

and had no reason to look on ourselves as the "top" of anything, that we should even find the concept personally repelling.

What, then, was the final outcome? At the October 11, 1978 meeting, of the sixteen members then on the Body, thirteen were present and nine voted for a change in the traditional policy, four (Henschel, Jackson, Klein, and Fred Franz) did not. This not being a two-thirds majority of the total membership, no change was made. On November 15, the vote showed eleven of sixteen in favor of a change, a two-thirds majority. The motion voted on was one of several suggested and happened to be one I had submitted. It read:

### MOTION

That where the superior authorities in any land, acting through whatever constituted agency they use, order a brother to perform some form of work (whether because of his conscientious objection to military service or for other reasons), there will be no congregational action taken against such a brother if he submits to that order, provided always that the work he is ordered to do is not in violation of direct commands or clear Scriptural principles found in God's Word, including that at Isaiah 2:4.—Matt. 5:41; 22:21; 1 Cor.13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:17; Titus 3:1; Acts 5:29.

We will continue to exhort our brothers to guard against becoming a part of the world and that in whatever circumstances they find themselves they must keep God's kingdom foremost, never forgetting that they are slaves of God and of Christ. Thus they should seek to avail themselves of any provision that allows them the greatest freedom to use time, strength and funds for that Kingdom.—John 15:17-19; Acts 25:9-11; 1 Cor. 7:21, 23.

A two-thirds majority had voted in favor of the motion—but the two-thirds majority did not last long. During a momentary break in the session, a member remarked that there evidently was going to be a change in the vote. He quoted President Franz (who was among those not favoring any change) as saying, "It isn't over yet; Barry has had second thoughts." Lloyd Barry had been among the eleven voting in favor of the motion. Why the change? Since the decision could make the difference between men going to prison or not going to prison, I think it is enlightening to realize just what sort of things can happen in a religious governing body holding power to affect the lives of thousands of persons.

You will note that in the cited texts at the end of the first paragraph of the Motion the citation "1 Cor. 13:1-7" appears. I had meant to put "Rom. 13:1-7" but, perhaps because of familiarity with Paul's well-known description of love in First Corinthians chapter thirteen, I mistakenly wrote it down as I did. Someone called the matter to my

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attention during the intermission and the Body was informed of the need to correct this one reference.

When we reconvened, however, Lloyd Barry stated that he would not vote in favor of the motion with Romans chapter thirteen listed in the citations. Given the opportunity to speak, I suggested to Lloyd that we could simply eliminate the reference completely or even remove *all* the cited texts if need be to make the motion acceptable for him. Without explaining the basis for his objection, he said he would still not vote for the motion and that he was withdrawing his previous vote. Other members endeavored to find some conciliatory adjustment but were unsuccessful. Though no provision had existed for withdrawal of one's vote after a motion had passed, we acceded to Barry's action. The two-thirds majority was gone. After further discussion, when another vote was taken it read: Nine in favor, five against, one abstention.<sup>41</sup> Though still a definite majority it was no longer a *two-thirds* majority. Though only a minority of the Governing Body favored the continuance of the existing policy and the sanctions it applied toward any who accepted alternative service (unless sentenced thereto), that policy remained in effect. Year after year, hundreds of men, submitting to that policy although neither understanding it nor being convinced of its rightness, would continue to be arrested, tried, and imprisoned—because one individual on a religious council changed his mind. Witness men could exercise their conscientious choice of accepting alternative service only at the cost of being cut off from the congregations of which they were a part, being viewed as unfaithful to God and Christ.

Surely such instances make clear why no Christian should ever be expected to mortgage his conscience to any religious organization or to any body of men exercising virtually unlimited authority over people's lives. I found the whole affair disheartening, tragic. Yet I felt that I learned more clearly just to what ends the very nature of an authority structure can lead men, how it can cause them to take rigid positions they would not normally take. This case illustrated the way in which the power of tradition, coupled with a technical legalism and a mistrust of people's motives, can prevent one from taking a compassionate stand.

The matter came up one more time and the vote was evenly split. Thereafter it was dropped and for most members it seemed to become

41 Lloyd Barry had left on some business matter and so was not present for this vote made necessary by his withdrawal of his previous vote. The five voting against change were Carey Barber, Fred Franz, Milton Henschel, William Jackson and Karl Klein. Ted Jaracz abstained. See also *Crisis of Conscience*, page 102, footnote 7.