



## Ambassadors for Christ

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor 5:20)

We pray, "*Thy kingdom come*" and "*For thine is the kingdom*" (Matt 6:10-13).

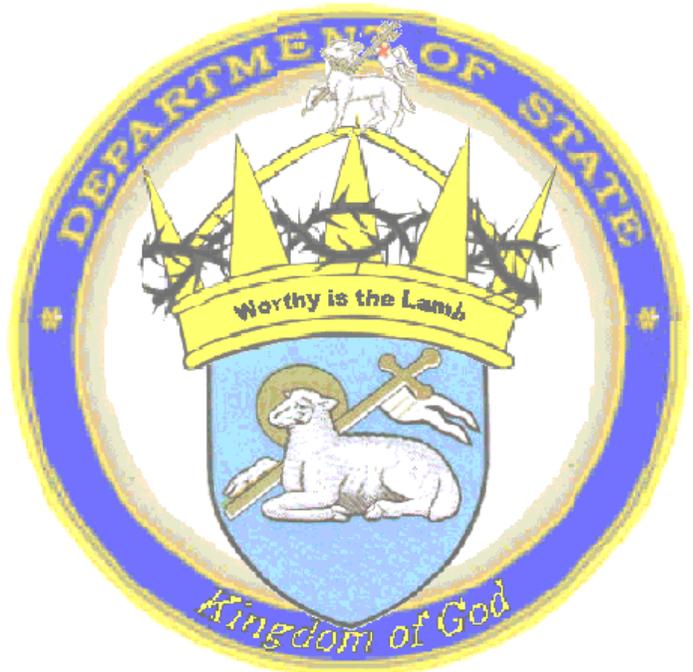
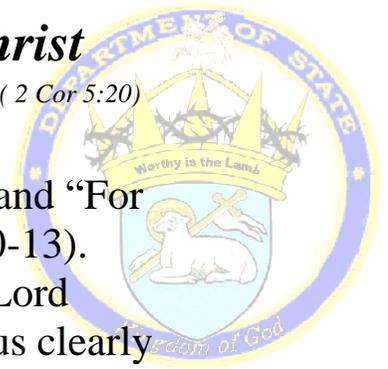
Twice in His sample prayer the Lord instructed us to refer to the Kingdom of God! Later, Jesus clearly taught that the Kingdom of God would be bestowed upon His disciples, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure *to give you the kingdom*" (Luke 12:32).

But exactly how should we perceive the kingdom? We understand that every kingdom has a king, territory, subjects, and laws. The question is, "How do these specific kingdom elements relate to us?" How should we approach the Kingdom of God?

What is a kingdom? Perhaps we should begin with God's first instruction concerning humanity, "*let them have dominion*" (Gen 1:26). God intended for and instructed humanity to rule! Dominion is rulership. Notice as the passage continues, "So God created man *in his own image*, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and *God said unto them*, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue it*: and *have dominion over* the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon *the earth*" (Gen 1:27-28). According to God's spoken word at the creation of Adam, he and all of his offspring were supposed to have exercised dominion (*rulership*) over the whole territory of the earth!

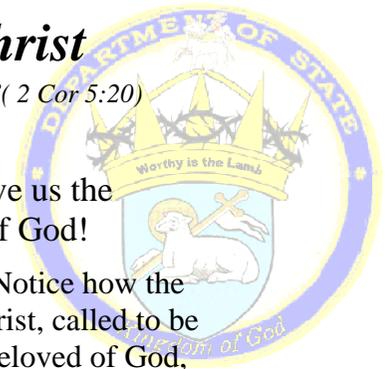
However, a king is supposed to have power! What kind of power do all of God's children possess? Notice Jesus' answer, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 *Which were born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God*" (John 1:12-13). The Apostle John makes it clear that when we are born of God that we have power (*authority*) to be sons of God! We cannot





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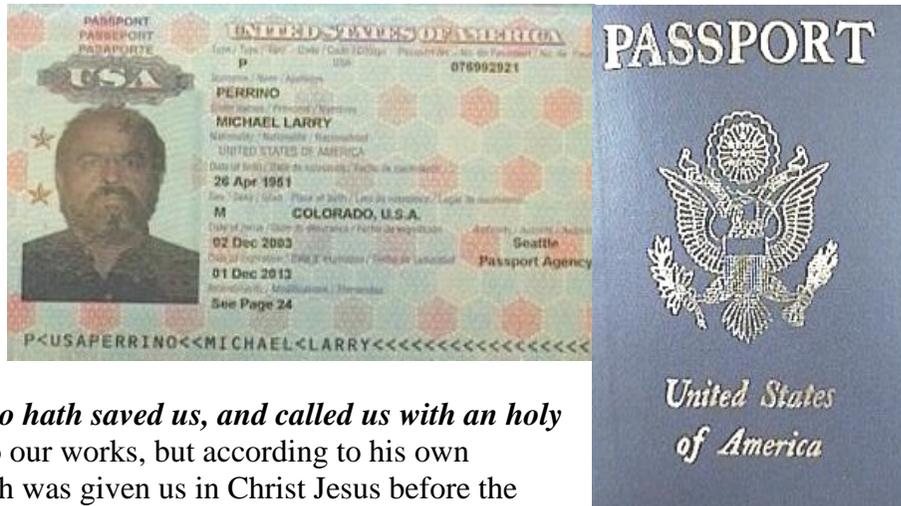
minimize the fact that Jesus Himself gave us the authority to act in the capacity of sons of God!

Christians are also referred to as "saints." Notice how the Apostle Paul simply refers to this select group, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God . . . 7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, **called to be saints**" (Rom 1:1-7). Daniel the prophet wrote that "**the saints** of the most High **shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever**, even for ever and ever" (Dan 7:18). A saint, "hagios" in the Greek means one set apart or consecrated for a holy purpose. We must remove the ethereal concept of sainthood that has been passed down to us through religion. Paul consistently simply refers to all Christians as saints:

- "Distributing to the necessity of **saints**" (Rom 12:13);
- "make a certain contribution for the poor **saints** which are at Jerusalem" (Rom 15:26);
- "receive her in the Lord, as becometh **saints**" (Rom 16:2);
- "Do ye not know that the **saints** shall judge the world?" (1 Cor 6:2).

Below is a copy of the first page of my passport. My Passport is a credential (*official document*) that gives surety (*or declares*) to all who might read on all parts of the earth that I am a citizen of the Unites States of America. Nevertheless, all of us who are called to be

"saints" are set apart or consecrated for a higher purpose. This means that we have a higher calling than mere citizenship in whatever country we might dwell, "be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 9 **Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling**, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim 1:8-9). Now what exactly does Paul mean that we are called "**with an holy calling**?" Does our holy calling conflict with our national physical citizenship?



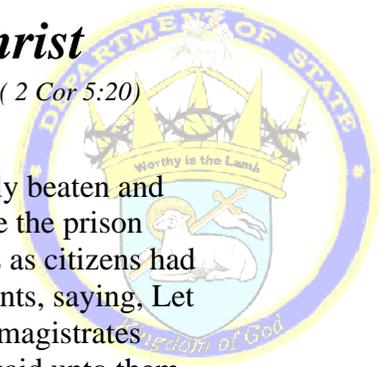
There is a difficult word from the Old English which is rendered in the KJV of the Bible as the word "conversation." This word appears eighteen times in the New Testament; however, in merely two instances does the word come from the Greek word "**politeuomai**" meaning to behave as a citizen! In all other instances the word "conversation" merely means one's conduct. In our modern vernacular the word "conversation" has a whole different meaning. The Apostle Paul penned both occurrences of the word "**politeuomai**" in the book of Philippians since he was specifically referencing the act of behaving as a citizen!

Paul understood citizenship from God's perspective and perhaps better than any other New Testament writer. Notice the following occasion where Paul introduces his Roman



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citizenship. Paul and Silas had been unjustly beaten and imprisoned and they refused to simply leave the prison when they were set free because their rights as citizens had been grossly violated, "And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. 36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. 37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, **being Romans**, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. 38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: **and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans**" (Acts 16:38). What are the details of exactly what is going on in this passage? The magistrates (*judges*) became frightened for their own lives when they realized what they had carelessly ordered Roman citizens to be beaten and imprisoned! They appropriately feared, because the Roman law insisted that a public insult upon any Roman citizen was an insult upon the whole Roman populace. In order to keep their empire strong, the Roman government took these affronts very seriously and customarily exacted suitable reckoning. Therefore, these magistrates were justifiably frightened because severe penalties were regularly carried out upon persons who violated the rights of any Roman citizen!

The point is that Paul stressed his legal rights as a Roman citizen. Further, Paul insisted upon the proper conduct due his citizenship rights! With this information regarding Paul's concept of citizenship, notice what he wrote to the church at Philippi, "Only let your conversation "*politeuomai*" (*citizenship*) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Phil 1:27). What could Paul have meant? What does citizenship have to do with the Gospel of Christ? How could these two apparently different concepts relate? Let's allow Paul's own words to answer these questions, "For our conversation "*politeuomai*" (*citizenship*) is in heaven!" (Phil 3:20). Paul establishes that first and foremost, Christians are citizens of the Kingdom of God! Now what exactly does that mean to us? If I am a citizen of the United States of America how does that affect my citizenship in the Kingdom of God?

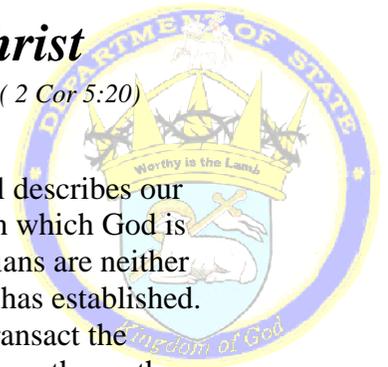
Notice how Paul described his and our function within the Government of God, "we are **ambassadors for Christ**, as though God did beseech you by us" (2 Cor 5:20). The Moffet translation uses the term "envoy" which is an *emissary* or representative of another government. An ambassador is a minister of the highest rank who is employed by a state at the court of another. The ambassador manages the concerns of his own government by representing his leader's interests in the lands where he is sent. He is sent to perform what the leader of the government would himself carry out if he were present in that distant land. The ambassador makes known the will of his government, and negotiates all matters which affect the interests of his government among the people to whom he/she is sent. Notice Paul's attitude, "I am an ambassador **in bonds**: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph 6:20). However Paul was prisoner and we should realize that no greater affront can be bestowed upon a nation than to mistreat their ambassador.

All around the world, ambassadors and their embassies are considered sacred (*like the word "saint" this means set apart for a special purpose*) territory. The ambassador's person and staff and embassy grounds are regarded as inviolable. Now remember, the ambassador is supposed to do only what the leader of the government would do were he himself present. In the same fashion, Christians are ambassadors for Christ and are sent to do what He



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would do were He physically present. Paul describes our ministry as one to make known the terms on which God is disposed to be reconciled to people. Christians are neither supposed to negotiate new terms, nor to change those, which Jesus Himself has established. An ambassador never promotes his own welfare; instead, he/she is sent to transact the business that the Son of God would engage in were He physically present upon the earth. Clearly, ambassadors for Christ have an office of great dignity and responsibility; they serve the King of kings and Lord of lords!

The international term for an embassy is a **diplomatic mission**. Notice that the term "mission" implies that the ambassador is sent to fulfill the will of the sending country. The role of the mission is to ensure and protect the interests and nationals of the sending State while they remain in the foreign State. The mission is considered to be part of the territory owned by the sending nation. The mansion on the Sixteenth Street (shown at right) owned by the Lithuanian Embassy since 1924 is the building longest owned without interruption by a single embassy in Washington, D.C.

In order to function properly and without any interference in the receiving State, the embassy is afforded rights and immunities (such as *diplomatic immunity*). In our modern society, these rights are actually codified in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. *Diplomatic immunity* is a form of legal immunity. *Diplomatic immunity* ensures that diplomats are given safe passage and are not susceptible to the civil and criminal laws of the host country. Nevertheless, a diplomat can be expelled as undesirable - *persona non grata*. Under certain special circumstances, the official's home country can waive immunity; this tends to happen only when the individual in question has obviously committed a serious capital offense completely unconnected with his/her diplomatic role.

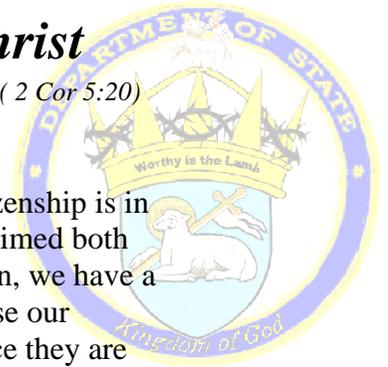


You will recall that my passport is considered in diplomatic terms to be a credential (or *official document*) that declares my citizenship. Whenever a new ambassador comes to the United States of America, he/she must present the credentials given by their sending country as proof that they represent the full authority of their government. Usually the President of the United States will meet with these ambassadors and say, "Since you have presented these documents as proof that you represent the government of \_\_\_\_\_, I therefore recognize you as the ambassador extraordinary and plenty potentiary." Through these words the President is stating that if he has some problem or issue to resolve with the sending country, he will take up his concern with that ambassador who is authorized to represent his home country and that the ambassador has the full powers of his government.



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We are ambassadors for Christ and our citizenship is in heaven! Just like the Apostle Paul, who claimed both Roman citizenship and citizenship in heaven, we have a dual citizenship! As a citizen of two different governments we must exercise our responsibilities within both governments. Many Christians believe that since they are citizens of heaven they must not meddle in the affairs of "the world." This kind of reasoning has caused many to disregard their rights to vote. However, notice the contrast in Paul, "I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, **a citizen of no mean city**: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people" (Acts 21:39). Here again we find Paul claiming rights to speak to the populace because he is a citizen of Tarsus. Paul frequently exercised his rights as a dual citizen; he used his human citizenship rights to advance the cause of the Kingdom of God! Just like Paul, we too are dual citizens. Notice Page 5, Paragraph 9 from the United States passport – ***"Dual Citizens: A person who has the citizenship of more than one country at the same time is considered a dual citizen. A dual citizen may be subject to the laws of the other country that considers that person its citizen while in that country's jurisdiction, including conscription for military service. Dual nationality may hamper efforts to provide U.S. consular protection to dual citizens in the foreign country of their other nationality."***

Websters defines "citizen" as (1) an inhabitant of a city or town; especially one entitled to the rights and privileges of a freeman. (2) a member of a state. A native or naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it.

We may or may not have difficulty in agreeing with the Biblical concept but we Christians are all subjects of some human government. The word "subject" describes an individual that is placed under authority or control. This means that the "subject" owes obedience and allegiance to the power or dominion of another. Notice the Biblical teaching, "Fear God. **Honour the king.** 18 Servants, **be subject to your masters** with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward" (1 Peter 2:17-18); we see this concept again, **"Submit yourselves to every ordinance** of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be **to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors"** (1 Peter 2:13-14). Every Christian therefore has dual citizenship and is required by the New Testament to submit to human government!

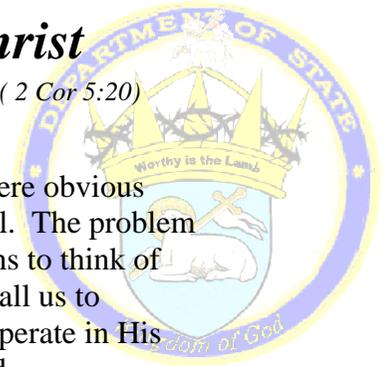
If you give it much thought you will realize that an individual's natural citizenship is rarely easy to discern. When my brother Ivan and I went to the Netherlands we obviously came across many people of foreign descent. There is no such thing as a stranger to my brother Ivan. While we were visiting a quaint old city mall a vibrant young couple with a small child engaged in a conversation with Ivan. This couple certainly looked and dressed in the European style. I immediately thought they must have been from the Netherlands; however, it turned out that they were from Ireland. The point is that human citizenship does not easily give us away! One's citizenship can be easily concealed.

Sadly, religion believes that one's garb should give away their citizenship. If we run into a foreign looking woman with a red dot on her forehead we immediately expect that the individual is of the Hindu faith. Likewise if we come across a man dressed in black with a prominent white collar we expect that this individual is a Catholic. If another man has tassels hanging from his waist we tend to identify this man with Judaism. If a woman is wearing a berka we are fairly certain that she is Islamic. The problem is that religion has



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brought our modern society to the point where obvious identifying characteristics seem only natural. The problem with this whole idea is that everybody begins to think of religion in terms that have nothing to do with Biblical faith! Jesus did not call us to identify ourselves with some obvious external garb; rather, he called us to operate in His faith and to act as ambassadors since we are citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus was so inconspicuous that on several occasions He simply blended into the crowd. Notice that His enemies, "were filled with wrath, 29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. 30 But **he passing through the midst of them went his way**" (Luke 4:28-30). We are certain that Jesus was not easily distinguishable in a crowd; in fact, when Jesus was arrested it was necessary for Judas to point out specifically who Jesus was, "Now he that betrayed him **gave them a sign**, saying, **Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he**: hold him fast" (Matt 26:48). Jesus wore no special garb that would set Him apart from the crowd.

An ambassador is the representative of the highest rank to his home country. The ambassador embodies his home state. The responsibility of an ambassador is to seek his government's interests and to influence those of in the state of which he is a guest. The ambassador certainly does not need to take a side job so he can provide for his family's needs. Survival is not his highest concern! Why? Because all of his needs are met by the state that has sent him into service!

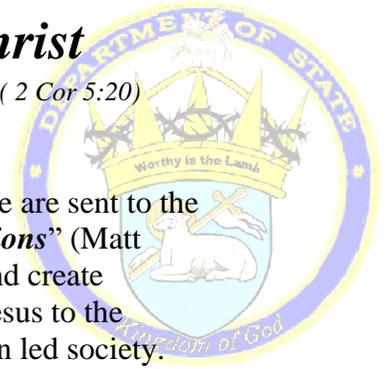
It is important for us to realize that an ambassador is not a political position in the sense that he needs to run for office. Instead, an ambassador is appointed by his head of state, "Ye have not chosen me, but **I have chosen you, and ordained you**" (John 15:16). Once we are chosen we are sent on a mission and Jesus gives us our assignment, "it shall be told thee of all **things which are appointed for thee** to do" (Acts 22:10). Since Jesus selected and assigned us then He will meet all of our needs. He also gives us authority to use his name, "And whatsoever **ye shall ask in my name**, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If **ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it**" (John 14:13-14). Jesus obviously knows that we will have needs in order to fulfill the assignment that He has given to us. He expects us to seek provisions from the Father in His name. We must realize that since Jesus appointed He will also provide for us. It is our job to discover our assignment; once we do that, He provides all of our needs, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19). We are instructed to go to the Father who is our source in the name of Jesus, "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:15). We need to realize that all information, all resources, all power, and all authority belong to Jesus; the Father distributes these resources as we ask in Jesus' name, "he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:15)!

Obviously, our needs are determined by our assignment, it is our dreams that point us to our assignment. We must realize that God placed a dream within us in the first place! If we can see it we can be it. If you would like additional Biblical assistance regarding the discovery of your personal assignment, you can locate the **Rivkah Ministries**, Bible Studies entitled, "**What is your assignment**," and "**Vision**." Both of these studies are available on the Internet at the address: <http://www.Rivkah.org>.



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The ambassador's job is inter-national. We are sent to the nations, "Go ye therefore, and teach all *nations*" (Matt 28:19). Our job is to exercise diplomacy and create relationships between kingdoms. We are sent so that we can re - **present** Jesus to the nation in which we are sent. In essence, we re - **present** Jesus into this satan led society. No! He is not happy by our assignment; however we have diplomatic immunity! That is why John said, "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). In fact we have diplomatic privileges (*the favor of God*)!

Currently, Colin Powell is the Secretary of State for the United States of America. His counterparts in other nations are usually referred to as, "Minister of Foreign Affairs." Whether as Secretary of State or Minister of Foreign Affairs, these individuals are the chief diplomats who represent their respective governments. King Jesus is our Chief Ambassador and He acts as the Father's Chief Representative, "he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev 19:16). In the United States, after the President, Colin Powell is the most powerful voice concerning foreign affairs. Even though George W. Bush is the leader, every embassy gets their instructions from Colin Powell and not directly from the President. If an ambassador were to bypass Colin Powell and go instead directly to President Bush that ambassador would be operating out of order. In the same fashion, we go to the Father but only in the name of Jesus Christ! There is a chain of command that we must learn to follow.

Whenever possible, President Bush meets with Colin Powell to give him new instructions. Colin Powell then sends circulars to each ambassador around the world. In this same fashion, the Father regularly meets with our Lord Jesus and gives Him new instructions. It is our job to meet daily with Jesus and get our up-to-date instructions, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt 6:33); "Give us *this day* our *daily bread*" (Matt 6:11). In those daily meetings between the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is also present and He acts in the capacity as our comforter (*parakletos* an intercessor, advocate, consoler). The Holy Spirit performs the duties of our secretary since He is present at those meetings. He gives to us whatever information we may need in order to complete our daily mission. The Holy Spirit is our communication link; therefore, we must spend daily time in prayer!

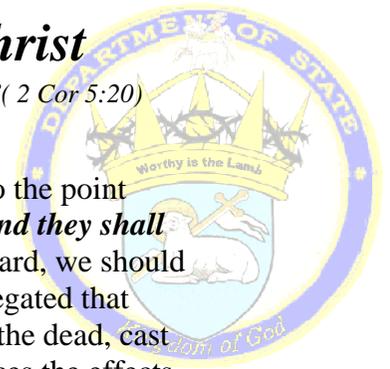
We are part of the Government of God, "is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Jesus told the Apostles, "*ye which have followed me, in the regeneration* when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt 19:28), He likewise has thrones reserved for each of us, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me" (Luke 22:29).

The proof of our credentials is the power of the Kingdom of God that rests upon each of us. The point is that we each must demonstrate the power of the Kingdom of God in our lives, "He that believeth on me, *the works that I do shall he do also*; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12). The works that each of us accomplish through Jesus Christ are proof that the Kingdom of God has sent us forth. If we are sickly, in poverty, and bound by problems, then our credentials need strengthening! On the other hand if we have overcome these things then we have the proof of power



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working in our lives. Christians must get to the point where, **"they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover"** (Mark 16:18)! In this specific regard, we should

never desire to send a sick person directly to Jesus to be healed; He has delegated that responsibility to us, "as ye go . . . 8 **Heal the sick**, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils" (Matt 10:7-8). He has given to each of us His power that produces the effects that He was able to accomplish. In the same fashion, it is expected that an ambassador of the United States of America, whose mission is in the United Kingdom will handle all the day-to-day problems that arise in his mission. The ambassador has the power to resolve these issues by operating in the name of Colin Powell with the full backing of the United States government behind his decisions.

The Pharisees and the Herodians came to Jesus one day and said, "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. 17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he saith unto them, **Whose is this image** and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and **unto God the things that are God's**" (Matt 22:16-21). As we read this passage we should consider Jesus' question, "**Whose is this image?**" More specifically, whose image is on each of us? "**God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him**; male and female created he them" (Gen 1:27); "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and **unto God the things that are God's**" (Matt 22:21). Since we are in the image of the heavenly, our citizenship belongs to the heavenly!

Just like Colin Powell might invite an ambassador to the White House to meet with the President, so too must Jesus reveal the Father unto us, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; **neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son**, and he **to whomsoever the Son will reveal him**" (Matt 11:27).

We are God's representative in our classrooms, offices, and homes. We represent the Government of God to the unbelieving world and to everyone in which we come into contact. Therefore, we must be continually Kingdom minded.

Our job is to re – **present** Jesus to those around us; as we do this He takes care of all of our needs. We cannot hinder the government that we serve by being focused upon survival. Survival should be the lowest concern in our minds. Notice how Jesus expressed His ministry, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that **the Father is in me, and I in him**" (John 10:37-38). Jesus prayed, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).

Our daily prayer should be, "**Thy will be done in earth**, as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10).

So, "How should we approach the Kingdom of God?" As ambassadors for Christ!

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