



No True Freedom Without God

Elder Charles Moore

"Indeed, such 'liberty', an unbridled license, is not true liberty at all; it is

In the movie Braveheart Mel Gibson, playing the part of William Wallace who was born in Scotland in 1272 A.D., stands in battle and says, "I see before me an army of my countrymen here in defiance of tyranny. You have come to fight as free men, and free men you are. What would you do without freedom? Will you fight?"

As he looks out at a huge English army a tall soldier, looking at the same army says, "Fight against that? No, we will run, and we will live."

William replies, "Ay, fight and you may die, run and you'll live. At least a while. And dying in your beds many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that for one chance, just one chance, to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom?" The men listening are inspired and

they do fight a fight that is studied by historians to this day.

There is something inherent in each of us that desire freedom. Our society loves freedom, exalts it as 'the be all and end all'. Freedom of religion, freedom to vote, freedom to work anywhere that will take us, freedom to go where we please, and freedom to say what we please. In fact in our society the ultimate punishment is the deprivation of freedom through imprisonment. None of us wants to live in bondage.

But some even say that our ability to choose to do evil is freedom. But, I ask you, is it freedom? Or isn't the ability to choose to do evil another sort of bondage? Theologian and author John Stott, in his book Only One Way, wrote,

another and more dreadful form of bondage, a slavery to the desires of our fallen nature. So Jesus said to the Jews: 'everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin' (John 8:34), and Paul describes us in our pre-conversion state as "slaves to various passions and pleasures" (Titus 3:3). There are many such slaves in our society today. They proclaim their freedom with a loud voice. They speak of free love and a free life; but in reality they are slaves to their own appetites to which they give free rein, simply because they cannot control them."

Colin Campbell wrote, "Freedom does not mean the absence of constraints or moral absolutes. Suppose a skydiver at 10,000 feet announces to the rest of the group, "I'm not using a parachute this time. I want freedom!" The fact is that a skydiver is constrained by

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a greater law - the law of gravity. But when the skydiver chooses the "constraint" of the parachute, he is free to enjoy the exhilaration. God's moral laws act the same way: They restrain, but they are absolutely necessary to enjoy the exhilaration of real freedom."

According to Mark Parsec, Independence Day "celebrates America's Declaration of Independence from the tyranny of England under King George." The Declaration of Independence of 1776, he says, was not intended to declare war with England, nor did it actually establish our country's independence. The Revolutionary War which was fought for our country's freedom did not end "until a treaty was signed seven years later on September 3, 1783."

Parsec says the purpose of the Declaration of Independence for the colonists was to declare "to the world their belief in a personal, infinite God - their Creator - who endowed them with certain 'inalienable' or absolute rights...To the men of that time it was self-evident...that if the inalienable rights they were urging were not seen in the context of Christianity, then they were without content - illusions, and nothing but dreams. To have absolute rights our forefathers had to acknowledge the Absolute Authority of God."

You see, there is no true freedom without God and His authority to determine the morality upon which the laws of our land are based. In God we find the basis for physical freedom. However we also find in the Lord the basis for our most important freedom, spiritual freedom. God's provision for our spiritual freedom is found in His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, on Independence Day and every day we must recognize the true freedom we have in Christ and not settle for an illusion of freedom that the world offers.

In the fourth verse of Charles Wesley's great hymn "And Can It Be" he wrote,

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke; the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee."

True freedom comes when we follow Jesus. "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36)

Cyberspace News

genevabegeman@charter.net



June is always busy because of graduations and weddings. Dale and I did have a 57th wedding anniversary. We were one of those June weddings.

Drew Begeman (Mike Begeman's son) and Daniel Sottile (Rachel Sottile's son) graduated from high school this month. Drew's party was this month but Daniel's is in July so we have something to look forward to yet.

Ruth Charles was able to leave her rehab hospital to come home in Florida. Kay and Jim Nevil visited there for a week and drove home. A few days later Kay flew back to Florida and traveled north with her Mom and Dad and they have settled in for a visit at Lynn and Rob Vaughn's. I think they are going to have a busy summer visiting their children.

Kay and Jim Nevil are helping Katy prepare for her European trip to do her student teaching in France. We wish you well in France, Katy!

Rip and Norma Ripley have written that all is as well as can be right now. There is an older group in their church presently that count it a blessing when they can get out for lunch!! The Charles', Dot Layton, Ellen Momberger, and the Dale Begeman's along with the Ripley's are in that group! Please pray for us.

Kane and Jennie with daughter Ainsley flew home from Phoenix to spend a couple weeks with Tim and Diane and witness brother Nick's wedding. We were all so happy to get to see six-month-old Ainsley and her parents of course.

David Brugman graduated from his truck-driving course and is now on the road for his apprenticeship. Rox-Ann and the children are doing okay so far at home without Dad. Some of these jobs can be hard on the family.

Sally and Lloyd Smith traveled to California this month to visit daughter Emily. While there, they were able to attend church with Roy and Bennie Gee in Auburn CA. It is so wonderful to have 'real' friends all over our great country!

Our family lost two of our dear aunts this week who were both avid readers of our Newsletter. Sisters Draxie Hamilton Newsome and Stella Hamilton Howell died within 5 days of each other. Our sympathy goes out to each family.

Happy vacations in July, Everyone!

Michigan Report

Aurine Moore



June 30, in the opinion of your reporter, was not an interesting a day in history for the non-history buff. But a few things happened on that date. In 1859, Charles Blondin became the 1st person to cross Niagara Falls alive and he did it on a tightrope. When he asked an observer later, do you believe I can do this, the observer said, "Yes," Charles said, "prove it and let me take you across". The man refused and thus was born a great sermon illustration on the difference between mental belief and real faith. On June 30, 1870 Ada Kepley became the nation's 1st female law college graduate. However it took 11 more years for her to legally practice in a state that made it legal for women to practice law - Illinois. To get in one more interesting event, your reporter read the Wilmington(Delaware) Weather Examiner at Examiner.com and learned how on June 30th 1908, a huge fireball streaked across the sky during the early morning hours over Siberia. A huge explosion occurred in the air near the Stony Tunguska River. The explosion flattened trees for 40 miles around and killed wildlife, but no crater or meteorite fragments were ever found. That would make quite an X-files episode (or conspiracy theory fodder) in today's world.

As to the notable events affecting the local church: *There was cause for celebration* because Dave and Terrie Fedor found a new renter for Jean's house. Amazingly, the wife is one of Jean's wonderful caregivers at Magnum nursing home. David Brugman started and completed training and is now working as a certified truck driver. Drew Begeman graduated from high school. Nick and Brittanie Begeman celebrated their wedding in Tim and Diane's back yard on a hot day in a beautiful ceremony. Shay Pinhey got the science award at school and David Begeman finished his school year very well. Dale and Geneva celebrated 57 years of marriage, all of them happy (and the water heater is still working). Vicki and Darran Chapman visited this month and were both

full of praises, Vicki to have a wonderful apartment in Trenton again on the River and Darran because he has a job in a workshop and is looking forward to something productive and challenging to do. Kathy Smeltzer, now retired from school, got to unload her '30 years of teaching boxes' in her living room and later held her grandson Caleb while visiting him at his new home with parents Joel and Carrie DeHaan, now living at 2081 Tonawanda Lake Road, in Grawn, MI 49637.

There was occasion for Church business as we ramped up for the upcoming COLOR Youth Camp by having our mandatory pre-service workshop, as the Echoes of Happiness led a wonderful music service at Loranger Square at an interdenominational Global Day of Prayer Service, and visited the funeral home for Matt Pifer's brother, Mark, who passed away, Matt and Elizabeth's daughters Hannah and Bethany sang a duet for his service. Joe Smeltzer spent some time overnight at Mercy Hospital with suspicious chest pains but all is well now.

There was reason to travel as Bekah Smetzer left for a 6 week education program in Sydney Australia. (Perhaps hence, Joe's chest pains.) She's blogging it. You can either google "memory, perhaps" or type in re-bekahb.rynn.blogspot.com. Jeff Begeman made it for a longer than usual trip to Germany and got to tour the Mercedes Benz museum - the first time I have heard he ever got to go beyond the board room or airport. He shared a bit of information about the history of the Mercedes company, including their history working for the Nazi's during the holocaust years.

There was time to reflect on the importance of fathers and the role of the Holy Spirit and faith. Tidbits - (1) the world needs good men to be good fathers, (2) children love their mothers but follow their fathers, (3) faith equals living without scheming, and (4) The miracle of Acts 2 is not that the apostles spoke in tongues but that the people heard and understood - - and what did they hear? They heard about the mighty deeds of God. Until next month, Vaya con Dios - Go with God.



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**1922 LaSalle Road
Monroe, MI 48162
Church 734-242-9511**

Editor - Jamie Carothers
Jamie.Carothers@utoledo.edu

Publisher - Diane Begeman
734-269-6098
veggie@charter.net

website
colornet.org

Marshmallows, Anyone?

As the coals from our barbecue burned down, our hosts passed out marshmallows and long roasting forks.

Just then, two fire trucks roared by, sirens blaring, lights flashing. They stopped at a house right down the block.

All twelve of us raced out of the back yard and down the street, where we found the owners of the blazing house standing by helplessly. They glared at us with looks of disgust.

Suddenly we realized why: we were all still holding our roasting forks with marshmallows on them.

Our 2011 Graduates



Drew Begeman



Daniel Sottile



Lloyd & Sally Smith with Bennie & Roy Gee

The Newlyweds
Nick & Brittanie Begeman



Jennie, Kane & Ainsley Begeman

