



Anglican Orthodox Communion Worldwide
Office of the Presiding Bishop

PO Box 128
Statesville, N.C. 28687

Phone (704) 873-8365

email: usa@anglicanorthodoxchurch.org

website: www.aocinternational.org

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T*his know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ²For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (2 Tim 3:1-5)*

Greetings fellow believers in Christ our Lord:

You may be thinking that my lead off text above somehow misses the mark for Thanksgiving; but let us reason together on the matter. There is no time in my memory, or of the ages in history of which I have read, when mankind has been less thankful for the wonderful array of resources and advances in health of the world's people. I read an example of that this morning in the news: One of the 'refugees' gathered at the southern border of the United States, seeking to come unwelcomed into our country, complained to the generous Mexican people there who were trying to feed them, "I do not like the beans!" Well, in my view, she can starve!

How many of us do not "like the beans of blessing" the Lord showers down on us, undeserved, every moment of every day? The same was true of murmuring Israel in the Wilderness. They tired of Manna. When we are ungrateful to God and the generosity of others, we may be plagued by fiery serpents as were they. God will not brood an ungrateful heart.

We have been blessed in America, not for who we are, but in whose Sovereignty we have placed our Trust – the Triune God. Any people who are privileged to do so will possess a national character that reflects the nature of the One whose subjects they are. America has lost that character, and unless awakened soon, that loss may lead to the ruin of the nation. Those behaviors that were not so much as mentioned in public are now heralded as dignified and proper. On the contrary, behaviors (such as school prayer, fidelity in marriage, love of unborn babies) are now condemned in the most outrageous terms. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Isaiah 5:20 (KJV)

But this very thing that the Lord has condemned is now the preferred approach in our modern society. And on the other side of the globe, cowardly men professing a false god rape and behead little girls in the name of their false god.

It is the responsibility of Christians to take a strong stand against such evils – even to the point of death if necessary. *“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!”* Matt 18:7 (KJV) We cannot pass the buck when it comes to moral responsibility. When the Communist revolution was in full progress in Nicaragua, the United Methodist Church was providing monetary support to the Sandinistas through the World Council of Churches. When I asked a member of that church how he could give money that would end supporting such a wicked system, he told me, “It is my responsibility to give money to the church in good conscience. Whatever they do with it afterwards, good or bad, is their own responsibility.” I hope none of the readers of this letter are so self-deceived. But, if we are thankful to God in all things, our outlook and station in life will be changed by looking into the mirror of His Word, and our characters altered thereby. *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Eph 5:18-20)

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

In Christ Alone,

Jerry L. Ogles
Presiding Bishop