



July 2021

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

July is traditionally the month when Canadians and Americans focus on and celebrate our national freedoms. At this time of the year Americans often think of George Washington, our first president, who as the commander of the ragged, ill-equipped Continental Army eventually liberated the United States from the British.

When Benjamin Franklin was the ambassador to France for our newly independent United States of America he was invited to a prestigious dinner (1781). Great Britain and France remained the most powerful nations on earth and their representatives also attended this important event.

The French foreign secretary started the evening by offering a toast to his King Louis. "To His Majesty, King Louis, the Sun, whose shining presence radiates the earth of France." Not to be outdone, the British ambassador rose with his own toast: "To King George the Third, the Moon, whose brilliance lights up the skies of Britain."

Then Benjamin Franklin, representing the "new kid on the block" of the United States, rose to say: "I cannot give you the sun or the moon, but I give you General George Washington of the United States, the Joshua who made the sun and the moon stand still when he commanded."

As Christ-followers we pay homage to Jesus Christ alone. *Faith alone, grace alone and Christ alone!* Our King, our Lord, our Savior and our Liberator set us free! We give thanks that he rescued us from the bondage of religious rules and regulations.

In his incarnation, Jesus, the Son of God, revealed the fulness of the Father's freedom. Jesus came with his gospel of freedom for religious captives. By the grace of God, because of Christ, in Christ we are free from the fear, intimidation, threats and imprisonment of Christ-less religion. With Martin Luther King Jr. we say, "Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

In 1924, when Simon Bolivar led his nation to independence from Spain, he refused an offer to become the first president of Peru. He insisted his work was all about liberation and that others were more suited and gifted to govern.

But grateful Peruvians still wanted to honor him so they offered him a gift of one million pesos. He accepted the gift on one condition. He said that he would use the gift, along with monies of his own, to purchase the freedom of over 3,000 people in Peru who were slaves.

After he had done just that, he explained: "it makes little sense to free a nation unless all its citizens enjoy freedom as well."

Even if you remember me telling the story of The Grand Inquisitor told by Dostoyevsky in "The Brothers Karamazov" before, it bears repeating. Dostoyevsky sets his story in 15th century Spain, held in the oppressive grips of religion, under the fear and sway of the Inquisition.

The Inquisition was the most oppressive and violent heresy-hunt ever. Those who did not toe

the line of the version of Christianity insisted upon by the Catholic church were brutally tortured and mercilessly killed.

According to the story told by Dostoyevsky Jesus came back to the earth, to Seville, Spain, where the fires and death of the Inquisition tortured and murdered so-called heretics. He came quietly, with no fanfare ... but people were drawn to him. He was kind, gentle and filled with love. He did not make demands nor did he threaten with fear.

As a procession of mourners is leaving Seville's cathedral, carrying the coffin of a seven-year-old girl, Jesus raises the child back to life. The Cardinal who is the Grand Inquisitor sees this resurrection and, realizing the threat that Jesus represents to his fragile hold on the people, orders Jesus to be thrown into prison.

The Grand Inquisitor knows who Jesus is, so he visits him in the dungeon and tells him "You have no right to come back here and mess things up for us! You're destroying these people with your freedom. They can't handle it! They are like children. They need our rules and regulations! They need a church that keeps them huddled close in fear! Go away! Don't rock the boat! Take your freedom and leave!"

Jesus listened to the entire tirade of the Grand Inquisitor. Then Jesus stands up. He moves to the side of the most feared man in all of Spain. He softly kissed him. That's his answer.

Jesus came to us, in all of our fears, in all of the religious abuse and oppression we have experienced, with all of our flaws and imperfections, to love us. Jesus revealed and proclaimed the unconditional love of God. God's love does not coerce or force or demand. **Love is not perfectly known through rules, love is known and illustrated by grace.**

God's love is freedom. Because laws promise what humans deeply desire—security, safety and a predictable life—many enslaved to religious laws are terrified by freedom in Christ. Slaves of legalistic religion are scandalized by anyone who says God loves us and is pleased with us on the basis of his grace and the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

God does not evaluate, judge or condemn us on the basis of laws, but rather we stand before and with God because of Jesus. That's why the great Reformer, Martin Luther, boldly insisted, "Christianity is not a new law!"

Freedom in Christ can be terrifying for those who were formerly held in bondage by religious legalism. **Freedom in Christ** gives us no certainty (like the false, illusive mirage-like security of religion) that we can earn and deserve God's love. That said, the gospel of Jesus Christ clearly explains that **freedom in Christ** is not the end of restraint or morality. **Freedom in Christ** is not anarchy!

Freedom in Christ is never something you can hold in your hand and count, as one might do with money in a checking account or a wallet. It's much easier to obey a law and be assured by doing so that God loves us rather than trusting in the unseen grace of God. Paul boldly proclaimed "*we live by faith, not by sight*" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Freedom in Christ is an ongoing, ever-developing and always maturing relationship. By his grace God enables and empowers us to "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (2 Peter 3:18).

The **goal of freedom in Christ** is that "*we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming*" (Ephesians 4:14)

The **goal of freedom in Christ** is that we are no longer under a taskmaster of law. Christ-followers

are not under the kind of restraints young children are in a household (see Galatians 3:23-29). We are no longer children, but we are one in Christ, co-heirs of the kingdom of God, in whom Jesus lives his risen life. We are free in Christ, and “*in him we live and move and have our being*” (Acts 17:28).

We are never truly free until we surrender to God so that Christ lives in us. We are then free, but only after, as Paul tells us, “*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*” (Galatians 2:20).

Freedom in Christ means we surrender all religious pretenses that we might, in some way, as a result of our performance of ceremonies, obedience to laws and compliance with customs and duties, earn the grace of God. Freedom in Christ means, as Paul says in the next verse: “*I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing*” (Galatians 2:21).

Imagine there are two long lines at the final judgment and you choose the religious line. When your turn comes, God opens a book and reads from the book by which you are judged according to what you have done (Revelation 20:12). There are good deeds in that book, mixed with your flawed and less than perfect behaviors. No matter who you are, and how perfect your life has been—if your name is in that book you will hear the final verdict “Not Righteous.”

But the good news is you are in the line of God’s grace, mercy and love. Your name is written in another book—it’s called the book of life (Revelation 20:12). God reads your name, and the fact that you live a new life in your risen Lord Jesus. He reads of your faith in Jesus as a Christ-follower who trusts and believes implicitly in Jesus. God assures you that you are God’s son or daughter, by the love demonstrated on the cross of Christ and fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. ***You are righteous because of Jesus Christ, by the grace of God!***

We are free in Christ! “Free at last. Free at least. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

Your brother in Christ,



Greg Albrecht

President, Plain Truth Ministries

P.S. As we conclude these letters, space permitting, we often share a brief note of thanks from those we serve. Some of those letters are from you, our beloved and deeply appreciated worldwide Friends and Partners. Here’s one of YOUR recent notes:

I’ve always wanted to write to you guys and tell you what a fabulous job you do in preaching the true gospel. But I was too busy, lazy, tired and many other excuses to write. Well, now that I’m retired I have no more excuses. I’ll try to be more proactive and show you my appreciation for the great articles and books you all provide. You (and I) can feel the Holy Spirit is definitely involved.

I want you to know that while our donations will diminish this year, it’s not because of the work you do. Unfortunately, since I am retired now, we had to reduce our giving to all charitable organizations. We even deleted some that probably wouldn’t notice, so we can concentrate on the ones we feel need the help and make the greatest impact. And you, my friends, make a huge difference. God bless all of you and the people you reach.—Ohio

CWR/PTM Prayer List—July 2021

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

Please pray for my elderly parents. They are deeply in debt and my mother has dementia.—Wisconsin

Please pray for my mother who has health problems, especially for her longtime scalp issue.—Ohio

Please pray for my nephew who is in prison for three years.—Arkansas

Please pray for the vaccine for COVID-19 to be given quickly to everybody to stop this virus.—Maine

Please pray for my spiritual growth and the healing of the effects of gout in my left foot and hand and the swelling in the lower side of my back.—Louisiana

Please pray for peace, love and kindness to be displayed around the world. Also, please pray for me and my husband to be free of pain and to be in good health.—California

Please pray for my granddaughter who has gotten involved with drugs. Please pray for God's divine intervention in her life to help her see that her ways are leading her into disaster.—Virginia

Please pray for my husband who now lives in a nursing home.—Mississippi

Please pray for my friends who are struggling in their marriage.—Oregon

Please pray for all those who are ill especially those suffering from the COVID virus.—Indiana

Please pray for my children to have a close relationship with their heavenly Father. Also pray for solutions for those who have serious family problems.—Texas

Please pray for my son who is in the hospital with pneumonia and has an aneurysm in his lung. I am praying for all of you to have good health so you will be able to keep this ministry going.—Louisiana

I need your prayers. I have high blood pressure and a very large cyst on my pelvis.—Florida

Please pray for my dear brother whose Alzheimer's is getting worse.—Michigan

Please pray that I will feel better. Fatigue and some dizziness come and go. Thank you for the spiritual food you give us.—California

I need your prayers as I'm going to have a procedure to repair a nerve in my neck. Also, my daughter started a new job. Please pray it all goes well.—South Carolina

Please continue to pray for me as I grieve the loss of my dear husband. I am all alone, and I suffer from anxiety and depression.—Virginia

Please pray for my wife's health, she had two small strokes and has A-fib (heart condition). She will be having heart procedures.—Texas

The March 2021 prayer list posted my request for a great-nephew who has a speech problem. He has now been diagnosed with apraxia, an uncommon speech disorder. Since the time the request was posted, some family members have been noticing some interesting and good things with his communication. Let's continue to pray. Thank you!—Pennsylvania

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.