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(choir sings “Amazing Grace”)

SPEAKER #1: Our father and our God, we are thankful to thee for allowing us once again to assemble ourselves together in this, your house. We thank you, our father, God for another week's journey. We thank thee our father that we can once again lift our voices to thee. We trust almighty God, all who have come this morning that they might sit with open minds and receptive hearts. That we might receive the word anew, and that your word might continue to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our pathway. Oh God, do bless him who shall break unto us the bread of life once again in this place. Undergird and more God, with that might and thy will and envelope them with thy holy spirit and bless all our father God, who shall come to this place today and do Lord hear our prayers and answer our petitions if thou wilt and bless all who desire to come. Some, almighty God who are unable to be here today, but we are thankful, we are grateful for you have seen fit to allow us to come one more time. Oh Lord, let thy spirit move throughout this place, this day. These blessings we ask in the name of thy son, Christ Jesus, our Lord, we ask it all.

(choir sings “Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”, followed by “Rough Side of the Mountain”)

SPEAKER #2: Good evening, welcome to the Bethany experience. Dr. Jones will preach at both the 8 and 11 a.m. worship services on tomorrow. We are pleased to announce our annual fall revival which begins on Sunday, October 14 and continues through Thursday, October 18th. The revival preacher is the Reverend Dr. H.B. Hicks, Jr., pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church, Washington, DC. A warm welcome and spirit-filled worship await you here at Bethany. God bless you today and always.

REV. DR. WILLIAM AUGUSTUS JONES, JR: The hymn of consecration is selection 346, “Close To Thee.”

(organ plays while choir and congregation sing “Close To Thee”)

JONES: Today I lift up words from the Gospel according to John, the opening words in the 36th verse in the 18th chapter. “Jesus answered, ‘my kingdom is not of this world.’” “Jesus answered, ‘my kingdom is not of this world.’”

The flag and the cross, that's what I want to talk about for the next little while, the flag and the cross. My spirit is terribly troubled these days. My heart is heavy, and my mind perplexed because of the reckless currents and the restless spirits which characterize these times. Three great issues plague the tissue of the body politic like some dreadful terminal disease. One is global, one is national, and one is supremely social and therefore peculiarly personal. Each represents the ultimate in painful conflict and no quick solution appears on the horizon of our best hopes. This land, even as we sit in worship at this moment is caught in the throes of three terrible crises. East versus West, black versus white, and the haves versus the have-nots. One is ideological, one is racial, one is social. The ideological has led to an almost total disruption of serious communication between the East and the West. Mr. Gromyko's visit with Mr. Reagan notwithstanding, the ideological is made manifest in the relationship which obtains between this nation and South Africa, the most racist regime on planet earth at the present time. The ratio continues to cause innocent blood to be spilt in this land and the social could disrupt at any moment into a bloody revolt on the part of the struggling masses. Western civilization is in a tragic state of dissolution and cultural disintegration. I try not to engage in fatalistic talk, but I am almost completely convinced that the best hopes for the fulfillment of what has been commonly lifted up and called the American dream, stand the chance of being dashed to pieces and relegated to a state of oblivion. All of our dreams of a so-called great society, where justice with peace and love obtains, may never be clad in garments of reality. Even our great desires for our children and our children's children may never be realized, given the frightening reality of the possibility of nuclear disaster. That word raised in a question by Cicero, long centuries ago may be realized in our own generation. Asked the roman auditor, "are children being born simply to die?" I tell you this society is flirting with terrible destruction. This nation props up ruthless dictatorships in Central America and in other parts of the world. Human animosity is at its peak and right now as we sit here in relative comfort, hunger pains are darting through millions of bodies right here in this land not to mention other places under the sun. There's trouble all over this world and all over this land. I am fearful for the United States of America. I wonder if her moral resources are adequate for survival. For the longer she travels, the less she seems to learn. I'm troubled about this land, but my greatest dismay and my deepest anguish are precipitated by the involvement of the church in the present crisis. My deepest fears brothers and sisters are for the organized church in America. I look on so many professing Christians and see so little power and the church's main guilt is not her failure to practice what she preaches, that's not the church's main problem. Her main problem I believe, is her failure to preach. For preaching involves encounter and confrontation and urgent proclamation. Preaching the kerygma in the New Testament, Greek is an assault on every bastion of human pride with the sovereign demands of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I say to you that the church in the main is failing to preach because the church is almost inextricably bound up in the fabric of the state. There exists a dangerous accommodation, a kind of peaceful co-existence which renders the prophetic voice speechless and whenever the church and the state embrace, the church is no longer free to preach the gospel. And I'm not talking today about a violation of that theoretical or even mechanical separation of church and state which was written into the constitution. We have that separation, and it should remain. There should be no state church and there should be no church state. I'm really not bothered about the possible weakening of that arrangement. I'm troubled by something else. I'm troubled by a kind of spiritual union of church and state. A union where both pat each other on the back. I'm troubled about a buddy-buddy relationship where the church is blind to the sins of the state. I'm really troubled about an unholy fellowship between light and darkness. In a word, there's no clear distinction between the church's position and the government's

position on the burning issues of the day. If you doubt my words just turn on the radio or turn on your television and listen to some of the televangelists.

pause in recording as cassette tape 1, side 1 ends

recording of cassette tape 1, side 2 begins.

JONES: Now we have a definite duty to pray for those in authority, but we also have a duty to preach to them. For though we reside here and are subject to the laws of the state, our primary citizenship is in heaven. That's what I understood the last time I looked at the book. I've been operating on the assumption that our main orders come from on high and the church should know full well that whenever she ceases to be the critical conscience of society, her sword is made dull, and her voice is rendered silent. The church should know beyond the shadow of any doubt that Christ and Caesar have always been incompatible and will remain so forever. One of the things which led to the death of the so-called Jewish church was the coalition between Rome and Jerusalem. The great Protestant Reformation led by Luther and Calvin and others was made necessary by the church's capitulation to culture. We, that is the church, we have not learned from history. We have not really listened to Christ, the captain of our salvation. For long ago on a certain Friday morning he stood in a courtyard beneath Pilate's balcony and issued a guideline for all the ages on the question of ultimate loyalty and allegiance. You remember the Jews had arrested him in the shadows of Gethsemane. All of his disciples had forsaken him and fled. From Gethsemane he was led to the religious court of Caiaphas the high priest. A meeting in special session, they trumped up a charge of sedition. A charge of going against the rule of Rome. A charge that would force Rome to sentence him to death. Through the darkness they carried him to Pilate's judgment hall. Pilate, Rome's representative and Judea's procurator asked Jesus a question, "Jesus, art thou the king of the Jews? Are you the uncertified political leader of the Jewish people? Are you the titular head of the descendants of Abraham? Jesus, art thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus stood there calm and serene with both his own cross and the flag of Rome in view and courageously said, "my kingdom is not of this world. I claim no portion of the turf, Pilate. I have no throne. I have no army. I fly no flag. I ride in no chariot drawn by prancing steeds. I do not boast dominion over men's bodies. I simply claim their minds and their souls. My kingdom is not of this world." Now Pilate's question was fundamentally a question having to do with ultimate loyalty, and this my friends is precisely the kind of question the church should be asking herself today. We're constantly being called upon to give answers to questions but the church ought to be raising some questions and one of the big questions we ought to be asking ourselves is, where lies our highest allegiance? Not, do you attend church regularly? Not, are you the best Christian on the block? Not, how long have you been a member of the church? Not, are you a good usher or a good choir member or a good deacon? Not, are you a great preacher but where is your final allegiance? Is it to the culture or to Christ? To government or to God? To the flag or to the cross? This is a very crucial question in the present era. For there is, I almost said an unconscious drifting, but I'm convinced more and more that there's a conscious drifting into a sea of conformity to culture. I see on the part of many Christians in this land no clear differentiation between their understanding of the demands of the flag and the demands of the cross. I'm really afraid that the church is being lured into the same trap that many German Christians got caught in under Hitler. Martin Luther, the great protestant reformer recognized that the Christian was always confronted with the problem of having to

choose between two authorities, both of which the Christian is expected to obey. So, in his attempt to deal with the problem, Luther constructed a two-story ethic, a public ethic and a private ethic. Now Luther meant well but he made a terrible mistake. Luther goofed. For this kind of dualistic loyalty created a situation during World War II, where some Germans were good Nazis and good church members at the same time. In a word, in public they obeyed the flag and in private they obeyed the cross. In public they said, "Heil Hitler" and in private they said, "bless the name of Jesus." This was a terrible perversion of Christian faith and Christ made it clear did he not? That you can't play on two teams at the same time. Oh no, you can't play for the Dodgers today and the Giants tomorrow! No man can serve two masters, he's bound to love one and hate the other. Well, what does this have to do with the Christian in America? This is good preaching y'all better wake up and get it. (congregation laughs) I know I'm preaching this morning. What does this have to do with the church and with Christians in this land? I think it has significance worthy of our best attention. We need to take a hard look at what's happening in this land and as black people, still oppressed, and still denied, we better take a hard look at it—for this shotgun marriage of church and state is being fully consummated before our very eyes—and the American pulpit in the main is terribly silent when it comes to the basic issues that have to do with life and with the enhancement of life. You see, in this land, the church through the years has been expected to teach those values which society deems best. The white church in the main has been a great promoter of the American way of life. As Jaroslav Pelikan has pointed out, society has valued Christianity more for its moral teachings than for its faith. The state has used the church to sanctify secular standards. Therefore, the church is often caught in a web of meaningless moralism. Now certainly moral teachings are vital and necessary. Goodness has to be proclaimed. For God and goodness are inseparably related but just as God is good, God is also just. Therefore, goodness and justice go together and whenever you emphasize one to the detriment of the other, the church is in trouble—and I say to you today—that the church throughout the history of this republic has been mainly the custodian of personal morality. She has had precious little to say about justice at any level of society. Her moral zeal has decimated, her ethical zeal. She has become the defender of what is rather than the promoter of what ought to be. Her loyalty has been to the flag and not to the cross—and as a segment of the church with a capital "C," and as individual Christians we need to determine once and for all where our highest loyalty belongs. Now I know that there's a natural human tendency to look to the state. The state is highly visible. The state has money and power and influence. The state provides Social Security, old age assistance, Medicare, and welfare checks. The state provides parks and playgrounds and schools. The state provides certain creature comforts. We need government. It's ordained of God, but government is not God. No government is infallible. No head of state is without sin. Ronald Reagan is a sinner just like you and me. He's in need of gospel surgery every day of his life. In fact, he probably needs it more than anybody else. For to whom much is given, of him much is required—and he needs to be told by some preacher on a regular basis that he falls short of the glory of God. He doesn't need preachers to come to the White House and get mesmerized by the Oval Office. I've been in there. There's nothing in there that ought to deter the man of God. Getting excited about the apartments of the White House—that's utterly absurd. Just as Nathan denounced David at Jerusalem and just as Amos reprimanded Jeroboam at Bethel, Reagan needs to be confronted at Washington. There can be no peaceful coexistence between Christ and Caesar or between church and culture. For coexistence connotes equality and no man and no system can equal the Christ of God. He fits no pigeonhole. He's too big and too holy to be tied down to any human system. He burst them all asunder and the church's mission is to the world, to every segment of society. We are called upon

by God to plant the cross on every domestic hill. We weren't saved to be off to ourselves in some little corner celebrating our own selfish concerns. We were not redeemed to be nice people apart from everybody else. The last time I looked at the marching orders they read, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The church needs the vision of Paul. The ability to scrutinize systems and analyze governments and decipher those things that separate people from people. Paul made very clear the nature of the adversary when he declared that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." So, I ask you a question as I bring this in. Do you know your place in this mad world order? Do you know your posture in the present cultural predicament? You're supposed to be what the Hebrews call a _____, ?? a resident alien, you are here but the main you is located somewhere else. You are in the world but not of the world. Come on now, you live here but your home is on high. You are a resident here temporarily. You're here for the time being. Your citizenship is in another country. Yes! In a word, you're supposed to be a saint in Caesar's household. You are tabernacled here, but your kingdom is not of this world. You love America but your highest love is beyond the din and dither of these shores. You recognize the flag, but you glory in the cross! For something happened at the cross. At the cross! At the cross! Where I first saw the light and the burden of my heart rolled away. It was there by faith I received my sight and now I'm happy all the day. (Jones is quoting lyrics from the hymn "At the Cross") There is a hill higher than capitol hill. There's a place more exalted and more sublime than Washington. The name of it is Calvary and towering over all the wracks of time. There's a cross on a green hill far away. Now don't go out of here and accuse me of disloyalty to this land. I love America but I just happen to love God more and I have to look at the flag through the eyes of the cross and I'm compelled to say whatever necessary. America, you're wrong. You're sowing the wind and your harvest is the whirlwind. America, put up your sword, for they that live by the sword shall die by the sword. America, it's not by might, not by power but by my spirit says the Lord. America, whatsoever you shall sow you gotta reap. America, the way of the cross leads home. I'm your subject. I'm a citizen but I belong to the Christ. I have to listen to the Christ and speak for the Christ. If I hold my peace the rocks might cry out and I don't want rocks to tell my story. God's been too good to me for me to let rocks make my testimony. If Christians continue to remain silent there'll be geological disturbances, there'll be convulsions in the earth, the jaws of hell will open wide. We've been nailed to the cross and in the cross experience, what happens to me as a Christian is really unimportant. For the cross spells God-like goodness and creative conflict. If you're tied to the cross, you understand that the body may die but soul lives on. The body they may kill, but God's word abideth still. That cross is an ugly thing, it's a bloody thing. It's flesh-smearred, its blood soaked. The cross is doing what you don't have to do. The cross is suffering for his sake, and I have to tell Caesar when he's wrong. I have to obey the cross. For my kingdom is not of this world. For my kingdom originated in the heart of God. Its origin is not in the earth, by him were all things made, that without him was not anything made that was made and then the resources of my kingdom come from beyond. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God and my kingdom's destiny is eternal. Powers will fail. Principalities will fall. Empires will collapse. Governments will wane. The world itself will end. The earth's demise will signal the commencement of the kingdom triumphant, but my kingdom will stand forever. I looked with Paul the other day and I saw the whole creation groaning and travailing, acting like it was waiting for something to happen. I looked with old man Daniel, and I saw a stone cut out of the mountain without hands rolling down through the ages, breaking every earthly kingdom into pieces. That stone is the kingdom of God, without beginning

and without ending. Yes! Oh, ye sons and daughters of the most high, lift up your eyes on high and see. High above every flag stands the cross of Christ. Look at Jesus standing before Pilate in the dark of that early Jerusalem morning surrounded by hate but totally without fear. He stands before Rome's representative. His foes are there, his friends are gone. Pilate is in authority. "Jesus, tell us who you are. Are you a king? Your complainants charge you with treason. They accuse you of disloyalty to Caesar. Is that charge correct, Jesus? Are you a king? Answer no and go free, answer yes and— Jesus are you a king?" And Jesus, bless his holy name. Jesus, my Lord, and my king. Jesus, hope you know him today. Jesus stood there with both the flag and the cross in view. He looked Pilate squarely and high and said with no fear and no trembling, "Pilate, my kingdom is not of this world. To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth." Pilate wanted Jesus to pledge allegiance to Rome, but Jesus turned from the flag and headed for the cross. My kingdom is not, is not, is not, of this world! Oh, thank God today if you've been captured by the cross. For make no mistake about it, this world will fail you. The best of friends will let you down. The United Nations will disappoint, and Washington will fail to deliver but I know somebody—I know a king above all others, he will not fail, Jesus is his name. Jesus! Yes! Jesus! And my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood, and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but holy lean on Jesus' name. On Christ! On Christ! The solid rock I said— all of the ground is sinking. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! My kingdom is not of this world. I'm controlled by the cross! I've been captured by the cross! I speak for the cross! I'm moved by the cross and the world can't do me no harm for I'm anchored in Jesus. Yes! Let me quit for your sake.

My word to you is to put on the whole of it and fight the good fight of faith. For we are soldiers of the cross. Servants in the army of the great king. My Lord shall reign. My king will come in the day of his own choosing. He will part the air and come for his own, yes! _____?? arrives and the living righteous shall be called up to meet him. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Thank you. The doors of the church are open. Anybody here today who came here apart from the kingdom of Jesus Christ? You need not depart in the same condition. He died for you on that cross. He died for your sins. He died for your eternal redemption. He that believeth that Jesus is Christ shall be saved. We bid you come if you're here today and you're living in this city and know the Christ but have no church at home you ought to hook up anew with the visible kingdom. We bid you to come as we stand and sing this great hymn of invitation, "The Solid Rock," selection 223. Let's stand and sing it to the glory of God. Who will come? The master is calling. God bless. God bless, whoever you are. Come right on. God bless you, sir. Is there another who will come? The master is calling. Oh, God bless.

(organ plays while choir, congregation and Jones sing "The Solid Rock")

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