



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” MARK 16:15

AUTUMN 2017

## FROM US TO YOU

Next year will be the thirtieth anniversary of this ministry. It began in 1988 when our first newsletter went out that December. By 1989 we were officially incorporated in New York State. And in 1990 we became federally tax-exempt. We moved into our first office building in 1993 and went online with our website in 1996. Ours was a long shot. We had no official church backing, no federation helping us, and very little money. All we had was a burning desire to follow Christ wherever He led us. It was a time of many religious scandals. Some were big, like the fall of PTL. Some were smaller, like hearing about a streaker in one city who had been causing a dangerous distraction on the highway. He would streak across it during peak traffic hours. He turned out to be the minister of a local church! “Enough already!” we said. “We’re sick of all these people making Christ look bad!” (See Luke 6:46 and 1 Peter 1:15-16).

There had been a lot of prophecy about this ministry during the years preceding its inception. It was from different people, from various lifestyles, in different parts of this country. They didn’t even know each other. So we decided that, even if the hierarchy in the church choose to go off in another direction (Matthew 7:13-15 and 2 Peter 2:17-22), two buck privates like Eric and Anne Kaestner would live for Him anyway (2 Timothy 2:3). We used our meager resources to buy a computer, office supplies, and pay for printing, etc. Our first office was an extra room in our tiny two bedroom apartment above an antique store. The neighborhood was dangerous, due to the gangs. There had been many break-ins in our building, including our apartment.

We were told by people that you need a big organization behind you, or a church to get you started. We had neither. We had gone from one church to another several times until we finally had enough of all the false doctrines and carnality. We weren’t going to church to attend fashion shows, or watch skits, or see beautiful baby contests. We wanted to meet with other believers who loved Christ and wanted Christian fellowship! And we knew that God was all we needed (see Mark 10:28)! That was 29 years ago and our love for Christ has not diminished. Nor has the flame of passion for His will flickered out. Although we may have started with no church backing, today we want to thank all the churches throughout the United States that have supported us with their prayers and sometimes donations. In Christ we are all family (Matthew 12:48-50), even if we have never met!

These days, more than ever before, Christians need to cleave to Christ. For it seems, at times, like the whole world is going crazy. And our nation is in a very dangerous state! As we prepare this issue, racial tensions are at a fever pitch since the protests that erupted in Charlottesville, Virginia. Some people are angry enough to kill over it! Others are brought to tears, like newswoman Melissa Francis on the August 16th episode of “Outnumbered.” Melissa is one of the nicest

and smartest women on the Fox television network. She broke down after the liberal panelists on the show began to gang up on her for defending the President’s remarks about the Charlottesville conflict. For that she was lampooned, mocked, and threatened. It seems that some liberals are so full of hatred that they cannot tolerate anyone with an opposing view.

Jesus said of these last days, “because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:12-13 NIV). Do you want to live for Christ and love your enemies (Luke 6:27-28)? Or are you so consumed with hostility that you make the devil laugh with glee? He has been jerking both sides around like puppets and pulling the strings of hatred with enthusiasm. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood [humans], but against... the powers of this dark world and against the **spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms**” (Ephesians 6:12 NIV). Whose side is God on? There’s only one side that the Lord is ever on. That is His own! The answer is to be on the same side that Christ is on!

There are a lot of lies being spread by demons who influence the minds of people. For Jesus said, “...My kingdom is not of this world...” (John 18:36 NIV). Satan runs this world system right now (Luke 4:5-8 and John 14:30)! He is the “...the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2 KJV). So if you are burning with hatred and rage you are not a child of God! “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:8 NIV).

A self-righteous attitude does not come from God! “For **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23 NIV). “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were **still sinners**, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8 NIV). If you don’t forgive those who have sinned against you, God won’t forgive you of your sins (see Matthew 18:23-35).

We finally have a President who is trying to promote Christian values and help this country. Yet he is constantly under attack from sources both foreign and domestic. President Trump could have continued his life of privilege and pleasure. He didn’t have to put himself in a position of vulnerability and attack. But he unselfishly gave it up and put himself in the crossfire of those who hate him because he loves America! That’s why Satan, the ruler of this world, is out to attack him! The whole thing with Charlottesville is based on the acts of a previous generation that is not even alive today. Their fate is already sealed. We who are alive in Christ should obey His laws. So, “do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21 NIV).

In Christ we remain, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*



# Spiritual Fruit

By Anne Kaestner

About a year or two after our marriage, my husband, Eric, had a birthday coming up. I wanted to please him with a special day. So, along with a gift, I prepared his favorite food. It was a hot summer day and we had no air conditioning. But I closed the windows in order to drown out street noise. I darkened the room to create a romantic atmosphere, and put some love songs on the stereo. It was the kind of atmosphere that I thought he would like. But it didn't work out that way! As soon as Eric came home he complained, "Why is it so hot in here? Why is it so dark?" And he went around the apartment opening windows and turning lights on. "I don't want to listen to music," he said, "I want to watch television." Then, seemingly oblivious to the linen tablecloth, fancy stemware, and my fine china, he took his shirt off and sat down bare chested at my carefully set table. So much for my romantic mood! However, it taught me a valuable lesson. When we want to please someone else, we need to find out what will please them, not necessarily what we would like!

The question has been in the mind of people for thousands of years. "How can I please God?" The unsaved ask, "What can God do for me?" But the spiritually mature in Christ ask, "Lord, what is Your will for my life?" So it's not about what we can do for God, but what God can do **through us**. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10 NIV). Even most Christians make a mistake when they do the choosing of how they can please the Lord. Cain thought that growing his vegetables and fruit would please Him. But it was not what the Lord wanted (Genesis 4:3-12). God wants good spiritual fruit from us, not carnal! And Jesus said that no one will enter the kingdom of God unless the Lord has been able to grow good spiritual fruit in their heart. Contrary to popular assumption, Christ was not referring to good works (Ephesians 2:8-10) or regular church attendance (Acts 7:49-51).

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful" (John 15:1-2 NIV). The Lord was **not** referring to the unsaved. He was talking to His own disciples when He said it! He told them, "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. **Remain** in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me" (John 15:3-4 NIV).

When His disciples accepted Christ as their Savior and Lord, their sins were automatically forgiven and they were spiritually washed clean. Jesus was with them most of the time. Therefore, He was able to teach them what God expected from them and move them in the right direction. However, there came a time when the Lord told them that He would not remain with them much longer. That He would be returning to His Father. Yet, when He saw how sad this made them, He said, "...I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you... Before long, the world will not see Me anymore, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:16-19 NIV).

Jesus was referring to the infilling of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives. As I write this we are heading into the season of giving. In my next article I will tell you about the gifts God has for us. In this article I want to tell you about the gifts that God expects from us. They are called good fruit! Good fruit comes from healthy branches

that receive proper nourishment from the vine. But they must be grown in good soil. The Holy Spirit is the Sower. The soil is the human heart (Psalms 103:13-14 and 2 Corinthians 4:7). The Vine represents Christ. And the whole thing begins with the seed of the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The earth in which the Vine grows has to be rich with the soil of faith.

Jesus said, "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear" (Matthew 13:3-9 NIV). The seed that fell along the path is the seed that is rejected right away and doesn't take root in the human heart. The seed that falls in rocky soil represents the person who is enthusiastic when they first hear the Word. But as soon as problems come into their lives, they reject Christ and return back to their previous life of sin. The seed does not take root because the rocks in their heart prevent the seed from developing good roots.

The person who receives the seed that falls among thorns is the



person who is discouraged from developing good roots in their relationship with Christ. The thorns are the lies of the false prophets who give them bad doctrine (Matthew 7:15-23). Then, because their faith in Christ is not forming good roots, they become distracted by all "...the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth [which] choke it, making it unfruitful" (Matt. 13:22 NIV). However, "...the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown" (Matthew 13:23 NIV). He is the one who grows delicious spiritual fruit for Christ. And he goes

on to influence the growth of new Vines that grow up and enables them to grow even more good fruit.

This reminds me of the beautiful Rose of Sharon trees that I liked so much when Eric and I prepared to move into our house. They are not vines, but they are similar in some ways. Like wild vines, they pop up on their own. The neighbor next door had planted the first one. And the seeds from the pods on her tree began to spread into the next garden, which became ours! But when we tried cutting clippings from the trees to bring the delicate flowers into our house, they would always die. They cannot sustain any strength on their own unless they remain on the tree. Then they are exquisitely beautiful! The dead flowers get thrown into the garbage. They turn brown and ugly and are good for nothing! It also happens with fruit trees. Eventually their fruit begins to die after it has been cut from the tree. It's the same way with the human heart. Good spiritual fruit will never grow in us unless we **remain** in the Vine of Christ (John 15:5-6)!

Now how can you tell the difference between a true Christian and a false one? Jesus said, "...by their fruit you will recognize them" (Matthew 7:20 NIV). Lots of people call themselves Christians, but God tells us that, often, it is just lip service (Matthew 15:8-9). Just because you go to a church or your parents or grandparents did, that does not make you a Christian (Acts 7:49-51). And God doesn't haunt churches. He lives in the hearts of those who love Him! So a good church is filled with people who are full and overflowing with the Holy Spirit. "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. What



kind of house will You build for Me?’ says the Lord. ‘Or where will My resting place be? Has not My hand made all these things? You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!’” (Acts 7:49-51). Jesus said, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46 NIV. Also, see Matthew 7:22-23).

So now, let’s talk about spiritual fruit. What is it? Well, the Apostle Paul starts by telling us what bad fruit is. “*The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God*” (Galatians 5:19-21 NIV). Sadly, there is much of this going on in churches today! It’s not that people don’t know the difference between right and wrong. They know the difference, especially Christians. They naively believe that God will just forgive them all the time and that they can sin with impurity! This is often condoned by religious leaders. It happened in Paul’s day and Paul was very upset about it (1 Corinthians 5:1-2). Sexual immorality is often condoned in churches these days! Idolatry to sports figures and movie stars is not even thought of as sinful. Envy is wide spread.

Some people go to church to show off their new car or clothes and make others jealous. And it usually works. Fits of rage are also not unheard of. I saw an old episode of “Adam 12” a few years ago. The episodes were based on real situations found in police files. In one scene the police had to break up a physical fight between two church leaders who were arguing about what hymns should be played in church. Selfish ambition is also another sin Paul mentions. As Christians, our ambition should be to be more Christ-like (1 Corinthians 15:49 and 2 Corinthians 3:18). Selfish ambition is when you don’t care who you step on in your climb up the ladder. Drunkenness is another sin Paul lists. And, these days, I believe that includes drugs as well. What people don’t seem to know is that God can deliver you from an addiction to either one!

The late Reverend David Wilkerson had much success leading young people out of their addiction to drugs. He wrote about it in his book, “The Cross And The Switchblade.” It is available through Amazon. (I would not recommend the movie by the same name.) My husband, Eric, says that before I knew him, he was an alcoholic! He said that when he gave his heart to Christ, the Lord delivered him from it. Eric and I take Holy Communion with real wine so that we don’t blaspheme the blood of Christ with something cheap like grape juice. And Eric doesn’t even like the taste of alcohol anymore! Eric has joined with those whom God has totally delivered! It’s the same thing with cigarettes. Neither Eric nor I have ever smoked in our lives. But a man at a church we used to attend often gave his poignant testimony of how the Lord had delivered from cigarettes. Without Christ it’s very hard to do. But, as Jesus said, “...*What is impossible with men is possible with God*” (Luke 18:27 NIV).

That brings us to another sin on Paul’s list, witchcraft! To my shock, over the decades, I have learned that even witchcraft has been subtly working its way into the Christian church. People can be deceived in many ways through what they think is Christian religion. Visualization is not of God! Some churches have taught people to visualize they are talking to someone who has died. That’s akin to engaging in a séance! Even visualization toward Christ is wrong. God wants us to reach Him through prayer, not visualization. It is a dangerous practice because Satan also works in the spirit world. Don’t be fooled by occult practices, including hypnosis, even if they come dressed up as a form of Christianity (2 Corinthians 11:3-4 and Galatians 1:6-8). And have

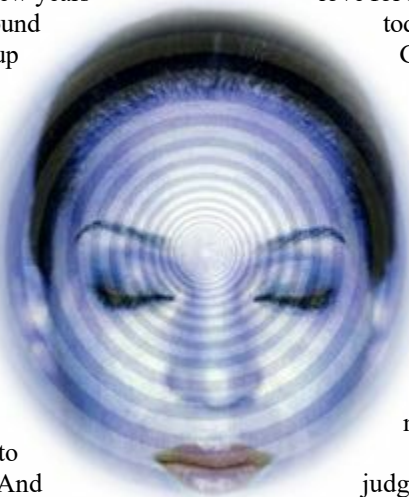
nothing to do with those who would encourage such behavior! “*For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve*” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15 NIV).

Now, let’s talk about what good fruit in Christ is. “...*The fruit of the [Holy] Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control... Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other*” (Galatians 5:22-26 NIV). The first trait mentioned is love. “*We love because He first loved us*” (1 John 4:19 NIV). God is the personification of pure love. So those of us who have been baptized spiritually in His Spirit (Matthew 3:11), take on the attributes of God. But it doesn’t happen right away! I always compare the Baptism in the Holy Spirit to being in love with Christ. Because that’s the way you feel. It’s not just about spiritual gifts, although “...*your Father in heaven [will] give good gifts to those who ask Him*” (Matthew 7:11 NIV). It’s about a change of attitude and compassion for others.

However, don’t make the mistake that the Corinthians made (1 Corinthians 5:1-13). Your love for God should come first before your love for fellow believers (Matthew 22:37-40)! The church today has it all backwards. When I have defended the Gospel to Christians, I have often been confronted with one of the backslidden church’s favorite scriptures. It is always misquoted and taken out of context. “But we’re not supposed to judge!” Did you know that the Bible says “*There is no God*” (Psalms 14:1 KJV)? That’s what it says if you take it out of context! What it really says is, “*To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good*” (Psalms 14:1 KJV). By taking it out of context, you can change the whole meaning of the scripture!

Now let’s take a look at the actual passage about judging. Jesus said, “*do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?*” (Matthew 7:1-3 NIV). But read down a little further in that chapter and you’ll see that Jesus also says, “*Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves*” (Matthew 7:15 NIV). Now how can you evaluate the difference between a false prophet and a true servant of God if you are not supposed to judge the church? You can’t! Further down Jesus continues, “*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!’*” (Matthew 7:21-23 NIV). So, obviously, we **are** supposed to make a judgment about those who claim to serve Christ!

The apostle Paul explains this further. “*I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people - not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With* (Continued On Page 4)



such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you" (1 Corinthians 5:9-13 NIV). The church today has been doing exactly what Jesus told them not to do. They are quick to pass judgment on the rest of the world when there is horrible sin going on in the church itself!

If you love Christ, you defend His Holy Gospel from those who want to contaminate the purity thereof. As Jude told us, "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to **contend for the faith** that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 1:3 NIV). Yes, I know that doing so is not without consequences. These days there are more lukewarm Christians (Revelation 3:16) in the church than those who put Christ first. It's hard to contend for the faith. But Jesus did it. Paul did it. And every one of the Lord's apostles did it. There will always be consequences and you'll probably lose friends and even family. And your church may turn against you (see Matthew 10:34-40). It was the same with Jesus (Mark 6:2-4). His family didn't understand Him, and even resented His ministry (John 7:1-11). And the religious leaders in His day wanted to kill Him (John 7:1). But, if living for Christ were easy, anyone could do it (Matthew 10:22).

Down through the ages those who have truly loved Christ have been tortured, stoned, burned at the stake, fed to lions, crucified, and suffered many other horrible methods of death. Nero, one of the worst of the Roman Emperors, used to ride naked through his gardens at night watching all the impaled Christians slowly burning to death! As a young man, Simon Peter told Jesus that he would die for Him. But, when he was actually accused of being a disciple of Christ, he denied Jesus three times (John 13:37-38, 18:17-27). In the western world, not many of us are killed for Christ. Although, in eastern cultures, many have suffered horrible execution these days. But if you're not willing to live for Christ, how would you be willing to die for Him (Matthew 10:28)? And Jesus said, "...whoever disowns Me before men, I will disown him before My Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:33 NIV. Also, see 10:34-39).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control... Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:22-24 NIV). These are not attributes we need to work up on our own. They become a natural part of putting Christ first and living daily for Him. When I came back to the Lord in my mid-twenties, He rebaptized me in His Holy Spirit. I felt like I was walking on air. It was a light, pure, beautiful feeling that I can't describe. But Paul called it "...the peace of God, which transcends all understanding..." (Philippians 4:7 NIV). My financial worries were gone even though I was deeply in debt. I just knew God would take care of them. And when I got engaged to Eric, he paid them all off. There was a nursing home across from the train station I would wait at when I chose to commute to work that way. Suddenly it took on an exquisite beauty I had never noticed before. It was winter and the snow just glistened from the sun and gave me such a peaceful feeling.

I felt a joy that bubbled up from within me. And it wasn't from any natural source, like winning a contest or buying a new car. I still had lots of problems in my life and was out of work at the time. But I had given my problems to Jesus, along with my heart. And the serenity and love that seemed to flow through me could only come

from the Holy Spirit! I remember, as a child, being amazed at the gentleness and patience I saw in people from the church that led me to Christ. En route to their camp one day, I was impressed when one of the counselors waited so patiently to use a public phone. The man using the phone was taking an inordinate amount of time while the whole bus full of people waited for her. We didn't have cell phones in those days. When people from the church would pick me up in their car to drive me to services, I noticed a profound difference in their attitude on the road. My family was too poor to own a car at the time, but my mother's friend, Kay, would take us places in hers. She was an Irish Catholic and had contempt for the teachings of my church. When she would do something irritating to another driver they would beep at her. She would roll down her window and yell out to them, "So what else did you get for Christmas?" I noticed such a contrast between her behavior and the calm consideration of the drivers from the church.

Perhaps you have, at one time in your life, felt a closeness with the Lord. But something happened to louse it up and you got discouraged. Don't be! Sooner or later it happens to everyone who loves the Lord. Even godly men in the Bible like David (see 2 Samuel 11:2 thru 12:14) and Moses (Exodus 4:24-26, Numbers 20:2-12) have had this problem. The devil finds a way to create struggles for us in our walk with God. It could be physical pain, a family crisis, financial

problems, or some way of keeping you too busy to spend time with the Lord. You wonder why God is letting this happen. You thought you were doing so well in your walk with Him. But then it's as if the firm foundation you were standing on falls out from under you.

When I was a child my Dad gave me a bicycle. I had never ridden one before so he had attached training wheels to it. So I felt secure riding it. However, there came a time when the training wheels came off and I had to learn how to ride without them. With training wheels the bike was like a tricycle. And tricycles are for children, not the mature. If he had kept the training wheels on the bike I never would have learned how

to ride without them. When we are immature in our walk with Christ, God leaves the spiritual training wheels on us. Living for Jesus is easy for a while. But we cannot stay babies in the Lord forever (see Hebrews 5:11 thru 6:3). We need to grow stronger in our walk with God.

Remember what Satan said to God about Job, "Does Job fear God for nothing?... Have You not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out Your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face" (Job 1:9-11 NIV). When serving Christ is easy, it doesn't prove that you love Him. True love for Christ is not a fair weather relationship. The adversities just make us stronger in our walk with Him, if we remain true to Him in good times and bad.

Remember the story of the sower and the seed of God that did not grow properly because of "...the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth... making it unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22 NIV). Don't give up on your walk with the Lord. Keep coming back each time you feel like you're falling. And "trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV). "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14 KJV).

