

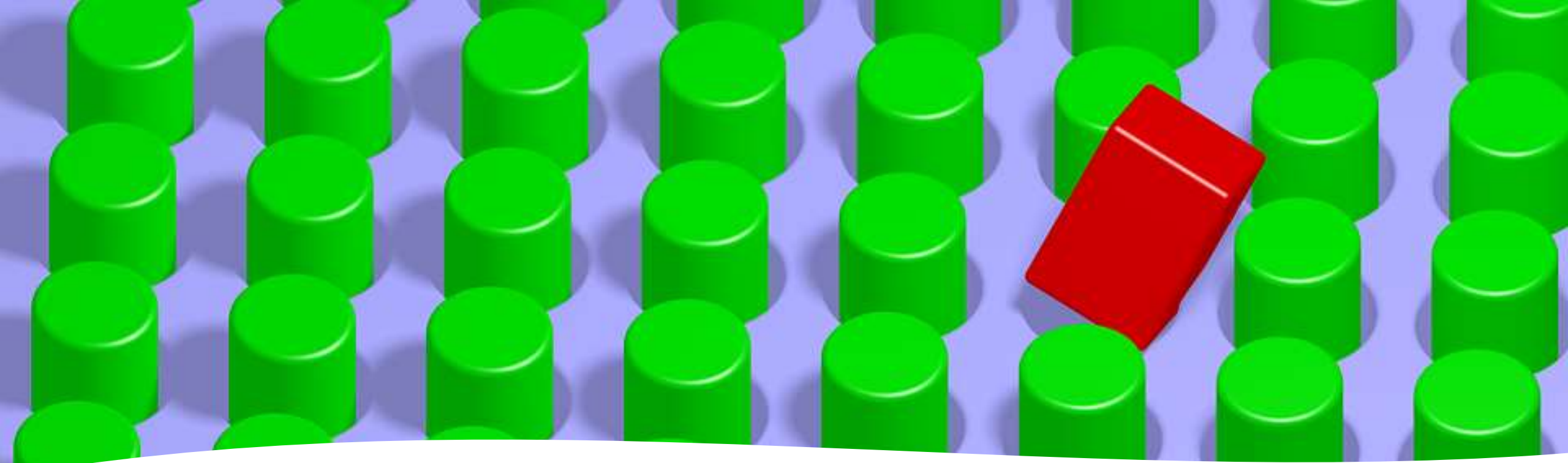
**You Aren't from
Around Here,
Are You?**

The Christian in the World

You're not from around here!

- Experience of anyone with a “foreign” accent
- There might be other clues
 - How you use a knife when you eat
 - How you use a napkin when you eat a sandwich
 - How you dress





We do not belong!

- In the teachings of Jesus and His apostles, expressions such as pilgrim, sojourner and foreigner appear several times
- When we study how those words are used, we discover some important facts to direct the life of anyone who seeks to please God
- **We are not from around here!**

- Paul (Saul of Tarsus) was known as the apostle of the Gentiles because, though himself a Jew, he was dedicated primarily to the work of taking the Gospel to other peoples (Gentiles = Nations = Non-Jews)
- He proclaimed the good news that the salvation offered to Jews was equally accessible to other nations
 - In Jesus Christ, the situation of these peoples changed
 - Paul commented about their previous state (Ephesians 2:11-12)
 - Through the blood of Christ, these same Gentiles received the opportunity to change their status and no longer be strangers and foreigners (Ephesians 2:19)
- **In Christ, the foreigners become citizens!**

- Some countries prohibit dual citizenship because they believe it is impossible for a person to be totally loyal to two governments
- When He speaks of the absolute monarchy of the Kingdom of God in contrast with this world and its things, Jesus denies the possibility of dual citizenship (Matthew 6:24)
- Jesus focused on this difference when he said His disciples would be in the world without pertaining to the world (John 17:14-18)
- One of these disciples (Peter) reinforced this principle when he spoke of all Christians
 - He refers to our time on Earth as our “stay” or “sojourn” (1 Peter 1:17)
 - He taught that sojourners and pilgrims should not participate in fleshly lusts (1 Peter 2:11-12)
 - In this case, he used the word Gentiles to identify those who are not the people of God, the unconverted



In the world, but not of the world



- Jesus' followers should live in the world and have contact with people who do not share their faith, but they must always remember that time in this life is short and that the eternal destination is in heaven
- That's what Paul emphasized (Philippians 3:20)
- The citizens of the kingdom of Christ are temporary residents of this world!

The danger of imitating the world



- In the final weeks of his life, Moses stopped with the children of Israel in the Transjordan region and gave his final series of speeches (recorded in Deuteronomy)
- He was trying to prepare the nation for its future
- Shortly after his death, Israel would be led by Joshua to begin the conquest of Canaan
- For centuries, that territory had been dominated by pagan peoples who did not respect the one true God
- Moses emphasized a fundamental point: don't do like the surrounding nations do!

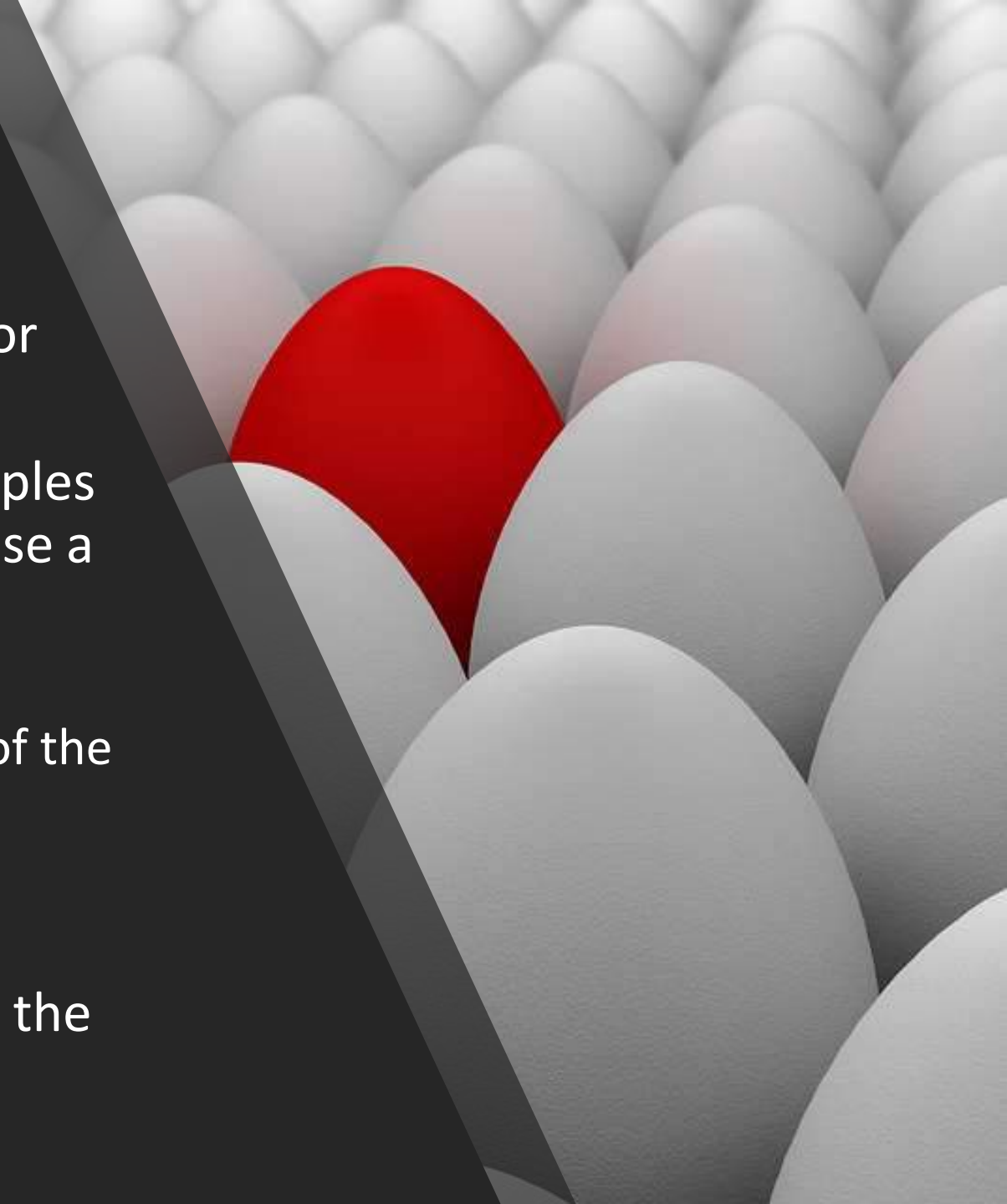


Israel would encounter nations that practiced idolatry and other abominations (Deuteronomy 12:31)

- God had planned the punishment of those nations centuries before, and would now fulfill those plans with the Israelite invasion of the land (Genesis 15:16,18-21)
- He warned His people of the need for keeping totally separate from these nations – no “cultural curiosity” (Deuteronomy 12:30)

We need to remember this principle

- Today, God does not request a physical or geographical separation of peoples
- To the contrary, He desires that His disciples live with people of the “world” to exercise a positive saving influence
 - Jesus prayed for this (John 17:14-18)
 - We are to influence others as the light of the world (Matthew 5:16)
- But the principle of sanctification, the separation of God’s servants from the uncleanness of sin, is quite important in the NT



There is an alarming fascination, even in “Christian” nations, with the traditions and pagan practices of ancient peoples

- Masonry, for example, exalts some aspects of the religion of ancient Egyptians and others
- Many Neo-Gnostics seek to salvage pagan exaltation of feminine figures
- Some protests against irresponsible exploration of the Earth end up reviving aspects of indigenous religions that exalted the Earth and its creatures rather than the Creator



The attitude of the early Christians



- Converts in the first century destroyed things used previously in pagan practices
- They did not treat these things as cultural patrimony to be preserved, because they understood that they were abominations to God
- Luke recorded the effect of the Gospel in the city of Ephesus (Acts 19:18-20)



The attitude of modern Christians

- **We can study** the history of architecture, natural sciences and the contributions women (and men) have made to society in ways that do not offend our Creator
- **We should keep open minds** to learn, but we must never forget to filter everything by God's will (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)



- **Different** in business dealings
- **Different** on the job
- **Different** in marriage and family
- **Different** in the choice of clothing
- **Different** in leisure activities
- **Different** in the use of money
- **Different** in attitudes about God
- **Different** in our eternal destination!

Holiness in practice: we are not from around here!

God wants a holy people

- In the OT, He called Israel to be His holy nation
- In the NT, He says to His followers: **“But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God’s* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”** (1 Peter 2:9)
- All those who seek the Lord should be concerned with their holiness: **“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God...”** (Hebrews 12:14-15a)