



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

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

SUMMER 2016

FROM US TO YOU

The two of us were heading home recently when we decided to stop off at a CVS store. The sign in the parking lot was put there by the police department. It warned customers to make sure that they locked their cars and to not leave personal items in them. We asked the young cashier in the store about it. He told us that since the store was so close to a high school there had been some thefts in the area. "Some people have left their car unlocked with a wallet lying on the seat," he said. "When the kids have seen something like that they have opened the door and taken it." Anne asked, "Has anyone been hurt?" "No," he replied. "It's just been thefts." Anne told him that, when we were teenagers, kids seldom did anything like that. "I wish I lived in those days," he replied. How sad it is that society has fallen to such a moral low! We not only lock our doors, we also have an alarm system on our house, as do most of our neighbors. We now live in a nice neighborhood with low crime.

However we spent our first nineteen years of marriage in a small two bedroom apartment above a store. When we first started our ministry, we turned our second bedroom into an office. Eric had to get up early for work in those days, so he went to bed early. His salary paid for most ministry expenses. He did his ministry work in his spare time. That included setting up the computer equipment, camera ready artwork for the printer, and overseeing distribution of our material to prisons. Anne had left her job and spent four years working full time for Bible Believers Fellowship, Inc. Neither one of us received any ministry salary in those days. Many nights Anne was up at 3:00 am working on articles. We lived on a busy main road and so the noise of traffic was constant even at that hour. What was worse were the burglar alarms on the stores in our neighborhood that occasionally went off at night. Anne's computer was right next to our cat Sasha's litter box. Sasha sometimes chose to use it while Anne was trying to work.

Many times the sounds of young gangs could be heard in the neighborhood. Their graffiti decorated the alleyway outside of our building, which was located between two bars, a bowling alley, and a pool hall. We had to park at the police parking lot two blocks away because our cars were vandalized when we left them near our building. On one occasion we had trouble getting home. Fire trucks were clogging the street. When we were allowed to enter our building we noticed hoses up the long stairway. Our apartment door was broken into by the fire department. Our skylights were also broken with pieces of glass on our kitchen and bathroom floor. There had been a fire in the building next to ours and the fire fighters wanted to make sure it didn't spread to ours.

During those years there were a lot of burglaries in our building. Our apartment was broken into once. Twice there were attempted break-ins that were unsuccessful. In the case of one of them we were home at the time! Eric was sleeping while Anne was resting on the

living room couch listening to music. It was 2:00 am in the morning and she got up to go to bed. We had no air conditioning except for the bedroom. So, since it was so hot outside, Anne had left the window open by the alleyway in the room that eventually became our ministry office. She got up to close it not realizing that a gang had formed in the alleyway.

Our apartment was on the second floor so we didn't think anyone could break in. We were wrong. God has a way of putting His servants in a trance at times, as He probably did with Simon Peter in Acts 12:5-11. (Also, see Acts 10:10, 11:5, and 22:17.) Apparently the gang had no need of a ladder. They had climbed up piggyback on each other's shoulders. Anne walked into the room, oblivious to the fact that the young man who seemed to be in charge had his foot up on the windowsill and was about to climb in.

She doesn't know what he saw but he took one look at her and shrieked with terror. In a trembling voice he told the guy underneath him to get down quickly. Then he began to panic when the man wanted to know why. They left and Anne calmly walked over and closed and locked the window. She went to bed and about an hour later she awoke with a start as God revealed to her what had happened. Anne knows it was no dream! What had the young man seen? She doesn't know. But at only five foot three inches and 120 pounds, she doesn't believe it was herself. Was it an angel? The Bible tell us that angels do protect us, as they did with Simon Peter in Acts 12:5-11. In fact, *"...some people have entertained angels without knowing it"* (Hebrews 13:2 NIV).

How comforting it is to know that when we put the Lord totally first in our lives, God protects us even when we don't know we're in danger. And in this crazy world we live in today those of us who love Christ need His constant protection. That is especially so when lawmakers try to make public restrooms gender neutral! Of course we should oppose these laws at all times, but when all else fails, we trust God to keep us safe. As believers, we all go through trials and tests of faith (Proverbs 17:3, 1 Peter 1:3-7). Yet, *"if you make the Most High your dwelling - even the LORD, who is my refuge - then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone... 'Because he loves Me,' says the LORD, 'I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges My name'"* (Psalms 91:9-14 NIV).

However, if you want the Lord's protection you must put Him first in your life! How sad it is today that so many Christians have lost their first love (Revelation 2:2-5, Matthew 10:32-38)! What you get out of your relationship with the Lord is dependent upon what you put into it. Have a lovely summer everyone!

In Christ we remain, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*



Weathering The Storm

By Anne Kaestner

When I was a young adult someone said to me “Christians today are the way the worldly folk were in the 1950’s.” That was forty years ago and it’s not so anymore. Today most Christians are the way the world was in the 1970’s. Just watch old television shows through those decades and it’s easy to see that. Actors, playing married couples on television sitcoms, were barred from sharing a bed together. “That Girl” had a single bed and on the “Mary Tyler Moore Show” they used a convertible sofa. By the 1980’s daytime soap operas showed actors naked in bed having sex with each other. The foreplay was obvious, but what was going on under the covers we can only wonder about! It seems amazing that society could fall into such moral decadence within such a short time. I never watch soap operas or modern sitcoms but I have seen their disgusting promos as well as little segments while flipping channels. Our grandparents would be appalled if they knew what was considered normal these days! Older generations knew enough to fear God (Eccl. 12:13). There was a time when children were taught Christianity in public schools and were well behaved in class. Now shootings in schools happen so often that, while we are upset about it, we are no longer surprised when it happens.

Today’s true Christians are more moral than their worldly counterparts. But morality doesn’t get anyone to Heaven! “*For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of Heaven*” (Matthew 5:20 NIV). We need a personal **relationship** with Christ to get there, not a religion! As for the Pharisees, Jesus blasted them, “*You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel...*” (Matt. 23:24-27 NIV). In other words, they were meticulous about ceremonial things like washing their hands up to the elbow before eating a meal but they had no Godly compassion for those who were hurting. They used the law as a weapon to control their flock (see Jeremiah 23:1-2, Matthew 20:25-28). That’s why they gave Jesus a hard time for healing people on the Sabbath day (Mark 3:1-5). And they complained on the Sabbath when the disciples picked some grain to eat when they were hungry (Mark 2:23-28).

Jesus said, “*Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean*” (Matthew 23:24-27 NIV). Over and over again Jesus called these men hypocrites because they took the attitude that they were superior to the common folk due to their position. They looked down their noses at the people they were supposed to help. And they thought that they would get to Heaven as a result of keeping the ceremonial law. Jesus compared them with whitewashed tombs that looked so pure and beautiful on the outside but were filled with death on the inside. They hated Jesus so much that they wanted to kill Him (Mark 11:18)! Their hatred was caused by jealousy!

Jesus told the people that the Pharisees taught the moral law and that His disciples should obey them in that. However, He said that they should not follow their example when it came to human relationships. He said, “*...You must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders, but they*

themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see... they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi’” (Matthew 23:2-7 NIV).

As Christians we must keep the ten commandments of God (see Exodus 20:1-17) as much as is possible, but keeping the law and paying our tithes alone is not enough. The two most important commandments are the very first ones. Jesus summed them all up in two verses, “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*” *The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these*” (Mark 12:30-31 NIV). The more love you have for God, the more compassion you will have for others (1 Corinthians chapter 13), especially fellow believers (1 John 3:23). But the Holy Spirit will also give you wisdom too (1 Corinthians 1:30, 2:7). For Satan knows the Bible very well and can quote scripture (Matthew 4:6 and Psalms 91:11-12). He will twist it around to suit his purpose when he can (Acts 20:30).

For example, I once saw an excerpt on the news about a homeless man in New York City. He liked to hold the door for people who would go in and out of a certain building. Then he would pressure them to give him money. His manner and appearance was very intimidating. And he would become angry when they didn’t pay him. After a while people began to feel it was a form of extortion. A reporter asked the man about it and he responded by twisting the scripture in Matthew 25:31-46. He said, “Didn’t Jesus tell people, ‘I was blind and you gave me bread. I was hungry and you gave me food?’” The reporter didn’t know what to say, but I would have said, “That’s funny because you don’t act a bit like Jesus. In fact, you act more like the devil!”

Compare the scripture in Matthew 25:31-46 with the words of Christ to Saul of Tarsus who was en route to Damascus to persecute the new Christian church. Saul “*...fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’ ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Saul asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ He replied*” (Acts 9:4-5 NIV). The Lord had already died and returned to His Father in Heaven. So Saul couldn’t physically persecute Him. Saul was persecuting the church. And the church was spiritually a part of the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27). I know it’s a bit confusing, but what it amounts to is this. Jesus became the replacement for Adam. Adam was supposed to be the first born and father of the whole human race. He was created perfect and was considered a son of God (Luke 3:38). But Adam failed God and the seed of reproductive life that God placed in Adam’s loins gave birth to a race of spiritually dead people. For we were born contaminated by Adam’s sin. All life comes from God (John 1:4, 14:6). But death comes as a result of sin which separates us from God (Romans 5:15-17).

So Christ came into this world to reinstate us to God, thus, becoming the replacement for Adam for those who accept Him as Savior and Lord (John 1:12-13). The first Adam had a wife named Eve. God formed her out of a rib from her husband’s body (Genesis 2:22). God must have spilt some blood doing it. Adam said of his wife, “*...This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman’ for she was taken out of man*” (Genesis 2:23 NIV). The last Adam, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22, 45), also has a wife. She is the true church. God formed the church out of the



spilt blood and wounded rib of Christ (John 19:34)! She is called a “**Christian**” for she was formed from the broken body of **Christ**. Eve was a separate part of Adam’s body. We, the church, are a separate part of the Lord’s body (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Therefore, God sees us a two separate entities that together make up one body in Christ. So when the church is attacked, Christ sees it as an attack on Himself, His own body (see Ephesians 5:25-32). Therefore, when the Lord said, “*I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit Me*” (Matthew 25:36 NIV) He wasn’t talking about Himself. He was talking about His beloved bride, the body of Christ (see Isaiah 54:5, 2 Corinthians 11:2, and Ephesians 5:23). Unfortunately, today the pure church that came out of the Lord’s suffering is not so pure anymore. The Apostle Paul said, “*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*” (2 Timothy 3:1-5 NIV). That’s exactly what most churches have these days, “a form of godliness” but without the Holy Spirit. For the Power of God comes to us through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Believers today take the attitude that if you go to a church you must be a Christian. But if you don’t go to church, but live by faith and trust God, you are a pagan. People, the church is the bride of Christ. The bride cannot save herself! Salvation comes through Christ, not the church (Acts 4:10-12 and 1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus said, “*...I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*” (John 14:6 NIV). Yes, there are those in the church who deeply love the Lord. But there are a lot of goats among the sheep too (see Matthew 25:32-33)! But the gift of “*...distinguishing between spirits...*” (1 Corinthians 12:10 NIV) is so weak that few in the church can tell the difference. The devil has added an extra tool to his arsenal of deception (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Remember what Paul told us, “*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them*” (Acts 20:28-30 NIV). One of Satan’s favorite scriptures to distort is “*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*” (Matthew 7:1-2 NIV). Christians are afraid to discern any difference between the sheep and the goats because they think that the Lord’s words apply to the church.

They totally take it out of context and ignore the Lord’s warning a few verses later, “*Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves*” (Matthew 7:15 NIV). This is similar to Paul’s warning in Acts 20:28-30. So how do we watch out for false prophets, who dress up like innocent sheep if we don’t judge them? Jesus said, “*By their fruit you will recognize them*” (Matthew 7:16 NIV). And “*...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 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” (Galatians 5:22-25 NIV).

Does that describe the congregation at the church you go to? Or is this description more in keeping with them? “*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). Beloved in Christ, the closer you get in your relationship with the Lord, the more the goats and false prophets will attack you, as they did with Jesus! Sheep and goats do not get along together.

So what was Jesus talking about in His admonition about judging? It was hypocritical judging of the world! Those who don’t know Christ have never been saved. They are still living in sin and acting accordingly. Of course they are going to do bad things. It’s not that they don’t know any better. It’s that they are still being influenced by the devil (Ephesians 2:1-3). But the church, the Bride of Christ, has no excuse! As the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians, “*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 5:12-13 NIV). The church should be setting such a good example to the world that they see the sin in themselves and repent.

Unfortunately the opposite is happening. The world is influencing those in the church! Paul was appalled to find out that the pure church that he had started in Corinth had fallen so far away from Christ that it had become worse than the world! He wrote, “*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father’s wife. And you are proud! Shouldn’t you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?*” (1 Corinthians 5:1-2 NIV). Here again the devil had twisted the teachings of Christ so much that they had it backwards.

Jesus said, “*... ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it:*

‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matthew 22:37-39 NIV). They were putting their love for those in the church ahead of their love for Christ! They were actually bragging about how forgiving they had been. Paul was alarmed. He told them, “*Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*” (1 Corinthians 5:6 KJV). Due to their lackadaisical attitude in the church the sin was spreading throughout the congregation!

Was Paul worried about judging or offending them? Was he concerned about not being “politically correct?” No way! He wrote back, “*Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present... Hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 5:3-5 NIV). In other words, throw the sinners out of the church so that they will come to repentance and get their hearts right with God. And repent of your sin in putting them before Christ. The only way you can be pure again is to get rid of that sinful yeast that was working its way through the whole loaf of bread, the body of Christ (Luke 22:19). If we in the body of Christ stop acting like Laodiceans (Revelation 3:14-17), repent of our sins within the church, and stop judging the world, the unsaved will see the love in us instead of the hypocritical judgment it is seeing **(Continued On Page 4)**



right now, and may come to Christ.

So how is it that conditions have been allowed to decay to this point? I believe there are two reasons. (1) Pastors have been teaching a "God is love" Gospel for so long that people have come to think of the Lord as a big Santa Claus who only exists to serve them. But God does not exist to do our will. We exist to do His (Luke 6:46)! Of course, from the pastor's point of view, as the Apostle Paul told Timothy, "...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 4:3-4 NIV). That time has already come! (2) Secondly, since people are not getting the Holy Spirit inspired teaching they should be receiving in church, they are learning about right and wrong from Atheistic college professors, television, movies, and modern medicine.

Paul wrote of such people, "Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles [idols and graven images]. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another [sexual perversion]. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things [evolution, idolatry, astrology] rather than the Creator - who is forever praised... Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones [lesbianism]. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another [homosexuality]. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion [sexually transmitted diseases]" (Romans 1:22-27 NIV). That explains the prevalence of homosexual propaganda in society. It has gotten so bad that society has gone crazy to the point of having gender neutral restrooms these days!

"Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. **Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them**" (Romans 1:28-32 NIV).

Taking all of this into consideration, those who love and serve Christ should not be astonished at the pain and terror formally Christian nations are dealing with every day! Jesus once said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:37-39 NIV). And what did God say about that? "The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. **The LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain.** So the LORD said, 'I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth - men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air - for I am grieved that I have made them.' But Noah found

favor in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:5-8 NIV).

The whole world was wiped out during that time and only one man and his family were righteous enough to survive. Yet there are not going to be any Noahs around today. For the next time God destroys the world it will not be with water, but with fire (2 Peter 3:10-13). However, we have something much better. We have the Ark of God, Jesus Christ! Many of us have heard the account of Simon Peter, after the Lord had left His disciples to spend some private time in prayer. The men decided to go fishing. But they picked a bad night for it. For "...the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it" (Matthew 14:24 NIV). So, although they were experienced fishermen, they became frightened. Then they saw what they thought was a ghost walking on the water toward them. By that time they were terrified!

"But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.' 'Lord, if it's You,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to You on the water.' 'Come,' He said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' He said, 'why did you doubt?'" (Matthew 14:27-31 NIV). With all the terrible natural disasters that have occurred over the years, I have noticed one consistent fact. The reporters would be out there with their microphones and cameras searching for survivors. And time and again the ones they interviewed would be praising God! I'd hear stories like the woman who went into a small room she called

her "prayer closet" (see Matthew 6:6 KJV). The storm raged all around her on the outside. The house began to fall apart as the wind howled. She must have felt so helpless. But she knew someone who was bigger and stronger than the storm (Proverbs 3:5-6)! "The house is gone," she told the reporters. "The only thing left standing is my prayer closet! And I was inside of it."

I remember the time my husband and I were traveling through Virginia on our way to my brother's wedding. We were keeping up with the traffic at seventy miles an hour and were

in the far left lane when the van we were in blew a tire and started moving sharply to the middle lane of traffic, which was filled with cars, as was the right. Eric struggled to control the van and I screamed, "Jesus help us!" I looked back out of the window and was amazed at what I saw. The traffic, which moments ago had been all around us was suddenly far in the distance! We were able to safely move over to the grassy embankment on the right side of the road. Eric started changing the tire while I sat on the grass praising God (see Psalms 116:1-13).

What we have seen so far with society and weather conditions is just a hors d'oeuvre of things to come. Remember the days of Noah and the Lord's warning about these last days before His return. "See to it that you do not refuse Him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from Him who warns us from heaven? At that time His voice shook the earth, but now He has promised, 'Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.' The words 'once more' indicate the removing of what can be shaken - that is, created things - so that what cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:25-27 NIV). Be like the proverbial wise man who built his house on the solid Rock of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). The storm raged around him. "The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock" (Matthew 7:25 NIV).

