



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

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

MAY - JUNE 1998

FROM US TO YOU

Although this newsletter is distributed in 452 correctional facilities in 49 states, we have been delighted to see that many Christians on the outside have been reading this "From Us To You" section on our web site. If you're one of them, we invite you to view our new photo section with its pictures of inmates and chaplains. They sent them to us with their testimonials, and/or inmate testimonies. The best mission field in the country is in the jails and prisons of this nation! The changes we have seen in those who have accepted Christ are amazing! For God loves those who need Him the most (see Luke 5:30-32 and Luke 7:36-47). In fact, studies indicate that the only proven method of reducing recidivism is by reaching prisoners with the Gospel! And they **want** to hear it! Their hunger for the Bread of life (Luke 22:19 & John 6:48-51) is so great that we cannot get our material out fast enough to satisfy the demand! Therefore, although this newsletter is usually written for the inmates, this month's "**From Us To You**" section is primarily for our web browsers!

Despite talk of a drop in crime, the overall rate is still very high! The total number of state and federal prisoners more than doubled in the United States from 1985 to 1996! In 1996, the prison population expanded by about 55,900 inmates, reaching a record 1,182,000 at year's end! By late 1996, state prisons were operating at 16% to 24% over their capacity. Federal prisons had a rate of 25%. And government statistics show that 39.9% of all paroles are revoked! There's also an alarming trend. The highest rate of recidivism, 46.5%, takes place among juveniles under 18! Of this group, 10.4% are returned to prison for murder and 13% for assault. One might think that all of this would cause anxiety among voters, but it hasn't. Surveys show that most Americans have been content with their lifestyle and the direction of the nation! So, what accounts for this? It is because, at this writing, the economy is still doing well! Yet we do not believe that this will continue much longer! For the Lord has told us, through scripture (Malachi 3:8-14), that He is angry at this nation, especially His wayward flock. For although God has been blessing Americans financially, it is **not** being invested in the **Bank of Heaven** (Matthew 6:19-21)! Our own funding has dropped dramatically from that of a few years ago. We have discussed this with similar ministries and they, too, are hurting. "People don't want to give to the work of the Lord anymore," is the usual response. In 1996, we were forced to discontinue our Bible distribution program in prisons. We had thought that by 1998 we would have the funding to restore it. But that hasn't happened! Nor have we been able to restore our newsletter to **monthly** circulation.

Yes, Christians will support their local churches when those churches develop a social club atmosphere. Religion has become a big business in the United States! Some churches are building health clubs on their premises, coffee shops, boutiques, and even bowling alleys! But when it comes to getting out the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20), most people are no longer interested! They have

become desensitized by the appeals of ministers of the Gospel. In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus tells a story about a wealthy Master who gives each of His servants some money to invest before He departs on a journey. When He returns He discovers that two of them have doubled His investment and returned it to Him. But the third has buried it in the ground, symbolic of the man who wastes the Lord's resources by sinking it into earthly pursuits. Worse still, the servant tried to blame his Master for it! His Master said, "*You wicked, lazy servant! ...You should have put My money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest...*" *Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*" (Matthew 25:26-30 NIV). Also, see Luke 17:7-10). Those who think that prison inmates aren't worth reaching with the Gospel should read Matthew 18:23-35 and Luke 18:9-14.

Among the property that has suffered the most during this year's

natural disasters has been very expensive homes! Vineyards that used to produce abundant fruit have been experiencing all kinds of woes. Farms and valleys across the nation have been plagued with troubles galore. (See Isaiah 5:8-12.) All of the damage will be costly to fix! God is saying, "If you are not going to support the work of My Kingdom (John 18:36 & Luke 22:28-29), I will render justice upon yours. If you will not feed My sheep (John 21:15-17), yours will go hungry. If you will not nourish My vineyard (see John 15:1-7), yours will suffer hardship. Since you have no compassion for those in the valley of need (see Psalm 23:4), I will flood the valleys where you live. Since you



have not built on the solid Rock of Christ Jesus (Matthew 7:24-27, Ephesians 2:19-20 and 1 Peter 2:5-6), I will move your houses off of the rock! "*For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, ...I was sick and in prison and you did not look after Me*" (Matthew 25:42-43 NIV). People think that Jesus was speaking generally about all the poor and needy. But He wasn't! He said, "**I** was hungry," "**I** was in prison" and "**I** was naked." Remember what Jesus said to Saul of Tarsus, "*...Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?*" (Acts 9:4 NIV). Saul wasn't persecuting people at random. He was attacking the **church**, the **Bride** of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2)! For just as Eve came out of the broken body of Adam (Gen. 2:21-24), the church came out of the broken body of Christ (John 19:34). So we who are in Christ are, in God's eyes, **one flesh** with Him (Ephesians 5:29-32). Americans are generous when it comes to social programs, even to people who have no regard for the Lord and prefer to worship idols. But God is more concerned with **His** children (John 1:12-13), **wherever** they may be! For "*...Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4:4 NIV). We hope that this month's article, "**Truth, Light, And The Servant of God**" will be a blessing to those who suffer rejection due to their commitment to Jesus Christ.

In the Lord's service we remain, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*

Truth, Light and The Servant of God

By Anne Kaestner

There has been an advertisement on television recently where two women are sitting at a kitchen table together drinking coffee. The older woman comments on how good it tastes and the younger woman agrees. Then she looks at her companion, and says, "Would you believe that this is decaffeinated?" In a firm voice the other woman responds with one word, "No." Her companion says, "I can show you the can." "You don't need to show me the can" the older woman states. Her expression and composure remain stoic and stubborn. She has already reached her own conclusions on the coffee and doesn't want to see any evidence to the contrary. That is exactly the way many people are about Christianity! They have formed their own ideas about what they **want** to believe, or they have been indoctrinated from an early age into accepting some particular ideology. And no matter how strong the evidence may be to the contrary, they refuse to accept any other position. Logically this makes no sense at all. For why would someone prefer to believe a lie than the truth? Why would they tenaciously follow a roadmap that leads them in the wrong direction when there is so much at stake? This is the reason. *"...Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God"* (John 3:19-21 NIV). Many years ago I was watching a television show in which three burglars were dressed totally in black and their faces were camouflaged with makeup. They were climbing into a house through a window. Suddenly my sister asked, "Why do the characters always dress like that whenever we see scenes like this?" I responded, "It is because it is dark out and they don't want to be seen." People who don't want to be noticed will always prefer darkness to light. They can blend into the shadows and do their work unobserved. But if you turn a spotlight on such a person he will be revealed, and everyone will see what he has tried to hide. Jesus Christ is a **spotlight** into the darkness of sin! His Holy Light (John 8:12) exposes the evil in the human heart.

That's why the Bible tells us to *"have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible"* (Ephesians 5:11-13 NIV). No man or woman of God should ever cover up evil. Of course, that will not make you very popular with the worldly folk. For example, the Bible tells us about a teenager named Joseph. He was a righteous young man who loved and served the Lord. His father, Jacob, had a special love for him because he was the firstborn son of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife, who had died. So he treated Joseph better than his other sons. However, Joseph's ten half-brothers despised him, especially those born to his father's two concubines. The situation got even worse after Joseph told his father about the evil deeds they had committed (Genesis 37:2). Their hostility to him was so strong that they *"...could not speak a kind word to him"* (Genesis 37:4 NIV). Nevertheless, God was with Joseph and He had great plans for his life. The Lord revealed them to him in dreams. But when Joseph tried to share them with his family, his brothers' hatred increased. Even his father failed to realize the Divine nature of the dreams and joined Joseph's brothers in rebuking him (Genesis 37:10). Then, one day, while his brothers were supposedly tending to the sheep, his father said to him, *"...Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the*

flocks, and bring word back to me..." (Genesis 37:14 NIV). Joseph had a difficult time finding them because they weren't where they were expected to be. But when he finally did, *"...they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. 'Here comes that dreamer!' they said to each other. 'Come now, let's kill him... Then we'll see what comes of his dreams'"* (Genesis 37:18-20 NIV). What would make Joseph's brothers hate him so much? He was their own flesh and blood, their little brother. His mother had died recently. They should have loved him and treated him as family. But they could not love Joseph. Because they sensed the call of God on his life and they resented it! For Joseph faithfully served the Lord, while they were self-willed and rebellious. Joseph was a part of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15). Therefore, he was an alien in this sinful world (see John 17:9-17, Ephesians 2:19, Hebrews 11:13 and 1 Peter 2:11), separated spiritually even from his brothers of the flesh. They hated Joseph because he lived in the Light (Matthew 5:14 and Ephesians 5:8) but they preferred darkness. **And light destroys darkness and exposes the truth!** That's why light and darkness do not mix (see 2 Corinthians 6:14). It's why the Bible tells us to *"...come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you"* (2 Cor. 6:17 NIV. Also, see 1 John 2:16-17).



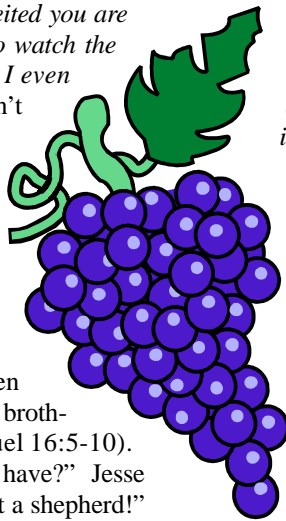
Despite his brothers' disdain, God protected Joseph. So, instead of killing him, they decided to sell him to slave traders heading for Egypt. Then they lied (Rev. 21:8) to Jacob and told him that Joseph had died. Yet Joseph remained faithful to God regardless of the circumstances. Even after he was accused of a crime he did not commit and was sent to prison (Genesis 39:20), Joseph would not acquiesce to sin. Therefore, although he went through some very difficult years, the Lord eventually raised him up to become the second most important man in all of Egypt. And, many years later, the dreams that God had given to Joseph were fulfilled. Consequently, his brothers repented of the way they had treated him (see Genesis 42:21-22). Moreover,

it was through Joseph that God saved all of his brothers and their families from starvation (Genesis 45:4-8). You see, evil always likes to compare itself to evil, never to virtue. The social drinker (see Deuteronomy 21:18-21 and 1 Corinthians 5:11) will tell himself, "I may get drunk occasionally, but I am morally superior to that alcoholic who sleeps in the street." The woman who gossips (2 Corinthians 12:20, Romans 1:29 & 1 Timothy 5:13) will think to herself, "I may like to gossip but I'm a better person than that shoplifter over there." Have you noticed, these days, that politicians seldom base their campaigns on their own qualifications for the job? They would rather tell you why you shouldn't vote for their opponent! You see, sin is not the evil that people do. It is the attitude of their heart! The religious leaders in the days of Jesus thought that they were being righteous by abstaining from certain foods. But Jesus said that it's not what goes **into** the mouth that makes a man unclean. It is what comes **out** of it. Because *"...the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'..."* (Matthew 15:18-20 NIV). These sins originate in the heart of a person who will not yield his spirit to the Spirit of God (Psalm 78:8 & Isaiah 30:1).

Such people don't see themselves as they really are because they live in the darkness of sin. And they want to remain in the darkness because they don't want to face the fact that they are evil (Mark 10:18 & Luke 11:13). So they view themselves as victims. In their mind,

their troubles are always caused by someone else. But when they come into contact with a righteous man who refuses to sin against God, they will hate him. For he becomes a mirror that reflects (see Romans 8:29) the illumination of Christ (Matthew 5:14) into the darkness in their hearts. I remember a job I had as a cashier in a supermarket in 1971 while I was attending school at night. The other cashiers regularly stole packs of chewing gum from the stands in front of their registers. But when I refused to do this, they resented me. Because, in this sinful world, *“truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey...”* (Isaiah 59:15 NIV). Backslidden believers are especially able to sense when a man or woman has the call of God on their life, and they will dislike that person without just cause. Such was the case when a shepherd boy named David was sent by his father, Jesse, to deliver some lunch to his older brothers who were fighting a battle against the Philistines. After he arrived, David became alarmed and angry when he heard one of the Philistines, a giant named Goliath, mocking the Hebrews and blaspheming their God. That’s because the Philistines were pagans who put their trust in worthless idols (Psalms 96:5). At that time, the Jews were the only race on earth that served God. However, all of Israel’s strong fighting men were terrified of Goliath! But, David lived by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Therefore, when Eliab, his oldest brother, saw the righteous indignation in him, and noticed that David had more courage than the entire Hebrew army, he *“...burned with anger at him and asked, ‘Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.’ ‘Now what have I done?’ said David. ‘Can’t I even speak?’”* (1 Samuel 17:28-29 NIV). In reality David wasn’t conceited at all! God never would have chosen him for such a high calling if he had not been meek and humble before the Lord (2 Samuel 22:28, Zephaniah 3:12, Matthew 5:5 & 1 Peter 5:5-6). But the anointing that God placed upon David (see 1 Samuel 16:13) was despised by his family.

When the prophet Samuel told Jesse that God wanted to make one of his sons the next king of Israel, Jesse brought them before Samuel. But he didn’t even bother to call David! Samuel met each one of David’s brothers, but the Lord did not choose any of them (1 Samuel 16:5-10). So, finally, Samuel asked, “Are these all the sons you have?” Jesse responded, “There is still the younger son, but he’s just a shepherd!” Yet he’s the one God wanted to watch over His sheep (Isaiah 53:6)! David was no hireling! (See John 10:11-15.) He loved the sheep enough to fight for them and protect them from the wild beasts. He said, *“...Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it”* (1 Samuel 17:34-35 NIV). Like God who called him, David was willing to give his life for the sheep. The Bible often compares false prophets to beasts (see Matthew 10:16, Acts 20:29-30, 1 Corinthians 15:32, 1 Peter 5:8, 2 Peter 2:12, Psalm 57:4 & Ezekiel 22:25). That’s because, although they appear externally as innocent lambs, it is just a facade. For *“...inwardly they are ferocious wolves”* (Matthew 7:15 NIV). David was saying, “I’ve fought wild beasts before. So what is this giant to me?” Yet Eliab accused him of conceit for the same reason that backsliders always accuse the righteous. It wasn’t really David that he resented. It was **God** working through him, exposing the darkness in Eliab’s heart! For there is nothing Satan hates more than being exposed! *“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 11:14-15 NIV).



Jesus was hated for the same reason. He exposed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of His day, often in parables. Some of them pertain to a vineyard. It is a plot of land where grapes are grown. In a good year, it can be quite valuable, because it produces good fruit that is used to make wine. And wine can sell at a very high price. So, the vineyard must be carefully cultivated. Special attention must be given to the **vine**, because everything the grapes receive comes **through** the vine. If the branches are separated from it they will not grow good fruit (see John 15:1-5). And, *“...every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire”* (Luke 3:9 NIV). Now take a look at Isaiah 5:1-7 where the Lord discusses the vineyard He planted. He speaks of the digging He did, the removal of stones from the soil (Mark 4:5 & 4:16), and the watchtower that He built. He made a winepress in order to turn the grapes into wine (Luke 5:37-39, John 2:1-10, Acts 2:1-18 & Ephesians 5:18). However, after all of that work and expense, *“...He looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit”* (Isaiah 5:2 NIV). The church is God’s vineyard! In Mark 12:1-9 the men who rent the vineyard are the same as the hirelings that attend His sheep. The vineyard does not belong to them, just as the sheep do not belong to them. Therefore, they don’t care about either one. Worse still, despite their innocent appearance, they have a murderous nature. *“At harvest time He sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed”* (Mark 12:2-3 NIV). This continued with many more servants. *“...Some of them they beat, others they killed. He had one left to send, a Son, whom He loved. He sent Him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect My Son.’ But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill Him, and the inheritance will be ours’”* (Mark 12:5-7 NIV). The servants were the prophets, many of whom died at the hands of wicked religious leaders (Luke 11:48-51). The Son is Jesus Christ, whom they would also kill. But, through His death and resurrection, He gave life to those who love Him (John 12:23-24). So what was the inheritance that the tenants wanted to steal? It was the fruit of God’s vineyard! The honor and glory should go to Christ alone, but it is stolen away by the hirelings. The love and adoration should go to the heir, Jesus Christ, but people worship idols, saints, and their religious leaders instead (see Matthew 4:10, Acts 14:11-18 & 1 Corinthians 3:4-9). The souls of those whom Christ redeemed should be the inheritance of the Lord. But multitudes of souls are lost and will die without their Redeemer (Isaiah 54:5 & Job 19:25-27), because the people were taught to follow the hireling instead of the Good Shepherd (Jeremiah 23:1-4 & Ezekiel 34:2-25).

After Jesus told His parable, what was their response? *“The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest Him immediately, because they knew He had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people”* (Luke 20:19 NIV). Also, see Mark 11:18). Why did they hate Jesus so much? It was because He told them the truth! However, Jesus wasn’t just disliked by the religious leaders. His earthly half-brothers also failed to recognize Him as the Son of God! They even encouraged the Lord to go to *“...Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take His life... Jesus’ brothers said to Him, ‘You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that Your disciples may see the miracles You do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since You are doing these things, show yourself to the world.’ For even His own brothers did not believe in Him”* (John 7:1-5 NIV). When Jesus went back for a visit to the village of Nazareth, where He had been raised, the town fathers treated Him with contempt. *“He began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were amazed. ‘Where did this man get these things?’ they asked. ‘What’s* (Continued On Page 4)

this wisdom that has been given Him, that He even does miracles! Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't His sisters here with us?' And they took offense at Him" (Mark 6:2-3 NIV). In essence they were saying, "Who does He think He is? What gives Him the right to have this power and authority, and even work miracles? He grew up in this town. We know His whole family! He's no better than we are! He's just the son of Joseph the carpenter." So if you, as a Christian, are also experiencing this type of hostility from your family and community, you're in very good company. For if Jesus received it, we, His servants, will as well! The Lord said, "...*Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor*" (Mark 6:4 NIV). Jesus knew that His natural family didn't believe that He was the Messiah. That's why, on one occasion, "*While Jesus was still talking to the crowd... Someone told Him, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to You.'*" He replied to him, "*Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?*" Pointing to His disciples, He said, "*Here are My mother and My brothers. For whoever does the will of My Father in Heaven is My brother and sister and mother*" (Matthew 12:46-50 NIV. Also, see Mark 3:21).

The half-brothers of Jesus resented Him. For He was Light and they lived in darkness. Oh sure, they had their religion. But they were missing the most important part of Judaism, their Redeemer! For it seemed implausible to them that their Messiah would be born into their own family. Let's go back to the story of Joseph because I want you to see the parallel between the accounts of Jesus and Joseph. It wasn't strangers who hated Joseph the most. It was his own brothers! They were not pagans. They were Israelites! So it wasn't that they didn't know the difference between right and wrong. They knew it! But they deliberately chose to do what was evil! Paradoxically, Jesus Christ came into this world as a Jew, yet it was the Jews, those of His own race, who hated Him the most (see Mark 11:18 & Luke 23:13-15)! He "...*was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him*" (John 1:10-11 NIV). But if they had not rejected Him, He would not have been the Messiah! For it was prophesied that the Redeemer would be "...*despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not*" (Isaiah 53:3 NIV. Also, see Hebrews 5:7-9). The brothers of Joseph were jealous of him (Genesis 37:3-4). Likewise, the Jewish religious leaders were jealous of Jesus (see Mark 15:9-10). Joseph's father sent him to his brothers to see how they and the sheep were doing. But when they saw him in the distance, they plotted to kill him. In like manner, God sent His Son, Jesus, into this world (John 3:16) to the shepherds of His sheep (Matthew 15:24 and Luke 4:16-21). As with Joseph, Jesus brought a bad report against them (see Matthew 15:7-9 and 23:13-33) and they planned to kill Him (Matthew 26:3-4)!

However, hypocrisy comes in many forms. I have a book in my office called "Bible Stories For Little Children." On the surface, it has the most innocent appearance. The cover contains a color drawing of a shepherd boy, dressed in Biblical attire, watching over his flock. But when I began to read one of the stories I was shocked! It was about Joseph. However, in this case, the author described him as being a "spoiled boy" who told tales on his older brothers and

bragged about the fine clothes his father gave him. In **her** version, Joseph's brothers had good reason to dislike him. They were the good guys and Joseph was a rotten kid. Eventually Joseph realized what "a bad brother" he had been because he told tales on his brothers and had expected them to wait on him. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth! The deceptive slant of the story book is just another example of Satan's stealth approach to mislead people into accepting a counterfeit Christianity (see 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 & Galatians 1:6-12). Another example of this is in a Bible dictionary that I purchased years ago. The front of the book lists the names and degrees of a multitude of theologians who had researched and written it. Most of them were college professors and doctors of divinity. But, when I started reading the passage in the book about Jesus Christ, and His relationship with the Pharisees, I was appalled to discover that it was written from the perspective of the Pharisees! Jesus was not treated as Deity. As with the woman who wrote the children's book, the authors portrayed good as evil and evil as good (Isaiah 5:20). Christ was depicted as a troublemaker who openly defied the laws of the religious leaders. The Pharisees were supposedly the sympathetic characters who simply did not understand why Jesus treated them with such contempt. Actually, it shouldn't be surprising that the authors chose to side with the Pharisees. As my grandmother used to say, "Birds of a feather flock together." They were simply defending their own! Two thousand years may have passed since the Lord walked this earth, but the devil hasn't changed one bit! Satan is a liar and so are his children (see John 8:42-45, 1 John 2:4 & 4:20), who live according to their natural sinful nature (1 Corinthians 2:14). That is why we must be reborn in order to get into Heaven (John 3:3). For Satan has a vested interest in keeping people in the dark (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 & 2 Corinthians 4:3-6)!

Have you been rejected and despised by your brothers because you choose to live for God? As the Lord said to Samuel, "...*it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected Me as their king*" (1 Samuel 8:7 NIV). The blood of righteous martyrs has left a crimson stain down the corridors of time. They would not compromise on their faith even when it meant certain death (see Hebrews 11:35-38). Therefore, through their suffering, they have preserved for us, a pure faith. We do not compromise because if truth is compromised it becomes a lie. Moreover, our God is "...*the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End*" (Revelation 22:13 NIV). There is no gray area with Him (see James 1:17)! You either love and serve Him or you don't (Revelation 3:16). We are pilgrims in a world that is hostile to the truth! That's why Jesus said, "*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed My teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of My name, for they do not know the One who sent Me*" (John 15:18-21 NIV. Also, see Luke 6:26 and Matthew 5:11-12). Remain in the Vine and do not be discouraged by the rumblings of the world around you (see Psalm 37). For those who build their house on anything carnal will fall by the wayside (see Matthew 13:4 and 13:19, Matthew 7:24-27, 1 Corinthians 3:11 and Ephesians 2:19-22). But when we build our house upon the faith and trust we have in Christ Jesus, "...*the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*" (Matthew 16:18 KJV).

