

July 2009

Cyberspace News

Michigan News

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What to do with freedom

Elder Charles Moore

Perhaps you can relate to the following statement by Hewitt. "Everybody looks for different things in the Ten Commandments. Some look for Divine guidance, some look for a code to live by, but most of us are looking for loopholes." Regardless, many of us are prone to go to extremes when we look at them. One believer interprets liberty as license and thinks he can do whatever he wants to do. Another believer, seeing this error, goes to an opposite extreme and imposes Law on everybody. Somewhere between license on the one hand and legalism on the other hand is true Christian liberty.

When a person gives their life to Jesus do you think the world thinks that they are free? Or does the world think that a Christian's life is about a lot of do's and don'ts with the don'ts far out weighing the do's? Galatians 5:1 tells us we are called to freedom. **It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.** Our call authorizes believers to lay claim to their

freedom and it challenges believers to use their freedom responsibly. The Christian is a free person. He is free from the guilt of sin because he has experienced God's forgiveness. He is free from the penalty of sin because Christ died for him on the cross. And he is, through the Spirit, free from the power of sin in his daily life. He is also free from the Law with its demands and threats. As Christ carried His cross and hung upon it, He bore the penalty that was due because of the Law and ended its tyranny once and for all. We are called into liberty because we are called into the grace of God.

The truth is that true freedom cannot exist without boundaries. "Freedom and discipline have come to be regarded as mutually exclusive, when in fact freedom is not at all the opposite, but the final reward, of discipline. It is to be bought with a high price, not merely claimed.

... The [professional] skater and [race] horse are free to perform as they do only because they have been subjected to countless hours of grueling work, rigidly prescribed, and faithfully carried out. Men are free to soar into space because they have willingly confined themselves in a tiny capsule designed and produced by highly trained scientists and craftsmen who have meticulously followed instructions and submitted themselves to rules which others defined." Elisabeth Elliot in All That Was Ever Ours. Christianity Today.

Freedom is not free, and with freedom comes responsibility. We have to decide what we will do with our freedom in Christ. In our country we have been given freedom. The problem our country seems to have at times is that we have forgotten that with freedom comes responsibility. The Founding Fathers understood that how a person uses their liberty or freedom will determine how well the nation would function. Even more so, Christians have responsibilities that come with our gift of freedom. We have to decide if we are going to use the gift of freedom or

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abuse the gift. **"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5: 13-14)**

Another misstep is to misunderstand the true meaning of the grace of God. "If you do away with rules and regulations," they say, "you will create chaos and anarchy." Of course, that danger is real, not because God's grace fails, but because men fail of the grace of God **"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;" (Hebrews 12:15).** We know there is a "true grace of God" according to 1 Peter 5: 12 because it says, ". . . **I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!" (1 Peter 5:12).** So too, there is also a false grace of God and there are false teachers, ". . . **ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."** (Jude 4). So, Paul's caution is a valid one. Christian liberty is not a license to sin but an opportunity to serve. This leads to a commandment: ". . . **but through love serve one another"** (Galatians 5:13). The key word, of course, is love. The formula looks something like this:

liberty + love = service to others

liberty - love = license (or slavery to sin)

Our freedom is something that we can use in many ways then: for God and His kingdom, as something that we can abuse and use for our own selfish benefit, or as a license. Should we choose to reject it, we can turn our freedom into legalism.

The irony of true freedom is that it is found in servitude. When Paul says, serve one another he uses a word normally employed in the context of slavery. The person who is set free from both slavery to law and slavery to self will find true freedom as the slave of Christ, and as an eager servant of the community of believers. Just as the old law brought bondage and death, the new law of Christ introduces the believer into an exciting new community where people are free to love each other and serve each other's needs. It is unfortunate that most people would sum up the spirit and intention of God's laws as "Thou shalt not." What God would really rather see us do is rush from opportunity to opportunity, always eager to serve others. Law builds fences around what we must not do; love builds bridges to new places of service for our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Greetings everyone. I am so glad to be back reporting a normal month's activities. We have all recovered from camp month by now.

We are so happy to announce the birth of Alexander Thomas Miller who was born June 16, 2009 at 11:30 am and weighed in at 7 lb. 10 oz. and is 19 3/4 inches long. Since it was in the middle of camp week my mind was elsewhere and I must apologize for missing this news last month. We are so happy for you all, Leslie and Tom and of course Rebecca. You have a big family now and we wish each of you the best in your home state of Kansas.

July usually starts off with a bunch of outlying folks and some of us locals traveling to Silver Lake in Michigan. In the pictures this month you have Peggy Charles dressed for the North Pole as the weather resembled that of the arctic. I have also a darling picture of Charlotte Charles, Larry and Peggy Charles' granddaughter.

Kerry and Kathleen Johnson from New Jersey were present at the camping venture along with Lloyd and Sally Smith (Trenton, MI) and son Kenny and wife Jennie Smith who now reside in Ooltewah, TN. Jane and Mike Brown from South Bend, IN joined the group for a couple of days and I got to take a picture of their reunion. These young folks all belong to Ethel Johnson and it is wonderful to enjoy time together with them each year.

Jon Lane was hospitalized this month for gall bladder problems and was happy when it was removed and now is well on his way to recovery.

Kane and Jennie Begeman made a trip home from Phoenix to be with family as Jennie's grandmother, Dorothy Glancy, passed away this month. Our sympathies go out to you, Jennie and Kane and the Glancy family.

This month Jim Nevil lost his father, Ken Nevil, after a prolonged illness. Jim and Kay reported that the time they had to bid farewell to this beloved father and grandfather was very precious. All four of the Nevil children spent valuable time together with their father. He was a man of God and had taught his children well about the Lord. They are all very musical and have followed Dad's footsteps in this way also. We have enjoyed Jim's whole family at camp for a few years now and are so happy they have adopted us as a part of their church family. Our sympathies go out to each of you.

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It was a good, if slow, news month this July. It rained very little, blew little and the days were temperately warm. People reorganized houses and stored summer camp items away for the year and went to visit family and friends for the Fourth of July and summer holidays, and generally enjoyed the flowers blooming.

The recession is having an impact on several people at the Michigan church. Jim Begeman, who has worked for the Lou LaRiche Ford dealership may be looking for a new job as that dealership is possibly closing. Patrick Gill, mechanical engineer, has also been looking for a position in his field after his position was eliminated at a General Motors engineering firm. Fortunately Branden Carothers has been getting more hours working for the Wilderness Restaurant in Dundee, after having Cabela's cut back on his hours.

Ken Nevil, father of Jim Nevil, died this month in Indiana. Several local members were able to drive to the funeral service, including Charlie Moore, Nate Valentine, Joe & Kathy Smeltzer, and David & Ruth Charles who drove up from Florida. Dave & Terrie Fedor, Dale & Geneva Begeman were able to attend the visitation the day before.

Many readers of our newsletter may not know about some of the ministries supported by the United Church of the Lord our Righteousness. One of them is Silent Blessings, a ministry targeted to deaf and hearing Christians. The first season of their television series, Dr. Wonder's Workshop, is available on their website silentblessing.org, along with a number of resources that would be interesting for anyone who has a deaf friend or relative or wants to understand how to communicate with them. Check it out. The site is

'user and kid friendly' and has lots of great resource information that would especially help with sharing the gospel with those who are deaf or hearing impaired.

We have a number of friends and members who have been ill recently: Marie Mayville, mother of Pat Conley had a cochlear implant this month and we're waiting to 'hear' how things have turned out. Marcia Moore continues to make it to church despite the fact that she doesn't always feel so great. Marshala Goins has faithfully found things to be thankful for, among which is the caring nature of the caregivers at the house where James Goins lives. It is always a pleasure to meet the new caregivers who attend church with James and see the 'veterans' who have come before.

During our Fourth of July church service, we learned about two revolutions that occurred in the world at the end of the 18th century. The French Revolution was founded on a belief in the goodness of man and the American Revolution was based on the knowledge that the nature of man is fallen and evil and hence checks and balances were necessary. The leaders of the bloody French Revolution died violent deaths at the hands of the people they fought to serve and the leaders of the American Revolution died in their beds of old age. The French revolution was anti religious whereas the American Revolution was marked by the refrain "We have no king but Jesus." We have since then moved on to the first book of John during our sermons this month and are talking about our confidence in Jesus Christ's return and His great love for us that we should be called children of God.

Until next month, may God be with you.

I interviewed Carter Jackson (10) at camp and wanted to include Carter's picture and some of his accomplishments this month. He is the grandson of the late Ken Nevil and the son of our dirtball leader, Teresa Jackson. He has memorized so many scripture passages that I had to tell you about him. The following are chapters of scripture he knows: Luke 2,4,6,15,23,24, Acts 1-6 and 8-10, Ephesians 4-6, all of Phillipians, 1 & 2 Corinthians and selected passages in the Old Testament. Great work, Carter!

David and Ruth Charles traveled north to Michigan in a meandering fashion so they could get some visits in on the trip. They were able to spend some time with Rip and Norma Ripley in Roanoke, VA first. They traveled on to Maryland and spent time with the Layton family. They were happy to be with Dorothy Layton as she celebrated a significant birthday with a party at Karen and Mark Dorsey's home honoring the occasion. They then spent their first week in Michigan with Larry and Peggy Charles.

Have a great summer, everyone!

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**CHURCH OF THE
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RIGHTEOUSNESS**

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ANAGRAMS

**DORMITORY
DIRTY ROOM**

**PRESBYTERIAN
BEST IN PRAYER**

**ASTRONOMER
MOON STARER**

**DESPERATION
A ROPE ENDS IT**

**THE EYES
THEY SEE**

**GEORGE BUSH
HE BUGS GORE**

**THE MORSE CODE
HERE COME DOTS**

**SLOT MACHINES
CASH LOST IN ME**

**ANIMOSITY
IS NO AMITY**

**ELECTION RESULTS
LIES—LET'S RECOUNT**

**SNOOZE ALARMS
ALAS NO MORE Z'S**

**A DECIMAL POINT
IM A DOT IN PLACE**

**THE EARTHQUAKES
THAT QUEER SHAKE**

**ELEVEN PLUS TWO
TWELVE PLUS ONE**

**MOTHER IN LAW
WOMAN HITLER**



Tom, Leslie, Rebecca & Alex

Charlotte Charles



How old is the birthday girl?



Kerry, Kathleen Johnson, Jane, Mike Brown, Sally, Lloyd Smith, Jennie, Kenny Smith



Seriously Peggy was it really that cold?



Coal Miner?



Our "Fearless" Leader?



Jonathan & Carter Jackson



Fun with the dirt balls!