



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

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

November 2020

FROM US TO YOU

Thanksgiving is just around the corner and we in the United States have much for which to be grateful. However, we are living in difficult times. Many are unemployed as a lot of businesses have been ruined due to the Corona virus. People are hurting financially. Others have lost family or friends who have died. The current political climate in our country is also making people emotionally upset from all the frequent arguments, protests, and violence. So, thinking about our blessings has, for some, been difficult. Nevertheless, there is a great deal that we American's take for granted. The Pilgrims never had a supermarket available to supply their Thanksgiving fixings. In fact, many of them died on the ship coming to this new land. Even some of those who survived had loved ones who died en route. They were fleeing severe persecution for their faith. In their new world, their life expectancy was just 35 to 40 years. Many women died in childbirth. Good medical care was nowhere near today's standards. Life expectancy in the United States these days is about 78. The Pilgrims had no washing machine or drier. After arriving at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in November 1620, the women took their dirty laundry down to the water to wash it with whatever soap they had left. Modern laundry detergent did not exist back then.

It's said they had wild turkey for dinner. Can you men imagine having to hunt for a turkey yourself when you're hungry and possibly ill from the voyage? Then the women had the chore of plucking the poultry, cutting it up, and cooking it slowly over an open fire. However, before all of this was done, they knelt down on the ground and thanked God for a safe arrival. We, in America, tend to forget all the good things God has done for us. Things that are so much a part of our lives that we don't even think about them. Perhaps during this Thanksgiving season, we should. Another thing we, Americans, have taken for granted is our freedom to worship God the way we choose. Even that seems to be in danger, if we are not careful.

We should remember that God delivered the Jews out of Egypt in the days of Moses. Yet, instead of being grateful, they murmured against Him. They did not put their faith in Him when things looked bleak (Proverbs 3:5-6). So, when the Lord was about to destroy the whole Egyptian army, who pursued them to kill them, they complained, "...to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!'" (Exodus 14:11-12 NIV). "Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered His people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe" (Jude 1:5 NIV). As a result, only Joshua and Caleb made it all the way to the promised land (Numbers 32:10-13)! For Christians, Heaven is our "Promised Land" (John 14:2, Hebrews 12:2-23). We can only get there by faith and trust in Christ (John 14:6,

1 Timothy 2:5).

It is time for us to be grateful for the good things we have. Have you suffered in some way and become resentful toward God due to it? The Lord is not the one who made you suffer. The Devil did, with the help of his demons (see Ephesians 6:12 and Job 1:8-19). Suffering is not unique to our current time. Down through the ages, many have suffered. Have you suffered due to your faith (1 Peter 4:15-18)? In some countries around the world, even in current times, many have been tortured to death for their faith! The Apostle Paul, in warning the church about hirelings (John 10:1-16), said, "*Are they servants of Christ? ...I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers*" (2 Corinthians 11:23-26 NIV).

Was Paul resentful for the things he suffered? No. He said, "*But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith*" (Philippians 3:7-9 NIV).

We, as a nation, are at a crossroad spiritually. Will we stand by the hope and faith our founders embraced, when they made up our United States Constitution? Or will we put our faith and trust in human wisdom and forget the Lord? Will we still live by the motto, "In God we trust" or will we look to man-made philosophies like secular humanism and socialism? It has been said that people usually get the government that they deserve. However, as "*Joshua said to the people, 'You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, He will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after He has been good to you'*" (Joshua 24:19-20 NIV). When God brings disaster upon a people, He lets the Devil have his way with them. No longer will He protect a nation that rejects Him and serves another spiritual influence.

While the Lord will always watch over those who love and serve Him, as He did with Joseph and Daniel, the church itself needs to be purified.

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



The Real Thing

By Anne Kaestner

My Dad once told me a story that came to mind while I was planning this article. It was about a man who was an expert on spotting counterfeit money. Then one day his friend said to him, “You’re so good at knowing the counterfeits. You never miss. How many years did you spend studying counterfeit money?” The other man responded, “I’ve never spent any time studying counterfeit money. But I have spent my whole life studying the real thing.” Too many Christians have the same trouble with identifying the difference between a real Christian and a lukewarm or nominal one (1 Corinthians 5:11). Paul, the apostle, wrote to Timothy about this present time. He said, “*Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths*” (2 Timothy 4:2-4 NIV).

And Jesus referred to much of today’s church as Laodicean. He said, “*I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of My mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent*” (Revelation 3:15-19 NIV). That’s why you are going through so many troubles now. You are being refined. So that you will have to either grow closer to Christ or totally reject Him.

Knowing the difference takes a mature Christian. And maturity in Christ takes a long time to develop. You start as just a seed of faith (see Mark 4:3-9) and then grow into a seedling.

Then, one day, when you mature, you produce good fruit. For Jesus said that God the Father wants to see good fruit in us. He 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). In other words, the very essence of our spiritual lives depends on our relationship with Christ. He is to the true believer what the vine is to the branch. The whole purpose of the plant is to grow good fruit for us. In order to do that the branches have to be getting their nourishment through the vine. But what happens when a branch is separated from the vine? It cannot produce good, nourishing fruit. So, the fruit rots on the ground. It is not good for anything. It dries up and starts to decay. The leaves also shrivel up and are blown away. Isaiah, in deep anguish about the spiritual condition of his own people, prayed, “*All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away*” (Isaiah 64:6 NIV).

What does Jesus mean by fruit? “*...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...*” (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV). It means you allow the Holy Spirit to control your temperament. When you try to hang up a picture and you accidentally hit your finger with a hammer, you no longer let out a blue streak of profanity. When someone tells a dirty or blasphemous joke, you no longer laugh at it. You stop going to obscene movies.

You don’t dress in provocative clothes. You don’t have sex with anyone but your spouse (Hebrews 13:4). You love Christ so much you want to please Him in everything you do. You allow the Holy Spirit to control your thoughts and actions. A person who is controlled that way does “*...not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry*” (1 Peter 4:2-3 NIV). You know that there is nothing this world can give you that even compares with the good things of God (see 1 Corinthians 2:9). You find you don’t feel comfortable carousing with the old crowd and engaging in all the vices of which God would not approve.

Knowing the real thing in Christ means you do not get swayed easily by false prophets who flatter you or appeal to your greed or lust. “*For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord*” (Jude 1:4 NIV. Also, see Matthew 7:15-16). If the pastor in your church has unconfessed sin in his life, his heart is not right with God. So, don’t be like the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 5:1-3) and put your love for the sinner ahead of your love for Christ. Satan can use your compassion to make you stumble.

I once knew a man who had been saved out of a terrible life of sin. He’d been addicted to strong drugs, and was arrested many times for criminal behavior. Then he accepted Christ as his Savior and Lord. One day he pointed out a group of people on a street corner and told me that he knew them. That he used to be just like them. Then he became upset and told me that he was no better than them and that he had no right to look down on them. He told me that he was being proud. He stopped looking up at Christ and started thinking about his past life with them. As a result of his empathy, he began

to drift back in his mind to the way he used to be and started to backslide. Yes, you feel compassion for the sinner who doesn’t know the love of God and the joy of salvation. But you don’t return to living like them in order to save them. You don’t become drunk yourself to help the alcoholic!

Another young man once told me that his pastor wanted to attract young people to his church by having rock music there. If attracting people to his church was his sole purpose he might as well put slot machines in there and a burlesque act. People would go to his church, but no hearts would be changed for Christ. God is Holy, Holy, Holy! His pastor ought to consider how angry Jesus was when people were buying and selling goods in the temple. “*In the temple courts He found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So He made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves He said, ‘Get these out of here! How dare you turn My Father’s house into a market!’*” (John 2:14-16 NIV).

Now it’s one thing when nominal Christians and worldly folk are deceived by the devil’s lies. For the Bible calls him “*...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world...*” (Revelation 12:9 KJV). But it’s another thing altogether when Christians, who should know better, are so easily deceived by him! Most churches these days have fallen so far away from Christ that they can even engage



in witchcraft and think they are doing it for God! The Apostle Paul told us that in these last days, much of the church will have become so homogenized with the world that it will actually engage in devil worship and not even know it! Hard to believe isn't it? He was writing to Timothy about the lukewarm, backslidden latter-day church. He said they would be "...always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. Just as **Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses**, so also these men oppose the truth—men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected" (2 Timothy 3:7-8 NIV). Bible scholars tell us that Jannes and Jambres are the magicians that Pharaoh used to counterfeit the miracles God performed through Moses! They did this through their sorcery. And sorcery is evil in the sight of God (Galatians 5:19-20, Isaiah 8:19, and Exodus 22:18) because it is used to enter into the spirit world without God. Those practicing such occult arts are being assisted by demons! And they deceive people into believing they can stop the sin at any time without bitter consequences. Smokers think they can stop, alcoholics think they can stop, pornography seekers think they can stop. They think they control the sin. But the sin begins to control them! And they can't stop without Christ!

Likewise, those who enter into the occult, even in seemingly harmless ways, such as Ouija boards, tarot cards, horoscopes, "Harry Potter" books, and games like "Dungeons & Dragons" are opening themselves up to demonic influence, oppression, or even demonic possession (Acts 19:13-16)! Such things make God very angry! So, unless you come back to Him in serious repentance and remorse over your sin, He will usually allow the devil to have his way with you (Judges 10:11-14), even if it leads to torture, murder, and other unspeakable miseries. That's why I am amazed at the demonic poison that has been entering into the church. Satan and his demons have become so skilled at deluding gullible Christians that he has even come up with a counterfeit Christ (Matthew 24:5). The Apostle Paul told the church, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from Heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians 1:6-8 NIV).

It's incredible what we get in the mail these days from businesses who equate Christian beliefs with carnal ideas. I mean promotions for church trips to "Radio City Music Hall" or some musical on Broadway. Terms like "Christian Fiction" have popped up. Jesus said, "...I am the way and the truth and the life..." (John 14:6 NIV). Seventy-eight times in the Gospels Jesus said, "I tell you the truth..." (Matthew 5:18 NIV). So, what could true Christianity possibly have in common with fiction? It's an oxymoron! And what about the term "Christian Rock"? I am not a fan of Jimmy Swaggart since his scandal back in the late 1980's. But he is the first cousin of Jerry Lee Lewis, who, along with Elvis Presley, made "rock" music acceptable to the white race. Swaggart has said that the term "rock and roll" was used as a reference to the sexual act. Elvis Presley used to sway his hips while singing. That's why! In the movie, "Great Balls of Fire" there is even a scene where the characters of Jimmy and Jerry Lee slipped away to watch a group of black men and women dancing. Parts of their dance was very salacious! It comes from African culture and was originally used in tribal worship. And that certainly doesn't come from Christian culture! That's why God sent so many missionaries to Africa. For years white Christians had no interest in rock music. But the devil has made great inroads into the church by simply adding the prefix "Christian" to it. I have never heard any kind of so called "Christian Rock" music that had even the remotest holy anointing

on it! You may think you feel an anointing on it. But it sure isn't coming from God! Remember Paul's warning about the devil's deception.

Beware of the subtle "...work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 NIV). Many years ago, someone sent us a folder of music CD's. It's a perfect example of what I am saying. The discs had a smattering of Christian music on it. It also had some very worldly stuff as well. One song in particular grabbed my attention, "Colors of the Wind." I played it several times, trying to decipher the words. For the melody was hauntingly beautiful, and I sensed a strange spiritual tone to it. However, as the words became more clear, I knew it was definitely not Christian! Words like, "Have you ever heard the wolf cry to the blue corn moon or asked the grinning bobcat why he grinned? Can you sing with all the voices of the mountains? Can you paint with all the colors of the wind?" Before I even began to research the song, I recognized a Native American influence to it.

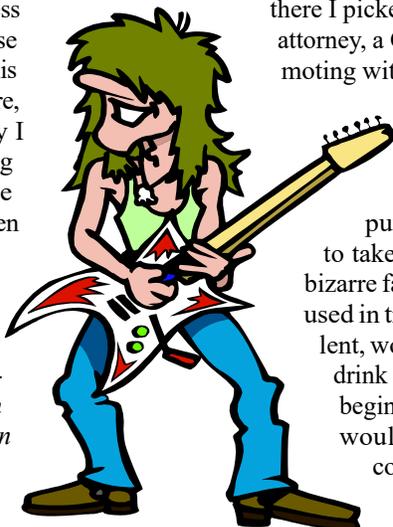
Back in the mid-1990's my husband, Eric, and I had a vacation in Washington D.C. The atmosphere of the city was very carnal, with statues everywhere (see Exodus 20:4). And the museums were filled with tribal artifacts, with a heavy bias toward anything pagan. While there I picked up some reference material. Like any good trial attorney, a Christian needs to know what the opposition is promoting without being seduced by its influence. One of them

was a video called "The Spirit of the Mask."

People think pagan ceremonial masks are harmless. But I was shocked when I watched the video and saw what happened when a woman put one on and demonstrated its power. She began to take on the mannerisms of a bird, strutting around in bizarre fashion and vocalizing in an animalistic way! When used in trial ceremonies, the "witch doctor" or his equivalent, would wear the mask, along with feathers and talons, drink a strange potion, sometimes with animal blood, and begin to go into some kind of a trance where tribal spirits would take over his body and send him into inhuman convulsions. Other ceremonial practices and beliefs were also revealed in the video.

During a staff meeting one day, I decided to play it for some employees. Two of the men there were Christians from Haiti, and of African heritage. One of them got very upset. "Turn that off" he begged. He began to look terrified, and said, "It reminds me of the things I saw in Haiti." The video claimed to unlock "the secret world of the Northwest Coastal Indians." However, it was clear that the differences between ancient Indian culture and African was not significant. Both stemmed from the same branch. And it was certainly not the Vine of Christ (John 15:1-8)! In Old Testament times, the Jews were the only people on earth who worshiped the one true God. And even they would frequently backslide away from Him into horrible sin. They would want to get along with the pagans around them, even though God told them to kill them (1 Samuel 15:17-19 and 2 Corinthians 6:17). He knew that if they became friends with the pagans, they would eventually adopt their evil practices. And that's exactly what happened. The Jews even got to the place of sacrificing little babies to Baal and other idols. The Lord became livid about this. He said that the descendants of Israel (also called "Jeshurun"), "...abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior. They made Him jealous with their foreign gods and angered Him with their detestable idols. They sacrificed to **demons**, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear. You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth. **The LORD**

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saw this and rejected them because He was angered by His sons and daughters” (Deuteronomy 32:15-19 NIV).

How foolish it is that these days, Christians can go to “R” rated movies, watch blasphemous television shows, and listen to the devil’s music, yet not even realize how far they have fallen from Christ! The same vocalist who sang “Colors of the Wind” on the audio I mentioned also sang some Christian songs as well. But the way she sang them, the Christian music had no anointing on it at all! The spiritual power was all in the pagan one. As I suspected, the song was about Indian culture. It came from the Disney movie, “Pocahontas.” When I saw the video online, with the music, I could understand how it had such a magical appeal to the lukewarm church. Likewise, the “Harry Potter” books are very popular these days. I never read any of them, because they promote the occult. However, I saw a book review of them on television. They start out by portraying the Harry Potter character as being badly treated so that the public will have sympathy for him and like him better.

As Paul told the church, “...I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3 NIV). This once Christian country, has been so seduced, over the decades, that it doesn’t even become alarmed anymore by the media promoting witchcraft. It originally became acceptable to society through Disney cartoons. Then movies like “The Wizard of Oz.” Then television decided it was time to do the same. Like “Harry Potter,” their main character was treated badly to provoke sympathy. It started with the old 1960’s television show, “Bewitched.” During the first season of the show, Samantha, the witch, is treated with condescension from her husband’s old girlfriend and her friends. So, Samantha uses witchcraft to get even. The viewer, probably identifying with her due to similar treatment in their own life, is made so angry that they are deceived into thinking Samantha’s revenge of witchcraft is justified by their snobbery. Thus, the gullible Christian, if watching it, is not alarmed by her occult practices.

Yet the Bible gives an example of God’s anger at King Manasseh, son of a righteous king named Hezekiah. “*He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had demolished; he also erected altars to the Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. He built altars in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, ‘My Name will remain in Jerusalem forever.’ In both courts of the temple of the LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts. He sacrificed his sons in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced sorcery, divination and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spiritualist. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking Him to anger*” (2 Chronicles 33:2-6 NIV). What happened as a result?

“*The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. So the LORD brought against them the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. In his distress he sought the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. And when he prayed to Him, the LORD was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea;*

so He brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God” (2 Chronicles 33:10-13 NIV). There is clearly danger in turning away from the Lord, if you’re a Christian. And this country is in danger when the people get involved in such abomination to God as human sacrifice (abortion), sorcery, and condone homosexuality. As Paul told the church in Corinth, “*Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God*” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 NIV).

The Bible speaks of people who have suffered for their sins and explains the reason. “*They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion*” (Romans 1:25-27

NIV). We are living in very dangerous times. The Apostle Paul, speaking of the latter-day Christian church, put it this way. “*But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. They are the kind who worm their way into homes [television] and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth*” (2 Timothy 3:1-7 NIV).

The book of Revelation tells us of some very scary times that are to take place in the future. That is, for those left behind after the Rapture of the church. I see the “handwriting on the wall” (see Daniel 5:5) these days. There will be hardly any privacy. Even now, I am amazed at how much personal information can be given about people. That includes, health, finance, age, relatives, work history, etc. So, read your Bible, and cleave to Christ. Our very survival, as a nation, depends on Him! I believe that the United States was blessed by God more than any other nation in modern times. It is because it was founded on the solid Rock of Jesus Christ (see Mathew 7:24 and 1 Corinthians 10:4). But we have been sliding off of that Rock for decades. Before it’s too late, Americans need to return to Christ. Don’t even look at media horoscopes. They are not harmless. They are a hors d’oeuvre to more occult activity. The job of the church should be “*to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming*” (Ephesians 4:12-14 NIV).

