

Jury Duty

April 19, 1994
92 Melville Avenue
Boston, MA 02124

Clerk, U.S..District Court 326
U.S. Courthouse
Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109

Attn: Jury Clerk

My name is Robert O'Rear and I am writing you, belatedly I realize, about the special grand jury duty I have been scheduled to appear at beginning this Thursday, April 21, 1994. I am very sorry to delay in communicating with you but I still need to tell you of my desire to be excused on the basis of the truth I know in my conscience. Let me explain.

I am member of a Messianic Community, that is, a community founded on the words of the Son of God which are found in the Bible. We are devoted to being His Body on the earth and our whole goal in life is to walk as He walked. Towards this aim we are obedient to His words and His example. His life is the very substance of our faith, and to fail to walk as He did is sin for us. However, to be forced to do so is repugnant to our consciences, and, we believe, to the freedoms we have under God in this nation.

It is in our constitution as God's people (the New Testament), that YAHSHUA - the Hebrew name of the Son of God - refused to be a judge over his fellow man. This is what is written in the gospel according to Luke, chapter 12, verses 13 and 14:

"And someone in the crowd said to Him, "teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbiter over you?"

If the Son of God would not be a judge over His fellow man, I can do nothing less than follow His example. All of His words are to be obeyed by His disciples. He told them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word he shall never see death." (John 8:51) For me to sit on jury duty then, in defiance of the clear example set by the One I have given my life to, would be to break His word. I can not in good conscience do so.

I have lived in the Body of Messiah for 16 years. I have renounced the acquisition of any personal wealth. I have received no salary or wages of any kind - except for having my personal needs met by the community. My commitment is total and I can but follow the directives of Paul the Apostle who commanded the Church members to be as soldiers: "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him." (2 Timothy 2:4)

We understand and appreciate the necessity of jury duty. We give thanks daily for the police and we pray for the government. We pay our taxes. In fact we obey all the laws that are binding upon the citizens of this nation except in the rare instances where they conflict with the word of God. This is one of those cases where the law would cause us to violate the clear example of our Teacher. To be like Him is our goal, and it is also the goal He has set for us, "A pupil is not above his teacher, but everyone, when he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher." (Luke 6:40)

The king we serve proclaimed, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were not of this world, then My servants would be fighting that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." (John 18:36)

Just as it is for those who are of this world to fight its wars, so it is for them to serve on the juries that judge their fellow men. So if compelled to serve I could render no judgments because of my loyalty to the Son of God. With sincere apologies for the lateness of my letter and my request, I ask you therefore excuse me from federal grand jury duty.

Sincerely yours,

Robert O'Rear