



Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

July 2014

"Finding True Liberty"

Dear Friend of Mary Craig Ministries,

In the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, we proclaim America to be "one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." We want liberty; and I believe that God has put within people a strong sense of fairness. When abuses occur, we cry, "Foul!"

The U.S.A. attracts people from every kind of nation, race, creed, social status, and economic class; the dream is for a better future. It is seen as a land of opportunity, a land of citizen rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion, the right to due process, the right to equal treatment under the law, the right to bear arms, etc. The U.S.A. is called the land of the free and the brave. Freedom is something valued, and many have lost life and limb to secure America's freedom as guaranteed under our Constitution.

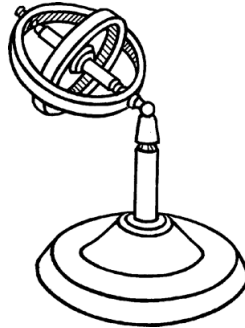
People see the U.S.A. as a land open to immigrants because we are a land founded by immigrants. My own family emigrated from the British Isles, from Germany, and from Switzerland, believing and teaching me that if someone is willing to learn, to work hard, to persevere, to serve the needs of others and not just their own needs, they can have good success. "Only in America."

True, we have a conglomerate of ironic thoughts, like Black Friday following Thanksgiving Day, and ads for foodies along with ads ostracizing obesity all in the same magazine. (I'm being kind.) But all this tells me that there is a desire for liberty, true liberty, and for justice, true justice.

Where the Spirit of the LORD is, there is liberty. (2 Corinthians 3:17b)

What is this liberty of which the Word of God speaks? This liberty is not freedom to do as one wants according to the dictates of the flesh (our body listening to our soul, or our body dictating to the soul). We've all seen ourselves rationalizing almost every kind of behavior in our minds as we come up with our own value systems and standards. And we don't even stick to that! The

Bible calls this the thinking of “natural man.” Natural man thinks the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil put him on a par with God, as God, and that he can figure things out (like truth) for himself out of his own reasoning. He got tricked. He’s really living in the leaning tower of Pisa, while failing to see True North.



He’s like a gyroscope, spinning sideways.

(Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 2:14)

But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 2 Corinthians 2:14

True liberty comes through the Spirit of the LORD. The mind of the natural man is blinded. His ears are shut and his heart needs to be turned. It’s like a veil on his heart. This veil is taken away only when the heart is turned to the Lord.

I’ve experienced this. The night I was truly saved (I say “truly” because I was raised in the church and had my “Christian resume”), I saw this veil preventing me from belonging to the true fellowship others in the room were enjoying. I knew I was an outsider. I also knew quite well the sovereignty of God and so I didn’t know what would happen to my soul. Later that night a battle raged over my soul, and I knew it was between God and the Devil. God won. I was living out Scripture, but back then I didn’t know it.

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remains the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ...Nevertheless when it [the heart] shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Corinthians 3:14-17)

This liberty for which people yearn and by which one is truly free is freedom from bondage to sin as a master that rules and binds our souls unto death. (Romans 6-8) The gospel is hid to those that are “lost” because the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. The light of the gospel of Jesus Christ must shine on them.

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6

Awake, you that sleep, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light [that Jesus Christ might shine on you]. Ephesians 5:14

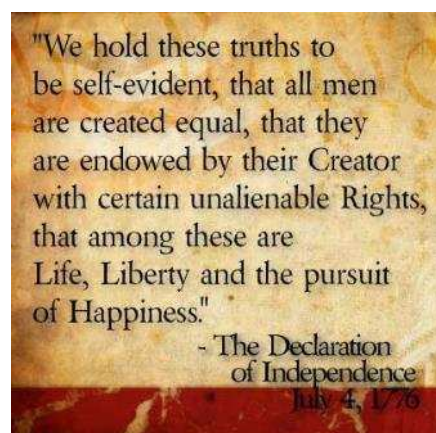
When a person's heart is regenerated by the Holy Spirit, he is renewed in the spirit of his mind. He is renewed in knowledge, knowledge as revealed by God, with God defining what is good and what is evil. (Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:10) He is to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. This is because the natural man walks in the vanity of his mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart. The natural man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. Basically, they who can be identified as "natural man" do what they want and live according to a system [of the world] that they come up with.

In contrast, the believer comes into the liberty of the sons of God. This freedom comes as the grace of God is given to obey God through faith which works by love. One can then please God. Thus Scripture exhorts believers to live by the Holy Spirit, walk in the Spirit, walk in the wisdom of the Spirit, walk in love [the *agape* love of God], walk worthy of the gospel, and be led by the Spirit. This only happens when one believes in Jesus and receives Him into his heart. (John 1:12; John 6:40, 47, 63).

When the soul of a believer yields to the temptation of the sensible (tangible senses), it breaks away from the rule of the Spirit and comes under the power of the body—it becomes flesh and is not only without the Spirit, but hostile to Him. God is Spirit and gives Spirit. We cannot protect in the flesh what was begun in the Spirit. Christ is the Wisdom and Power of God. Christ fulfilled His promise to send the Holy Spirit to dwell in believers in order to obey Him and do the will of the Father. Justification by faith is only the beginning; believers are to walk by the Spirit of God. Read Galatians 5:16-26.

"It is impossible to enslave, mentally or socially, a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom." Horace Greeley

When true believers, those truly belonging to Jesus Christ, came to America seeking religious freedom, they came with their desires for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They also came with the understanding of the truth of the gospel of Christ. The Mayflower Compact composed by William Bradford and adopted November 11, 1620 became the seed of American democracy. In it the signers declared that they undertook for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith a voyage to plant [one of the first English colonies in North America]. <http://www.constitution.org/bcp/mayfcomp.pdf> By July 4, 1776, the thirteen united States of America declared their independence. http://www.constitution.org/us_doi.pdf



"We have this day restored the Sovereign to Whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and with a propitious eye beholds his subjects assuming that freedom of thought and dignity of self-direction which he bestowed on them. From the rising to the setting sun, may His Kingdom come." Samuel Adams at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

Christians understand that Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh for the purpose of living a life of perfect, personal, perpetual obedience, the life required to merit eternal life. Jesus also came to bear the penalties of the Law of God for disobedience; He came as curse-bearer, sin-bearer, and bearer of the wrath of God against all things contrary to God's nature and ways. He did this in the place of and on behalf of those given to Him by the Father. The call, the message, is to believe in Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has done. Jesus lived, died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father. He is coming again in glory.

There will be a reckoning, justice for all. The natural man will be judged by his own standard(s). Those under the Law of Moses will be judged by that Law. Those who have put their trust, their faith in Jesus Christ alone to save them from the penalty and consequence of cosmic treason against their Creator, will find they have an Advocate, a Substitute, an Atonement, a Messiah, a Surety, a Mediator of a New Covenant in Christ's blood [what He has done sacrificially]. Pick up the Gospel of John. Read what Jesus says about what He came to do. Believe in Him. Believe Him. God is never lawless, only just.

We see in America's history the battle of minds, a battle between values based on the truth of the Word of God and those based on the best minds of the natural man. Both want liberty and justice for all, but their definitions and ways differ. Yet even that worldly philosopher Plato understood that people living in a cave seeing shadows on the wall in front of them would not see truth unless or until they turned around or were turned around to see the light coming in from outside the cave. Plato spoke of Forms and Ideals; but the One we need to speak of is Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

If people anywhere are to enjoy true liberty and justice for all, then we as believers need to get the Word of God into our conversations with folks. It isn't necessary to sound like the KJV or to give "chapter and verse." Speak the truth in love. Minister grace to your hearers. Be ready always to give anyone that asks an answer for the hope within you. Be ready to testify of what the LORD has done in your life, how you came to know for certain that if you died, you are ready to "meet your Maker" and why. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit; keep in step with Him. Teach people how to pray. If they are interested, tell them what "church" is like; too many people today have no clue how to pray, read a Bible, what a hymn is, what worship entails, what to expect in a church service, how to begin, etc.

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man. Colossians 4:5, 6

Julia Ward Howe wrote "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" in 1861. It was published in 1862. The lyrics link the coming judgment of the wicked (Revelation 19) with the Civil War. Julia Howe actively sought the end of slavery; her husband was highly involved in the education of the blind. Here is her account of how the lyrics came to her:



I went to bed that night as usual, and slept, according to my wont, quite soundly. I awoke in the gray of the morning twilight; and as I lay waiting for the dawn, the long lines of the desired poem began to twine themselves in my mind. Having thought out all the stanzas, I said to myself, 'I must get up and write these verses down, lest I fall asleep again and forget them.' So, with a sudden effort, I sprang out of bed, and found in the dimness an old stump of a pen which I remembered to have used the day before. I scrawled the verses almost without looking at the paper. (Howe, Julia Ward. *Reminiscences: 1819–1899*. Houghton, Mifflin: New York, 1899. p. 275.)

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me.
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on. (Fifth stanza)

I'll leave it to you to look up the other original lyrics; but let's not just sing it. Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to do it, not just in the U.S.A. but in every land.

For His Glory,

Mary Craig

Mary Craig, D. P. M.

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free,
and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

Galatians 5:1

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