

## 940504 John Weidner HLH Pas Im

remarkably challenging music I wish to express my appreciation for it one is often assigned an occasion to speak at the various congregations and things may happen in between prior to the time of such an event for example I was asked to speak to this congregation but certain things have happened that I would like to present today that I might not have thought of presenting it if this had not been this particular weekend I draw to your attention that Ezra Taft Benson the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints died this past weekend many will remember him in the administration president Eisenhower many were not born then he was in the Department of Agriculture a person of significant contribution in his own right it was only so many years ago in January 1986 that many people from different groups religious and otherwise and various religions around the world paid their respects to the former pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong and so sometimes it does pay us to reflect on the lives of prominent people whose general contribution has been far out of keeping with the way many behave in society two weeks ago this morning there was the death of John Henry Widener whom my wife and I have known since 1958 Seventh-day Adventist elder he and his wife had been in our home we were in his I would like to tell you a little bit about the opportunities we had last Sabbath one week after the death of John Henry Widener you will remember that on Monday nearly two weeks ago his face appeared on the cover of the local newspaper the Star News which was in fact taken Friday the day before he died his heart failed he was 81 would have been 82 this year he was born October 22 in 1912 in Brussels Belgium Dutch citizen when I first met him it sometimes was easier to converse either in French or German I don't know Dutch and modern Dutch as it was to converse with him in English which was his fourth language some of the brethren knew him from that time till now and I want to express my public appreciation that at the memorial services where we met Mrs. John Widener one of our members here Mr. John Hopkinson and his daughter were able also to be there and pay respect Mr. Widener told us something that will be the basis of my sermon which I will point up at the moment and then tell you a little bit more of the things you should know of his life he once asked me in our home who is the head of your church he did not he knew me better than let's say he might have known our administration I told him Jesus Christ was the head of the church no no he said I mean who is the head of the church the one who really administers things in the church as a 70 Adventist elder that was a logical question I said Jesus Christ is the head of the church now John Widener had been interrogated by the French and German secret police's police and he was quite aware of answers that people gave and when one recognized that he knew me for what I was he believed me he did not think I was trying to avoid an answer and instantly he grasped something this has never been in print in any of the material written about him but I think it tells you a lot having understood that I had given the correct answer he defined the nature of our church government just with the one statement that I had made Jesus Christ is the head of the church he said why then your church government is based on faith and you know I had never really sat down to contemplate what it was based on in terms of our thinking now we recognize that the Bible gives us illustrations and makes the statement which I had repeated but if I had repeated that that led to two questions one did I believe it and two if I believed it how do I live in response to that belief for there are some who sometime ago now concluded that Christ had in fact failed his responsibility to be the head of the church and has been allowing things that must not be allowed and so some left with that premise but if Christ is the head of the church I must take a different view it was remarkable especially for those who are as I am in the 60s or older to have the presence of a person who had spent his time in Europe and I would like to tell you a little bit a little bit about it because Mr. Tkach wishes us to

reflect next Monday on what is called D-Day June 6th in 1944 that took 11 months thereafter to win the war in Europe which ended early in May in 1945 the following year John Weidner was a person who lived his adult life at such a critical period a book was written published if I may just turn to it here for the Southern Publishing Association in Nashville Tennessee called *Flee the Captor* by Herbert Ford with a forward by Visser Toft and another individual that is an Adventist publishing house Herbert Ford is an Adventist by background and a writer it was my privilege in particular my wife didn't always stay where I was because Mr. Weidner had a food store and he would ask me sometimes to come back to a little table and a chair in his back room where I was introduced to Herbert Ford and he would be reading aloud to John Weidner what he had written based on the tapes that Mr.

Weidner had made and John Weidner regularly had to correct what was said one it either might not have been clearly understood or as any writer does we tend to have to fill in a certain detail in order to have the story move even though the original person telling it didn't fill in that detail and it turns out that such a detail may not have been correct so it was a remarkable experience to be in the background let's say of a book that came to tell such a story and to meet the author and in a sense to be with the autobiographer as well as the biographer the description of John Weidner was given in the Los Angeles Times May the 23rd as it was also in our local paper and that is available if you want to check in the library if you did not see it or did not take note I would like to tell you a few things about his life just as Mr.

Tecache could tell you some of his experiences by knowing the men who've made the difference the possibility for this work to have done what it has done in recent decades which certainly would not have been the same if the events of 1944 had not occurred fifty years ago one of the things mentioned not in the book but at the occasion the memorial service for John Henry Weidner was the fact that he tried to steer young people whom he found were unemployed he gave opportunities normally to people who were immigrants into the country and I met one of the young men that he tried to help and had a chance to speak to him briefly on more than one occasion and at the memorial service it caused quite a ripple when the young man's name was mentioned whom John Weidner tried to help I can tell you that it was true his name was Sirhan Sirhan who was responsible for the death of Senator Robert Kennedy John Weidner was honored by a number of individuals whose names I think would tell you a lot about what some people have done who've rescued as he did with the help of many others some 900 to a thousand people mainly Jews allied airmen were people of major prominence in the diplomatic scene there were those whom I have already mentioned Herbert Ford there was the Consul General Peters of the Consul General's office the Netherlands the Consul of Belgium Celestino it was a child in the resistance Mrs. Breyer there were Mr. and Mrs. Ben Cornelis he was a rescuer in the Dutch Paris resistance and she was one of those who was rescued the attorney and president-elect of the temple Beth El at Riverside the attorney goldware the French the Belgian the Netherlands the British were represented by a written message the civic leader and treasurer of the city of Monterey Park Mrs. Louise Davis some of these things will tell you to what extent a man's life has a great deal of effect far beyond the areas where he may have done his work as he did in Europe in this book *flee the captor* I would like to tell you a little bit about what can happen that we sometimes don't think can happen in our lifetime or to us but it may pay us to think about the problems that do be set a society in critical times there were people who often in the early 1940s after the Germans moved into the Low Countries in France who blundered in their efforts and gave life for life but their unpolished acts shine bright in the annals of man as one's own brother's keeper there was a little widow who passed her Aryan identification card to a Jewish mother who in turn let the Jewish mother take her card with her little child and the person with the Aryan identification card marched off to the firing squad meant for the Jewish life for life the cattle

dealer who was hanged in the public square for concealing 35 Jews and to go on and on there were people who offered their lives for another but that really doesn't solve a problem in the sense of who is going to stop the killing there must be something greater in planning and it is remarkable that one of the most distinguished achievements in wartime France was accomplished by Dutch Paris that is it was the Dutch who were living in Paris and in France who were the first primary people who organized a route ultimately from various areas of France Holland and Belgium also to the area of southern France then under the Vichy government because Vichy was the center of government and John Weidner was the mainspring and founder of this group the people who risked their lives who decided what we all would learn in wartime as the son of an Adventist minister one does not rescue only Adventists one rescues people who are not even Christian one rescues Jews or anyone else who has the need of help one discovers when in prison that there are gypsies there there are Jews there there are Catholic priests there there are Marxists there communists there are homosexuals there each being there for a specific reason what he is you do not go around saying if you are not one of mine I cannot help you you are not my brother you learn what it is like when people with all sorts of differences or problems are put in a situation where their life is at stake John Weidner did what he did and many others assisted because he could travel back and forth in what is called the underground the underground works above ground they do not work in tunnels and holes under the earth now I shouldn't have to say it but somehow we tend to think in those terms if we don't clarify it to ourselves the underground may be riding the train with German soldiers as you travel in public may be meeting in a park where you can see who is around you may be driving along the border with Switzerland John Weidner did not normally operate along the Spanish border though Dutch Paris use both areas John Weidner could not have done his work if he hadn't been trained unexpectedly in his academic career the Coulange on the French Swiss border in fact he knew the border region in a way that almost no Frenchman would have and certainly the Germans didn't if he had not been schooled there he would never have known how to climb up and down the Alpine mountains that he was able to use he was in Paris when the war broke out sought to leave France and was detained in the city of Lyon in the south and he could not leave France and then was in the business pertaining to the marketing of cloth he was a businessman and trained and he was also trained in biblical studies there were a number of lessons that one learns when I read the book and heard some of his story I wanted to take a bit of time to tell you what can happen in life I will start with a short episode later than the first one for its shock value on a day the John Weidner was at the train station in Lyon he recalled that he had recently been confronted with the reality of the war in a most shocking and maddening way Herbert Ford is writing as a biographer waiting for a train that day with many others on the station platform because he used the train wherever possible to transport people who were escaping one walked with an SKP or one sat nearby but never with an SKP you always attempted as the one who aided you attempted to sit as close to some German officer as you could or somebody in the military of the occupying power the closer you were the obviously more innocent you would be or do you understand the reasoning and so the Germans never suspected him when he used that technique waiting for the train he saw a group of Jewish women who had been arrested and were being deported one of them carried a fretful baby in her arms and despite everything she could do the child continued to cry nearby stood a Nazi officer who personified the worst that war could offer he ordered the mother to keep the child quiet but there was no way of stopping the cries of the baby as some of you mothers know and or fathers in anger the Nazi snatched the child out of the mother's arms slammed it on the concrete platform brought his heel boot on the baby's head and the child was dead I won't read the reaction of the mother to you today but you can understand what it's like there are those who gave their lives helping others there are those who were able to plan cautiously enough so that lives did not have to be given and the work could go on there were those who had to operate with passports with identity papers that were fictitious as John Weidner did he used to ask

himself the question he told me as well as it's discussed in the book should he or should he not have false identity papers should he always use the identity of who he was because surely if it was no one who he was his business would be over and anything he could do to help others was gone he was troubled by that but when giving a lecture on such a crisis at the Fuller's Theological Seminary very thoughtful of them to have invited him one of the young men for the ministry asked him John Weidner how could you possibly have allowed yourself to live lies when a Christian is supposed to tell the truth in answer my words the principle is essentially the same John Weidner said I had to ask myself what would God say if I had allowed all these people to be killed when I had the responsibility to rescue them he said I owed to God the responsibility not to have these people killed not to be a murderer in his eyes I did not owe to Adolf Hitler to tell him the truth Hitler of course is the person who stood behind what was being done as far as man can see but John Weidner had these papers that enabled him to get about I would like to tell you a little story here out of the book many of you have not read it I should at some time I have a copy here with the dust jacket and that would not be the one I want to leave I want to leave one without a dust jacket or the jacket becomes dust when too many happen but I would like it to be available to this congregation if some of you have not read it before a living person who paid respect to our church members who when they came to his store said I know who your members are I can tell right away as distinct from others even of our own congregation and he said it respectfully he said your people love one another he was a very observant man and I hope that is still true today in an account here John Weidner was involved in a situation the background of which is not always essential for the story you are John Henry Weidner yes we are the Gestapo you will come with us a very German expression you will come with us there are questions you must answer but what have I done you will come with us now get your coat it had been that simple they had come to his apartment in Lyon and told him he was under arrest the charge well there was really no charge the plain Gestapo officer said they were simply questions he needed to answer that was reason enough for arrest in southern France so they had gone John and the officers to the Gestapo headquarters in Lyon there the time consuming ritual began now remember no charges sometimes they didn't even know who they were arresting sometimes they did John Weidner was fingerprinted pictures were made many of them then his life story was taken where were you born Weidner how long have you been in France what is your religion what is your business here what are your political feelings the questions seemed endless the strain increased as the hours dragged by now Weidner we are most interested in the nature of your activities in the past few months it is no one that you are helping your people the Dutch in their illegal movements and that you have given them assistance we are interested in hearing your story about these activities I have helped some people John conceded as he sat sat board looking there are many here in southern France who are without income and they're starving I've always tried to help people in need you have been giving assistance to your Dutch consulate here in Lyon why is this can't the consulate itself help without your assistance well certain work of the consulate in helping Dutchmen in France has been made more difficult through many new government regulations John replied in a steady voice I've been asked to give some assistance to our people by the council Mr. Schake merely as an easier way for the consulate to render its legal services then the German uses a typical word translated blockhead do you expect me to believe such stupid talk you have been giving illegal aid to Jews there were Dutch Jews and your consulate has also been giving such aid I can only tell you the truth John continued Mr. Schake will tell you the truth also he's a good and honorable man we will see about that we shall know quickly all about the activities in which you have been engaged now we're also interested in your relationship with and then there are a conversation over a particular person which I will not discuss here he happens to have been a Dutch Jew and then they named a number of others these names which I will not read here do you recognize any of them Mr. Weidner I have not heard or known any of those people ah now you were trying to cooperate with us aren't

you Mr. Weidner the officer smiled to every question you give a negative answer or a smart one all you have told his lies and that's too bad for you you will soon be very sorry about 20 minutes later other officers came in and the whole questioning began over again for psychological reasons the questioning went on into the night John sticking to his story that he had done nothing against the Germans only that he gave help to those in need finally the Gestapo officer ordered Weidner taken to the torture room he was stripped his hands tied behind his back and thrown into a tub filled with water the guard shoved John's head underwater and held it against the bottom until he began to drown then his head was jerked out of the water now blockhead will you answer our questions no John said is he gasped for air the guard slammed Weidner's head under the water again jerking it up just as he was about to drown the group in Paris you know about them no gasped Weidner now he could have said yes and then they would have known who he really was in terms of its relationship a third time his head was pushed under the water and he began to lose consciousness he alternated between prayer and discipline of mind and refused to let himself tell anything about his organization one hour two hours three finally he was pulled from the tub and half dragged to another area of the torture chamber he was kicked about by the officers remember what happened on another occasion all night and into the morning recorded in four gospels several times he tried to stand but was kicked down he was slapped kicked beaten in a senseless demonstration there is something you will enjoy very much Mr. Weidner designed to make your legs more comfortable kneel down the guards said and on the floor where he was to kneel was a large steel ruler set on edge as Weidner's knees came down on the floor the steel rulers pressed deeply into both legs just below the knees the pain was excruciating there doesn't that feel comfortable that is the comfort we give people like you who will not give information we want we have other comforts that you will enjoy too if you live long enough to get to them that will give you some feeling of what it was like to have to go through to rescue hundreds of people up to a thousand some remarkable cases I can tell you one without reading but those details were a little more personal upon jumping from a train on one occasion even a man like John Weidner can make a mistake he was near the swiss border and found the border and crossed the barbed wire entanglement and met two soldiers and explained his case who he was whom he was to meet where he had come from and was asking the two german swiss guards to take him into town in order that he might complete his responsibility and as the two officers led him to the compound John suddenly caught the fact that above the compound where they were taking him to was the Nazi flag of the third Reich he had only crossed the first barbed wire entanglement and he asked himself how foolish could one be to have assumed the Germans did not have two or three before you get to the border he was taken back and was on a train headed to Germany and in fact had entered Germany and on the train were many other people who were going to a slave labor camp having learned a lesson there he needed to realize he must have his wits about him they were no longer in France and when they got into Germany everybody who was being taken to the slave labor camp stayed on the train and the German guards went off to eat now John Weidner could have sat there with everybody else but when the German guards had just gone around the corner he walked off the train too carefully not to be seen by them and then proceeded to buy some food because he knew German and to dine in a restaurant which clearly nobody in an underground would do especially in Germany it never had occurred to any of the others to leave the train but many of them would not have been able to hide their identity because they may never have spoken the language but John Weidner was a trained professional person where one knows at least two other languages beside one's own he walked to the Rhine River and being an athlete he was able to swim the Rhine even though the Germans aimed their machine guns at him and the river was strong in fact he essentially didn't make it except for the fact that when he was completely exhausted and put his feet down he realized he had reached the muddy side or the other side of the river the swiss and had in fact escaped the morning early early morning of the day that he was to be assassinated

because the french secret police had in fact resolved the responsibility that they had and turned him over to the Germans in France he jumped from the third story in america which europeans call the second story because there are two stories above the ground floor and the ground floor is not number one he was remarkably athletic and did not break any of his bones and when he jumped from the train he had not broken any of his bones though on one occasion he had been knocked unconscious because he jumped from the train as it was going around a corner he was arrested four different occasions it was my privilege to talk to him on one occasion in his store when he said he was going to be honored by the jewish community and i had the privilege of being there in the 1960s when that honor was given and the jews had asked him to speak and necessarily it was the logical thing there to speak about the importance of the law and of that which says you shall do no murder the commandments his speech was very well presented when he needed to he rose above the limitations of his fourth language it was last year in april that he was also honored i think it was in Arcadia by the jewish community whose representative was also there at the time of the memorial service last weekend this afternoon we could go i mentioned these things because we often are so far removed unless one has been in vietnam but this was different world war two had many kinds of heroes and heroines of different religious conviction and one learns in a crisis like this what it means to be a brother's keeper as you remember from the original story of Cain and Abel John Weidner understood the importance of grasping church government he saw it as a matter of faith i would like to expound on that a little this afternoon because it would tell a great deal about why most all of you are here some of you might simply be guests and would not normally be in attendance or why you were here and others who had been here no longer are there was a bible study in which my wife and i were privileged to be participants after the services in one of the southern california congregations and usually in a study like that there's a question and we give an answer i concluded without a question except to pose one to myself it was this how would i explain to god why i had done what i had done if i had decided and i was speaking to the deacons and elders in their wives to leave all of you and to participate in a competitive work what explanation could i have ever given jesus christ to have abandoned my responsibility in the church and all of you it meant something this was the first time and everybody clapped because they realized that is really the issue in government to know who is the head of the church paul the apostle to the hellenists the greek speaking people jews in the hellenic world greeks in the hellenic world was not the head of the church jesus christ is the head of the church peter was not the head of the church even though there were some later who came to the idea that the lamb of god jesus christ had returned to heavenly pastors and had given his responsibility to peter as the shepherd that idea rose much later the reality is that none of the apostles were the head of the church nor were any of their successors however you may construe the word successive jesus christ is the head of the church that is the way it is established you could go back in the days of moses moses was not the head of the church or the congregation of israel the lord the eternal was the head of the church that congregation church is a word coming from another language had the same general sense that congregation originally had in the hebrew and we take one usually an old testament terminology and the other in new testament terminology there were those who fought moses was the head of the church and moses made some mistakes in fact he made very many he made so many because he kept following that cloud taking them in the wrong direction once he got to the promised land moses told them after the testimony that was brought back by 10 of the 12 who searched the land that they were not going to enter so in a sense some of these people said we're going to enter anyway that's what we were supposed to do and any leader of the church who can't see what we were supposed to do is not prepared to be the leader so the lord and moses and those who were willing to stay with the lord left the borders of the promised land and others decided to take responsibility in their own hands the story of government beginning with the days of moses to the time of jesus the messiah the christ is a very interesting story in this

context because the same thing can be said of the government of god over the new testament church you remember however interpreted this may be because there can be different ways of looking at the symbolism there are seven lamp stands separate lamp stands in the new testament revelation two and three as there was one lamp stand with seven branches because there was one nation and one area where that government was ultimately to be established so there is a distinction in the nature of the organizations that the government of god supervises in the new testament both in terms of the people who are fundamental to each period the geography and the nature of continuity which is not the primary subject but looking at the old testament there were indeed some very interesting and critical periods of time that i would just like to bring to your attention moises could be criticized no man is perfect moises was certainly not moises led the children of israel to the borders of the promised land joshua took them in the promised land and the elders that outlived joshua represented the conclusion of a remarkable period in which the congregation of israel was organized as a congregation or church and if you please as a state with a constitution the Torah with a government in which there is a king there is a king over israel in the days of moises now if you think i have confused myself with the story of sol you should read the story of sol because in sol's story it is quite clear as god told samuel the prophet you may indeed anoint sol as king don't feel god said to samuel that the people have rejected you you understand they have rejected me from being king over them so in fact the one who was ultimately in charge of israel who was if you please the head of the congregation was god as king and the people didn't see it they only saw human government and they could see mistakes that might be made from time to time very often they couldn't see their own but a remarkable thing happened no sooner had the children of israel buried the last of the elders that had the experience in the wilderness to outlive joshua that we find the nation doing good and evil in a remarkable sequence in which there is no visible government in which there is a visible government under a judge a man or in one case a woman and then again no visible government this is the period that we often call the judges quite distinct from the events in which god was in a very personal way operating through moises through joshua and those elders that outlived joshua then you had this remarkable period of leaders and then no leader who was visible now you might say this certainly isn't the way things should be and there undoubtedly were people like that based on what you hear from time to time if you read that one remarkable book called the book of judges a book to test any generation's soul there are people who could have raised questions about god's management his government why sometimes he chose no one as judge now the answers of course lie clearly in the book when the children of israel did evil god gave them no new leader under him they had to learn to come to a repentant state of mind whereas in the days of moises god established joshua there was no interim the predecessor anointed the successor but now things were different you would have to ask yourself what would be your view of the god who lets the government run as you find described in the book of judges well it came to the place that the people wanted a king who would have an heir so they would always have somebody they could look to as the ultimate leader for in reality most of the people hadn't even thought of god as responsible in the judges times they were looking to the judges and when a judge had been given no instruction concerning a successor they held him responsible and took advantage and each did what was right in his own eyes again and again so there was indeed a picture of the government of god with that first lamp stand out of the seventh of the menorah and the temple when the congregation was established and the second represented by the period of judges but the children of israel ultimately wanted somebody visible to lead and we are introduced to a period in which we have one nation maybe under god but certainly under a king sol david and solomon now here it becomes quite clear that there were many problems about god's government in the days of sol there were those who thought well this can't be true god wouldn't surely let things deteriorate like this under sol he had his enemies even as he himself had become an enemy of god there were those who felt the same about david one of the songs we sang

this afternoon is about david's father-in-law as far as we know the man at hit the bell who gave wise counsel to david who turned to be a traitor because he ultimately held david responsible for what had happened to his daughter the wife of uriah the hittite the background of that appears in the nicely presented letter from personal correspondence if you should like any further information on that but in this third stage when there was a king and no longer judges you can imagine there were people who said like samuel began to reason we can't have kings we had judges god had approved judges how can he approve kings how can these changes be made what would you have done would you have continued to argue like samuel what is going to happen when you have kings and refuse to have one and join the moabites and the edomites and the philistines the egyptians yes the arameans or those wonderful people on the tigris river the assyrians you think about what it would have been like to move from moses day and joshua's to the time of the judges or from the time of the judges to the time of kings and you would have to say i frankly might not know why god makes his decisions but if samuel is right and god has used him god has told samuel very clearly we're now going to allow kings and that's that because after all this is god's church this is god's congregation this is his nation now if you want to join another nation you will have whatever benefits the gods of those nations will provide but then such a remarkable thing happened after solemn was dead rea bohem discovered that ten of the twelve tribes had revolted and he set out to stamp out this civil war and god sends a prophet and says now don't do that you just let most of the church go so most of the congregation go just bring your troops back listen carefully because this thing is of me why what a statement to make kings in the days of saul and thereafter god is permitting now he's permitting the church to be divided in ten of the twelve tribes to do what they wanted to do and not to reunite the nation there would be people surely in this fourth stage who would say how can we have any confidence in our administration if the king tells his army we're allow we will allow this civil war that we are starting to be immediately terminated by those tribes up north ought to be a part of the church then you read the story of course what happened during the divided monarchy the ten tribes in the north of juda and others who joined with them in the south and you will notice what a different state of mind generally existed both in the kings and the south but not always and most certainly existed in the north some were more evil than others and finally the kingdom of the north was carried into captivity and the kingdom of the south continued to the days of the Babylonian power and they themselves went into captivity the difference being that Israel was in a sense expelled from the land never asked to return in those days but juda was asked to return in a repentant state something that the children of Israel had never as a whole done and when they did they had to leave their nation and become Jews and now they're coming back after the Babylonian captivity under the Persians and what do you think is going to happen are we going to go back to the government of Moses are we going to have judges now and then are we going to have kings well after all the persians were running the world and the leader of the persians was the Shah and Shah the king of kings and the prophet had already said that no one would prosper out of the immediate lineage that had been ruling in juda in the days of Nebuchadnezzar on the throne of juda and so now there were governors governors of the house of david governors in some way who may not have been of the house of david there were men like Ezra who was a priest Nehemiah who functioned at the court of the king of kings you mean the god's government starts with a continuity of judges then has another period of time when the original continuity and then a third period of time in which everybody is together under a king and the fourth one when the monarchy is divided and now a fifth period in which we have governors and above the governor is the Gentile can you have faith in a god who allows things like that could you say that the government is based on faith think about it because those things are written in this book for us to ask what would you have done would you have decided to revolt and say there should not be a governor under another nation we must engage in war well there came a time when the jews had to make a decision josephus tells us about this when the greeks came on the

scene i won't tell you the background of that because there is not essential here it's not directly in the bible but some remarkable things happened and alexander the great was persuaded to allow the jews to continue to function as conscientious objectors to be able to keep the sabbatical year and the jubilee the tithes the holy days the Sabbath those things that made that nation unique which the children of israel in the north had long since abandoned except for those who were willing to live as jews they are now under the greeks and we are not told very much of what happened in extra biblical material in the early part of the greek period but you come to a time when indeed the question is one that might have faced john weidner a greek not in the tradition of the open-mindedness of Athens a greek in the tradition of oriental monarchy decided that there shall be one fundamental respect for religion and it is to be the manner of the Gentiles and it was time that the jews conformed for the greater good to the world of the syrian greeks and he had sent his army and they had taken the temple and they now must offer swine's flesh to god and offer pig's blood on the altar and some decided to cooperate because they reasoned well this must be what god allows i know the law doesn't say anything like that should be done but we might as well compromise and some of them did and some did not the macabees now here interestingly we have decisions to be made what was your attitude if you had lived in between the days of mooses and joshua and then the story of the later elders as to sorry judges as to why after one died there was no other for a long time until we come to the latter part of the period which i am not going into at the moment but those were regional judges when the kings came would you have decided that you had to take action or that you recognize god's government and how would you know how would you understand samuel how would you therefore understand david in that period then came the divided monarchy and how would you have decided that or that of the governors but here that's sorry as the governors continued there arose a crisis the life of which there had been none before what would you have said we have been asked to offer swine's blood we have been asked not to circumcise our children in fact we have been asked not to read the law we have been asked to become like the Gentiles around us who are being Hellenized the Maccabeans said no the Jewish nation was divided and now we have a line of priests who later became priest kings of the house of Aaron not the house of David who led those people in the nation of Judah who rallied around the law as distinct from those who said well god's government surely would permit us to compromise on these points for why should we die this question was met by many in world war two why should we not in fact let the Jews reap what they sell let the marxists reap what they sell let the catholic priests reap what they sell let the homosexuals reap what they sell let the gypsies reap what they sell until the question arises what you do when they come knocking at your door when it's too late the maccabees saw that this was not a time for compromise this was different this was not like it was when the Persians treated our governors with respect this was not like it was when the house of David steered the house of Judah through treacherous waters while the other tribes wandered off into spiritual ignorance and then there came a later time toward the end of that period when circumstances arose a seventh period in the government in which we have the scribes and Pharisees having seated themselves in Moses seat and what would you have done if the Galilean rabbi had said the scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves on Moses seat now what they command you to do pay respect to them and do it but don't do after their works for they're very scrupulous about the law as to what you should do that they are not with respect to their private lives anyway you could ask yourself why shouldn't I be an essay why shouldn't I be a sad you see why do I have to listen to this rabbi who allows these people who sat themselves in Moses seat to tell me what to do now I know I find this rabbi's message interesting you know just ask yourself what would you have done would you have joined with the Herodians would you have plotted against that rabbi with some Pharisees but not others would you have been a zealot a political party aimed at the overthrow of Roman government over your people there are questions that happily we don't have to answer because that's of another age but there are

lessons there John Weidner had to make certain decisions in his life he had to decide whether the spirit of murder or altruism could be the spirit to govern society whether loving one's brother was the way to go even if it might cost you your life now happily a center has been established in Massachusetts where John Weidner's private papers have been sent the center is dedicated to the call for the cultivation of the altruistic spirit I did make a telephone call because I very much appreciate what is going to be done there to have those who can give lectures and who can investigate and come to a better understanding not of the men and women who did evil but of those who did good and why some who have been altogether forgotten and others who have been made heroes or heroines just as we have had those periods of government in the old testament church so we have periods in which the work of God varies in time and place and purpose and circumstances so different in the days of the old roman empire from the time when the center of the government of Rome is an Asia minor so different when it is centered among a people other than the Greeks or Jews in Armenia or having many of these people in the rise time of the rise of Islam forced into migration into southern Europe in the Balkans discover ultimately in the Alps people who had been there also for a long time and finally wandering into Britain and rediscovering the importance of the Sabbath not that it was not altogether unknown but that it was only known by some and practiced by some on the continent especially in Italy but now the Sabbath became very important but the churches who began to understand the purpose of life and had understood the Sabbath day had great conflict in the days of Queen Elizabeth over the subject of the holy days and then the church came into a new land still under the government of Britain but later to be interestingly under a government that separates church and state that gives certain freedom and also certain responsibility as a Buddhist doctor in San Marino in his home I have been who had in his desk a Catholic friend of this work from Sri Lanka said in corroborating what I mentioned to our mutual Catholic friend it's one of the great tragedies in this country is that no people has been given such freedom for so long in a written constitution so respected but the tragedy is we haven't all been able to handle that freedom we go to one extreme or another we are not a people gifted by nature to stay in the middle of the road now there are others who never are on the middle of the road are people wander to the right or to the left in this society the majority tend to be around the middle but we have too many who wander in one direction or another and that's why we have such circumstances in poverty and crime as our Canadian neighbors cannot understand in this free society God's work functions differently and it certainly had to function differently in the critical period of the civil war the critical period of world war one and world war two the korean war in vietnam but 1994 is a different world and under christ we have another administration the same as there were different administrations between the 1920s and the 1950s over God's people or the 1860s could you answer the question as correctly as John Weidner did when he said oh now i see your government is based in faith faith in jesus christ as head of the church faith that he is doing the will of god the father i could only wish in a sense that i could say all this with mrs john weidner here but as someone who also observes the Sabbath somewhere else she couldn't be here today you will meet john weidner sometime in your life and if you don't i'll introduce him to you and you might remember what you might have done and the problems that you might have faced if you had to have have the same things thrust upon your shoulders as were on his as i said to the buddhist doctor when one of our ministers was being honored our davis we were discussing the fact that here were people of different religious convictions a catholic a buddhist there was myself and there was a minister of the church of god being honored among others in his case you know the story the film is in the Worldwide News with respect to their son i said why should i be one who would want to cut myself off from you just because we may not have yet come to understand everything we need to about the purpose of life because the purpose of life is we all ultimately share in what that purpose is why shouldn't i want to get to know you now and they said well we know we never quite thought

of it that way why should i disdain people who don't know all that we understand why should i assume that i know in my office what is best for the church of god can't christ see clearly what he's doing from up there from up there though i don't normally appear here i will expect you all to be here next week with robin weber and the rest of the ministry i want to thank church administration for the fact that they didn't know that they had chosen the right weekend or i would not have addressed this question i think john whitner would have been happy to meet you at the back door if i had invited him and this had been other circumstances to get to know all of you of whom he had said himself i know the church of god members because they love one another