



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

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

WINTER 2016-2017

FROM US TO YOU

In America we have much to be grateful for. Our freedom of worship and lifestyle is the envy of the world. God has blessed us in many ways. But we could be in danger of losing those blessings if we continue to take the Lord for granted. Flooding this country with any religion other than Christianity will destroy the blessings God has given to America. For without God’s protection, we become vulnerable to demonic teachings. The ancient Hebrews are an example of this. God blessed them greatly as long as they continued to serve Him. He protected them from all their enemies (Joshua 23:3) even though the pagans were much more numerous than them (Deut. 7:7). Yet when they got tired of fighting against their enemies and began to make friends with them, the Jews adopted their evil culture as their own. This included the sacrifice of little babies to demon “gods” (2 Kings 17:16-18).

God said, “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 saw this and rejected them because He was angered by His sons and daughters” (Deut. 32:17-19 NIV). This used to be a Christian nation but all the years of liberal propaganda have weakened our spiritual fiber! Yet people are finally feeling free to express their thoughts without worry about not being “politically correct.” But your current freedoms must not be taken lightly. Satan is hoping again to flood the nation with those who hate Christians and want to replace our faith with their own! We can feel the devil’s anger that the election turned out that way. While heading for the dentist office the day of the election our afflictions, which had been slightly less annoying over the last few months, suddenly got much worse.

For those who take their freedoms for granted, consider this. Back in the 1960’s Iran was under the rule of the Shah, a strong but benevolent leader. It was a nice place to visit. There was no Sharia law. Women were not forced to wear burkas and everyone had more freedom. However, that all changed when Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlava became terminally ill and was forced from power. It happened very fast! Mob rule took over and Ruhollah Khomeini became ruler of Iran. Hence, Sharia law!

All this stress globally was prophesied by Christ long ago (Mark 13:5-8). The world we live in today is a very dangerous place. At this writing it has gotten so bad that assassinations of police officers is at an all-time high. Now, like never before, it is time for the church of Christ to reject all the false doctrines of the past, like the “prosperity gospel” (Matthew 6:24-33). Or the nonsense about “bad confessions.” That’s when you are sick or handicapped but you are taught to claim by faith that you are already healed. Everyone who was healed by Jesus or the apostles was truly healed. It was evident to all. No one had to

pretend to be healed. It’s unbiblical to preach that way. Simon Peter told the church, “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed” (1 Peter 4:12-13 NIV).

Another false doctrine is “Self Esteem.” That’s a haughty, condescending attitude that stinks of self-worth. Those who engage in it love themselves more than they love Christ. They therefore, will not deny themselves (Luke 9:23). They puff themselves up. That was the sin of the Pharisees in the days of Christ. However, “...God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6 NIV). “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you

up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith...” (1 Peter 5:6-9 NIV).

For many years before he died (on April 27, 2011), [Rev. David Wilkerson](#) gave frequent warnings about a vision he had seen that will take place in the future. He had a good track record of prophesying the future. He accurately prophesied the stock market crash in 1987, the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, and much more. We therefore, take his warnings very seriously. The most frequent warning had to do with fires and looting in New York City. However, back in March 7, 2009 that warning took on an even more ominous tone. It not only included New York, but also New Jersey, Connecticut, and major cities all across America. Since then we have heeded his recommendation

to stock up 30 days’ worth of food and supplies.

Since 2009 we have been wondering when this event will occur. He stated in his March 7 newsletter that it was not far off. However, now with the promise of President Donald Trump to remove all the dangerous Islamic terrorists and illegal aliens from our nation, we feel that the prophecy may just be right around the corner.

God is allowing this to shake up the nation and His church in order to bring her to repentance. “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). Therefore, let us be a church so firmly planted in the solid Rock of Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 10:4) that come what may, we will not be blown away (Matthew 7:24-27, Eph. 4:14).

Till we meet together again, we remain in the Lord’s service.

Eric and Anne Kaestner



Do You Think God Has Stopped Loving You?

By Anne Kaestner

Let's face it, this is a very difficult world in which we live, especially in these last days before the Lord's return. Satan wants to weaken our faith and drown out every vestige of Christianity from our culture. That's what the Apostle Peter was referring to when he said, "*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, **standing firm in the faith...***" (1 Peter 5:8-9 NIV). Faith is the key to the whole thing! For, if the enemy can weaken our faith he weakens the church. For "*...without faith it is impossible to please God...*" (Hebrews 11:6 NIV). There are several ways he can attack us. I want to dwell on one of his favorite tools. That is to get you to question whether or not God really loves you.

As Christians, we don't always understand why things happen as they do. Yet when the Lord is directing our lives, if we remain faithful to Him, He has a way of turning the situation around for our benefit and His glory and honor (see Romans 8:28 and Proverbs 3:5-6). However, many Christians become disillusioned when they put their trust in God and everything seems to go wrong. Such was the case with two young, enthusiastic missionary couples from Sweden.

They were excited about the chance to go to Africa. Their names were David and Svea Flood and Joel and Bertha Erickson. They loved Christ enough to give up everything to go to the Belgian Congo, which is now Zaire. David and Svea had a two-year-old son, David Jr. Along the way, both families caught malaria. They were willing, if necessary, to become martyrs for the Lord. The year was 1921.

When they finally reached a village in the interior, the natives would not let them enter. They said that the missionaries would be an offense to their gods. So they tried another village but were rejected there too. After six months the Ericksons decided to return to the missionary station. The whole thing seemed fruitless to them. After all they had sacrificed and suffered, God, it seemed, had not opened any doors for them. However, the Floods were unable to go with them. Not only did Svea catch malaria, but she had become pregnant. For months she had endured a raging fever. Yet, as sick as she was, she found the strength to minister Christ to the only African native to get close to them. He was a little boy who came to see them from one of the nearby villages. He was the Floods' only convert. Eventually Svea gave birth to a baby girl. Svea lived for about another week, then died. David was inconsolable. He made a casket for his wife out of a wooden box and buried her on the mountainside. Sven was only twenty-seven years old.

As he stood beside her grave, David looked down at his young son beside him. Then he heard his daughter's cries from the mud hut. Frustrated and angry, bitterness filled his heart. He began to cry out to the Lord. "Why did you allow this, God? We were willing to give our lives for You! Now I have a two-year-old son I can hardly care for, let alone a baby girl. After more than a year in this jungle, all we have to show for it is one little village boy who probably doesn't understand what we've told him. You've failed me, God. What a wasted life!" Do you sometimes feel like God has failed you because things didn't turn out the way you thought they should have? In the difficult times we live in, our faith is often severely tested. But if living for Christ were easy, anyone could do it. And most fall away (Hebrews 6:6) like the wasted seed of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-23. Also, see Matthew 7:13-14). "*...But he who stands firm to the end*

will be saved" (Matthew 10:22 NIV).

David took his two children and returned back to the missionary station. He gave his infant daughter, Aina, to the Ericksons to raise. Then he took his son and returned to Sweden. But the Ericksons themselves did not live long after David left them. Aina was given to an American missionary couple, Arthur and Anna Berg, who changed her name to Aggie. The Bergs eventually returned to America with their adopted daughter. Aggie grew up to marry a man named Dewey Hurst, who later became president of Northwest Bible College, the Assemblies of God school in Minneapolis. Forty years went by and Aggie continually tried to contact her father. But David no longer wanted anything to do with God.

As they say, "God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform." In this case, it came in the form of a round trip passage to Sweden for Aggie and her husband Dewey. It was a gift to them by the bible school. On the way, they had a one day layover in England. As they strolled along the streets, they noticed a mission's convention going on at the Royal Albert Hall in London. They went inside and began listening to an African man who had become a missionary to his

own country, Zaire. He spoke about the tremendous work God was doing in the nation. 110,000 new converts had come to Christ. 32 missionary stations had been built, several bible schools, and a 120 bed hospital.

It was the same part of Africa where Aggie's parents had ministered. It was where her father had given up hope that God would ever use their sacrifice. The white missionaries had been rejected by the natives. But now they were listening to the Word of God and accepting Christ as their Savior and Lord. The whole thing had been started by this African man who had come to Christ as a little boy, at the side of a dying Swedish woman named Svea. For she had not given up hope despite all the obstacles. Her faith

had remained strong and her love for the Lord had never failed. Aggie introduced herself to the minister and they were both amazed that they had finally met.

In Sweden Aggie finally was reunited with her father. He was living in a shabby looking building in a depressed part of Stockholm. His life had become a waste of his own making. Empty liquor bottles covered the room and a pathetic looking elderly man was lying in a cot. David was now 73 years old. He was suffering with diabetes, and was recovering from a stroke. His vision was impaired by cataracts on both his eyes. Aggie fell down next to him crying. She told him who she was. David's eyes filled with tears and Aggie told him about the good things God had been doing in the part of Africa where he and her mother had sacrificed so much for Christ. David began to weep harder. He repented of his longtime grudge against God and, once again, received Christ as his Savior.

My Christian grandmother, Anna Riccio, was another example of God's saving grace amid horrible suffering. As happens with many believers, all was going well in her life until one day when everything she had come to depend upon was taken away. She had only been married a few years and was only twenty-four years old. Her family were immigrants from Italy and so was Angelo, her husband. Their marriage was a happy one. They had two young boys and a third one, my Dad, was on the way. Angelo had a good job and was providing nicely for his family. That is until he got sick. Many people in those days were dying from Spanish Influenza. It had become an epidemic.



Moreover, it was the early nineteen thirties, the time of the Great Depression. As a result many people were losing their jobs. Angelo didn't want to be one of them. So, as sick as he was, he continued to go to work. Then he succumbed to the influenza and died before he was even able to see his infant son who would be born twelve days before Christmas.

Anna was destitute. She had no husband, no source of income (there were no welfare programs in those days), and no one to help. Her mother had died and the rest of her relatives were as poor as she was. She turned to her church for help. But they were more interested in receiving money than in helping her. Anna managed to get some work sewing men's trousers in her home, but that money wasn't enough. In desperation, she sent her children out to work selling newspapers and pretzels before school in the morning. She learned how to stretch the family budget as far as it would go. Her children were exhausted between school work and making a living. So when her church told her older son that he had to sell raffle tickets to make money for the church, Anna told him to tell them that he couldn't do it. They went back and forth with this for a while. Then, finally, one of the nuns told the boy to tell his mother that if she couldn't afford to support her church, she couldn't afford to be Catholic.

You can imagine how Anna felt. It is times like this that Satan whispers in your ear that God doesn't love you anymore. If he did, He would not let you suffer so. Unfortunately, too many people have the erroneous idea that God and the church are synonymous. They are not! For the devil is more religious than anyone else. He has his false prophets all over the world (Matthew 7:21-23, 24:5, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 John 4:1).

Anna was so discouraged by her church that she gratefully accepted the invitation of her neighbor to attend a Salvation Army service. That's where Anna repented of her sins and gave her heart to Christ, not the church. She later attended a service at Ridgewood Pentecostal Church in Queens, New York. There she developed an even closer walk with Christ and received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-6). Her sons eventually grew up and were drafted. It was in England during World War 2 that Angelo (who had changed his name to Eugene or Gene) met my mother, Winifred. She was 8 years younger than him. She was working at a company where he was sent by the army for the procurement of medical supplies. Winnie and Gene met and fell in love. In 1949 Winnie traveled to the United States where the two of them were married in Grandma's church. Mother was twenty-one years old. Her mother was with her.

However, the class of cultures took its toll! Grandma, by then, had managed, with the help of God, to buy her own two family house. Eugene lived with his mother. And that's where the newlyweds were to live. Winnie's mother remained in America a short time after the wedding. While there she attended Grandma's church along with my mother and dad. I read about the experience in my mother's memoirs after she died in 1993. She never told me about it when she was alive. The following account is taken from my mother's manuscript:

"That evening, in his mother's church, Gene held my hand, not daring to slip his arm around my shoulder, and we exchanged glances. Just in front of us sat a young girl about sixteen. My attention had been drawn to her from the beginning because of the shaking of her body and the uplifting of her hands. Others too were lifting up hands to the ceiling, their heads thrown back in adoration, but this girl had tears running down her cheeks. "What's the matter with her?" I whispered to Gene. He did not reply but squeezed my hand in

response. He seemed embarrassed. Suddenly the girl began to cry out in some strange language. It went on for several minutes, and the sanctuary became quiet. Then immediately at the close of her outpouring a man stood up and recited, what seemed to me, like a passage from the Bible.

"My eyes wide in astonishment, I turned to Gene for an explanation. "He has the gift of prophecy; he is interpreting her message in tongues," he told me. "What message? From whom?" I insisted, thoroughly perplexed. "I'll explain later," he whispered. I could see my mother too was perplexed by this manifestation of a Power we had never yet encountered. However we had only seen the "tip of the iceberg!" From all over the sanctuary people began crying out in strange languages. Even worse, certain individuals were fainting. Women were placing squares of cloth over the knees of other women who had stretched out on the floor of the sanctuary. All the while the minister was moving from person to person touching heads, praying, exhorting. As people groaned and cried out loudly to God, the organist kept the flow of music at a low level. Nearby, in the aisle, I saw a man dancing. His dancing was of a strange type of hopping which took him up and down the aisle, careless of the "bodies" laying around.

"Later I learned that the multiple events occurring on the night of our attendance was something which had rarely, if ever, happened before to such a degree in that particular church. As we sat quietly in our seats witnessing this display of - we knew not what, I felt I'm tremble beside me. Even my mother-in-law seemed uneasy. Mum nudged me. "This is Bedlam, let's get out of here...""

As I read my mother's account of what happened I felt the Presence of the Holy Spirit speaking to me. His Presence was so strong that tears streamed down my face. God was planning for this ministry in advance before I was even born!

However, let's get back to Anna's life. She had finally found the love she had been seeking. It wasn't human love. It was the love of God. A girl I once knew who had experienced this kind of peace after coming to Christ told me that it felt like a "natural high." For those who have never experienced this, I am not talking about religion but a warm, comforting Presence in one's life. It's an inner glow or joy (Philippians 4:7) that cannot come from anything this

world has to offer (1 John 2:15-17). It can only come from God, through total contrition (Psalm 51:17 and Isaiah 57:15) and submission (James 4:7) to Christ! I don't believe my mother ever felt that kind of peace. Years later she began to understand about the power of the Holy Spirit and felt His Presence in church services. But she always thought that she was already a Christian because she was born in England, which was considered a Christian country in those days. She went to a Christian church. So she felt she must be a Christian.

Anyway, after her marriage, my mother got a job in a factory and worked there for a year. She and Gene continued to live at Anna's house but Winnie became increasingly homesick for England. After that first year she returned to England, ostensibly for a short visit with family. But, once there, she refused to return to America. However Gene loved his bride so much that he moved to England himself and got a job. I was born there when my mother was twenty-five years old. I was Anna's only grandchild at that time. Her other two sons never married or, as far as I know, sired children. So, when I was a newborn baby, Anna traveled to England to see me. I'm so glad she did! Because she bonded with me emotionally and, even after she returned to the United States, she prayed for my salvation. And she kept praying. Then she prayed some more! Gene remained in England for nine years. Two more children were born to them.

Anna was in her late fifties or early *(Continued On Page 4)*



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sixties by now. Back in the United States she was left alone with only one son left to take care of her. Her middle son, Vinnie, had left her and moved to Florida years earlier. Her church became her family as she sensed such love there from her fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. She longed to see me again, to hold me in her arms. But my mother flatly refused to return to America, and my Dad remained with her. All that changed when I was six years old. Gene received a letter from his brother one day. Grandma had been diagnosed with terminal lung cancer yet she had never smoked a cigarette in her life. The doctors gave her from six months to two years to live. She begged God, "Just let me see Anne again, and my other grandchildren before I die."

Things looked pretty bleak at the time. But Grandma's love for me was so great that, I believe, she told the Lord to do whatever it took to bring me to salvation and to bring me back to her before she died. Her cancer was the only way! Gene left England and returned to New York to see his mother once again. He said he would not return to live in England. Still Mother refused to go back, and she kept her children with her. Two years went by. The letters went back and forth between the two until Gene wrote saying that he had seen a lawyer about a divorce and that he was told he could get custody of his children. Mother said that it was then that she prayed to God for the emotional strength to return to him. The year was 1961. Grandma continued to live, though dying slowly and painfully.

The church was closer to Grandma than her own sons.

They sent a constant flow of people to her house to pray for her, wash her floors, and clean her bathroom. The doctor would show up every once in a while to examine her. He wanted another woman present so my mother was also there at the time. Mother said that, after the examination, the doctor would shake head sadly and Grandma would raise her arms up high toward God and call out "I'm coming to you soon Jesus. I'm coming soon!"

Then, one day, two young women from her church brought about fifteen children to her house to sing to Grandma. They were Sister Sarah and Sister Gerta. My family was living in the downstairs apartment at Anna's house. Mother answered the door and let them in. Sister Sarah ran the "Release Time" at the church and Sister Gerta played the piano during meetings. Neither one of them ever got married, to my knowledge. Sister Sarah began explaining to Mother that the schools don't teach religious instruction in this country. But they allow children to leave school early one day a week so that they could get religious instruction at their local house of worship.

Sister Sarah told my mother that these children were about the same age as my sister and me. She said that if my mother let us go, they would give me a card to take to school to let them know that I was going to "Release Time." And the church would send a car around to our house to drive us there and back. Mother asked me if I wanted to go. I told her that I'd take any excuse to get out of school an hour early. So we got signed up and began attending services. However, by the end of the school year, my mother received a card in the mail, inviting my sister and I to attend "Daily Vacation Bible School." And that's where I knelled at the alter one day, sobbing before the Lord. Suddenly I felt a comforting arm around my shoulder and Sister Sarah led me through the sinner's pray. I accepted Christ as my Savior and Lord. My life changed forever and I have never been the same again! I was 10 years old.

The cancer in Grandma's body continued to grow worse and she was in horrible pain. A short time before her death, she went into surgery again. The doctors were amazed. Not only had the cancer spread but she also had peritonitis and gangrene! However, the church told Grandma that I had accepted Christ as my Savior and, despite her pain, she was ecstatic! I would sometimes go upstairs to visit with her. Then, one day, I went to see her, shortly before her death. She had the most joyful, satisfying, look on her face. "Anne, God told me that He's going to give you a Christian ministry. And it will be very big, worldwide!" she told me. Grandma died when I was 12 years old. Despite the doctor's original predictions, she lived for 6 years after the diagnosis and made medical history at the hospital! God answered Anna's prayers the only way He could. And she's with Jesus in Heaven today.

This ministry began in 1988. In 1993 Eric left his job and we both began working full time for this ministry. We leased 1,000 square feet in town. It was in April that year. My mother died of breast cancer that same month. The suffering we go through during the refining process (Revelation 3:15-19) is always painful. But that's how gold is refined. It is separated from the dirty ore it is stuck to, as Christians are separated from the sinful things of this world. Then, it is cleaned up, it is heated to such a high intensity that it becomes fluid enough for the refiner. Only then can the gold be poured into molds and prepared for a useful purpose. It hurts as God turns up

the heat in our lives. We may lose friends, family, jobs, homes, or anything else. But the Holy Spirit fire (see Hebrews 12:29) is necessary in order to bring us through the testing of our faith. So, "*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*" (James 1:1-4 KJV).

When Eric and I first moved into our house in January 1999, I was thrilled to have a garden of my own. In the small apartment we had lived in, I had longed to have such a place to feel closer to God through nature. So I decided to plant a vegetable garden. The vegetables included some string bean plants. One problem I

had were the snails and slugs that liked to eat the plants. Toward harvest time I went out to the garden one day to pick some string beans for dinner. Never did I ever think that I could become emotional about a string bean plant. But God can use anything to speak to us. There were several string bean plants. I looked at about four of them. They were beautiful, with pretty purple flowers and lots of leaves. But they had little or no string beans. Then I noticed a skinny, pathetic looking plant next to the others. There were few leaves on it. So many of them had been eaten by pestilence. It looked like it had suffered a lot. But as I looked upon that sad, scrawny plant tears filled my eyes. It had more string beans growing on it than all of the healthy plants put together!

God was using this metaphor to remind me of the suffering Christians have endured throughout the centuries in order to bring forth the good fruit of the Gospel of Christ. For as Jesus said, "*...unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves Me must follow Me; and where I am, My servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves Me*" (John 12:24-26 NIV).

