



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Corinthians 1:21). So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading (Nehemiah 8:8). Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend (Proverbs 27:17).

Volume 9, No. 11

Issue # 911

The Establishment and Order of the Kingdom of God

I invite you to a passage of Scripture taken from Acts 1. A while ago this passage of Scripture was read in our devotional and there was a phrase in there that somehow touched my heart. It seems as though the Lord has laid upon my heart to share from that Scripture.

I would like to read Acts 1:1-9. "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that

Jesus began both to do and teach, (2) Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: (3) To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: (4) And, being assembled

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together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. (5) For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

“(6) When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? (7) And he said

unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. (8) But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (9) And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.”

Vol. 9 No. 11, Issue # 911. The Pulpit Exchange is a compilation of written sermons without commentary, published as often as possible, in the interests of promoting sound preaching in our conservative Anabaptist churches. All sermons have been transcribed and printed with permission. Names are removed so that we can focus on the message and content rather than on a certain speaker or style. (Names will be published in the next issue).

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Published by Door of Peace Publications/Les Éditions «Porte-de-Paix» a conservative Amish Mennonite/Anabaptist publisher
c/o Keith G. White, P.O. Box 104, Blyth, Ontario Canada N0M 1H0

Cost per Issue \$4.95 + \$2.50 p& h Canada/ \$3.50 p& h USA

At times, we as parents will go certain places. It may be for an hour or two, or an afternoon, or maybe for a week. As we leave, many times we will give some last minute direction to our children. This is perhaps the way it was with Jesus right before His ascension. He had some very important things to share with His disciples. One of them was that He would be going. Verse 3 says, "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

That was an important part of His heart. Jesus wanted to share with them, and spoke to them pertaining the kingdom of God. I do not know what all He said. The Scripture does not say. However, I know what He said was proper, right, and truth. I would like to think about some of the terms on the kingdom of God. In the New Testament the kingdom of God and the Church are all interchangeable as I understand the Scripture. For an illustration of that Peter, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, preached that powerful sermon in Acts 2. As we come through that message, those who heard him said, "What shall we do" (Acts 2:37)? They were convicted.

The Bible says that the message was to repent, be baptized and there were added to the Church, "about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Those three thousand souls we could say, were added to the kingdom of God. That is not an injustice to the Scripture. That is an explanation of a different title we could use.

Old Testament kingdoms had many kings such as Saul, David, and Solomon. According to history they all reigned, every one of them for approximately forty years each. The New Testament kingdom is far superior to the Old Testament kingdoms in that it has one King and this King is forever. It is a little bit like the book of Hebrews. It is a book of "better things." It is a better sacrifice with a far better promise. That is the way it is as I understand the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, however we want to name it, is far, far superior to the other one, and it has much more to offer.

The question may be asked, When, where and who is king of this kingdom? That is a good question. I) We will look at *when is the kingdom?* Is it past? Is it present? Or, is it future? Perhaps there would be several different answers if I would ask the congregation. However, I would say

this, every one of you would be right. If one would say one, one the other, and another, the other, they are all right.

I will say at the beginning of the message that I would encourage you to take notes. They are very valuable. I remember a while ago a brother preached a message on *The Strong and the Stronger*, on the strong man and how he takes care of his house and protects it very well. I found the verses said there is one stronger than that strong man who came and I always had a view of questioning concerning that. I did not know what he meant. How is it a strong man, as strong as he can make it, how much could it be any stronger? Really, the thought is that Satan is strong, but God is much stronger. It blessed my heart. In fact, I went home that day and looked at some of my notes and rejoiced again by what our brother said from God's Word.

We learn from others and God has set up people that we might learn. Let that be our experience. It is my intent to present this message on the kingdom of God in such a way that everyone here could walk out the doors at the rear and say, "It was well for me to be here." That is the intent of this message. We plan to stay on God's Word.

Further, concerning this kingdom it was foretold to some prophets in the Old Testament concerning the kingdom. Let us turn to Psalm 132:11 and read what David said. This is what God revealed to him. David is saying, "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." God revealed and God was saying to him in essence, "Thy throne, the fruit of thy body, or of thy offspring, generations in the future of thy family God will raise one up and set up a throne. We are talking about the kingdom of God, which Jesus was teaching to His disciples before He left at the very important event.

Isaiah 9:6, 7 says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (7) Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." I Take notice here even the same

thought in these verses as God said to David, of the fruit of his loins to sit on a throne. Here He said to sit, “upon the throne of David.”

“And upon his kingdom,” Jesus spoke to His disciples concerning the kingdom of God. They were among His last words before His ascension. “A son is given,” to sit on David’s throne “to establish,” and “to order it.” The title of our message is *The Establishment and Order of the Kingdom of God*. That is what the Bible says.

In the New Testament Luke 1:31–33 says this. Here we have Gabriel speaking to Mary. “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. (32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: (33) And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” The angel Gabriel spoke to Mary confirming what David and Isaiah had already said. If you note how it is worded, the phrases are equally the same, a number of them equally the same.

Isaiah, David and Gabriel were speaking of the same event, if I understand the Scriptures. Turn

with me to Daniel 2:44. It gives a little direction as to when this king, or kingdom shall be. Especially the first part. This is what he said. “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.” That is the main part. I could read on down to some other verses, “and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

This was given following a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had and the interpretation which God gave Daniel as to why and how, when and where. Here it brings the thought of when is this kingdom of Jesus. In this we many times do not go in depth. I did not take hours and hours to try and determine who these kings were “in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom.” I did not really go into detail. Nevertheless, we do have a number of books that do, which are fairly well accurate of those who have searched it out. Therefore, in that particular point in Daniel, as he reveals the time of the event says, “in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom.”

The four world empires (this is taken from history) are generally

understood to be the Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek, and the Romans — four empires. That goes right into this verse, “in the days of these kings,” one of those empires — in the days of one of those — God will raise up a king to sit on a throne. Christ was born and lived within the Roman empire as Daniel said. That is the fourth kingdom. This kingdom was raised up and a lot was said about the Romans. The Jews wanted to pull themselves away from the Roman empire. They wanted another king like in the Old Testament.

Jesus Christ saw it otherwise, or God saw it otherwise. In Acts 2:29–32, as Peter was preaching to the multitude of the people being filled with the Holy Spirit, he spoke to them, and this is one of the things that he said. (He said many things). “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. (30) Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins,” (It is a quotation from Psalm 132 which we spoke about. He requotes that. “This is what David said.”) “Knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins,

according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.” It was foretold in the Old Testament.

Some people use the word “prediction.” I choose to use a better word. Prediction does not always hold true. There are many predictors and they are not always right. In contrast, when God foretells something it is 100% — full. According to the flesh God would set up Christ to sit on His throne. There again, word for word, as it were, back to Psalm 132. Verse 31 is a very important verse. It helps us fully understand. “He [David] seeing this before” (as we said back in Psalm 132). “spake of the resurrection of Christ.” It is very clear. The Bible is the best commentary ever if we want to accept it. “He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.” David spoke in the Old Testament concerning this, and now here the Scripture explains what it really means. It says if Christ would have still been in the grave as other men are, He could not be a king. However, he was raised, being the fruit of David, of his body, an offspring generations down the road. Today is history. He was not left in hell at all. But, “He seeing this

before spake of the resurrection of Christ.” That is important. I understand the Scripture by the Word of God. At the point of the resurrection, the kingdom of God has been established.

The hymn writer in hymn #300 in the *Church Hymnal*, the poet was moved to write and quote these words. You will find them in the third verse. It says this, “He who died to be your Saviour, Rose again to be your king.” I think he said it well. I really do. He who died to be our Saviour rose again to be our king. Now, in a sense Jesus’ work was finished as far as dying and being a Saviour. That is what He said. It is not that His work was complete, not that His work was done, not at all. He still had more work to do and He is still doing work. On our behalf we ought to thank God for our Redeemer, for the King in heaven which is “on the right hand of God” (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 10:12), interceding for you and me. What would we do without Him? That Scripture is true today.

Let me put it this way. I like to think of Christ and His life, and He starts up here at the top one side of a “V.” The Bible says that he was rich. What all riches He had in His glory I do not know. Someday we will understand

more fully. The Bible says, “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). We see the sequence of events. Christ in His great throne above, or the glory that He had and He came down, down, down, “even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). He gave His last drop of blood. He drained His cup and He drained it dry. He could not go any lower, but He went low enough that He paid the price. That is why I said it is finished on the cross of Calvary. He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). The atoning work for the washing away of our sins now is complete. The blood is already given, far superior than the Old Testament sacrifices. They could not cleanse, but Jesus “cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). The power is there.

He came down low and He even died “the death of the cross.” If I have a four foot square blackboard, I would simply put a big “V” right there. I would start up at the top there where Christ brings His glory and His love and comes down. Down at the bottom of the point there is a pivot. And from that point on Christ goes up, up, up. At the resurrection, Christ’s life pivots and we see Christ in a new

dimension. He is now King sitting on His throne. I see our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as it was prophesied in the Old Testament and now happening in the New to us is history. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32).

Jesus Christ sent His disciples to bring that young animal, that ass, a colt of a donkey. He sat down, and He started out in a most meek and humble way and He was riding to be His king. He was riding toward His kingship. He started real low, it pivots there, and He goes up, and up, and up until today. The Bible says in Philippians 2:8, 9. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." I would like to entertain the thought (I stand to be corrected, and some day we will more fully understand) and I would like to say that perhaps God gave Christ a greater authority, or a greater exaltation than what He had when He left.

This otherwise, if it is not any more than what it was, be that as it may. I am only giving that as a possibility and when I see that in

the Scripture, I believe possibly that is the way it was.

The last words that Jesus spoke in Matthew before His ascension were, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). He has the power of the kingdom. Mark 1:14 says Jesus preached, "the gospel of the kingdom of God." The Gospel has a thought that "Good News" or "God's Word." I want to tell you it is good news and I am happy to share it. The good news is the Gospel of the kingdom, and that is what Jesus called it. Mark 1:15 says, "The time is fulfilled." What does He mean — "The time is fulfilled?" What was foretold in the Old Testament now is fulfilled in the New. "The kingdom of God is at hand," The Scripture says. At hand carries the thought of "here and now," when Jesus was here on earth.

Many times during Jesus' three years of ministry He said, "My time is not yet come" (John 7:6), "mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4). However, at the time of His crucifixion He said, "the hour is come" (John 17:1). I see the same thought here, when it was foretold in the Old Testament brought over into the New being fulfilled, and He said, "the hour is at hand" (Matthew 26:45), here and now. It helps us

to more fully understand, does it not?

The kingdom of God, the time is fulfilled, the time is come, “And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe” (John 14:29). “That which I told you before is now happening before your eyes.” To us it is approximately two thousand years ago.

Matthew 10:5–7 says, “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: (6) But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (7) And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “Now, it is being established.” In that message of Christ earlier quoted, He said, “repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

I want you to turn with me if you will to Acts 17:7. That chapter blessed me. I do not know what drew my eye but I had this verse marked. We will turn to it because I want to read it. “Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.” Jason had received Paul and Silas. He had room there and they stayed there. Paul and Silas

had some adversaries.

The preaching of Paul and Silas brought a mob or a group that was against, or brought opposition. One heading says, “An uproar of the Jews.” Why? They were preaching the truth. This is what it said in verse 7 that is was doing contrary to the decrees of Caesar. What were they preaching? The Bible says, “saying that there is another king, one Jesus.” That tells me that Jesus was then and is now King. It is very obvious. Sometimes we sing the hymn “O Worship the King.” How true that is. Another hymn we sing has the words, “I would love Thee, God and Father, My Redeemer and my King.” Many of the songs in our books refer to Jesus Christ for being King. I noticed that many of the songs in our hymn books refer to Jesus as King. We have something to sing about.

Jesus was the King and it caused an uproar and the opposition was saying, these people are turning “the world upside down” (Acts 17:6). No, they were setting it straight. The world was upside down in a whirl, not Paul and Silas. Their message was Jesus as King. My Bible says that is what they taught and it brought opposition. It will today too, many times.

Where is this kingdom that

Jesus taught about? In Acts 1:6 His disciples asked Him, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus did not say yes. He did not say "No." He simply worded here what He said, however you want to understand it. After Jesus had spoken to the group that was there pertaining to the kingdom of God, then the Scripture says, "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? (7) And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:6, 7). He answered it well. He did not say "Yes," "No," when or where. He simply said in verse 8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Then, He continued on to say what shall follow: "and ye shall be witnesses."

Verses 6 and 7 are connected very closely to the kingdom of God as the things that were pertaining because that was very important in His life. He said, "Go to Jerusalem and wait till the power from on high," or the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and they did. Very shortly after this they received that. Then He said, "ye shall receive power." That is

all associated with the kingdom of God. Where is this kingdom? The disciples and others who were there and others as well, had the wrong concept of the true kingdom of God. They thought it was to be here and now.

On one occasion they were going to take Jesus by force and set him up as King. What happened? Did it happen? The Bible says, "he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15). He did not come to be an earthly king.

The mother of James and John asked a favour of Jesus for a position for her sons. What did Jesus say? "Ye know not what ye ask" (Matthew 20:22). Jesus did not come to give positions on this earth as a reward, or to be an earthly king and have James on one side and have John on the other. Not at all. That is why He said, "Ye know not what ye ask."

In John 18:36 He says this, "My kingdom is not of this world." He also added, "if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." Therefore, Christ's kingdom is not of this world. That is the Bible. I would like to read from Luke 17:20, "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come." That is the question they asked. They demanded it. They

asked “Where and when is this?” “He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” In other words, if I understand it, it is not a visible kingdom, not by observation. You cannot see it. If someone said, “It might be here, or in another country.” No, do not believe them.

One day a man with whom we had contact stopped in all excited. He said, “Come. I have seen Jesus running down the road.” That is what he said. Another brother said to him, “Now, wait a minute,” and he quoted to him what the Bible says. “If any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not” (Mark 13:21). He was right. Well, it all falls in line. Christ’s kingdom is not of this world. The question they were asking Christ then was “Where is it?” That is what the Jews were asking. They wanted to know. It was not a visible kingdom, not a kingdom like the Old Testament. It is far superior.

Let us read Luke 17:21 to answer the question, “Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there!” (I just explained that). “For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” Do we believe that? The kingdom of God which Jesus Christ was preaching and introducing to His

disciples is within us. Do you belong to the kingdom of God? We say concerning our missionaries, “They are in kingdom work.” That is a true statement. That is not false. It is kingdom work — within you.

This could also be understood as “among you,” here and now. However, a further thought is as a sinner repents, receives salvation, and is filled with the Holy Ghost he is part of the kingdom of God. Do we believe that? I hope we do because that is what the Bible teaches. It starts at conversion, even though the kingdom was set up at that pivot point back between the death and the cross and the resurrection. That is where it started. Many people believed, but it is continuing. The kingdom of God is expanding and still will. In other words there are still those accepting Christ today. There are still those coming into the kingdom.

Did not Jesus say in answer to the scribe who gave a very truthful statement, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God” (Mark 12:34)? What did He mean? “You are quite close to coming into that kingdom and finding salvation.” Did not Agrippa say to Paul when he spoke to him about salvation, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a . . .” (Acts 26:28) what? A Christian.

Almost. So close, but yet so far. He was close to the kingdom. If he would have gone altogether (we do not read that he did) but if he did he was brought into the kingdom — the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is within you. In Acts 1:6, 7 we touched on receiving the Holy Spirit. Jesus was saying the very same thing. In 2 Peter 1:11 he goes through the forepart of that first chapter in 2 Peter and he gives eight Christian graces starting with faith. It finishes with rejoicing charity. After the eight graces are given, the Bible says, “for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Peter 1:10). That is almost eternal security, but it is not. We do not believe in once saved, always saved. We do believe in God’s saving and keeping power.

Then, he said, “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:11). We have an entrance into a kingdom not measured by years. Jesus Christ’s kingdom started at the resurrection and continues on through eternity to a greater measure when it comes to eternity. In John 18:37 Pilate said this to Jesus, “Art thou a king then?” This is what Jesus said, “To this end was I born, and

for this cause came I into the world.” Jesus confirmed exactly what Pilate asked him. Jesus answered, “Thou sayest that I am a king.” He confirmed it because He was King. He is King.

We know that Jesus was before Pilate before His crucifixion. However, He was speaking concerning the kingdom at that pivot point. That is a very important part. James 2:5 says, “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom” — heirs — future as in Romans 8. That blends right into the Scripture. There is no man that comes in a high position to Christ. It is always in a low position. God’s conditions are to fall down at the foot of the cross and beg for mercy “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). That is the way we come as the child of God to belong to the kingdom of God. We are chosen because we accept.

In Matthew 28:19, 20 is the Great Commission. It is for us today. We are to continue to preach the kingdom of God. That is our mission. It says at home, close by and across, excluding none. At home would be that we start personally with ourselves. Then, with my family, or our family, and then maybe with the church or those close by, until it goes out unto the ends of

the world — all nations. That is a command. It is not an option. It is for every child of God in our day.

The hymn writer says, “Into thy hands the Gospel is given.” That is ours. I close with these verses. Matthew 9:36–38 is a very familiar passage of Scripture. “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. (37) Then saith he unto his

disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; (38) Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” May that be our portion. May that be our prayer. We are informed and commanded by the Word to pray for others. We need to be careful when we pray that prayer because as we pray that God would send forth labourers, it could be the Lord might say and you might be the one to go.

The Two Kingdoms

You may open your Bibles to John 18. We are looking to the Scriptures for direction in relation to a subject that affects us. We think of our practical outworking of nonresistance and the provisions that have been made. We can consider the IW service and the conscientious objector provisions that were made by our government when they gave consideration to our positions on nonparticipation in civil government and nonresistance.

This is what we sometimes call the two kingdom concept. The kingdoms of this world are earthly kingdoms. While we are citizens of an earthly kingdom, we have a dual citizenship so to speak. We are citizens of heaven

as the children of God. Those kingdoms are in conflict and we need to know, we need to be standing with the kingdom of God in Christ while we live in this world. That calls for a constant awareness such that as children of God we identify with the kingdom of Christ and not with the kingdoms of this world.

We cannot separate the fact that any national crisis brings this more into a sharper focus, the teaching here, what we are considering in relation to the two kingdoms. Whether or not we have this type of crisis in the nation is maybe not the most important. The fact is that whether we do or not, we need to know which kingdom we are in

and which kingdom we are supporting and not be a part of the kingdoms of this world.

While we do appreciate our earthly citizenship, we know that if at any time our earthly citizenship violates our citizenship in heaven we know what we need to do. We need to be living as “strangers and pilgrims” (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11) in this world and not be tied up with the patriotic fervour. That is the concern we have that we are free from the patriotic fervour that is afloat around us today like I never remember before.

When we were in 1W service, the Vietnam war was not a popular war and people could understand why you did not want to go to that war. However, it is a different spirit that is afloat today.

We want to consider the message in three areas. I) The Scriptural view of the two kingdoms. This is somewhat primary from the teachings of Jesus as well as the other apostles. II) A few historic Anabaptist teachings relating to this. What we have today is an Anabaptist teaching that our Anabaptist forefathers have held to. We want to consider a few readings from some of the writings of our Anabaptist forefathers. III) A few of the current tests that we are facing at this time.

Turn with me now again to John 18:33-40. We will read from the words of Jesus and look at this portion of Scripture. Primarily, the text would be verse 36. Jesus said, “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” Jesus made it clear which kingdom He was a part of.

Jesus was on trial at this time before Pilate. “Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? (34) Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? (35) Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? (36) Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. (37) Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the

truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. (38) Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. (39) But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? (40) Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.”

Jesus was on trial before Pilate. However, there is a sense in which we could say Pilate was on trial before Jesus. In the answer to the question that Pilate raised, Jesus asked Him another question. Pilate said, “Art thou the King of the Jews?” In verse 34 Jesus said, “Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?” I would like to ask this question, Why did Jesus ask Pilate that question? He asked that question in response to Pilate’s question. I believe it was that which forced Pilate to think through his own question. Jesus could have asked him, “Well, what king do you have in mind?” I think that is really what Jesus had in mind.

He wanted Pilate to think through as to what for a king he was thinking about. What for king? What is a Roman king?

Was Pilate thinking of a Roman king? That would have automatically made Jesus a rebel if He had wanted to ascribe to being a Roman king. Was it a Jewish king that he had in mind? If it was a Jewish king the political matters could have been laid and set aside because that was not a Jewish king’s responsibility. Was it a political king he had in mind, or was it a spiritual kingdom that he had in mind?

We believe that Jesus would have been considered the spiritual kingdom. He is looking at it from the spiritual aspect from a spiritual king. That prepares the way for Jesus to explain His kingdom. Notice that Jesus did not deny that He is the king or that He would be a king. He did not deny that. He said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” He did not really answer the question in the way that Pilate wanted Him to answer it. Neither did He deny the fact that He was a king.

Jesus explains His kingdom or the nature of His kingdom in John 18:36. Jesus kingship was not from an authority of the world. Jesus derives His authority from God. The Jews were under the Roman authority. Pilate was under the authority of the emperor, but Jesus derived His authority from God. That

comes through clear here, “but now is my kingdom not from hence.” Pilate could not understand those terms. We are sure. In essence Jesus was saying, “If my kingdom was earthly, or worldly like yours is, then My followers would gather an army and fight to release me.” Jesus said here, “ If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews.” He was saying that if my kingdom was earthly then I would gather my followers and they would gather an army and fight for my cause.

Since Jesus’ kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, a peace kingdom, Jesus was emphasizing His peace kingdom. We are thinking of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, the peace kingdom which we are a part of. His was a spiritual kingdom, a peace kingdom. Jesus told Peter, “Put up thy sword into the sheath” (John 18:11). “For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matthew 26:52). Jesus’ emphasis was peace. It is interesting to note this fact, if I understand correctly, here in this situation where He was emphasizing His peace kingdom. He turned around and demonstrated that peace, by making peace between Herod and Pilate.

Turn with me to Luke 23. I am

told that between John 18:38 and 39 (Mark does not record this but Luke 23 does). After Pilate dealt with Jesus in Luke 23:4–7, “Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. (5) And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. (6) When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. (7) And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.”

Pilate sent Him to Herod right here in the middle of this trial. He sent Him to Herod to be tried by Herod. It says here “he was exceeding glad” (verse 8) for this opportunity. He questioned Him and he found how “the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him” (verse 10). Verse 11 says, “And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.” Verse 12 says, “And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.”

Thus, between our text here verses 38 and 39 Herod tried

Him and sent Him back to Pilate and there was peace between those two kings that had not existed before. Therefore, right here in Jesus' trial He was already beginning to make peace. His peace kingdom we see it at work.

Then, the account here goes on in John 19. We will not read that. The trial continued and we know what took place. Pilate scourged Him which was a violation to do that. Three times in this trial Pilate declared that he found "no fault" (John 18:38; 19:4; 19:6) at all in Him. In light of that he acquitted Him. He considered Him not guilty. He turned around and had Him scourged as a punishment for crime, I think with the intent that somehow maybe he could appease the people, but it did not work. Finally, he allowed them to crucify him as an innocent man, as a man whom he declared three times that he found no fault in Him.

Well, that is moving out of the area of what we are thinking of but let us follow the thought a little bit further. We, as the children of the peace kingdom, represent the kingdom of Christ. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Jesus emphasized the peace kingdom.

In John 18:37 Jesus explained His origin and the mission of His kingdom. "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Jesus declared that He was born, which we could say speaks of His humanity. He was born as a child into this world. He came "into the world" speaks of His deity. Of course, we all came into the world and we are not deity. Nevertheless, the fact is that Jesus came into the world. We know that He pre-existed before His birth at Bethlehem.

Thirdly, we see His mission, to "bear witness unto the truth." That is the mission of this kingdom of Christ. Our thinking is largely here in relation to the kingdom of Christ. It is one of the two kingdoms — the kingdom of Christ. His mission in the world was to bear witness to the truth. Pilate's response was, "What is truth?" in verse 38. People respond to that question and for various reasons. Unbelief would say, "What is truth?" with the air of contempt toward those who actually believe in truth. Maybe that was Pilate's view. I am not sure.

Yet, at the same time, there was a sense of soberness in rela-

tion to this that we see in the life of Pilate. Maybe we would see him like the skeptic who would ask the question, "What is truth?" but he doubted. He doubted the possibility of attaining that truth. Even for Jesus, he had doubted that Jesus could actually have a kingdom of peace.

Then, there are those who are seekers, "What is truth?" and they seem to be sincere and have a prayerful interest, but maybe move no further. A true sincere seeker is one who finds the truth, embraces the truth, and experiences that satisfaction of walking in the truth like Jesus' kingdom portrayed [see 2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4].

Jesus' mission was to bear truth into the world. That is really our mission as we think of the two kingdoms and the responsibility of nations, the responsibility of armies in the nations of the world in contrast to the kingdom of peace which we are a part of. The kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of peace is realized through the Church, not through the kingdoms of this world. Jesus was speaking of a kingdom, and we are children of a kingdom. We think of the Church. The *Church* means "called out ones" — those who are called out of the world.

The Church that was formed on the day of Pentecost. The

Church received Her power through the Spirit, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The Church is the kingdom which Christ referred to when He said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). That is the kingdom that we are a part of and our responsibility in this world, and kingdom interests in this world. The Church has a mission and a commission in the world. Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world."

2 Corinthians 5:20 talks much about being "ambassadors for Christ." This is the kingdom of Christ now. We are focussing away from the kingdoms of this world in relation to the kingdom of Christ. 1 Peter 2:9 says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." That is the Church and Her mission in the world.

We can look at the opposite spectrum of the two kingdoms as we consider the kingdom of Christ. The kingdom of this world is somewhat in opposition, in contrast. There are the two kingdoms. There is the Prince of Peace, the one who is the Prince of Peace, the one who is ruling in

this kingdom, the kingdom of Christ. Then, there are the kingdoms of this world which we believe are controlled by “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2).

Paul said that we should be “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15). We are in opposites. We are in conflict with the kingdoms of this world.

Turn with me to a few more New Testament teachings/Scriptures in relations to the contrast or the opposition between these two kingdoms. In Ephesians 2:1–4, 6, 7, 12, 13 you will notice while we are part of an earthly kingdom we have been delivered into God’s spiritual kingdom. “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; (2) Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: (3) Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

(4) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us. . . (6) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (7) That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. . . (12) That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (13) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

We are called out to serve in the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of peace and His peace kingdom — called out from the world. Colossians 1:13 says, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” Notice the contrast between the two kingdoms, and the purpose and the motive of the two kingdoms. We are called out from the one controlled by Satan, “into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

Paul, in Acts 26:18 (when he was before Agrippa) gave his testimony that his mission to the gentiles was “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness

to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” We know Paul used some contrasts likewise in 2 Corinthians 6:14–17 when he referred to our coming out from the world. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” He makes a number of comparisons here. He uses light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness. What relationship do they have together? They are opposites — Christ and Belial, the believer with the unbeliever, the temple of God with idols. Then, Paul says in verse 17, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

We know that in God’s plan and purpose, He has ordained men to rule the world, to rule the nations of this world. However, He has called us out to be children of His to serve an heavenly kingdom.

II) *Some views from an historic Anabaptist views of this two kingdom idea.* I will read from *The Mennonite Church in America* written by J. C. Wenger. Herald Bender writes in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* and J. C. Wenger here quotes what he

has written (page 280). He said, “The Anabaptists broke completely with the medieval concept of the Christian social order of church and state . . . They were the first to insist upon a free church, separate from the state, separated from the world, composed only of committed disciples, who had through personal conversion and dedication accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord. This believers’ church they conceived of as a brotherhood, with leaders but without a hierarchy. . . By their doctrine of the two kingdoms . . . the one the kingdom of Christ, the other the kingdom of this world ruled by Satan, they drew a clear line between the church and the general social order. Since the state was in this general social order ‘outside the perfection of Christ,’ although instituted by God and responsible to God, the church could have no part in it nor be subject to it in matters of faith, etc. Finally, the church was understood as a suffering church, bound to suffer in its conflict with the kingdom of this world, as it sought to create the holy community of love within its brotherhood circle, but through victorious steadfastness in suffering demonstrating that it was the body of Christ and would ultimately conquer.”

They had a picture of the Church as a suffering church in the world. We are “in the world” (John 17:11), but “not of the world” (John 15:19; 17:14, 16) as we sometimes say. The last phrase here refers to the fact that the Church would ultimately conquer. I will say a little bit more about that later. Our Anabaptist forefathers had a clear line in relation to the Church and the state and that “the state was in this general social order ‘outside the perfection of Christ.’” Even though the nations are instituted by God and responsible to God, the Church should have not part in matters of controlling and ruling in the kingdoms of this world.

“They worked out a series of contrasts between church and state to justify their separation from the state insofar as the state operated on the principle of force rather than on Christian principle of action (love). At the same time they held that the government as an institution was a good institution of God — although they insisted that the state had no right to meddle in matters of religious faith and practice, much less to enforce conformity to a given creed and to punish religious dissenters” (page 281).

It is interesting to note that according to these writers our

Anabaptist forefathers were those who strongly influenced a cause in the world that gives us the freedoms that we have today namely that of not being ruled under Roman Catholicism or religion forced upon people — the voluntary church aspect. We are not being forced into the church. That is a problem you get into when you fail to have separation of Church and state.

I will read a little bit from the writings of Menno Simons. The *Complete Writings of Menno Simons* has this to say, “Scriptures teach that there are two opposing kingdoms. The one is the Prince of Peace, the other is the prince of strife. Each of these princes has its peculiar kingdom and as a prince is also, so is the kingdom. The Prince of Peace is Jesus Christ. His kingdom is the kingdom of peace which is His Church. His messengers are messengers of peace. His Word is a word of peace. His body is the body of Peace. His children are the seed of peace. And His inheritance and reward are the inheritance and reward of peace.” Notice, the responsibility of the Church is part of the kingdom of peace.

Then, relating to the Church, *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* gives this about our Anabaptist forefathers and their concept of

the Church. “One of the most characteristic features of Anabaptism is its Church concept. The Church according to the Anabaptists is a voluntary and exclusive fellowship as truly converted believers in Christ committed to follow Him in full obedience as Lord. It is a brotherhood. It is not an institution. It is completely separated from the state which is to have no power over the Church. And the members of the Church in turn, do not uphold the office of magistrates. There is to be complete freedom of conscience, no use of force, no compulsion by state or church. Faith must be free.”

“In these principles the Anabaptists were pioneers and forerunners of modern religious liberty and free church. This church concept held in sharp distinction from the prevailing exclusive concept of both Catholic and Protestant state church namely that of the mass church.” Here it is again showing us that they were forerunners of what we enjoy today in religious liberty and free church. That is all I will give in relation to the readings of our Anabaptist forefathers now.

We know that if you read more of their writings like we found in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* you will find examples of how

the Anabaptist forefathers followed the teaching and the example of Jesus when they referred different times to those who would argue their point in relation to separation of Church and state. They would look at the account of Jesus with Peter and the sword — Jesus teaching of loving our enemies. Jesus said, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). This, certainly seems to be that it cannot be one kingdom if one kingdom would be persecuting the other.

They had answers to the differences between the Old and New Testament, when faced with questions with regard to godly men like king David and him being a warrior. They gave a simple answer, “The fact is the Old Testament is now replaced by the New Testament, and the New Testament Church finds its pattern through the New Testament now instead of the Old Testament. Then, there is Paul’s writing, not only Jesus, which I will read a little bit later in the matter of the responsibility of the church judging themselves and leaving the judgment of the world to the outside. I will read that in 1 Corinthians 5:12, 13 a bit later.

III) Let us remember our earthly citizenship dare not be in

conflict with our heavenly citizenship. While we believe in being good citizens in the nation, we dare not allow that to become a hindrance to our heavenly citizenship. As I refer to it some of the current tests we face today I want to think of two of them now in a practical way which in the times which we are living are tests in our nonresistant position that we need to be clear on. It seems as if there are many. There are at least some older people, a number of Mennonite people, plain people today who can easily be caught up in this and we want to be alert and be forewarned.

One of those is the appeal today to display the flag. It was suggested that maybe we give a little teaching in relation to this. We have not been tested in that way. Nevertheless, it certainly has taken a new turn today in relation to the emphasis of the flag. I do not think we need to go into a lot of discussion into how much we see the flags on display today. They are displayed on vehicles, houses, wherever you can think of them, in yards and so forth. The question is "How do we relate to that emphasis and appeal today?"

On September 11, 2001 after the tragedy, maybe you received some paper flags in the mail that

read a little bit like this: "America was targeted for attack because we are the brightest speaker for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining." Then, below that it said, "Display this flag proudly in your window." How do we relate to those things? That is an appeal from the President. What he may have said may have been true. We do not know about the freedoms that we have in our land being under test.

Where do we as God's people, as Christian people, stand? Do we realize and see that it is a violation of our nonresistant position in separation of Church and state? Today there is the display of flags on the bumper, lights on trucks and display of flags on clothing, and car windows. One of the men we do business with offered me a little flag pin to pin on my shirt. He already knew, or at least had questions whether I would accept it. He asked that actually before he even offered it to me. Nevertheless, we do face a fervency in relation to the patriotic spirit and support of the American flag today.

This week I was in a local store of an Old Order person that had one of these flags that came in the mail taped onto his window at his place of business. It is

an area that we need to keep alive and keep our teaching in relation to our view of this. Also, many of you know the local Mennonite store that was publically ostracized for not selling the flags. We may be tested in ways that we have not been tested before in these areas. This may be especially true as I think of the fact that if a time would come that the draft would be enacted (we are not expecting that) but we might be tested in our positions of the two kingdoms, separation of Church and state.

There are even those who are painting flags on pumpkins and selling them at the auction, which I suppose does sell very well. Nevertheless, as plain people, as Mennonite people we should not be involved in those things. It is a violation of our nonresistant stand and our separation of Church and State. Patriotism is running high. The challenge is to maintain our position and we want to face this challenge in a Scriptural way.

I would like to think a little bit about the flag. I tested our children a little bit in relation to the knowledge of the flag. We are glad for all that they are spared in our Christian day schools. However, there is a place to be a little knowledgeable on the national flag and so forth. I will

not cover a whole lot about this but we know the flag is an emblem of national identity. The flag represents the freedom of this nation. Our security is not in a flag. We must ever remember that. Our security is not in the flag or in the nation. Our security is in God. As much as we appreciate the freedoms of this world in the nation that we have enjoyed for many years, we are citizens of heaven.

The Encyclopedia says, "The nation's flag is a stirring sight as it flies in the wind. Its bright colours and striking design stand for the country's land, its people, its government, and its ideals." We are thinking of what the flag represents. If we will respond properly in relation to the flag it is well that we know a little something about what the flag represents. "It rallies people to a cause." I Notice it said, "the courage." We believe that it is right for the nation to do that but that is where we need to draw the line as to how we relate to the flag.

"And to sacrifice," it says. I was impressed a few days after the 9/11 national tragedy someone, whose patriotic spirit was running high, said, "They are willing to change their lifestyle somehow so that this can be stopped and revenge can be

taken.” He was willing to change his lifestyle. They will rally behind the nation. Likewise, we rally behind the cause of Christ. Now, whether people really would do that is still in question.

As far as in the national scene there are some things about the national flag that we need to understand. Flying the flag upside down is a signal of an emergency or dire distress. Flying at half mast (or halfway up the staff) of a national flag is a signal of mourning. When the flag is flown at half mast, it is a signal of national mourning. In the United States the U.S. flag flies at half mast for thirty days after the death of a President or a former president and ten days at the death of a Vice President.

The military will drape the casket of a military person with a flag. There are a lot of things that are prohibited in relation to the use of a flag. The national flag should never be used for receiving, carrying, holding or delivery of anything. It should not be printed on paper napkins [serviettes], boxes or other items and that which would be discarded. The United States flag should never be used for advertising purposes. Then, it says that Federal and state laws provide penalties for persons who use it improperly.

Does our younger generation know those things? Some of us who grew up in the public school system probably learned more about the United States flag. I am not suggesting that we need to know all so much about it. However, there are some things that are good for us to understand.

That brings us to the point of the saluting of the flag. Reference has been made to that some here in the past. Our children growing up hardly know what that is all about, and I am glad for that. I am glad for the fact that our children are out of the public school system. Many of us in the public school system in the early days were involved in the saluting of the flag.

Someone told me in the last day here that there was someone who wrote a news article and made mention of the fact that they do not understand why Mennonite people are against the *Pledge of Allegiance* to the flag. They said they remember when they were in school. There were all types of Old Order Mennonites and they named some of the groups, and the children all pledged allegiance to the flag. I think that was true. Nevertheless, there are two things I think he did not realize. Today many of those Mennonite

people have their children out of the public school system. That is why he does not see it today. The second reason for that is that we do have a teaching program, and we need to continue to have that kind of teaching program that helps us to understand the fact that we do not pledge allegiance to the flag.

The pledging of allegiance to the flag (for those who may not know what was involved) back when we were in school we would stand in the morning, take our hand over our heart (your right hand) and then we would pledge allegiance to the flag which would go like this, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Doing that you would need to face the flag. It is that kind of a pledging.

Pledging allegiance to the flag, is that right? Well, we believe that a part of pledging allegiance to the flag is pledging which is "making a promise or an agreement." Allegiance means "devotion or loyalty to a person group or cause." There are two things in relation to that. One is that the allegiance to a nation which is an allegiance which really only belongs to God. When we make

a promise of that kind of devotion and loyalty to a nation it should be expected that one would take up arms and defend that nation. That is where you see it violates our nonresistant position of separation of Church and state.

We are glad for the direction, help, and teaching that we receive in the church today in helping us to relate properly to the patriotic fervour in the times in which we are living today.

The other area I wanted to mention here in closing is not related to where we are as a nation at this time. It is related to a change that has taken place locally here. A number of people recently, of our brotherhood, more have been called to serve as jurors, to serve in jury duty. Our discipline, page 21 article VI, number 7 asks that we ask our people not to serve as jurors. A change has taken place. It used to be that when we were called to serve as a juror we could fill out a sheet, a form, and have our bishop sign it and send it in and be dismissed. However, that has now changed.

You may be called to serve as a juror and you will need to respond by going into the court. Let us think a little bit about the part of serving as jurors in Romans 13. We do believe that

the “powers that be” (verse 1) are responsible to be the “revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (verse 4). We as Christian people do not have that responsibility. We are not criticizing the courts. We believe that in the constitution of the United States it provides that everyone accused of a certain crime has a right of trial by jury. We understand also that they would like to have people with integrity and honesty to serve on those.

We understand that, but it is a violation of our separation of Church and state. It is a violation of the principles of nonresistance. We believe it is the world’s responsibility. In 1 Corinthians 5 (the verse that I referred to earlier) is one of the Scriptural bases that you can keep in mind and remember in the event that you are asked to serve. 1 Corinthians 5:12, 13 Paul said, “For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? (13) But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

Paul emphasized that for those within the church, it is the church’s responsibility, and it is not our responsibility to judge those that are without. He said that it is God’s responsibility.

God has used nations, kings, and the world to judge people that are without. However, it the responsibility of the church to judge those who are within. That is one principle of the Scripture that we need to keep in mind. Romans 13 is another Scripture.

As it relates to the jury and serving in jury duty, we know that the recruits today for jurors are primarily found probably through the license plates and the license number on your driver’s license. It used to be mostly through voting, and maybe sometimes through Social Security. They say there are three ways in which people, in which names or drawn for this. They are voting, Social Security numbers, and license numbers which are the reason that there is an increase. The greatest increase may be through the driver’s licence number.

Some of the changes now are that you must appear except for mothers with small children and many more are called than are really needed. Some are not qualified and some are never called to be a juror. However, if your number is called to be one of the jurors you will need to give your testimony and give your religious convictions. Some go into the court house and their number is never called. Others

go and they are called. You will need to give your convictions as to why you cannot serve.

As far as I know, the most part or all have been dismissed but some have needed to state their religious beliefs and convictions. Some have been relieved rather easily and others maybe have been questioned more, it may depend upon the judge, or the type of judge one would have.

May the Lord bless us and give us the wisdom that we need to be able to stand true to our nonresistant position in the world, stand true to the Bible teaching of the opposing two kingdoms that are in this world and stand for the kingdom of peace. We deeply appreciate the freedoms that we enjoy but it is inconsistent with our beliefs in nonresistance and our understanding of Church and state to be involved in those things that violate those principles.

I would say in relation to the jury duty if we should be asked to

serve, we should respond in a manner which is consistent with our belief, and without reflecting against this practice in the courts of our land. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15). May the Lord bless us that we might be part of that heavenly kingdom. This will depend as to how we respond in this world.

"He shall reign from pole to pole

With illimitable sway;

He shall reign when, like a scroll

Yonder heavens have passed away;

Then the end beneath His rod

Man's last enemy shall fall;

Halleluiah! Christ in God,

God in Christ, is All in All."

— *Hark! the Song of Jubilee*
verse 3

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Ambassadors For Christ

From a message by Daniel E. Yoder

Winter 2004

Term Revival Meetings

Messiah Bible School

Youth Book Reprint *(continued)*

Judith

II

REFUGEES

The Flight from House and Home

In the midst of these living lavas, there was the Weinberg family. Leaving their large pos-

session to its fate, David Weinberg had been able to take with him only a few hundred

rubles he happened to have at hand. Now he, with his wife and the three girls, were walking along the dusty road with the many thousands of other unfortunate refugees seeking to find a place of safety farther in the interior of the country. They felt just one desire in their hearts — not to lose each other, and to move forward as quick as possible farther away from the front and the awful shooting of the artillery that was rocking the earth.

After four days of strenuous and tiresome walking along the highway that runs parallel with the railroad, they succeeded, though with great difficulty, to board a passing freight train. Being entirely exhausted from the long walk and hungry, they were now able to rest at least somewhat, sitting on the floor near the open door of the car. The cars were badly thrown from one side to the other from the fast movement of the train. Every car was overcrowded with weary, homeless refugees. In spite of the fact that the sitting and standing in an overcrowded freight car was not comfortable, all passengers felt quite happy because they were now moving rapidly away from the front, nearer a safe place. Together in the car with the Weinbergs there were a number of children who had lost their

parents and parents who had lost their children on the highway. These all were passing one station after the other not knowing where and for what they were going. Everyone was anxious to go farther away from the German border out of the reach of exploding shells.

David Weinberg and his family felt especially happy and grateful that they had not lost each other on the Way, but their hearts were filled with grief at the thought of their old parents, who lived less than twenty miles from the border and who had hardly had time enough to leave their home before the German army took possession of that territory. But as it is very human to forget others if our own life is in danger, so it was with the Weinbergs. Anxious thoughts about the parents soon gave place to the worry over their own condition.

After having traveled some days by train, and feeling a little rested from the prolonged walk, the family began to consider the question of where to make their temporary home until the hurricane of war had passed and they would be able to return home again. At that time everyone was sure that the storm of war would pass over very quickly and that in a few months peace and order would be established.

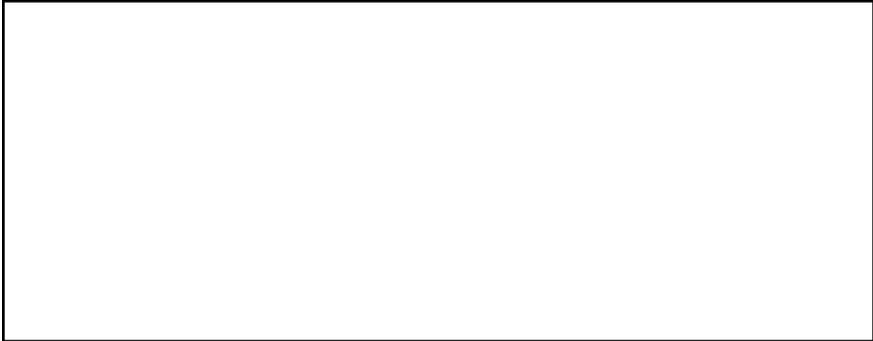
After some consideration, the Weinbergs decided to choose the *city of G*— for their temporary home. There were many Jews living in G— and Mr. Weinberg had had some business with some of the merchants there. The recollection of this caused some sad feelings, as this brought to their mind the fact that through the loss of their property these connections were severed. Their thoughts wandered back to their big warehouses, the stores, the home and its surrounding property. Most likely it was all pillaged and ruined by the passing armies. Possibly the buildings even had been burned. It was only now that they began to realize the sad truth that they were left poor and homeless, like paupers, and that they would have to start from the very beginning.

There had not been much time to consider the past and take thoughts of the future when they fled from their home in haste with the multitude of others, nor during the four days' walk on the highway. Then it was only the fear of being taken war prisoners by the Germans and the worry not to lose any of the dear ones on the way that occupied their minds. But now as the train car-

ried them past villages and cities where the people were still living in safety, they had ample time to think and grieve over their great loss. Together with this, the thought of their old parents troubled them more and more. Where were they now? Would they ever see them again? Perhaps they were not among the living any more. Rumors were spread among the refugees that the German soldiers did not make any prisoners but that they killed everyone after the most cruel tortures.

While thinking of the past, the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Weinberg were burdened with the thought of the future. They had been fortunate to take a few hundred rubles with them, but what did that mean for the future? Part had already been spent while on their journey. The remaining sum was very small. How were they going to live? Judith had finished only two years in college, and the two younger girls were still in high school. Having always been determined to give their daughters the best education possible, it now grieved their parental hearts to think that their hopes would probably never materialize.

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God.” — Psalm 146:5



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