

TOO MANY DOORS

"To everything there is a season...A time to kill, and a time to heal;... A time of war, and a time of peace." Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8."

CHAPTER I

It was the brilliant whiteness of the lightning that first penetrated Tim's sleep-dimmed eyelids, but it was the sharp crack of thunder, followed by its deep bass-drum roll, that brought to his half-awakened mind the dream of bombs exploding all around him, with ships, and planes, and even the dismembered limbs of men filling the skies at Pearl Harbor.

With a whimper and a bound, Spunky, Tim's tan and white cocker spaniel, leaped onto the bed, pushing his cold, wet nose under the covers, seeking refuge from the raging weather outside. Now Tim was fully awake, his mind instantly returning to those troubled thoughts that had made sleep so difficult in the first place.

Tuesday.

Could it be that that was only yesterday? It certainly was a day that he would not forget! Last night he sure wanted to, but the memories of the day's activities kept flooding in, pushing all thoughts of sleep to the inner recesses of his brain.

At 22, Tim Hendrix had his future pretty well mapped out. He loved his design job at Ford Motors. They were even willing to pay his tuition at the University for his degree in Electrical Engineering. His par- ents were a great support in all his plans. There was only one slight hitch.

Mom and Dad were upset about his relationship with Susie, but that didn't worry him too much. Tim knew that when they knew Susie the way he did, they would be thrilled to have her for a daughter-in-law.

College was great. Even though he was not able to carry a full program, they had agreed to let him work out with the football team and play in the marching band. "Life," he thought, "may not be a bowl of cherries, but it certainly is not the pits, either."

But all that was before yesterday. Now he was worried. Did he blow it all? For the first time in his life he felt a fear for the future. Maybe next year, instead of a degree and a promotion to the Engineering Department, he might be in prison.

Prison! The very thought of it sent shivers up his spine. His job, his education, his athletic options--where would they be if he had to go to jail?

No! It wasn't worth it! Not just for something his parents believed. Oh, yes, he believed it, too. But did he really? It had not been always easy to be raised a Bible Student. Oh, he liked the Bible well enough. He certainly loved Jesus, and appreciated his example.

"It was easy to imagine what Jesus was like," Tim thought, "he must have been just like my parents." He just couldn't let them down. They were so sincere... and so sure. "Jesus," they always said, "was a prince of peace. If you want to be like him, you must also be for peace. Can you imagine Jesus going to war and killing another human being?" How easy it all seemed.

The government recognized the right of conscientious objectors. All you need to do was fill out some forms, and prove your sincerity, and you could spend your draft time in alternative service for the duration of the war. He could just see himself in the Engineering Department at one of the Civilian Corps projects where C.O.'s were permitted to spend their alternative service. Even Susie would understand. But would Susie understand prison? Would she wait for him? After all, she wasn't a Bible Student. Her older brother was in Europe now. He had been one of the lucky ones on D-Day. He had survived Omaha Beach, and it looked like his unit would soon be at the Rhine. Tim had talked to Susie about it.

Shocked at first, she came to admire his principles, but would she wait for him if he actually went to prison? "Tim," she pleaded, "it won't go that far. You're a real sincere guy, and they'll see that...they've got to, they've just got to," she added somewhat desperately. Tim just wished he had as much faith as his parents. It seemed as if he had just a year ago, when he first filed his application. He had done a pretty good job on it, too, he felt. He remembered how he rushed home after work when Mom called that the letter from Selective Service had arrived. How good it was to have it over with! Now, with his I-O classification, he could go on planning his life around it. It was just before supper when he got home. Grabbing the letter he rushed into his room to open it. What a shock! I-A. Why? Why? Why?

Supper turned into a gloomy affair. It would have been a disaster if it had not been for Dad. "Don't worry about it, Son. There aren't many Bible Students around here, and the local board is made up of a lot of veterans. There's an appeal process, and you shouldn't have any trouble. And, remember, God won't let you have any experience that is harder than you can handle." "That was it," his heart was quick to answer, "this is just a test. The Bible says we all need tests."

That night he prayed about it, and carefully began to formulate his appeal.

Time seemed to drag on forever. Three months passed. "Maybe the war will be over," Susie had said, "and it won't matter. Now that the troops are in Europe, it can't be long. Why, my brother Dave wrote that the Krauts are running like scared cats." He remembered telling her that that wasn't the point--war or no war, he still had to prove he was a C. O. Finally the long-awaited letter arrived. This time, he wasn't quite so sure. It had to be an acceptance--it just had to be. But it wasn't. Another 1-A.

He remembered the walk down to the draft board the next night. His father pleaded his case. "Don't worry," Mr. Arthington had said to Tim, "you won't need to go to prison. We know you are opposed to killing. Why don't you consider changing your position to a non-combatant one? I am sure that we can get you a favorable recommendation for that." The hours passed quickly that night as he and Dad and Mom discussed the situation. Maybe a 1-AO wasn't that bad. The board had assured him he wouldn't have to kill, or even carry a gun. "I think maybe that is what I should do," he concluded after the discussion. Then he saw the tear in Mom's eye.

"You do what you think right, Son," she said softly, "but don't lose your ideals."

"What are my ideals?" He lay there in bed thinking that over again and again. The steady patter of the rain on the window was interrupted savagely by lightning trying to tear its way into his very thoughts. The still whimpering Spunky lay cowering by his side.

Somehow it all seemed to make his thoughts more confused and terrifying than ever. His ideals? Of course he didn't want to kill. That was for sure. "But how can all my ideals be the same as theirs? After all, they're consecrated; I'm not. Not that I don't love the Lord. But a non-com stand wouldn't involve killing."

Mr. Arthington had assured him, that there would be no weapons carried. Still he couldn't bear the thought of letting down his parents. He might not share the strength of their faith, but how he loved them for having it! No! He would not compromise, and he filed for the District Appeal.

This time things became personal. Tim knew that this appeal would mean an FBI investigation, but they really got nosy! The investigators even talked to Susie's Dad. That just about did it. Susie understood, but not Mr. Deaver. "If Dave has to go and risk his life," he told her, "you are a traitor by dating this snivelling coward of a conscientious objector. It's bad enough that he is one of those pesty Jehovah's Witnesses, but he's a yellow-bellied coward on top of it."

Sue had cried a lot that night when they talked about it at the drive-in. About all he remembered of the movie was the title, "The Yankee Flyer Comes Home." Sue understood, really

understood, she appreciated him for his stand. But now, he thought again, what if I have to go to prison. That will be too much for her. "Oh Mom!," he thought, I love you. I don't want to let you down. But I love Sue, too. I just don't have the faith you do, Mom!"

And then he remembered that Scripture Dad had taught him so many years ago, "Help thou my unbelief?" "Oh God," he sobbed, "Help thou my unbelief." The rain has settled down to a steady drizzle and even Spunky assumed the courage to sneak out from under the covers, jump off the bed and settle down on the rug by the corner. Tim yawned, pulled the covers tightly over him and turned on his side for some more sleep.

CHAPTER 2

The brightness of the morning sun swept Tim's mind clear of the gloomy dreams and thoughts of the night. The freshness of the air after the spring shower gave him the feeling of a new breath of life. As he showered and shaved, Tim's mind already was busy with the challenges the new day would bring him at the Ford plant. When his boss had praised his work and assigned him to the team to work on the new ignition system, he had been thrilled. "I really shouldn't do it, Tim," Art Cowers, the head of Engineering, told him, "but you've got some good ideas in that head of yours, and we certainly need some of those on this project."

The very thought that he was the only person without a degree being placed on the development team, gave Tim a feeling of pride and responsibility. Jauntily flipping his I.D. badge for the guard at the plant gate to see, Tim strode to his desk, eager to tackle the new assignment. On the top of his drafting table, he spotted the message: "Memo to Ignition Development Team: Please assemble in Mr. Cower's office at 8 A.M. sharp." "Must be important," mused John Langley, project supervisor, as he jointed Tim, "or the old man wouldn't want us first thing in the morning." "Gentlemen,"

Art Cowers began, "you all know that the top brass are putting a lot of pressure on us to get this new ignition system out of design and on to the lines quickly. Well, now it's double-quick. The government has just ordered 1,000 of our biggest buses, and they insist on this new system. Now, get this, the entire order must be delivered in nine months, or Ford Motor Co. will have to pay \$10,000 per day penalty charges. That means 12-hour days for each of us until we complete our assignment. That's all, men. Back to work."

As the men filed out, Tim lingered behind. "Art," he asked hesitantly, "can I see you a few minutes."

"Of course, Tim, but make it snappy, we've got a deadline to meet. So, what's on your mind?"

"What does the government want with 1,000 buses?", Tim queried. "How the dickens should I know?" Art shot back, "and why should we care?"

"Well, I just thought, maybe they were personnel carriers for the army, or something like that."

"So what? We make lots of things for the Army."

"I know the company does, Art, but I don't; I can't."

"What do you mean, you can't."

"Art, I told you before I took this job, I am a conscientious objector. It just wouldn't be consistent for me to work on defense work and be a C.O."

"Look at it this way, Tim. Let's say we get an order from Greyhound for 1,000 buses. Would that bother you?"

"Of course not."

"Now, you know Greyhound will take those same buses and use them to transport troops."

"That's their business, not mine."

"But you still would have worked on the buses for the army."

"Yeah, I guess so. But its not the same, you know it, Art. It's just not the same."

"Oh yeah? What makes it so different?"

"O.K.,O.K., you've made your point. But I still want out if this project is for the military."

"Well you won't have to worry abut this one, Tim. These buses are on order from the General Services Administration, and will be used for general shuttle service of government employees in Washington D.C. Sure, some will be on the Pentagon run, but that's just top brass; that's not taking the boys to training camp."

"Yeah, I guess so. It just bothers me. But you've got a point, there's nothing you can do these days that doesn't tie in to this war mess some place."

"I know. It's just one crazy world out there. But, time's a'wasting. Let's get busy and get this project done so we can be through with that overtime and get back to life as normal. Oh, one more thing, Tim, you are excused from overtime for your night-school classes."

"Thanks, Art. See you later."

Back at his drawing table, Tim couldn't wipe the doubts from his mind. Every time he adjusted his T-square to start a design, his thoughts returned to yesterday's hearing before the Appeal Officer.

Capt. Tom Mulrooney! That was the first thing Tim had noticed when he walked into the court room where his hearing was held. The name plate was on the hearing officer's desk-- Capt. Tom Mulrooney--carved on the fragment of an army tank. The Captain had made a point about that nameplate.

"So, you're Timothy Hendrix," his voice sounded very judicial." Now, let's see, you're 22 years old, a student at Mannequa College, employee of the Ford Motor Company, and a member of the Associated Bible Students. I see here you want to be recognized as a conscientious objector to war. Is that right?"

"Yes, sir."

"You see this piece of metal here?"

"Uh, Yes, sir." The words came out rather nervously.

"Well, let me tell you about this little piece of metal. A very good friend of mine brought this back from the Battle of Iwo Jima. You've heard about Iwo Jima, haven't you?"

"Of course, Sir."

"That battle was hell on earth. The Japs almost knocked us off there. But, damn it, we won. This tank was the first one off the USS Montana. It got blown to smithereens. But we kept on coming, and enough of our troops got through. And we won. Boy, we won. Now, do you know who was driving this tank?"

"No, sir."

"James T. Mulrooney. My son, Jim. He lost his life that day, but he was a man, a real man. And the important thing is that the troops got through. Jim was a fine lad, lots of courage, that boy; and, damn it, I'm proud of him. Do you understand that, Son, I'm proud of him!"

"Yes, sir. I understand; at least, I think I understand."

That was when the fear first began to gnaw at Tim's insides. But the Captain wasn't finished.

"Timothy, do you know who made that tank?"

"No, sir."

"How could I know?" he thought, "Does he think I'm a fortune teller."

"Well, I'll tell you, Tim; I'll tell you who built that fine piece of equipment--the Ford Motor Company--the same Ford Motor Company who pays you your wages; and I dare say those wages are a lot more than my son, Jim, got as a seaman in the Navy. Now, how can you work for a company that makes these tanks, and not be willing to drive them?"

Summoning up his courage, Tim took a deep breath and spoke politely, "Well, Sir, when I was asked by my friend, Art Cowers,

to work at Ford, I knew that they were a defense contractor. I told Art that this was against my conscience. And Art told me not to worry, that Ford did a lot of business that was not connected with the military and I could confine my work totally to this area.

"And how long have you worked for Ford?" "A year and a half, sir."

"Have you been able to confine your work strictly to civilian projects?"

"Yes, sir."

Tim began to relax, feeling that the worst of this particular crisis was over. But the Captain was still not finished.

"What is your current project at Ford?" "I just finished drafting some parts for our Ford Lift trucks, sir."

"And don't you think that the military uses Ford Lift trucks, Tim?"

"Of course, sir; but this order was not for the military. It was for the General Electric Co."

"But Tim," the Captain persisted, "don't you think that these will be used by GE at their new plant in Terryton?"

"Maybe so," Tim was puzzled now, "but what difference does that make?"

"You do read the papers, Son, don't you?"

"Of course."

"Then you know that the new GE plant in Terryton is for their new aircraft engines. These engines are urgently needed by our boys in the Air Force. The trucks you designed are being used, no doubt, to lift those engines into their crates."

"That may be, sir," Tim was getting more and more nervous, "but I don't have control over that. I'm not making it for the military. What they do with it is their business."

"So, you want to be like Pontius Pilate, and wash your hands of all the responsibility?" "

No, sir; that not the point, I just don't want to be involved directly in the war effort."

The sharp jangle of the phone on Chris Langley's desk; next to Tim's, brought him abruptly out of his reverie. With a shake of the head, he turned his full attention to the drafting table in front of him and concentrated on the task at hand. Usually, Tim found, that busy days passed quickly. Today, for some reason, the hours seemed to drag by. His usual fascination with all things electrical, which made every difficulty just a new challenge to conquer, was replaced with those nagging doubts as

to the propriety of the work he was doing. But he had to have a job. Tuition had to be paid. He had to save up before he could ask Susie to marry him.

Susie! He had forgotten to call her and cancel their date for tonight. Rising from his desk, he hurried to the pay phone in the cafeteria. After a brief conversation, he returned. How sweet she was, he thought. No complaining, just "that's fine, Tim, you've got a job to do, and that must come first. But I'll pick you up at 8 tonight, and maybe we can have a soda on the way home, O.K.?"

CHAPTER 3

As the men shuffled out to their cars, tired from a long day's work, Tim still had a spring in his step. Susie would be waiting. He needed to talk to someone, and who better than the greatest girl in the world.

She met him at the gate with a quick kiss, and wheeled the old '38 Studebaker around the lot, and unto the highway. In a few minutes, they were occupying a booth at King's Drug Store, sipping together from the two straws in the big soda between them. Reaching across to take one of his big hands into both of hers, Susie looked him full in the eyes. "How's it really going Tim? You were so depressed last night. I don't like it when you're that way. Want to talk about it?"

"Susie, I'm scared, really scared. And I'm confused, too. I just don't know my own mind. What should I do?"

She gave him one of her little giggles, not laughing at him, but trying to relieve the tension. "First, you silly oaf, you talk logically. Start at the beginning."

"I don't even know where the beginning is," he squeezed her hand hard.

"O.K., then start in the middle."

He looked down, as though struggling with what to do next. Then he stretched his neck upward, took a deep breath to control his emotions, and suddenly, like water breaking through a dike, the words came tumbling out. "Sue, the hearing last night was a disaster. I may have to go to prison. Capt. Mulrooney--that was my hearing officer--hit me with questions I never thought about before. I'm afraid, Susie, that my life is not always consistent with my C.O. position. And I didn't know it, Susie, I swear, I didn't know it. Susie he crucified me. There's no way he will recommend in my favor."

"How do you know, Tim? Did he say so?"

"No, but I know it; I just know it."

Suddenly he looked at her with an intensesness she had never seen before in him. "Sue, I wish I could swear. I'm so frustrated. It's getting all bottled up inside me I want to scream. I've got to blow off steam."

"Hey, don't start that," she protested. "One of the things I love about you most is that you don't swear. That's all I seem to hear around my house, and you're so different. Let's just talk about it, O.K.?"

"Sure, Honey."

Suddenly he paused, took his hand from hers and buried his face in both palms. It seemed like forever to her before he looked up.

Taking both of her hands in his, he whispered intensely, emotion putting tears in his words, "Susie darling, I've got to ask you a question. I've no right to ask it, but I've got to. Susie, if they take me to prison, will you wait for me?"

"Relax, Tim," she cut in, "you're not going to prison."

"But I might, Sue, I might. I can take everything else--Mom and Dad will be very supportive of me, even if I have to go. I can finish my education when I get out. Somebody will give me a job. I can face all that, Susie. But, if you won't wait," his voice broke, "then...then I just don't know."

"Oh Tim," there was almost a note of desperation in her voice, "there must be some other way. I just can't commit myself to that now. Please try and understand. You know how my Dad feels about this whole thing. He just thinks you are a coward, and afraid to die. Tim, I know better; but I have to live at home. There's got to be another way. How about that non-combatant position. Mr. Arthington said you could get that. That wouldn't be so bad, would it? After all, you wouldn't be killing. You wouldn't even have to carry a gun."

"Susie, don't think I haven't thought about it. I just don't know. I just don't know."

He stopped, still holding tightly to both of her hands, trying to regain his composure. Finally, he lifted his eyes to her once more and began. "I had a long talk with my folks after the first hearing. We talked about the I-AO stand. Dad made a lot of sense that night. He's known brothers from our faith, back in the last war, who were non-combatants. When the going got rough on the battlefield, every hand was needed. The commanding officers didn't bother with the fact that some were non-combatants. It was a case of survival. These brethren had to take the guns or be shot. Sue, there's just no civilized order on the battlefield. They want..."

"But that's illegal," Sue interrupted. "They can't do that."

"Oh, yes they can, Sue. When you are inducted, whether you are a 1-A or a non-combatant, you have to take an oath of obedience

to your officers. As far as they are concerned, that oath overrides your stand."

"But you're an engineer. You probably wouldn't be sent to the front. They'd put you in a defense plant, or something--wouldn't they?"

"Maybe so, Susie, but, don't you see, that's not the point. I just can't take an oath to defend my country, when that might mean arms and violence. You do understand, don't you? Please say you do."

"Tim, I love you. I understand that this is important to you. If it's important to you, it's important to me, too. But don't ask me to feel the same way, Tim. I don't know enough about it. When my dad talks about our patriotic duty that makes sense, too. It's such an irony. Think about my brother, Dave. There he is out on the front line, fighting and maybe getting killed, so that you have the right not to fight and get killed. It just doesn't make sense."

"I know, I know, but what can I do?"

"Tim, think about it some more. What if you were a German and not an American? Do you think the Nazis would let you be a C.O.? You can bet your bottom dollar they wouldn't. So if my brother, and thousands of others, weren't willing to get killed for your right not to fight; then the Nazis would win, and you wouldn't have even that right."

"So what do I do?"

Now it was Sue's turn to remove her hands from his. She needed them to fetch a Kleenex from her purse and daub her tear-moistened eyes. Composing herself, she looked at Tim tenderly. "Do what you've got to do, Tim. You have to be your own man. You couldn't live with yourself if you did anything less. It means too much to you. But, please, Tim, please don't force me to commit myself to waiting. I'll try. That I promise you. I'll try, but I don't have your strength and your convictions. Dad will keep working on me, and I just don't know if he will persuade me. Remember one thing, though, Tim, and remember it well--I love you, really love you, and I will as long as you live. I'm just too weak," her voice trailed off.

Tim was surprised with himself. Instead of tears, her words brought a great warmth of feeling and understanding. He patted her hands, "it's O.K., Sue. I understand. I will always love you, too, even if you can't wait. Maybe we just weren't meant for each other, but you will never know how much you have helped me and how much you mean to me. Now," he put on that boyish smile she always loved to see, "let's forget it. Probably it will work out and I will get my Conscientious Objector papers after all."

All the way home, as they sat close to each other, he couldn't get over the peace of mind he felt right now. Mom was right. There is a peace when you accept the inevitable, when you finally just cast the burden on the Lord. He thought of that Bible story about David he loved so well, where David wrote a Psalm that said, "Lord, deliver me from all my fears." Maybe that's what he was having right now. Just fear.

After a warm hug, Sue dropped him off, and Tim, his worries temporarily laid aside, strode happily to the front door, glancing at his watch as he did so. "Nearly midnight," he thought, "I wonder if the folks will still be up."

CHAPTER 4

Indeed Tim's folks were up. Elizabeth Hendrix was sitting in an easy chair reading a few chapters in the Bible before retiring, while Henry, Tim's father, was preparing for the weekly class study in the fourth volume, "The Battle of Armageddon."

There was a note of concern in his mother's eye and in her voice when she looked up as he entered. "Had a late night, Son?"

"Yes, Mom," he responded. "We had a rush contract at the plant and we will be on 12-hour days for the next few weeks. Susie and I skipped or date, but we went over to King's for a soda after work and had a long talk. She's fantastic, Mom, really great!"

"She's a nice girl, Tim," his mother spoke slowly, as though carefully selecting each word, "but you know Dad and I are worried about the way this is..."

"Now, now, Bitty," Henry loved to use that affectionate title for her. "Let's not get into this tonight. Tim's tired, now."

"No, Dad, it's O.K. I'm all keyed up anyway, from my talk with Sue, and we need to air this out. I know you don't approve of Sue, but..."

"Tim," his mother interrupted, "please don't feel that we don't approve of her. She is a very nice girl, but..." she paused, trying to find the next word.

"I know," Tim responded, "but she doesn't believe what you and Dad believe."

"I hope it isn't just your father and I who have these beliefs. Don't you share them, too?" There was a catch in her voice.

"Of course I do, Mom, I didn't mean it that way. It's just that you're so sure, so positive, and I haven't that kind of faith. What you say sounds beautiful. I want to believe it the same way you do, but it takes time."

"That's fine, Tim," his father broke in, "we just don't want you to make some mistake now that you can't change later. You realize, Son, that it is not just our thoughts, but the Bible speaks directly

to the issue, 'Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers,' This is why we want you to marry a nice sister in the truth."

"In the truth," a little harshness edged Tim's voice. "That term always bothered me. It sounds so, so egotistical. How are we so sure that all that we have is truth? Susie thinks what she has is true, too."

Tim's father leaned back in his chair, his finger tips touching each other. "Son, it not that we think we know it all, but that truth is so important to us. God made us and all the things around us, and we're thankful for that. We want to show our appreciation by serving him, and Jesus said that those who worship God must do so 'in spirit and in truth.' Your Mom and I are still seeking for truth, we know that we have much to learn, but we appreciate what we have learned as truth. It's these things, Son, that make us different from other churches, and maybe that's why we like to call ourselves 'truth people.'"

"I understand, Dad, I guess it's just the sound of the phrase that bothers me. Anyway, that's not what we're talking about. But it does tie in. Susie loves truth, too. She was just raised in a different house. Her dad's very opinionated, but he's really a good guy; and her folks want her to turn out right, too."

"Now, Son," it was his mother's turn now. "You've been raised on meetings and conventions. Susie isn't going to want to go with you. Even here, since you've been dating her, you haven't been coming to our Thursday night meeting so much, and..."

"Mom, that not fair," Tim burst in. "That has nothing to do with Sue. It's just my work, and college, and football practice, and band...well, they just take a lot of time. I still love the Lord, and don't mind going to the meetings, but something had to give..."

"But why the meetings? Why not drop the football or band?"

"I need the break, Mom. The meetings are fine, but they're a little boring. Bro. Van Dohrn keeps harping on the same points week after week. If he would lead a meeting like Prof. Stinson at school, maybe it would be different. He just doesn't have the education, I guess, to do any better."

"He knows the Bible, though," interjected Tim's father, "and they are such an example of Christian living. Why, when Bitty was so sick last year, they..."

"I know that, Dad, I'm not trying to knock them. I like them, too. But that doesn't make the meetings any better. I guess its true though, that while I'm a little bored, they're not so bad because I know all the good things the Van Dohrn's have done for us. But Susie, she doesn't know those things, and she finds the studies way over her head. It also bothers me that we are studying from the Volumes. To her they're just the writings of a man. We've

talked about it, and I've told her how important Bro. Russell is to us, how he's the seventh messenger, and all that stuff."

"What was her reaction, Tim?", his mother queried.

"At first she was pretty upset. You know, her Dad thinks we're a bunch of JW's, and he's got pretty strong ideas about them. The pastor at his church even gave him a book on Russellism when I started going out with Sue. So he's filled her head with all the trash about Bro. Russell's marriage and miracle wheat. Then, too, there are all the law suits where the Witnesses are protesting saluting the flag."

"But, so? We're not Witnesses."

"Sure, you know that and I know that, but you can't convince old man Deaver. Anyway, Sue and I talked it out." His face took on new animation as he talked, "She's really great that way. We can talk everything out. She understands me. So we talked for almost two hours. At first, like I said, she was upset, and worried that I was in a cult or something. But finally she saw that I was only looking at Bro. Russell like a teacher, or professor, who brings the facts together logically so I can understand them. She even came to a few meetings, you remember. She thought they were O.K., a little blah, but O.K. She liked all the friends, the Van Dohrn's and, well, and everybody. She specially liked old Sr. Frederick. Sue was amazed at her spunk at 90. But, the upshot of the whole thing was, that the meetings themselves really didn't appeal to her. She thought they were too slow and irrelevant to her life. She said she would keep coming if I really wanted her to, but I said, No... if she really didn't care for them that much, I didn't want to force them on her."

"And so, Tim," there was a note of reproach and sorrow in his father's voice, "you've stopped coming too."

"That's not true, Dad. Please listen to me! It's not because of Sue. It's just that right now I've got too much going on. Right now some other things are more important. In time I'll be more regular again. Anyway, I am always there on Sunday."

"That's right, Tim, and we do appreciate that. We are not trying to run your life. You have to make your own decisions. We won't impose our will on you. You know that."

Tim sprang from his chair to give his mother a tight little hug, "That's just like you, Mom. I will always appreciate you for that."

Reaching her arm backwards to squeeze his head, she continued, "Still, Tim, I wish you would consider going out with one of the girls in the ...", she caught herself suddenly, "with one of the girls at the meeting."

"Mom, you're wearing rose-colored glasses. I've dated a few of them. A couple of years ago, I had a thing going with Maxine Weaver."

"I know, I remember that. Your Dad and I were very happy. Her Father, Tom, is such a fine brother, and Darline, her mother, and I have been such good friends for years. Maxine is a very pretty girl, Tom. Why didn't it work out?"

"She's not only pretty, Mom, she's gorgeous. Well we'd go out for sodas every night after the vesper service, and then we'd sit up to 'most 2 o'clock in the morning, but we just didn't have that much in common. She was completely bored when I got onto my electrical courses in school. Oh, we both liked football, but you can only talk about that for so long. She sure didn't understand me like Susie does. And she was less interested in the meetings than I was. In fact she only sat in for two talks the whole convention. I guess, though, what really broke it up is when Tom Manning told me one day at lunch that he overheard Maxine telling one of the other girls that she was only dating me because of my athletic ability and that she thought I was a cute guy, and she wanted to show that she could land me."

"I'm sorry about that, Tim," his father spoke up, "but certainly all the girls at the meetings aren't like that."

"Of course not, Dad. I guess there are really three types. There are some really nice girls there. But they are consecrated, and you know how it is between the consecrated and the unconsecrated. It's not that they're stuck up or anything. They have just been brain-washed that they should only date another consecrated person."

"Now Son," his mother interposed, "that's not brain-washing. It isn't the best for the consecrated and non-consecrated to date. The Bible says, 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?'"

"O.K., O.K., I'm sorry I used that word. You're probably right, but it sure limits a guy's choices."

"It's getting late, Tim, and we've both got to get up early for work in the morning. But, first, what are your other two categories of girls?"

"That's easy--the ones who are taken and the ones who aren't. It just seems that the really nice girls are already spoken for, and what's left are the petty vacuum-heads like Maxine. You know we're a pretty small church. I think I've talked to all the girls in our movement. You even sent me out to that convention on the West Coast. There just aren't any girls there for I know. I've looked. And I don't want to stay single. I want to build a real life for myself."

"Now, now, Tim, take it easy," his mother soothed. "You're father is right, its late and we're all tired. Let's just leave it that

your father and I realize that you're a grown man and must make your own decisions. Please understand, Son, that our bringing the matter up is because we love you and want only the best for you. Whatever you decide, we will leave in the Lord's hands." Tears were choking him up. All Tim could say was a low whisper, "Thanks folks, I really appreciate that. You try so hard to understand. That means a lot. I will think about it. Good night." "Good night," his Dad called out, "and while you're thinking about it, pray about it too." "Don't worry, I will do a lot of that," he called back over his shoulder as he began climbing the stairs to his bedroom.

CHAPTER 5

Work seemed to zip by the next few days. The details of the new ignition system completely filled Tim's mind. Thursday night he had to miss the meeting at the Van Dohrn's because of overtime. There wasn't even much time for Susie, just a few minutes each day on the phone at noon hour. By the time he got home each night, he had to hurry to his room and hit the books, because he had mid-terms on Saturday.

Saturday dawned a dreary day, with clouds rolling in over the lower Appalachian hills from the north. The darkening mood of the day failed to dim Tim's optimistic mood. As usual, he had no worries about his mid-terms. Electrical engineering fascinated him, and he grasped the concepts with ease. The challenge was not in the gathering of the information, but in finding new ways to put them into application.

Noting the falling barometer, Tim donned his football jersey for warmth, whistled for Spunky and together the two headed off for a walk before school. Saturday was the one time he could be with his dog, and he was thinking of the good times they had shared as they strolled along.

"Spunky, you're a good friend," Tim said suddenly, as he stopped and tousled the dog's shaggy hair. "You know, you introduced me to Susie, don't you?" He was thinking back some four years ago when Duke, the German shepherd he had grown up with, died of old age. He had been hoping for another dog, when he saw an ad posted on the bulletin board at school offering the choice of a litter of cocker spaniels. He called the number listed on the ad, and Mrs. Deaver, Sue's mother, answered.

"Yes," she said, "we have four puppies to place, but we want to make sure they have a good home." When Tim explained that his dog had died, she quickly agreed to give him one of the pups. Stopping by the house, he noticed the pretty blond girl helping her father tune up the car. He remembered how fascinated he was, that first day he met her, with her quick mind and her interest in the inner workings of the car's engine. The

talk soon swung to Tim's interest in things electrical, and he was surprised that she shared his enthusiasm for the subject. Two nights later, he called her and asked for their first date.

Then another memory flooded in from just about six months back. He still choked up a little when he thought about it. "I'm sure glad you made it, old boy," he thought, as he recalled the close call Spunky had when they were out duck hunting in the fall. He had bagged a mallard, and Spunky was swimming out to retrieve it when another hunter, glimpsing the movement on the lake, mistook the dog for a duck and fired, hitting him square in the hindquarters. Tim remembered how he had dove in and swam out to rescue his pet.

"We'll give him three days," Doc Evans, the vet, had said, "and if he doesn't regain use of his right leg, he will be paralyzed for the rest of his life, and he will be better off if we put him to sleep."

How happy Tim had been when, two days later, Spunky began to slowly walk around once again! After that, recovery had been rapid, and the dog soon became his usual rambunctious self. It was odd, Tim thought, how one memory led to another. That hunting trip had come up again the other day, at his draft hearing.

"What are your favorite recreations?" Capt. Mulrooney had asked casually.

"Football and music," he had responded.

"Any others?"

"Does dating count," Tim was surprised at himself, the words just came out.

Capt. Mulrooney laughed, "Not really, what else do you enjoy?"

"Well, once in a while I like to go hunting with my friend, Jack Carr."

"Gone recently?"

"Not since last fall when we went duck hunting. My dog almost got killed that day, and I haven't been much interested in it since."

"Did you get any ducks?" The Captain's tone was conversational, at though interested in the answer.

"Yeah, about three or four."

"How did you bag them?"

"Huh, I don't understand, sir. What do you mean, how did I bag them?"

Capt. Mulrooney smiled, "I guess that was a dumb question. I mean, do you use a bow and arrow, or a sling shot, or what?"

"If the first question was dumb," Tim thought, "this is twice as dumb." Outwardly he said respectfully, "No Sir, I used a shotgun."

"But Tim," the Captain pressed his point, "I thought you didn't believe in carrying guns."

"Ouch," thought Tim, "I didn't see that one coming."

"But Sir," he said, answering the Captain, "I think there is a big difference between killing a duck and killing another human being!"

"I'm sure there is, Son; I'm sure there is. But you said your reason for declining a non-combatant position was that you didn't want to carry a gun. I thought maybe you didn't know how to use one, but if you bagged four mallards in a few hours, you're a pretty good shot."

"Sir, can I explain my position on this matter a little further?"

"Of course, Tim, of course. I am not trying to put you on the spot. It seems like your actions are a little inconsistent with the classification you want me to recommend for you. Give me any more details you like."

"Well, sir, I try to live my life by the Bible. In the Bible God told Noah that man was given all the animals to eat. This seems to me to indicate that we can kill animals, but we cannot kill our fellow man. After all, unless we are vegetarians, someone has to kill an animal for us to eat. I have no conscience against being a butcher. Therefore this seems consistent with my enjoying hunting."

"Hmm, I see your point," he said, turning his pencil slowly between his fingers. "I gather you hunt only for food, then. But Tim, I believe my original question was about recreation and things you enjoyed. Do you hunt for food or for sport?"

"Well, uh, both, I guess I do like eating the duck. Yeah, I guess you could say it is a sport, too. I just don't know how to answer that, sir."

"Don't worry about it, it is a hard question. Well now, my boy, I don't know the Bible as well as you do, but I seem to recall that somewhere God said that King Saul, or somebody, was told to kill his enemies--man, woman and child."

Here at last, was a point Tim felt comfortable with. "Yes, I realize that, sir; but it was God who told him to kill, and not some other man."

"Do you think God talked personally to each of the men in Saul's army?"

"Of course not, sir; but Saul was merely passing on God's commands to them."

"How do you know that the same is not true today. We are not asking you to lead the army into battle, but to be a good citizen, the same as Saul expected of his men."

"But, Sir, I don't mean this disrespectfully, but I don't believe God told our president to fight the Nazis."

"You don't mean that God is on the side of the Germans?"

"No sir, I just don't think our country has the same relationship to God which ancient Israel had. They were a theocracy. The Bible says of them, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth.' So I don't think the situation is the same at all."

"Thank you, Tim, I just wanted to understand your position."

The exam had gone well, pretty much as he expected. He was glad for his work, because it prepared him for his school just as much as his school prepared him for his job. Before leaving the campus, he called Sue and asked if he could come over and spend some time with her after supper, listening to records and just talking. "Great, Tim, you know you're always welcome," she responded.

CHAPTER 6

As Tim walked home, his eyes took in the quaint beauty of the small Pennsylvania town where he had been born and raised. Mannequa had a population of only 6,500 and was nestled in the upper Allegheny River valley. The houses in the old river town reeked of history. The street names, mostly taken from old Indian words, gave further depth to the city's roots. Tom ticked them off in his memory--Mossequa, Allequippa, Erie, Seminole (he wondered how that one got in there), Monongahela and, finally, his street, Iroquois.

As he turned down his street he was surprised to see a car in their drive. Getting closer he noted the New York license plates. He didn't see many out-of-state cars around during these wartime years, because gas rationing made travel difficult.

Recognizing the '37 Packard immediately, he broke into a trot. He could hardly believe it. Pat and Patty Donaldson, "Two of my best friends in the truth," he thought, laughing to himself that the habit was so ingrained he used the phrase that was his own pet peeve, "in the truth."

Seeing him come up the walk, Pat met him at the door. "Pat, what are you doing here," he exclaimed, as they gave each other a big bear hug.

"And Patty, what a fantastic surprise. Haven't seen you since the October convention. What brings you to town?"

"Patty's dad was asked to serve at a convention in Ohio, and has managed to pool our ration coupons and decided to drive out

together. We've got to leave at 5 in the morning, but thought we'd stop in for the night since your mom said the welcome mat is always out."

"That's great! Just great! Hey, let me just stand back and get a good look at both of you. Patty, don't tell me you're going to have a baby."

Patty laughed, "Sure I am! Should be arriving right on the nation's birthday, July 4. Who would ever think that I, the wife of a C.O., would be so patriotic as to celebrate the birth of the country with a baby of my own."

As they brought each other up to date on all the news since they last saw each other, Tim looked at his best friend among the Bible Students. Just three years older, Pat looked as different from Tim as two people could. Tim, at 6 foot 2, carried his 195 pounds in the well-disciplined muscle of the football tackle that he was. Pat, looked every inch the high school teacher he was trained to be--tall, thin, with his horn-rimmed glasses giving his face an appearance of even sharper features than he had. His brown hair, already thinning, was combed straight back, while Tim's black curls covered his head like a ball of yarn after an affair with a playful kitten.

Tim had always thought that Patty seemed an odd choice for Pat to make. At 5 foot even, she was as short as Pat was tall. She would not have been considered attractive if it weren't for her ever-present smile. She was one of the most vivacious girls Tim knew, with a full-throated laugh that belied her petite size.

When Tim and Pat were in their late teens, their friendship blossomed from being playmates at conventions to becoming bosom buddies who share easily their innermost thoughts. A few years ago, the two had discussed Pat's decision to consecrate his life to the Lord, and Tim was thrilled when Pat made the decision and was baptized at a New York convention the following year. Pat had understood, too, why Tim was not ready for the same step.

"You've got a lot going for you, Tim. You're handsome and smart, and have a wide range of interests. I understand the pull the world has for you. Yet, Tim, I can't help but think that your time will come when you are just going to find all these things unsatisfying, when you're going to want something more permanent. And that, you know, can only be offered by the Lord."

"You're probably right," Tim agreed, "but don't sell yourself short. People just don't get accepted to Cornell without some smarts."

"I don't know if I will accept them, though," Pat had been serious.

"All my life I wanted to teach history, and they've got a great program; but Tim, you know the time is short. This war will probably burst out in Armageddon. I'm not going to have much time to make my calling and election sure. If I only had some way to spend my full time in the Lord's service, I'd grab at the chance. Sometimes I wish I was a J.W., so I could just go around and tell people about the kingdom."

"Can't you do it on your own?"

"Not really. You've got to have money to live on. And, if I am going to marry Patty, I have to learn responsibility. Besides, she wants children, and you can't raise them on peanuts. No, I'll probably go on to school, though most of the brethren think that college is not good for a Bible Student. Bro. Abernathy had a long talk with me this morning about shifting to trade school so I wouldn't get in with all that evolution junk."

"Pat, you couldn't be happy with a trade?"

"I know. My one love, outside of the truth is history." Tim found that it didn't bother him when Pat used the term, "in the truth." It sounded so natural and sincere from his lips.

"Then you should do it." "I think I will."

A year later, Tim got a call from Pat--"Hey, Tim, can you make a quick trip to New York next month?"

"Why? What's up?"

"I need a best man for my wedding."

"No kidding! You and Patty are really going through with it! Fantastic! I'll be there if I have to ride my thumb all the way."

Mrs. Hendrix call to dinner put an end to the memories, and they all gathered around the old oak dining table. Compliments on the delicious food and reminiscing over good times past made for an enjoyable meal. Suddenly Tim noticed the clock on the wall and awoke with a start.

"Susie!" He had been so excited to see Pat and Patty that he had forgotten his date.

"Excuse me a sec," he addressed the whole group. "I had a date with Susie for tonight, and I've got to call her to cancel it."

"Hey, my brother," Pat broke in, "don't let us break up your love life. We can spend the evening talking with your parents."

"Not a chance. We had nothing special going anyway, tonight. Just some records and some talk. I can see her tomorrow night. Now I want some time with you."

"I've got an idea," Patty chimed in. "The convention tomorrow will be over at 4:30. We can be back in Mannequa by 9 p.m. Why don't you and Susie come along. I'm sure my folks won't

mind, there's lots of room in the old Packard, and it will give us a chance to meet this Susie of yours."

"Gosh, I don't know," Tim hesitated. "She's never been to a convention before. She has been to a few of our meetings here and...,well, I just don't know. Besides her dad's pretty much opposed to our religion."

Patty wasn't to be put off, "There'll be some of the younger brethren there, Tim. It would give her a good chance to meet them. I am sure I could have a good time with her, and make her feel comfortable. Why not ask her?"

"O.K., I will. After all she had got to meet some of my friends sometime, and I haven't got any better friends than you guys."

When Tim called, Susie was a little apprehensive. "I don't know anybody there, Tim. Dad will be furious; but that's O.K., I can handle him."

"You don't have to go," he backed off. "I don't want to force my religion on you, Susie, but..."

"Oh, you silly oaf, that has nothing to do with it. I want to know what you believe, even if I can't accept it all; especially now, with this conscientious objector problem you're having. Tim, it sounds like a great chance. I'll go. What time do we leave?"

"Pretty early, Honey, 5:30. We're leaving my house at 5, but we have to pick up Patty's folks at the Van Dohrn's first. So we won't get to your place until about 5:30."

"You're not kidding its early. But I'll be ready."

Although the hour of rising was early and the Hendrixes and Patty retire, Tim and Pat sat up until 1 o'clock in the morning enjoying the friendship that they had built up over the years. It was not long before the subject turned to matters of conscientious objection, since the recent hearing was uppermost on Tim's mind and Pat had just started his alternative service.

"How did your hearing go, Tim?"

Pat asked in a concerned tone. "I don't know. I'm afraid not too well. Some of the areas I was pretty well prepared for. You know I did a lot of studying on the subject, and Bro. Morley spent a lot of time with me at the last convention, coaching me on my answers. But Capt. Mulrooney--he was my hearing officer--sure probed a lot of areas I wasn't expecting."

"Such as?"

"Well, he gave me a pretty rough time about hunting."

"How did you handle that one?"

"Well, you know, by letting him know that God gave us meat to eat, and that required killing animals; but he didn't tell us to eat other people."

"That sounds pretty good."

"I thought so, too; but then he hit me with my earlier statement why I wouldn't accept a non-combatant position because I didn't want to carry a gun."

"Ouch!"

"Yeah, Ouch! But it got worse when he tried to emphasize that I was doing this for sport, and not because I needed the food."

"Maybe that's why Bro. Morley told us at the convention meeting for C.O.'s that we should think twice before taking up hunting for a sport. How about your other hobbies? You know that seems to be an area they like to dig into. Why, my draft board even made a federal case out of my being on the wrestling team in high school. I had to explain why I thought fighting with my hands in a sport was different than going out to kill on the battlefield.

One old buzzard even retorted with, "Well, in my book violence is violence. I don't see where you're very consistent."

"But that's ridiculous, Pat," a tinge of anger marked Tim's voice. "You wouldn't hurt a fly."

Then he chuckled good-naturedly, "You're so skinny you couldn't, even if you wanted to."

"You know that and I know that, but I had a dickens of a time convincing them. Like I told you a couple of years ago, I was just doing it to build up my body because I was so thin. Fortunately, that was the only problem I had, and the board gave me my I-O after the first hearing. Tim," he continued, "how about your Scriptural position?"

"I did pretty well on that, I think. When I gave him all the texts I had memorized on 'Thou shalt not kill', he rebutted with God's commands to kill in the Old Testament. But I was ready for that, and explained the difference between the Old Testament commands to the Jews and the New Testament for the Christians."

"Well, I guess that's one area where we are pretty well covered. A lot of these draft guys don't know their Bible anyway."

"Capt. Mulrooney certainly did. One thing he surprised me with was his question as to who was the first Gentile convert. I told him, 'Cornelius.' He shot right back, 'Do you know what his occupation was?' 'Sure', I responded, 'a centurion.' 'And don't you think centurions carry weapons?'"

"How did you handle that?"

"I told him that maybe they did, but I doubted that Cornelius remained a centurion after his conversion.

"Did that stop him?"

"Not at all. He came back at me very smoothly, 'Since you've studied these things, Tim, I suppose you have a Scripture that says that Cornelius resigned his position when he became a Christian?'"

Of course I didn't. I felt like a fool.

"My board tried to get me on that text in Luke 3," Pat interrupted, "where the soldiers asked John the Baptist what they should do and he doesn't say anything about getting out of the army."

"Gosh, I didn't think of that one. How did you answer it?"

"Fairly easily. I just responded, 'Maybe not, but he did tell them to do violence to no man; so it seemed to me that to fulfill that they would certainly have to stop soldiering. After all, what's a soldier who doesn't do violence.' That seemed to stop them pretty much."

"You were lucky you didn't have old man Mulrooney. I can just hear his answer. He would have said, 'A soldier, Son, who does violence to no man is called a non-combatant soldier.'"

"Did you use that argument that Bro. Morley gave us about a conflict of interests because we are not citizens of this world, but of the heavenly kingdom? That worked great with my board. Oh, they gave me a little trouble by bringing up that place where the Apostle Paul pleaded his Roman citizenship to appeal to Caesar; but I explained that there were certain places where a Christian may use the rights of the land when they are available, but he is also willing to have them given up, and that there were no conflict of principles where Paul used his citizenship rights."

"Pat, I just can't use that argument," Tim protested, holding up his hand for Pat to stop. "You're consecrated, and I'm not. How can I claim heavenly citizenship?"

"That's not the point, Tim," Pat spoke earnestly. "The point is the conflict of interests. You do believe in the coming kingdom, don't you?"

"Of course."

"You believe in God's kingdom?"

"Naturally."

"And that men's government will not bring it?"

"Get to the point, Pat. That's simple stuff. What's that got to do with heavenly citizenship?"

"Nothing," Pat paused to grab another handful of popcorn," but it's got everything to do with the conflict of interest. Since you recognize that all that the governments of this world are doing by their fighting each other is preserving the present evil order,

you've got a conflict with helping them preserve it. Your interest is in the new kingdom."

"Hey Pat," Tim was worried, "that's rough stuff. Mulrooney would have hit me for treason with that."

"No, No, Tim, you don't make it that strong; but you get across the thought that you are not looking at the outcome of the current conflict, but beyond it to the ultimate change of government, the incoming kingdom of Christ."

"It sounds pretty good when you say it, Pat," it was easy to see Tim still wasn't convinced, "but it just comes out too theoretical and preachy from me."

"Well, we've each got to use what we feel comfortable with, and what we really believe expresses our true conscience," he said, stifling a yawn.

"Golly, it's past midnight, and we leave at 5 a.m." "I'm sorry, Pat, I didn't notice. Sorry to keep you up so late, but it's just been great talking to you. Good night, see you at quarter to five for a bite of breakfast." "Night, Tim. Maybe we can talk some more about it in the car tomorrow."

CHAPTER 7

Dawn was just breaking over a cloudless sky the next morning when the packed car headed up Kawahlen Hill on the way out of Mannequa. The tall pine trees cast long shadows, like fingers pointing ever forward, away from eastern sun, rising slowly behind them. The car, itself was fully packed, with Warren and Ruth Wright, Patty's parents, sitting in front with Pat. Patty, herself, had arranged to sit in back with Tim and Susie so that she would have a chance to get acquainted with Tim's girlfriend.

Dog tired, Tim soon leaned back his head and slept, as did Pat in the front seat, while Patty and Sue, benefitting from an earlier bedtime, soon was chatting like old friends. Conversation was Patty's strong point. Her mother had once said, "Leave Patty alone on a tropical island, and within a week she will give you the life story of each of the parrots." Two and half hours later found Mr. Wright pulling into a gas station in a small West Virginia mountain town.

\While the tank was being filled, Tim and Pat slipped into the men's room to dash some cold water on their faces and freshen up from their early morning nap. Back on the road, Patty leaned forward, resting her forearm on the back of the front seat.

"Dad," she asked, "Susie and I've got some questions for you?"

"Fire away, Patty," Mr. Wright responded, quickly glancing back at her, "but they better be easy."

"Well Susie was just telling me about some of the things her father has told her about Brother Russell. Since you knew him personally, I thought maybe you might give her some answers."

"Suits me. What would you like to know, Sue?" "Well, everything, I guess. I mean, Mr. Wright, I don't want to put you on the spot, but Patty said you wouldn't mind, and I'd kind of like to know a little more about this religion of Tim's. That is, if you don't ..."

"Of course not, Sue," the warm friendliness of his voice was reassuring. "You should want to know about it."

"Did you really know this Mr. Russell, Mr. Wright?" There was still a measure of uncertainty in her voice. I sure did. Ruthie and I were both raised as Methodists and..."

"Why, what a coincidence!" Sue interrupted. "That just what my family is."

"As I was saying, Ruthie and I got married in 1912. It was just a few months later, during the presidential campaign, that Teddy Roosevelt started stumping for the presidency with a new slogan, 'We stand at Armagedden, and we battle for the Lord.' Well we both knew enough about our Bibles to know that Armageddon was a Biblical word, but our pastor had never talked about it. When we asked him, he just said that it was related to the final battle between good and evil, but he didn't know too much about it. Isn't that about right, Ruth?"

"Yes," his wife chimed in, "and so Warren and I began studying about it ourselves at home. Then, just about a month before the election, we began seeing these tracts passed out all over town advertising a big lecture at Carnegie Hall for the Sunday before election. 'Armageddon', printed just as big as you please. Warren and I decided to go, and it was Pastor Russell himself who gave the talk."

"Sue," Warren Wright picked up the story, "I don't mind telling you, it was a real eye-opener. Pastor Russell knew his subject so thoroughly, and tied in the current war fears so well with Bible prophecy, that we just had to meet him."

"How long did you know him?", Sue queried. "Just a little less than four years, until he died on a railroad trip during one of his trips to the West Coast."

"Did you know him well?"

"Very well, indeed. "You see, Sue," it was easy to see that Mr. Wright was warming to his subject, "my work before I met Brother Russell was in the cinema, running the new projection equipment. In 1914, Pastor Russell introduced one of the most amazing cinematic productions ever produced up to that time. It was called 'The Photo-Drama of Creation'. It was a four-part serial and ran eight hours,. Well, 'most everything Russell did

was by volunteers. I volunteered to help run the cameras for this Photo Drama, while Ruth served as an usherette."

"That sounds exciting."

"It really was, Sue it really was," his voice took on a reminiscent tone. "For a year and half Ruth and I spent our full time showing this program. We played to packed houses. Why in one theater, in Pittsburgh, I think it was, we had a standing-room only crowd of over 2,000 for two weeks running. But you don't want an old man's memories, Patty said you have some questions to ask."

"Well my dad says he read someplace that," suddenly Sue stopped, as though looking for the right words, "--please don't take this as an insult, Mr. Wright --but he read that this man Russell was divorced, and led a very wicked life."

"Don't be afraid to ask your questions, Sue," Mr. Wright reassured her. "I won't be offended. Many people believe exactly what your father told you. And it is true that Pastor Russell and his wife had marital difficulties, and were legally separated. However, there was never any evidence of immoralities."

"Dad said something about some young girls,.."

"There were charges made about some girls who were living with Pastor Russell and his wife, but the only charges that were made about them was he was in their room alone with them on a few occasions. He explained to the judge that this was when they were sick, and he was caring for them. The judge even asked Mrs. Russell if she were accusing her husband of immorality. She said, No, that she wasn't. Finally, these charges were dropped as being without foundation."

"Wow, that sure sounds different from the way I heard it. But my dad...I better explain that he is very opposed to Tim's religion...well, dad always tells me, 'Where there's smoke there's fire.'"

Warren Wright paused his conversation while he negotiated a change of highways. When he picked up the conversation, it was almost as though he were changing the topic, "Sue do you think that Jesus was an alcoholic?"

"Of course not," Sue's tone was puzzled.

"How about being a womanizer?"

"That's ridiculous!"

"But, Sue, that is just what his critics charged him with. The Pharisees were upset because he spread the gospel to the prostitutes and other sinners. Jesus himself, said that the people called him a "winebibber."

"But they were just his enemies. That wasn't true."

"Of course not, Sue, but, as your dad says, 'Where there's smoke, there's fire.'"

Susie was silent for a moment before saying slowly, "I see your point. But another question. Is it true that Russell had no religious education, didn't even know Greek, and yet pretended to be a Pastor and a Greek scholar?"

"Not really, Sue. I've talked to a lot of ministers in my life, and none of them knew the Bible like Brother Russell. It may be true that he didn't learn the Bible in a theological seminary, but he sure learned it somewhere. We had him in our home on several occasions, and he always would answer any question quickly, thoroughly and with numerous Scriptures.

"How about the Greek?"

"It is true that he did not know the language to read it, But he was a very well-read man, and he was very conversant with the writings of those who were scholars in Greek. If you accurately quote a recognized scholar directly on the point, you are accomplishing the same thing as if you, yourself, were a scholar on that point."

Once again, Warren Wright's voice appeared to shift gears, "Tim tells me that you really enjoy discussing electrical engineering with him."

"Yes, it fascinate me."

"Did you ever study it in college?"

"No, but I work in the library and have lots of time, and read a lot about the subject and..."

"And therefore you can talk about it knowledgeably with Tim. The same was true with Pastor Russell. Studying the works of scholars, he became a scholar, though it was not in a formal school where he received a degree for his knowledge."

"Interesting point. One more point, my dad says Russell made a mint by defrauding his followers on something called 'miracle wheat.'"

"Here's the true story on that one, Sue. Pastor Russell was always very interested in the welfare of his readers. Therefore he would occasionally publish various medical cures in his journal. He also firmly believed that the preparation for Christ's kingdom was well underway. Therefore, when he heard that a farmer in North Carolina had developed a special kind of wheat that would produce a fantastic harvest, he mentioned the fact in his journal. The farmer, in appreciation, offered a certain percentage of the proceeds to help the world that Brother Russell was involved in."

"But was the wheat really special?"

"Yes, and it was adequately testified to by its users. In fact, none of them ever complained that he had been gypped. It was his critics, and especially one newspaper in New York that he had been avowedly out to get him, "The Brooklyn Eagle", that made it seem like he was conducting a fraud."

"That's interesting," Sue reflected. "I appreciated your openness in discussing these matters with me. I guess it just seems hard for me to see why there is so much opposition to this Pastor Russell if he was as good as you say."

"Again, Sue," he repeated, "I might say the same about Jesus. Well, I see we've almost come to our destination. Ruth, can you get out the map that Sr. Fletcher sent, and we'll see if we can find the convention hall."

CHAPTER 8

The first thing Sue noticed, as the Wright car pulled up before the convention hall, was that the letter "O" was missing from the "B.P. E." over the doorway of the Elks' hall. She was slightly aghast at the run-down condition of the old yellow clapboard building, and even more so as the ancient pine flooring creaked under her feet, as though protesting its many years of service.

She called Tim aside, and whispered, "Is this where the convention is going to be held? It's so old and dusty."

"I told you we were just a small group, Sue."

"I know, but I guess I expected something a little more like our Methodist church in Mannequa." She quickly put her fingers on his arm, and added, a little apologetically, "Not that it isn't all right, Tim; it's just that I guess I was expecting something different."

They had arrived about 45 minutes before the convention was due to begin, and were among the first at the hall. Soon, however, other cars began driving up. Because of the gas rationing, though, the attendance was limited in the main to brethren from about a 200-mile radius. By the time the meeting was to begin, about 50 brethren had assembled.

The town of Stockton, where the convention was held, was in the coal-mining area of Ohio, at the western extremity of the Allegheny mountains. Most of the brethren were of Slavic descent, and worked in the mines. About a dozen sisters, born in the old country, still wore large babushkas. Their husbands dressed up for the convention in the only suit they owned, many of them threadbare from use.

Bro. Houska, the chairman, called for the opening hymn in his broken English, and Sue was impressed with the strength of the voices, making up in volume for the lack of tone. "I like the way

they sing," she whispered to Patty, on her right. "It sounds more sincere than our choir at church."

The Bethel service was next. Again Sue enjoyed the challenge of trying to understand each word of the various readers, with their strange-sounding accents, reading words that were so new to her, from the Manna, the Morning Resolve and Vow unto the Lord.

Suddenly, near the end of the Vow, she gave a start, and tugged gently on Tim's sleeve. He inclined his head toward her, and she whispered, "That was odd."

"What?" Tim asked, he had heard the words so many times in the past that he had not concentrated on them this time.

"That part, Sue continued, "about not being in the same room as one of the opposite sex alone. Why do they have to read that?"

"Uh, I dunno; let's talk about it later, on the way home, O.K.?"

"Sure, Tim," she said quietly. The first discourse of the convention was by Bro. Marlinski on "The Days of Daniel." Sue soon found herself lost in the strange terminology and detailed reasoning, with dates and calculations and an amazing array of Scripture texts, all blending in her mind into one impossibly long, meaningless sentence. Soon her mind was adrift, and she found herself watching the rapt attention the others were giving to the talk.

Many of the old sisters, whose babushkas and worn dresses she had found so quaintly drab, were rapidly turning their Bibles from one text to another with amazing accuracy. Their eyes reflected deep comprehension, as stubby pencils recorded the speakers thoughts in the dog-eared margins of their well-worn Bibles.

"Amazing, she thought to herself, "how your impressions of people change. At first I thought that these were just a bunch of country bumpkins, and now they impress me as advanced students in some theological seminary."

From time to time, through the talk, a few late arrivals would come in and quietly take their seat. Sue noticed that it seemed to take no time to find the correct places in their Bibles, and they appeared to be able to jump right into the middle of the maze of texts and computations that the speaker was using.

Just as she was trying to concentrate her own thoughts once again on the speaker, the door opened again and another family tip-toed in. It was a couple about her parent's age, but what caught her eye was the uncommonly beautiful blond daughter that was between them.

She suddenly became aware of a tightening of the muscles in Tim's arm, as he sat beside her. "Who is she," she asked Tim in a low voice.

"Her name is Maxine Weaver," he responded. "She's from Garden Springs, about 35 miles south of here."

With effort, Sue forced her attention back to the discourse. Bro. Marlinski had finished his numerous calculations, and was getting down to the current event applications of his subject. Sue's interest picked up as the subject got into more familiar territory for her.

"We would anticipate," the speaker's voice was earnest and forceful, "that now that the Days of Daniel, the Double of Israel and the Times of the Gentiles have all come to an end, that once again Israel will become a nation. Perhaps it will come about as a result of the great war that now faces the world. We do not expect that it will be easy for the Jews to reclaim Palestine because the Arabs and the European powers are deeply entrenched in the ancient homeland of the Jews. They will have to fight for it, but the Bible assures us, 'God will fight for them as he did in the days of old,' and thus we can be sure that Israel will be victorious."

Somewhere in the back of Sue's mind, the words of the speaker struck a discordant note. Once again, her mind drifted from the speaker, this time to consider the words just uttered. She remained lost in her own thoughts, a puzzled frown creasing her brow, until the speaker finished his remarks and the chairman called for a closing hymn.

During the intermission, Patty and Sue excused themselves to freshen up, and Tim began crossing the hall to see Jerry Schwartz, a young Jewish brother of his own age. Before he reached Jerry, however, he felt a tap on his shoulder and heard a familiar female voice.

"Hi, Stranger. I didn't know you'd be coming. What brings you here?"

Tim turned quickly to see Maxine Weaver. "Uh, Hi, Maxine," He felt oddly self-conscious. "Uh, I didn't really expect to be here either, but Pat and Patty stopped by Mannequa on their way and offered Sue and me a ride."

"Sue?" she said quizzically. "Is that the name of the girl you were with?"

"Yeah, she's my...", he couldn't bring himself to say 'girlfriend', she's a friend of mine from my home town."

"Been witnessing to her?"

"Uh, yeah, some." Eager to change the subject he asked, "What's new with you, Maxine?"

"Oh, Tim, she bubbled, "I've got great news for you. I've made a consecration, and I'm going to be immersed during the next meeting."

Tim couldn't have been more surprised. Inwardly he thought, "Now that's the ultimate in hypocrisy," but to her he feigned enthusiasm. "Why that's great Maxine, when did all of this come about?"

"It's a long story, Tim, and a little embarrassing. But before I get into that I've got some unfinished business to finish."

"Huh?"

"Tim, I owe you a great big apology," her voice was suddenly very serious and somber.

"For what, Maxine." "For the way I treated you when we were going together at the convention a couple of years ago. I am very ashamed of myself, Tim."

"But why? that was nothing."

He was too embarrassed to reveal how hurt he had been. The pain was largely gone now anyway, since he and Sue had been going out together. She put her hand on his arm and squeezed it softly, "Tim, please let me finish?" Not waiting for an answer, she rushed on, "People have always told me I was attractive, Tim, and I guess I got to believing it."

"Well, its true, Maxine."

"Please, Tom."

He suddenly realized it was important for her to say what she was going to say. "Well, I got to believing I was pretty special and could have any guy I wanted. Anyway, I wanted to see if I could make you really like me, so I started flirting with you. But, Tim, I wasn't really interested in you, I was just interested in making you like me."

"So, I found out." He couldn't hold back a note of sarcasm from creeping into his voice.

"Yes, I know that, too. You told me so in no uncertain words."

"I'm sorry for that, Maxine," he said, changing his tone.

"No, Tim, you were right. I deserved it. In any case, last year I set my mark to date the Senior Class president, a real knock-out of a guy and awfully popular with the girls. Well, I succeeded and we started going out. One thing led to another and, well, we did some things we just shouldn't have done. Later, I felt just so ashamed, and I cried a lot. Finally, Tim, I prayed. For the first time in my life, I really prayed. Not saying prayers, but really talking to the Lord. I asked him for forgiveness, and I felt real peace, Tim, real peace."

Her voice was quivering a little with emotion, as she spoke. "To make it quick, Tim, I realized that vanity had been controlling my life. Now I've asked the Lord to change me. Now I realize that its only a beautiful character that counts, and not how we

look on the outside. Oh, I know I look attractive enough but my character was not beautiful. You do understand, don't you Tim? You will forgive me, won't you? I'd really like to know before my immersion."

"Of course, Maxine." Tim wasn't really sure he meant it, but he felt she needed reassurance. "That's all water over the dam anyway."

"Thanks, Tim, that means a lot to me." Her tones were very earnest as she continued. "You know, Tim, we're a lot alike. We are both popular and have a lot of interests in life. In my case, I had to decide that there were just too many doors out there, I found that really only one of them mattered to me, and that was the Lord. It was the only one that promised peace, and the only one that was permanent."

Her sincerity touched Tim deeply. "I know the feeling, Maxine, sometimes I feel that there were just too many doors out there for me too. It really does worry me at times." He turned to face her, and took both of her hands in his, "In any case, Maxine, congratulations on your consecration. I'm happy for you. I really mean it."

"So what are you two up to?"

It was Sue, walking up to them with Patty. "Uh, suddenly he was self-conscious again. "We were just reminiscing about old times. Sue, this is Maxine", he rushed into the introductions, "Maxine, this is Sue, my friend from Mannequa. Maxine is going to be immersed during the next meeting, Sue."

"Immersed?" The question mark in her voice brought Tim to the realization that so much that he took for granted in the Bible Student meetings was new to Sue. Since the chairman was calling for order, he quietly explained his concept of of consecration and baptism as they returned to their seats. The subject interested her, and she give close attention to the Baptismal Discourse.

Following the talk, the whole convention piled into their cars and drove a few miles to a small inlet of Skunk River, where they stood on a grassy knoll and sang "All for Jesus" while Maxine was led into the water and immersed.

When they arrived back at the old Elks' hall, a few of the sisters who had remained behind had prepared a buffet lunch. Tim and Sue sat at a small table in one corner, with the other six younger people who had been at the convention.

As Sue was introduced to the others at the table, she was fascinated to learn that Jerry Schwatz had been Jewish. Leaning forward, and resting her chin on her upturned palm, she addressed him, "So, you're really Jewish, Jerry?"

"Yes, Sue, at least until I became a Christian two years ago. She leaned back, her eyes taking in all of them at the table.

"Are all of you conscientious objectors, like Tim."

"They all assented, either by saying "yes" or nodding their heads affirmatively.

"You too, Jerry?"

"Of course. I'm no different because I was raised a Jew. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, because of something I heard in that first talk this morning that confuses me."

"What would that be?" It was Jerry who responded, since he felt singled out.

"Well, the speaker said that Israel would regain their homeland, maybe as a result of this war. Is that right?"

"Right."

"Then he said that it wouldn't be peacefully given to them, that they would have to fight for it, but that God would fight with them and they would win. Is that correct?"

"Well, that's what he said; we don't know for sure, but it probably will be something like that."

Sue was again leaning forward, her arm raised on her elbow, with her second finger tipped toward Jerry. "Now, Jerry, if you weren't a Christian, but still a Jew, and you were in Israel, would you fight with the Israelis for their land?"

Jerry squirmed in his seat, "Whew! That's a good question, Sue. I guess I just don't know what I'd do. It makes me gladder than ever that I am a Christian."

"But even as a Christian. If you were living in Israel and believed that the Bible indicated that the Jew should fight for his homeland, and believed that God was fighting with him, wouldn't you want to fight, especially if God was fighting for them, too!"

"Gosh, I don't know. I do know that I am glad you are not on my draft board. One thing I am certain of, I don't want to kill anybody."

Sue sensed that everybody was getting a little tense, so she changed the subject to other matter of general interest. The final talk of the day was a publicly advertised lecture by Br. Wright. His topic was: "When Christian Nation Fights Christian Nation, Whose Side Is God On?"

An excellent speaker he held the 15 public, as well as Sue, spellbound with the challenge his topic suggested. Pointing out the high percentage of Christian populations in both the Axis

and the Allied countries, he skillfully etched portraits of church services in rival countries, each asking God's blessings upon their troops.

The conclusion of his discourse centered on the text in Psalms, "God was on neither side, but was using the present conflict to tear down the nations of both sides in preparation for the establishment of his Kingdom of Peace upon the earth."

Good-byes were quickly said, since the Wrights and Donaldsons had to get back to New York by morning for work. Maxine slipped a note into Tim's pocket when he said good-bye to her. "Read this when you get home, Tim," she said pleadingly.

CHAPTER 9

The return trip passed quickly and uneventfully, with the hours filled with conversations about the convention. Sue and Patty were talking such a blue streak that Tim finally slumped back, with his head in the corner, and took a nap.

When Tim awoke from his nap, Sue turned to him and said, "One thing sort of bothered me today, Tim."

"What?" he queried.

"That thing the foreign-speaking man was reading this morning."

"What thing?" "I'm not sure, something about a vow, or something like that."

"You mean, 'The Vow Unto the Lord'?"

"Yeah, I guess so." Sue paused before continuing, "Well, what was the part about guys and girls not being in the same room together? That sounded a little bit weird to me."

Patty overheard the conversation, and chipped in, "You mean where it says, 'I will not be in the same room with any of the opposite sex alone?'"

"That's it. Why do you always read that?"

"Well Sue, " Tim was glad that it was Patty who continued the conversation, "do you remember the questions you asked about Pastor Russell's marital problems on the way to the convention?"

"Yes."

"Remember how Dad told you that those charges you referred to about some young girls, were really innocent situations where he had been with them in their rooms while they were sick."

"Yes, I remember."

"After these incidents were so cruelly misrepresented in court, Pastor Russell decided to suggest to the brethren that they

protect themselves from even the appearance of evil, by resolving to avoid all such situations."

"That seems wise enough."

Patty concluded, "Well, that's the basic reason we recite that part of the vow, to remind ourselves of the dangers that even an appearance can bring about."

"But," Sue continued, "take, like, Tim and me. I mean gosh, there's lots of times when we want to be alone together, just to talk and stuff."

"That's why that phrase is in there, 'where reasonably possible.'"

"I'm sure glad that's in there," a little giggle came out of Sue, "`cause there's time we sort of like, you know, to cuddle up."

Patty laughed back, "I don't think that's quite the point I was trying to get across, Sue. As Christians, we should be very concerned about our conduct."

"Don't get me wrong, Patty, I don't mean going all the way; but when you really like a guy, you like to get close to him."

"Sure, but sometimes getting close, gets too close."

Suddenly Sue turned to Tim, "What do you think about it Tim?"

Tim winked at both girls, "I think it's too hot for me to handle. I'm going to get a little more rest, and you girls just talk it out among yourselves."

"Chicken!," Sue teased him. Then, turning back to Patty, "Come on, Patty, level with me. Didn't you and Pat do any necking when you were going together."

"Of course," Patty laughed. Then, turning serious, "It was a problem area, Sue. We were both so much in love we both wanted to snuggle up to each other. There were times that we were awfully tempted to go farther than we should."

"So how did you handle it?"

"Pat and I finally had a big discussion about the whole thing. Neither of us wanted to do anything wrong, but we both felt ourselves tempted strongly. We didn't follow the vow perfectly, but it was a big help to us. You know, Sue, it was Jesus himself who told his apostles, 'the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'"

"But do you really think Patty, that it's wrong for Tim and me to kiss or anything like that?", Sue sounded a little upset.

"Of course not, Sue, especially if you get engaged. But it is best to keep it light, and not allow yourself to become too involved where you have too much time without interruption. One thing we found helpful, was by learning to not to be ashamed to show

our affection to each other in public, we had less temptation to seek privacy, where greater temptations lurked."

"Yeah, I suppose so. It's certainly a hard thing to know just how to handle," Sue's puzzled tone revealed her uncertainty.

"Just remember the Apostle Paul's words, Sue, 'Use moderation in all things'. and maybe that will help." At that juncture, Mrs. Wright called out from the front seat, "Anybody for sandwiches?"

CHAPTER 10

Just before nine in the evening, Mr. Wright pulled up to the Deaver house on Seminole street. "Right on time, Sue, just like we promised."

"It was great," she gushed, "thanks so much for taking me. I really felt at home with you folks, and the day was very interesting to me."

"Be sure to write," Patty said, "It was just great getting to know you. I sure see why Tim likes you so much. Keep in touch, O.K.?"

"Sure thing, Patty," she waved as she started up the walk to the house, "have a safe trip back to New York."

She was still humming a bar from "God Be With You" as she opened the front door, totally unprepared for the storm that awaited her.

"So how was your date with that Nazi boyfriend of yours?" her father sarcastically snarled from the living room.

"Dad!", she angrily retorted. "I won't have you speak of Tim that way."

"I'll speak of him any way I damn please," he shot back. "Sue, I demand that you stop seeing that yellow-belly any more."

"I'm free, white and 21, and you can't order me who to see or who not to see."

"I sure as hell can if you're living in this house."

"Dad," her voice was near tears, "are you telling me to get out?"

"No, I don't want you out; I want him out, out of your life."

"But I think I am in love with him."

"Love, schmuv! How the Sam hell can you love a guy who won't even protect you from danger."

"What do you mean by that remark?"

"Jim Collins, one of my customers, is on the draft board, and we were out playing golf this morning. He was telling me that when that Hendrix kid was up before them last year they asked him

specifically what he would do if someone were to attack his wife or girlfriend or mother. Do you know what he answered?"

"N-N-No", she was apprehensive now.

"Well that yellow coward just said he didn't know; but he felt that he would try not to hurt his attacker. Anybody who can't see that this is a kill or be killed situation is either a stupid fool or a lily-livered sissy. What I can't understand is how the high school's most aggressive defenseman on the football team is such a baby in real life. If that's not enough, that crazy Jehovah Witness religion of his..."

"Dad, I've told you before, Tim is not a Jehovah's Witness, he's a Bible Student."

"Sue, they're all the same. Even Rev. Hitchings says that they are just two brands of Russelism, and that damned hypocrite Russell..."

"Dad, I refuse to talk about it any more." The dam had broken and tears were flowing freely as she raced up the stairs to her bedroom, slamming the door shut behind her.

Mabel Deaver waited about 15 minutes before she timidly approaching Sue's door. Knocking softly, she asked, "Sue, dear, can I come in?"

"I guess so, Mom." The words were still punctuated with sobs.

"Susie, dear, I'm sorry for the way Dad spoke to you." She sat beside her daughter who was lying prone on the bed, her head buried in a scrunched-up pillow.

"He's got no right to talk like that," she cried, and I just hate it the way he always swears."

"Darling, you've got to understand your father. He loves you very much, too. He's just afraid that Tim will be a very bad husband for you."

"If he loved me, he'd listen to me." Sue flipped on her side as she spoke, blowing her nose into one Kleenex and pausing to wipe her eyes with another. "He just wants to get his point across. My feelings don't matter."

"Now, now, dear; that's not true. It's just that he is very upset."

"He's only upset because he doesn't know what he's talking about."

"I'm afraid he feels the same way about you, darling; he thinks you are letting your love for Tim deceive you into not seeing his weaknesses."

"That's not the point, Mom. Of course, Tim's not perfect, neither am I, but he's certainly not the ogre Dad makes him out to be."

"I know, Susie." Her mother was smoothing back Sue's hair." But I'm worried, too, about this position he takes concerning the draft. My goodness, Sue, if he's not willing to protect you, what kind of a man is he?"

"Oh, Mom," she protested, "he's not that way. It's just that, well they sort of put him on the spot, and he probably didn't know just what to say. I admit, Mom, that it worries me sometimes that he seems a little brain-washed on this C.O. business."

"Well, just be careful, honey." Then, changing the subject, "how did you like this convention thing you went to today."

"Gee, Mom, I don't know, I really don't know. It certainly was different than our church. I was shocked at first. It was held in a run-down building you wouldn't believe. And the people, they were very friendly, but they didn't look too educated, and some of them seemed frightfully poor."

"That doesn't sound too good, Susie," her mother's voice showed her concerns.

"No, Mom," she sat upright now, straightening her skirt. "It wasn't that bad. In fact, I sort of like the quaintness of it all. It reminded me of pictures I've seen of Quaker meetings a hundred years ago. There was one swell thing, Mom," her face was again taking on animation. "They had this baptism of a young girl right out in the open air. I had to laugh when they said we were going to the Skunk River for it, but it was a real pretty spot. Somehow, Mom, it seemed so simple and everybody was so sincere. I liked it, really I did."

"So it all went well, then."

"Yes, but it's so different, too, in many ways. Don't worry, Mom, I won't be rushing into anything. I've just got a lot to think about."

CHAPTER 11

"I've got a lot to think about." The same words Susie had just uttered were being expressed across town at the Hendrix household. Tim's parents were an eager audience as he recited the incidents of the day. They inquired about old friends, how they looked, about the different talks that were given, and especially about Sue's reactions. They were happy that Sue and Patty had hit it off so well.

"Who knows," Bitty Hendrix had said, "maybe she'll come into the truth."

Tim also related the discussion about Brother Russell in the car. "Warren Wright was certainly a good man to ask," Tim's father stated, "he and Ruth knew Brother Russell very well."

"But Mom, the most unusual thing happened. You'd never guess who was immersed!" "Who, Tim, anybody we know."

"Maxine Weaver."

"Why, that's great; Darlene must be so thrilled. Hank, is it all right if I call her in the morning?"

"Of course, Bitty," he agreed. Then, turning to Tim, "But, Son, I thought you said that she was not really interested in the meetings or anything."

"I know," Tim was hesitant whether to go on, "that's what worries me, Dad."

"You mean, that it might just be family pressure?"

"No, no, not that. You see, Maxine and I had a long talk just before the immersion. She's changed, changed completely."

"Praise the Lord!" his mother was bubbling. "I was hoping that what you said the other night was just a phase of growing up."

Mr. Hendrix broke in, "I don't think that's the point. You're worried, Son, that this might be just another acting job of hers?"

"No, Dad, not at all. She was just too genuine. Nobody can act that well. No, it wasn't Maxine that bothered me, it was myself."

"I don't understand, Son." His mother was confused.

"Well, I don't know how to say this, but...", he was at loss for words. "Well, you know how much I love Susie, and how I hope to propose to her after graduation, and everything? And now, Susie seems to be taking a real interest in our beliefs. Gosh, she was wonderful today! But..."

"But what?"

"Well, somehow when Maxine talked to me, everything just kind of came back, I thought I would be real mad at her, and I wasn't. In fact, it was sort of like I still liked her."

His mother was suddenly hopeful. "You can always go back to her, can't you, Tim?" "Oh no, Mom," he protested. "Let's not get into that again. No! I love Susie and that's that, but still...", he paused, "I guess I can't explain it. Anyway, I shouldn't have brought it up, 'cause I don't really know what I feel, and it's been a long day. So, I better hit the hay. See you in the morning. He arose and walked thoughtfully up the stairs.

"You fool," he thought to himself, "Why did you bring up Maxine to Mom? Now she'll be on your back to go back to her."

But, he realized, he just had to talk to somebody. The problem had bothered him all the way home. In his room, he took off his suit coat, hearing the crinkle of paper in the pocket as he placed it on a hanger. Feeling inside the pocket, he found the note

Maxine had slipped into it when she said good-bye. Sitting at his desk, he turned on the reading lamp and opened the note.

Her handwriting was neat as always, and the note was very short. "Dear Tim, Thank's for being so understanding today. I had to make everything right before the Lord before my baptism. I just had to tell you that, while it is true that I didn't care for you when we were going together two years ago, I've thought so much about you the last two months, especially today, when I saw you again. I noticed that Susie is more than just a friend, and she seems real nice, Tim. Just be sure she won't take you from the Lord. If she accepts the Lord, I will be very happy for both of you. In any case, though I know I've lost you through my own foolishness, I will always care for you--not only as a brother, but even more. Agape, Maxine"

Tim leaned back in his chair, locked his hands together behind his head, closed his eyes and let his mind wander. "I've got a lot to think about," he mused, "so very much to think about."

CHAPTER 12

Almost simultaneously, words to the same effect were being uttered in yet another part of the state. The New York-bound Packard was approaching Harrisburg when Warren Wright Packard was approaching Harrisburg when Warren Wright mentioned to Ruth, "That boy has got a lot of think about."

"You mean, Tim Hendrix?", she could nearly read his mind after 33 years of marriage. Pat and Patty Donaldson were asleep in the back seat, since they both had jobs to go to in the morning, and the Wrights had been discussing the affairs of their trip and the convention. "I was noticing him this weekend, Ruth, and I like what I see."

"You surely don't mean you approve of him and the Deaver girl? She's not even in the truth."

"I wasn't thinking about that, Ruth, just his whole bearing. During the baptismal talk he was all ears. Then, too, I noticed his face in the rear-view mirror when Patty was asking all those questions about Brother Russell. He was drinking it all in."

"What I liked," Ruth moved over and laid her head back against his shoulder, "was the earnest way those young people were discussing the Bible at lunch. I also saw that Tim and Maxine Weaver were having a serious chat before the baptismal discourse."

"But he's got problems," Warren spoke pensively. "This C.O. business could go against him, Ruth, these young people just don't recognize how important their life style is before they apply for draft exemption."

"You mean his hunting?", his wife inquired. "That," his words came slowly, "but other things, too. You know football is a contact sport and brings out the aggressiveness in a person. I'm sure that won't set too well. In marching band, he must be involved in playing a lot of military marches and the national anthem at sporting events."

"But surely they won't hold that against him," his wife broke in. "Not by itself, but if it all fits into a pattern, well, they just may feel that his religious and conscientious objection scruples are the things that are out of pattern. If they do that, he's going to have a rough time. But, Ruth, I think there's a deeper problem."

"What, dear?"

"Well, we had a little talk about the Scriptures that relate to military service, and he was very good, very good, indeed."

"So, what's the problem?"

"He was a shade too good, Ruth."

"How can you be 'too good'?" she raised her head off his shoulder, turned her back to the door and looked at him as she spoke.

"Well," he found hard to choose the words, "I guess that they came off as sort of memorized, like maybe he was brain-washed, or something."

"But, Warren, he wasn't brain-washed," she protested.

"Ruth, I'm not so sure. We are so intent in having the right answers, that maybe we are teaching some of them by rote instead of getting these kids to think." He paused, waiting for a clear space to pass the slow truck in front of him, "It's so important, Ruth, that we encourage our young people to make the truth their own, and not just recite what they've learned."

"I know, dear." She was beginning to grasp his argument. "But we do have the responsibility to prepare them for the troubles we know that lie ahead."

"True, Ruth," his tone took on a meditative reflection, "but I've been thinking while driving along tonight about that place where Jesus said, 'take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.'"

"But surely we have to fill the mind first, before we can expect the holy spirit to bring the truth out of it?"

"True enough, Ruth," he was thinking out his argument even as he talked, "but we don't need to arrange our words for them. Maybe, it's sort of like the difference between 'saying our prayers' and praying. The 'vain repetitions' that Jesus warned against may not only apply to meaningless prayers, but to our ability to quote doctrinal statements at will without having grasped the deeper thoughts beyond them."

"I don't know, Warren," she responded worriedly, "that sounds more idealistic than practical to me."

"Maybe so, he sighed, "but nevertheless that boy has got a lot to think about." The conversation slowed down, as he came into the city traffic of the Harrisburg area. On the way out of the Pennsylvania capital city, Route 22 passed within two short blocks of Quaker Crescent.

CHAPTER 13

At that very moment, in a small, clean bungalow at 46 Quaker Crescent, a tall red-haired man, leaned back thoughtfully in his tilting desk chair, and slowly inhaled on the Lucky Strike in his mouth. "You've given me a lot to think about, Timothy Hendrix," he mused.

Taking a break from the papers on his desk, he slowly rose and strolled about the room as well as his limp would permit. He stopped by the fireplace and glanced at the frames on the wall. On the left was a photo of a young naval officer in full dress outfit, and below it was a stock publicity shot of the Naval destroyer, Montana, at full sail. Balancing these two, on the right, was his wedding picture, and underneath it a prized possession, the "Military Man of the Year" award which Sen. Robbins had presented to him in person.

He paused to read the familiar words one more time. To Captain Thomas Q. Mulrooney, Retired, on the 6th Fleet, U.S. Navy for service and valor above the call of duty, in the Battle of Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941." Every time he read those words the same memories flooded back. He loved to describe that battle to those Conscientious Objectors when they appeared before him. He could tell a lot from their reaction to his vivid description, whether they were sincere or not. He recalled he had used that tactic with that Hendrix boy whose case he was considering now.

"So you don't want to go to war, Son," that was how he had started with Tim Hendrix, "of course you don't want to go to war. It's a living hell, my boy. Let me tell you about Pearl Harbor. My son, Jim, the one who was killed, sailed out of that hell-hole on Dec.6, the day before the Japs attacked. I know, I was given leave with Jim for two days in Honolulu. It was the last time I saw my son alive."

"I'm sorry, Sir," Tim had said.

The Captain had been so wound up, he appeared now to even hear the young lad before him. "Well, my boy, early on the morning of the 7th I was headed back for my ship when suddenly out of the sky came more planes than I had ever seen. Wave after wave, they kept coming, dropping their deadly eggs on our ships. The noise was deafening, the roar of the explosions

even drowning out the screaming Zeros as they homed in on our boys. The odor of burning kerosene filled the air. The heat from the fires forced me to strip off my shirt when I reached the ships to help out. Son, the screams of those men I still hear every night. Rushing on to the deck of the first ship, I spotted two of the wounded. The smell of baking flesh filled my nostrils as I grabbed one of them. 'I'm O.K.,' he moaned, 'I can make it, but help my buddy, Jake. He's lost a leg.'" "Grabbing the shirt I had just stripped off, I stuck it on the bleeding stump and literally carried him off to my jeep. I don't know where I got the strength, but you sure get it under battle conditions. Wheeling around the jeep, I tore off for the hospital, when I heard a Jap Zero whinnying over my head. One of our boys had hit it squarely with his Ack-Ack gun and it crashed not over 150 feet in front of me. We were sprayed with scrapnel. Both of the two men I had rescued were killed, and I caught a piece of scrapnel in my left arm and leg. For two days I was unconscious. They thought they were going to have to amputate, but I was lucky and got out of it with a limp and a reassignment to the States."

"I'm sorry for you, Sir," Tim had gasped, unprepared for the enormity of it all.

"So, you see Son, I understand why a boy doesn't want to go to war." The Hendrix boy had done well on that one. His face had shown compassion, but not fright. Mulrooney could see that it had made a deep impression. The boy would probably have a few nightmares over it. but that was good for him.

"Now, Tim, that's my story. I could tell you other battle stories just as gory. I could give you more details on what my son went through when he was killed at Iwo Jima. This, my boy, is the kind of life some of the rest of us have to go through so you Conscientious Objectors can have the right to stay stateside and enjoy the good life. Now, do you understand why some of the veterans, why some of the parents whose kids are spilling their guts in Europe and the Pacific, are just a little resentful of you C.O.'s?"

"Yes, Sir," Tim tried to hide how deeply he had been touched by the captain's words, "at least, I think so. Sir. I appreciate the fact that others have been killed to protect my right not to kill. In fact, Sir, I even wrote a theme paper for my freshman English class at college on that very subject."

"I know you did, Tim, I know you did. It's right here in my FBI report," he patted the thick dossier on the table in front of him, "and I might say you did an excellent job on that essay. In fact, if I were your teacher, I would have given you an A, instead of a B."

Stretching his legs, Mulrooney walked back to his desk, and once again looked at the yellow scratch-pad in front of him. Captain Mulrooney prided himself on being a tough man, but a

fair one. Twenty years as commanding officer of ocean vessels, including two years in wartime conditions, gave one the feeling of knowing human nature. In order to protect his objectivity, he had neatly filled the pages in front of him with areas he had hoped to examine in his investigation of a case, and his reactions to those areas.

Three times he had surveyed his notes of the Hendrix case. Now he wanted to review the facts one more time before penning his recommendation to Selective Service Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

NAME: Timothy R. Hendrix 110 Iroquois St. Mannequa, Pennsylvania Age:22

SELECTIVE SERVICE HISTORY: Received Draft Notification Oct. 10, 1942 Requested C.O. Re-Classification Oct. 15, 1942 Denied Request by Local Board Jan. 15, 1943 Appealed Local Board Decision Jan. 16, 1943 Appeal Board Hearing June 10, 1943 Rejection of Appeal October 5, 1943 District Appeal Filed October 10, 1943 FBI Investigation Ordered November 4, 1943 FBI Investigation Completed March 15, 1944 District Appeal Hearing April 30, 1944

BASIS FOR APPLICATION: Religious objector. Held extensive discussion with applicant concerning Scriptural basis for position taken. Well-versed in the Bible. Handled most objection well. Gave appearance of being too glib with answers, as though memorized. Not clear on handling objections to non-combatant position.

CHURCH: Associated Bible Students Small non-denominational group, outgrowth of Adventist movement in late 1800's under Charles Taze Russell. Original tenets of faith opposed participation in war, but permitted non-combatant position. Later positions insisted on full abstinence from military. Present group position differs from related Jehovah's Witness claim of ministry for all members. Considered a historic "Peace Church."

EMPLOYMENT: Caddy at Country Club 1937-1938. Mechanic for Tom's Sinclair, 1938-1943 Electric Design Assistant at Ford Motor, 1943-Present Discussed possible conflicts on conscientious objector position with present employment for major defense contractor. Applicant explained that his work was limited to civilian projects. Applicant admitted secondary use of his work for military projects. Appeared nervous and ill-at-ease in discussing possible conflicts.

HOBBIES: Football (All-State-Guard for 1940 Music (Trumpet Soloist at Patriot Day Parade, 1939) Hunting (Mainly duck hunting) Discussed areas of possible conflict on individual in contact sports of aggressive nature with profile of being a conscientious objector. Applicant made clear distinction in his

mind between sport, where injury would be accidental, and war, where injury to another would be probable and purpose- ful. Applicant defended playing for Patriot Day parade on basis of being patriotic and appreciating the liberty of our form of government. Claimed he could appreciate the country, but could not defend it where such defense involved the use of violence. In the discussion on hunting, applicant tried to show a distinction between killing for food and killing a person. Claims the Bible permitted the eating of meat, therefore killing of animals could not be wrong. Appeared very nervous when challenged that he was killing for sport, not for necessity.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS: Close romantic relationship with Susan Deaver, daughter of Joe Deaver, owner of Big D's Hardware and Gun Store. No apparent inconsistency with dating daughter of owner of local gun store, as FBI report indicates lack of closeness with Mr. Deaver himself.

DEFENSE OF FAMILY: Applicant appeared to hedge on willingness to defend loved ones if attacked. Apparently believes that such a thing would not happen to him. His conscience apparently would forbid defense of loved one, but overall indication is that emotion would drive him to such a defense.

DOCUMENTATION OF POSITION: File contains original statement of position as early as 1936, at age 13. Three later updates show growth in comprehension of position. Fifteen character references from both within religious affiliation and without. Notable are two school teacher's letters showing position was defined in classroom, and letter from current supervisor at Ford Motor confirming applicant's unwillingness to work on military projects.

NON-COMBATANT POSITION: Applicant appeared unsure at times on accepting this position. All stated stands were negative, but indications were that he had not totally made a conclusion on the subject.

STRONGEST POINT: Unshakeability of conviction. Though rattled at times by strength and tone of discussion, appeared willing to accept prison, if required. Might accept non-combatant position if pushed hard enough.

WEAKEST POINT: In Scripture discussion, applicant appeared surprised with text, "There is a time to kill, and a time to heal." Attempted to place "time to kill" in Old Testament days, but appeared unsure when confronted with Jesus' statement, "Think not that I am come to bring peace to bring peace on the earth, but a sword." Also admitted of a future time of God "fighting" for Israel.

RECOMMENDATION: In light of the above facts...

There his memo stopped. "You've given me a lot to think about, Timothy Hendrix," he mused.

At this juncture, Maude Mulrooney, his wife, came in with a fresh cup of coffee. "You'd better be finishing that up soon, Tom, old man," she smiled, "and come up to bed."

"Ah, it's a hard one, my dear," he sighed. For a half hour they batted the case back and forth between them. That was something Tom Mulrooney would always be grateful for, a wife who had common sense and shared so deeply in his search for honesty and fairness.

Finally, as he retired for the night, he addressed himself to the closing paragraph and penned two versions to look at and compare. "In light of the above facts," the first version read, "I feel that there is much to merit the claim of the applicant. However, for the following three reasons, I regretfully must recommend that the appeal for application be denied." Then he proceeded to number his reasons:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Then, laying the sheet aside, he tore off a fresh sheet, and once again took up his pen: "In light of the above facts, while I feel that there are certain questions that remain unresolved, the bulk of the evidence indicates a sincere devotion, though not totally developed inasmuch as the law of our land demands that a man be considered innocent until proven guilty, and inasmuch as the bulk in this case points to sincerity, I recommend, with reservation, that Timothy Hendrix be granted his application for a I-O (Conscientious Objector) classification."

Laying the two sheets side by side in front of him, he tapped out another cigarette, and pondered them for a full 20 minutes.. Finally, his mind made up, he pulled the first set to the foreground, penned in his three reasons for denying the application, and sealed it in an envelope to be sent to Selective Service Headquarters in the morning.

CHAPTER 14

The morning of May 7, 1945, dawned crisp and clear. Yawning, from the late night of thought in his study, Capt. Thomas Mulrooney, stretched his long legs.

"Oh, how that left leg ached after a night of inactivity," his thought was the same every morning. After showering, he turned on the radio so that he could hear the early morning news while shaving. He was just rinsing of the last of the suds, when a change in tone on the radio demanded his immediate attention.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," the announcer was saying, "we interrupt this program to bring you the following announcement. President Harry Truman has just informed the press that the German forces have made a full and unconditional surrender. We repeat, the War in Europe is over. Germany has surrendered."

Even before the announcement was over, the noise of horns blowing in the street was wafting up to the Mulrooney bathroom. Tom, still in his pajama bottoms, ran downstairs and grabbed his wife for a quick Irish jig.

"We won! Victory is ours!", he shouted. After a few exchanges of kisses and hugs, he went back upstairs, turned up the radio for late news from the front, and finished getting dressed.

Half an hour later, Maude and Tom Mulrooney, were happily facing each other across the breakfast table. "Never had Maude's cheese omelet tasted better," he thought. "Maude," he said out loud, "we've got to do something to celebrate." They finished their breakfast making plans for an evening out to commemorate the Allied victory in Europe.

Helping Maude clear away the dishes, he was surprised to hear her ask, "What did you finally decide about that Hendrix boy last night, Tom?" His face sobered as he came down from the euphoria of victory, to the wrestlings of the mind over his own fairness the evening before. "I had to recommend against him, Maude," he said wearily.

"It really wasn't that there was a clear case, but three matters seemed to indicate against the lad."

"It seems a shame, Tom," Maude quietly reflected, "that that nice boy will have to spend time in jail, especially now that the war is winding down. Did you really have to do it, Tom?"

Thomas Mulrooney stopped suddenly, a light dawning in his eyes. "You've hit it, Maude, like usual you've got the point."

"What point?" she was suddenly confused. "Why, simply this. If that lad had to serve, he would be in for the duration of the war. The European war is already over, MacArthur and his boys have re-taken the Phillipines. It will be just a matter of time before Japan falls. By the time this lad's case is all settled, there will be no more duration. Oh, he might have to serve two years or so in a peacetime army. He can do that much in a CCC camp. Maude, do me a favor, will you?"

"What is it Tom?", she asked.

"On my desk in the study, here is another closing paragraph to my report, recommending granting his claim. Will you bring me that and the envelope on the mantel addressed to the Selective Service System. I think it is time I did a little report switching. You don't mind, do you, Maude?"

Maude walked up to him, stopped in front of him, put her arms on his shoulder and kissed him lightly on the lips, "Of, course I don't mind, you old softy."

Filename: DOORS
Directory: C:\WIN95\Desktop
Template: D:\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title: TOO MANY DOORS
Subject:
Author: Carl Hagensick
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 07/25/98 8:57 AM
Change Number: 9
Last Saved On: 08/22/98 1:37 PM
Last Saved By: Carl Hagensick
Total Editing Time: 137 Minutes
Last Printed On: 08/31/98 3:20 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 48
Number of Words: 20,759
Number of Characters: 92,687