he is going.
 2. Aliens could be like the refugees from Kosovo, or the “boat people” from the Vietnam era.
 3. Aliens could also be like the immigrants from Ireland and Europe who migrated to this great land looking for a better opportunity for themselves and their families. This later purpose – aliens looking forward to an opportunity - best fits our topic here. An alien is a foreigner with a purpose. He has come to the new land with a purpose - on a mission if you will.

- B. What is an “ALIEN’S” worldview?
 1. Within the spiritual context we are discussing here, an alien says, “I have been sent on a specific mission by my homeland.”
 2. The Mission: Planetary domination. Domination not by force and power like the great conquering nations of the past, but planetary domination through gentleness, meekness, love and service.
 3. The Goal: Convert individual Natives from citizenship in this world to citizenship in the next.
 4. Every aspect of an Alien’s life is directed towards accomplishing his Reigning Monarch’s stated mission. He walks and talks and eats and sleeps and plans and works and sacrifices to fulfill his assigned purpose. Nothing sidetracks him from his mission.
 5. The typical spy movies provide a sense of the risk, sacrifice and dedication of carrying out their mission – often their “mission impossible.”
 6. And nothing in this world could entice an alien to forsake his allegiance to his homeland and its stated purpose and his commitment to fulfill that purpose.

- C. There are literally dozens of Biblical examples of Aliens who refused to defect to the side of the Natives.
 1. Moses - Hebrews 11:25-26
 “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin...”
 2. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego - Daniel 3: 16-18
 “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this. If it be so, our God who we serve is able to deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”
 3. Peter and John before the Sanhedrin - Acts 3:18-21
 “And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.”

4. In the days of the Roman Emperor Nero, a band of soldiers known as the Emperor's Wrestlers served him. They were picked from the best and the bravest of the land, recruited from the great athletes of the Roman amphitheater.

In the great amphitheater they upheld the arms of the emperor against all challengers. Before each contest they stood before the emperor's throne. Then through the courts of Rome rang the cry: "We, the wrestlers, wrestling for thee, O Emperor, to win for thee the victory and from thee, the victor's crown."

When the great Roman army was sent to fight in Gaul, no soldiers were braver or more loyal than this band of wrestlers led by their centurion Vespasian. But news reached Nero that many Roman soldiers had accepted the Christian faith. Therefore, this decree was dispatched to the centurion Vespasian; "If there be any among your soldiers who cling to the faith of the Christian, they must die!"

The decree was received in the dead of winter. The soldiers were camped on the shore of a frozen inland lake. It was with sinking heart that Vespasian, the centurion, read the emperor's message.

Vespasian called the soldiers together and asked: "Are there any among you who cling to the faith of the Christian? If so, let him step forward!" Forty wrestlers instantly stepped forward two paces, respectfully saluted, and stood at attention. Vespasian paused. He had not expected so many, nor such select ones. "Until sundown I shall await your answer," said Vespasian. Sundown came. Again the question was asked. Again the forty wrestlers stepped forward.

Vespasian pleaded with them long and earnestly without prevailing upon a single man to deny his Lord. Finally he said, "The decree of the emperor must be obeyed, but I am not willing that your comrades should shed your blood. I order you to march out upon the lake of ice, and I shall leave you there to the mercy of the elements."

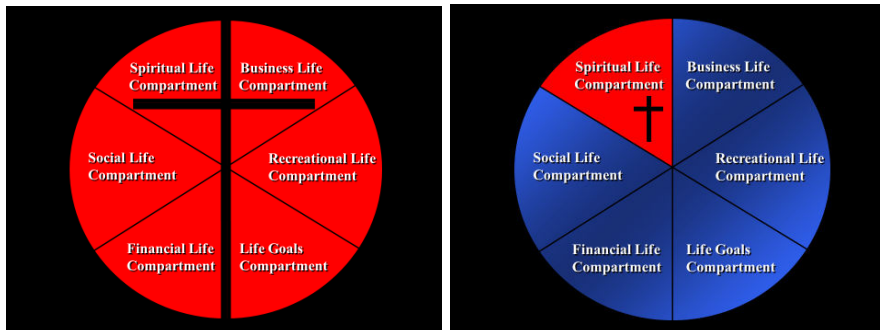
The forty wrestlers were stripped and then, falling into columns of four, marched toward the center of the lake of ice. As they marched they broke into the chant of the arena: "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory and from Thee, the victor's crown!" Through the night Vespasian stood by his campfire and watched. As he waited through the long night, there came to him fainter and fainter the wrestlers' song.

As morning drew near one figure, overcome by exposure, crept quietly toward the fire; in the extremity of his suffering he had renounced his Lord. Faintly but clearly from the darkness came the song: "Thirty-nine wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory and from Thee, the victor's crown!"

Vespasian looked at the figure drawing close to the fire. Perhaps he saw eternal light shining there toward the center of the lake. Who can say? But off came his helmet and clothing, and he sprang upon the ice, crying, "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory and from Thee, the victor's crown!"

III. THE THIRD WORLD VIEW IS THAT OF A "TOURIST".

- A. What is a “TOURIST?”
1. A Tourist is “an Alien without a purpose.” While in the foreign land he has little interest in or loyalty to his homeland from which he is a citizen.
 2. His driving motivation in life is to see and enjoy all the sights and sounds and things that the foreign country in which he is visiting has to offer.
 - a. The Tourist will take whatever time is necessary to do it all.
 - b. The Tourist will spend whatever money is necessary to have it all.
 3. A Tourist would openly admit to being an Alien if asked, but if carefully watched his lifestyle more closely parallels that of a Native.
- B. What is a “TOURIST’S” worldview?
1. The Tourist’s life is made up of several, separate and distinct compartments.
 - a. a spiritual compartment
 - b. a job/business compartment
 - c. a social life compartment
 - d. a recreational compartment
 - e. a life goals compartment
 - f. a financial compartment.



2. The Tourist freely gives God control of the spiritual compartment of his life. But, the Tourist thinks, “God has left me totally free to do as I please in all the other areas of my life as long as I’m good.” In other words, God doesn’t really care...
 - a. . . how I run my business or do my job as long as I am not an out and out crook or the worst of sluggards.
 - b. . . what I watch on TV as long as I don’t participate in the sinful activities I watch.
 - c. . . how I spend my free time as long as I behave myself.
 - d. . . how I spend my money as long as I don’t gamble it away. This financial area is where I have focused a major portion of my professional career and ministry efforts. So, let me take just a minute or two to digress and say a little more about how a Tourist thinks about money.
 - (1.) A Tourist is happy to acknowledge that God owns everything. But this intellectual acknowledgement has no practical impact on the way he uses his financial resources. He still makes all the decisions about how they will be used.
 - (2.) The reason that churches and ministries all over America struggles to survive financially is because Tourists spend about 97% of what they make on themselves and their preferred lifestyle.
 - (3.) In recent research it was revealed that if everyone who claims to be a born-again Christian would just give a dime out of every dollar they earn, the Kingdom would have access to an additional \$133 billion dollars annually.

Do you have any idea how much money that is? Or, if you want to use one of the largest ministries in America, it would entirely fund an additional 1,300 Focus on the Family sized ministries annually. Or, we could send an additional 3.3 million missionaries on to the field.

- (4.) I personally believe that every dollar that is needed to completely underwrite the needs of every ministry in the world and fulfill the Great Commission in our lifetime is already in the hands of Kingdom citizens. The great tragedy is that the overwhelming majority of it is in the hands of the Tourists who have a totally different mission focus than the King of Kings.
- (5.) Let me give you an example of the perfect contrast between the worldview of a Tourist and the worldview of an Alien in this area of money.

Many years ago I knew a young, ten-year-old boy named Jimmy Mitchell. One Sunday before church, I was standing up at the pulpit getting my sermon notes ready and Jimmy came running into the auditorium. He ran up to me with a dollar bill in his hand and said, "Jay, look what I've got." I said, "Jimmy, that's great. Where did you get it?" He told me that after he mowed his yard, he decided to go ahead and mow old Mrs. Brown's yard next door. "After I finished, she came out and gave me this dollar."

He went on to say, "Jay, I'd like to give some of it to the Lord." I replied, "Jimmy, I know the Lord would be so pleased that you would want to share some of that dollar with Him. How much do you think you would like to give?"

Even after three decades, I still remember what he said to me like it was yesterday. He looked down at the dollar and then gazed into my eyes, looked back down at the dollar, looked up again at me and said, "Do you think He would mind if I kept a dime?"

- e. So, the Tourist reasons God really doesn't care what I do as long as I don't do anything to embarrass Him or His church.
- f. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. But that is how a Tourist, of necessity, must structure his worldview to make any sense out of his Tourist lifestyle.
- g. To compare:
 - (1.) The Alien sings, "I surrender all (and understands those words to mean literally ALL/EVERYTHING)
 - (2.) The Tourist sings, "I surrender all (and understands those words to mean everything in the spiritual compartment in my life (a little of his income, Sunday Morning attendance, etc.) In other words, he mentally sings, "I surrender all . . .of my spiritual compartment . . ." and he sings it with a totally clear conscience.
- h. With this worldview, the Tourist is free to live the vast majority of his life exactly as he pleases with little input or interference from God which allows him to participate and enjoy all the things and activities of this world with no apparent sense of contradiction or feeling of inconsistency.

C. How do these varying worldviews feel about one another?

I. The Native

- a. . . . loves and wants the things of the world (because, in his mind, that is all there

- is in life)
- b. . . . hates the Alien (because the Alien is always bent on changing both him and his culture forever). That is exactly what Jesus said would happen to us in John 15:18-19. "The world ('Cosmos' — meaning Natives) will hate you because it hated me."
 - c. . . . tolerates the Tourist (because, even though he is an Alien, he still anxiously and willingly consumes most all of the Natives' goods and services. So it is "good business" to keep him around.)
2. The Alien
 - a. . . . doesn't care at all about the things of the world (and that's why he so easily gives them away when others have need. They just don't mean anything to him.)
 - b. . . . loves the Native (because he is the object of his mission in this strange land. He is called "to make disciples" of the Natives.) You see, the Alien loves people and simply uses things to help him demonstrate his love for people.
 - c. . . . grieves over the Tourist (because the Tourist is a fellow alien who has gotten so caught up in pursuing and enjoying what the world has to offer that he has either unconsciously forgotten or consciously forsaken his assigned mission in this foreign land.)
 - (1.) This desertion from the Alien ranks leaves fewer working Aliens to carry out their homeland's mission.
 - (2.) It also provides conflicting Alien role-models which confuses the Natives and makes winning them over to the Alien cause more difficult than ever.
 3. The Tourist
 - a. . . . loves and wants the things of the world (because he finds immense pleasure in them).
 - b. . . . doesn't really care about the Natives .
 - (1.) He is more concerned with the food at the restaurant than the Native waiter or waitress serving it.
 - (2.) He is much more interested in the car on the showroom floor than the Native salesman who is selling it.
 - (3.) He is more drawn to the books in the library than the Native librarian who checks them out for him.
 - (4.) He is more obsessed with winning the game than for the Natives on the other team who will lose.
 - (5.) You see the contrast. The Alien loves people and uses things to benefit them. The Tourist, on the other hand, loves things and uses people to benefit himself.
 - c. . . . feels threatened by the Alien (because the Alien stands as a constant reminder of their failure to carry out their assigned mission. And in an attempt to try and justify this failure they often label these Aliens as radicals and holy rollers.)
- D. You see the church has slowly and inexorably moved from being a counter-culture in our society to being just one of thousands of sub-cultures that make up our society.
1. What is a sub-culture? A Sub-Culture is a group of people who want to maintain the distinctives of their group while enjoying the benefits of the larger culture as a whole. They are not at all interested in changing the larger culture. They maintain the attitude that says, "If you don't hassle us about how we are, we won't hassle you about how you are!"
 2. The Chinese people in China Town in San Francisco are not interested in making San Francisco Chinese. But, likewise, they don't want San Francisco to force them to use American laundries.
 3. The Polish section of Chicago is not interested in making Chicago Polish. But they don't

- want Chicago to insist they stop eating their Polish sausage.
4. But unlike these foreign cultures who brought their distinctives with them, we Christians, have, for the most part, simply modified the world's culture and Christianized it and now claim it is different.
 - a. Christian TV networks
 - b. Christian book and magazine publishers.
 - c. Christian softball leagues
 - d. Christian radio stations
 - e. Christian Rock and Roll
 - f. Christian Psychology
 - g. Christian Entertainers
 - h. You see, all we have done is merely take the existing worldly culture and its activities and modify them just enough to say they are different from the world while we leave the bulk of it the same. And if we would be totally honest with ourselves, the changes we have made are really more window dressing than reality.
 5. What is a counter-culture? It is a group of people whose sole objective is to change the existing larger culture and replace it with the distinctives of their own counter-culture.
 - a. The teen rebellion of the 60's is a perfect example of a counter-culture. They were not satisfied with just breaking from traditional culture and having free love, drugs, and anti-war sit-ins, they wanted to bring the whole cultural structure down and wanted everyone to adopt their counter-cultural lifestyles and values. And to a very great extent, they succeeded.
 - b. But the best example of an effective counter-culture at work is found right where you might expect to find it; the Handbook for Aliens.
 - (1.) Acts 17:2-6 Thessalonica - "And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a great multitude of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and coming upon the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. And when they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also..." I like the way the King James translates this last verse, "These that have turn the world upside—down are come hither also..."
 - (2.) See Paul wasn't coming to Thessalonica to "fit in" with the community and become a respectable citizen of their fair town. He certainly did not come to Thessalonica to see the sights. He was there for one reason and one reason alone; to change that city and culture for Christ. And in following his commission he was "turning the world upside-down!" His counter-cultural revolution was working.
 - (3.) And may I submit that the exact same counter-cultural revolution initiated by Paul would still work today if we had the courage to employ it.
 6. I think the Lord's church has made a terrible error in judgment in recent years.
 - a. The error is thinking that the best way to get the world into the church is by trying to make the church as much like the world as we can (of course, we will always keep what we consider to be a safe distance between us) and in making it

easier for the world to make the transition many more Natives will join our ranks. The new byword among churches is now “user-friendly” and “seeker sensitive.”

- b. The tragedy, unfortunately, is that, as one author has put it. “The church, in trying to lean over and relate to the world, has fallen in.”
- c. Now the greatest challenge that lies before us is not getting the world INTO church, it is getting the world OUT OF the church.
- d. Our churches are full of Tourists who profess to be Aliens but who still live the lifestyles of the Natives.
- e. And that, in my humble opinion, is why the church in America which should be shaking this country to its foundations for Christ is, sadly enough, having a relatively minor impact in the life and affairs of America. Our enemies certainly would never accuse us as was Paul of turning the Natives upside-down for Christ.
- f. We are not on this planet to just peacefully coexist with the Natives; we are here to capture the planet for the Commander and Chief of our homeland. We are called to make Aliens out of the Natives!
- g. And to that end and that end alone we have been called.

CONCLUSION: This world is not a resort, it is a battlefield. It is not our homeland; it is a foreign military outpost. It is not the destination, it is a stopover.

Here in Indiana, as you know, the land for the most part is flat and much of the state is farms. Farmers’ two major crops are corn and soybeans. And like all good farmers, they periodically rotate their crops. It is interesting that in the year a farmer rotates from growing corn to soybeans inevitably you would see scattered through the soybean field a few random corn stalks that had grown up from some kernels of corn that didn’t get harvested from the previous year’s crop.

Well, many years ago when I was first contemplating these life-changing truths I have been sharing with you this morning, my wife and my two oldest daughters, who were maybe seven and five at the time and I lived in the country and on both sides of our long drive back to our log cabin in the woods were two farm fields, As we were pulling onto our gravel drive one Sunday morning, I looked out at these two soybean fields and for the first time I really noticed the sporadic corn stalks growing up right in the middle of the soybeans. It was as if God himself spoke to me at that very moment. I was so overcome by emotion, I stopped the car with my eyes filling with tears and I looked at my wife and daughters and said, “This is what God wants us to be. He wants us to be corn stalks in a soybean field.” We may live in a soybean world, but He has called us to stand out, to be different, to be corn stalks for Him – corn stalks in a soybean field.



Many years ago a veteran missionary who had spent 40 years on the mission field was finally coming back to

America, the land that he had left nearly a half century earlier. It just so happened that the ship that he was returning on also carried President Teddy Roosevelt from one of his many African hunting expeditions. As the ship arrived in New York Harbor, cheers began to swell as tens of thousands of Americans lined the pier to welcome their President back home. As Roosevelt left the pier so did the crowds and there standing all alone on the pier was the elderly, retiring missionary and there in his hand in one small, tattered bag was all his worldly possessions.

A tear rolled down his old, wrinkled cheek as he muttered to himself sadly, “The President had thousands here to welcome him back home. Not one person is here to welcome me back home.” Then that still, small voice that he had come to know and trust for so many years spoke softly and kindly to him, “Ben, it’s because your not home yet.”

I cannot help but remember the words to a song I used to sing as a youth:

“This world is not my home, I’m just ‘a passin’ through;
My treasures are laid out somewhere beyond the blue
The angels beckon me from Heaven’s open door;
And I can’t feel at home in this world any more.”

Oh, to long for our homeland like that! Oh, to be so weary from well doing that we yearn for that time of rest in our Fatherland. Oh, to be truly, solely, totally an Alien in this world for Christ – **ALL** our time, **ALL** our talents, and **ALL** our treasures devoted wholly to Him.

It would be my greatest desire for each of us here today that this very moment you would choose to either make a commitment or renew your commitment to being a Resident Alien that is dedicated to the mission that has been set before us – to be corn stalks in a soybean field.

No matter where you stand in your life right now, right this minute you are on holy ground. The God of the universe is here this minute seeking those who love Him and those who are willing to deny themselves, (their career preferences, their financial preferences, their retirement preferences, and their lifestyle preferences) and take up their cross and follow Him even to the death to accomplish His mission.

Choose you this day which worldview you will choose, but I hope you will choose to say, “for me and my house, we will be Aliens.”

ABOUT THE SPEAKER — E. G. “JAY” LINK

E. G. “Jay” Link has a unique combination of being an ordained minister with a Master Divinity degree in Biblical Theology and a professional Stewardship planning coach who for over 40 years has been working with very affluent Christian families to enable them to optimize their Kingdom impact with all that the Lord has entrusted to them to manage. After retiring from his personal practice, he then served for five years as Director of Taylor University’s Stewardship Planning Ministry, which he launched for them. Most recently, Jay founded the Stewardship Resource Group to serve Christian ministries, colleges, and churches to better minister to their highest capacity families. He has written six books, hundreds of articles and has provided extensive training curriculum for hundreds of professional financial and legal advisors in how to provide stewardship planning services for their clients.