

Freedom of Religion

Around the world today many of our brothers and sisters in Christ are attending church fearful of their lives. Recent church bombings in places like Egypt on Palm Sunday puts many Christians in constant fear. They fear not simply the freedom to worship as they like. They fear for their very lives.

We must never forget that one of the driving reasons for this country was the freedom of religion. Many of our forefathers came here to escape the persecution they were receiving in many countries in Europe. At the time of our countries founding most European countries limited free expression of one's faith. The Church was sanctioned and funded by the governments of the land. If your beliefs ran counter to the governments you faced persecution and hardships. Many people were looking for a place where they could worship in freedom. That place became America.

We have had our faults as a nation. We still do. Yet we became a beacon of hope to countless millions of people who were hopeless where they lived. We are still to this day that beacon of hope. If America isn't great why are people lined up to come here? One of the major reasons is our freedoms. One of the key tenets our Founding Fathers was that the State would not, could not, dictate to the citizens where or how they should worship.

That Separation of Church and State has been a driving factor that to this day assures we can worship here in this place as we choose. In our celebration this week of our freedoms don't forget this cherished freedom. We are blessed to be able to worship openly and without fear. Our brothers and sisters in Christ in places like China or Iran don't have the freedom of worship that we have.

Since the founding of our country men and women have given their lives to preserve our freedoms. Someone said, "Freedom isn't free." It cost the lives of many. They gave so that we could enjoy the fruits of this great land AND be free to worship as we choose. As we take up our offering this weekend your gift helps us continue our life changing work. You see though we have freedom of worship we live amidst many who have given up their freedoms to be ensnared by sin and darkness. Our task is to shine the light of Jesus to a world that needs hope. Every time you give you help us achieve this purpose.

The government doesn't tax you to support the Church like in many countries. We are not only free to worship as we see fit but to use our offerings as we see fit. You are free to give to the church of your choice. In fact your gift today is tax deductible. Do we live in a great country or what! So, let's celebrate the freedom of worship with a generous gift that will keep our vision and mission fully funded.