

THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT...

BY: BRAD CULLEN

For several days I have had this nagging thought to write about matters that relate to personal liberties. Since roughly thirty-five percent of the people who respond to my writings, and that are in harmony at least somewhat with what the Lord has given me to write, are outside the United States, I balked at writing anything which had to do with the current political climate of the U.S. – and yet...

A few days ago this quote came into my possession... seemingly “out of nowhere.”

“Unless we put medical freedom into the Constitution, the time will come when medicine will organize into an underground dictatorship...” (emphasis mine). “To restrict the art of healing to one class of men and deny equal privileges to others will constitute the Bastille of medical science. All such laws are un-American and despotic and have no place in a republic... The Constitution of this republic should make special privilege for medical freedom as well as religious freedom.” – Dr. Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

This was forwarded to me from someone outside the U.S., along with some other notable quotes. So I prayed about it. On one hand I didn’t see how it “fit” within the framework of the other thoughts I had about how far the U.S. has strayed from its revolutionary roots which brought about its Constitution and Bill of Rights and my resistance to writing anything about, or my mind set in relation, to it. I literally said, “Well, Lord, I guess I need your direction about this,” and went back to wondering why I wasn’t “getting” anything new to write in my usual vein of deriding the lack of results-getting-faith (as Jesus used the term) within organized Christianity and the urging to do what he said to do to acquire such faith.

This past Friday morning I received a phone call from someone passing through the other side of the city in which I currently live. At once she seemed reluctant to bother me... and at the same time almost insistent that we meet. I was in the midst of packing up my office and small apartment for a planned relocation and this call was an interruption of the agenda I had for the day. Everything was in a chaotic disarray, including my mental and emotional state, thus her willingness to “drop by” just didn’t “sit right” with me.

The caller and her husband have a ministry in a rather remote area of the U.S. and he and I correspond on occasion. Though I have never met him, I consider him to be a kindred spirit and brother. Thus I didn’t want to put his wife off... so I finally suggested that I drive the thirty miles or so to a location that was relatively convenient to both of us.

We stood by our cars in a parking lot. A story unfolded from her that made it obvious to me why we were meeting. She seemed somewhat perplexed and at the same time determined to tell me without a great deal of detail about three things that seemed to be unconnected. One had to do with people who were actually being imprisoned for their resistance to a quasi agency of the U.S. government; the second, her own “near death” (her brief description was more akin to actually and completely dying and coming back to life) experience; thirdly a bout with ovarian cancer from which she was healed (not by the doctors) and a court-ordered surgery because she was branded incompetent about the decision she had made not to have the surgery. BAM!!! I knew I had to write what had been on my heart and to this audience! I told her this and she seemed to confirm it.

We prayed together for a few minutes and she left for her long trip home. I rushed back to my office to write. After writing several paragraphs under the title of *From Liberty to Tyranny*, I decided to do a bit of research on Benjamin Rush, the author of the above referenced quote. I strongly recommend a trip to the Encyclopedia! Frankly I was embarrassed at my lack of knowledge related to the powerful influence of this man in the revolutionary founding of the U.S.

Several tidbits of history related to Dr. Rush are worth noting here. For example, he was considered by many to be the chief philosopher behind the American Revolution (as an almost devout pacifist, this is a telling point).

After earning a B.A. in 1760 from the College of New Jersey, Rush studied medicine from 1761-66, under Dr. John Redman in Philadelphia. On Redman’s advice, he continued his studies at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland where he received an M.D. degree in 1768. He did further training at St. Thomas’s Hospital in London, 1768-69.

Not only was Rush both a noted physician, he became deeply interested in the causes of mental illness and was a champion of reform of institutions for the insane.

Anticipating Freudian analysis by a century, Rush also listened to his patients tell him their troubles and was interested in their dreams. He recommended occupational therapy for the institutionalized insane. He wrote, *Medical Inquiries and Observations, Upon the Diseases of the Mind*, in 1812. It became the standard reference for seventy years and earned

him the title of "the father of American psychiatry." Rush constructed a typology of insanity, which is strikingly similar to the modern categorization of mental illness and studied factors—such as heredity, age, marital status, wealth, and climate—that he thought predisposed people to madness. One of many causes of insanity he noted was intense study of "imaginary objects of knowledge" such as "researches into the meaning of certain prophecies in the Old and New Testaments."

Although at various times a member of Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches, Rush generally avoided formal denominational connections. In his later years he confided to John Adams: "I have ventured to transfer the spirit of inquiry (from my profession) to religion, in which, if I have no followers in my opinions (for I hold most of them secretly), I enjoy the satisfaction of living in peace with my own conscience, and, what will surprise you not a little, in peace with all denominations of Christians, for while I refuse to be the slave of any sect, I am a friend of them all. My own beliefs are a compound of the orthodoxy and heterodoxy of most of our Christian churches."

It is worth mentioning that two prominent, "founding fathers of America," Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, were both friends and admirers of Benjamin Rush, M.D. Upon hearing of Rush's death Thomas Jefferson wrote Adams,

"Another of our friends of seventy-six is gone, my dear Sir, another of the co-signers of the Independence of our country. And a better man than Rush could not have left us, more benevolent, more learned, of finer genius, or more honest." Adams, grief-stricken, wrote in reply, "I know of no Character living or dead, who has done more real good in America."

Back to my meeting in a parking lot with "Barbara" (she asked me not to use her real name, for reasons that should be apparent). In addition to providing the impetus, with her story, for the forthcoming article, *From Liberty to Tyranny*, Barbara looking upward poured forth a word of knowledge, "There is a shaking coming and yes even now going on as many are called and chosen to be woven into the fabric of God's purposes."

May you receive, my article, *From Liberty to Tyranny*, as a call back to liberty in Christ – whether you live in the U.S. or elsewhere. As the Apostle Paul wrote: "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." You should receive it in a day or so.

May the following two quotes serve as a wake up call to the coming and ongoing "shaking" prophesied by Barbara:

"Men in authority will always think that criticism of their policies is dangerous. They will always equate their policies with patriotism and find criticism subversive." -- *Henry Steele Commager*

"In the beginning of a change, the Patriot is a scarce man, Brave, Hated and Scorned. When his cause succeeds, however, the timid join him. For then it costs nothing to be a Patriot!" -- *Mark Twain*

It is only when we determine that we cannot go back and when we make a firm commitment that we *will not* go back, that we discover how to move forward. We do this best by saying, "Spirit of the living God, I want only Your own will, Lead me!" Uncomfortable to be sure, but in the end, the result is faith, growth and spiritual progress. Put in the vernacular of another culture, "Only when you lose sight of the shore will you discover new lands."

And now... a definitive departure from the subject at hand, but as a precursor to, *From Liberty to Tyranny* – which may seem like a statement of protest: I am sympathetic to the stated purposes of those who advocated the war in Iraq, but by no means could I be considered "pro-war." I have equal sympathy to the stated purposes of those who opposed that war, but by no means could I be considered "anti-war." Such a stance at times like these is greeted by both the "pro" and the "anti" as being vacillating. I dispute that view and offer yet one more quote from history... from the mouth of a stalwart Nazi during an interview in prison at Nuremberg to illustrate my point:

"Why of course the people don't want war.... But after all it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship... Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is to tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country."

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