

# The Importance of Christians and Churches Speaking Out About Cultural and Civil Problems



There are not many churches and pastors who talk about cultural and social issues from the pulpit, topics such as the wars America has been involved in, the southern border crises, the evils of the LGBTQ agenda, the genocide Israel is committing in Gaza, etc. The only ones I know of in the USA besides the Christians in this interview are Chuck Baldwin of Liberty Fellowship in Montana, Michael Hoggard of Bethel Church, Missouri, Steven Anderson of Faithful Word Baptist Church in Tempe, Arizona, and John MacArthur of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, who defied the governor of California by disregarding the COVID-19 lockdown mandates. I'm sure there must be many others, but obviously, they are way too few because the churches in America have *not* had the effect on society today they used to have up to the 19th century.

The transcript and video below is an interview led by two leaders of an organization called, [Our Country Our Choice](#) (OCOC), Colonel (retired) Douglas Macgregor and Pastor Casey (that's the only name given.) They discuss current events with a pastor, [Gary Hamrick of Cornerstone Chapel](#). I deem them all to be solid Bible Believing Jesus Christ following Christians.

## Transcript

**Gary Hamrick:** It's unfortunate but a lot of times Christians today feel like they're not supposed to get involved in politics in any way shape or form. The fact of the matter is **the First Amendment was given to us to keep government out of the Church, not the Church out of the government.** And so unfortunately too many Christians have been sitting on the sidelines, and a lot of pastors have been encouraging them to sit it out. The result is, that we have a country in which many of us are not liking the direction (it's going).

And we always understand that in the big picture of things, of course, the enemy is at work. And the Bible tells us the world is going to get more corrupt and more evil as we get closer to the return of Christ. But, at the same time, the Church should be that restraining force against evil in our world. If we sit it out then evil will just run rampant.

That's why Christians are supposed to be involved. Because why? Jesus told us to be salt and light! And salt and light means you penetrate the darkness as light, and you flavor the world as salt.

And so unfortunately too many Christians have been sitting it out, and too many pastors think that you shouldn't get political. My response is, look, all these issues that we're looking at today when everything from the whole transgender sexual identity confusion, the thing about same-sex marriage and abortion and all these issues, I mean, these are issues that the Bible speaks about. So **when the government has gotten involved in these issues of life and liberty and sexuality, they've crossed into our lane.** And so **the Church needs to be engaged to be a voice of reason and a restraining force against evil** in our world today.

So that's my basic take on why Christians should be involved because there's a mandate to be salt and sight and to not sit it out, to be a restraining force against evil in our world.

**Pastor Casey:** Fantastic! Well-spoken. In fact, God's moral law does restrain evil. One of the things that we like to say here at OCOC is that the truth will set you free but you must speak. And so the truth will set you free, but when we speak God's moral law, it has a restraining factor. Thou shalt not lie, and thou shalt not kill, those things that God has established from the very beginning. When we speak those things, it helps not only to restrain evil but to guide Christians. It also is a conviction factor.

When we talk about the Gospel, it brings the lost under conviction and they see that they are sinners in need of a savior. Tell us briefly about the Gospel before we move on to the next subject if you don't mind.

**Gary Hamrick:** Well, the Gospel is central to what what we're about. I mean, it's the good news of Jesus Christ, putting your faith and trust in what Christ did for us.

The beautiful thing about Christianity is that it's different from all other world religions. All other world religions put the burden on you to try to get up to God. Christianity tells us, the Gospel tells us, that God came down to us. And He took on flesh and died for our sins. And so our faith and trust are in Him as our Lord and Savior.

And that's important to add to, and I'm glad you asked the question because sometimes I'll get accused of, "You're putting government above God." Not at all. We believe the central message of Truth is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But at the same time, Martin Luther once said, "If you preach the Gospel in all aspects with the exception of the issues which deal specifically with your time, you are not preaching the Gospel at all." Jesus is central to everything we're about, and from Him, all other things flow.

**Pastor Casey:** Well said! Thank you very much. In regards to Christian participation in the Gospel, I think nothing else needs to be said. And now I'm really interested in how we can encourage perhaps a mindset towards these endless wars. You said on your website that you're a News Junkie and I'm sure

you've seen the colonel and his contributions, so you guys dialogue a little bit in regards to the two front wars that are going on and why and all of these things that us as Christians need to be educated on how we view these types of things to be able to help steer our country in the right direction.

**Gary Hamrick:** Well Colonel, I'm going to defer to you to answer that question first.

**Col. Douglas Macgregor:** Well, to go back a little bit, you know the whole point of the (US) Constitution if you read through the statements of the people that wrote it up, was to leave us in the maximum freedom possible. And that's really the idea. The Constitution is all about *what the government cannot do*. It doesn't say what we must do, it says this is what the government cannot do to *you*. And we forget that. And increasingly we're dealing with people in Washington who are desperate to fundamentally change us. They want to change us by bringing in millions and millions of people whom we know nothing about, who are not coming to become Americans. That's all nonsense. They're coming to jump into the giant consumption machine and profit. We know that. And of course, our rule of law has been largely destroyed as a result of this sort of thing.

The issue is fundamentally this: The wars that we've been involved with, certainly since the Korean War, are almost universally things that we started. I'd say that perhaps the Persian Gulf Wars are one exception. We essentially responded to something that had happened in the region. Our goals were limited, and we went and then we left. All of the other wars have involved precipitating hostility for reasons removed from the interests of the American people because a small number of people in Washington made decisions that it was in our interest to do something without ever consulting us.

No one declares war. There are few if any debates anywhere about what we should or shouldn't do. Everyone seems to be very anxious to bomb and sanction repeatedly. If we take Christianity seriously, I don't think Jesus would tell us to sanction and bomb everyone into submission.

But I don't hear enough from Christians about that. Why are they not standing up and questioning the wisdom and the conduct of these wars? How many people have we killed unnecessarily? How much have we destroyed unnecessarily? And at the same time, is this a distraction so that we pay no attention to what's being done to us by our own government here at home? So why don't you think about that and tell us what your views are?

**Gary Hamrick:** The debate I suppose is over America's vital interests in the world and whether or not we should get involved in certain wars to protect those vital interests. And at times I'm a little fuzzy on what's our vital interests. I don't know, sometimes when I see us engaged in different wars, the one thing that troubles me is you mentioned the border.

The border is a huge crisis right now. And you're right, it's not people coming over necessarily to find a new beginning. I think a big concern for me at least is the potential for terrorism and terrorist cells to be coming

into the United States through a very porous southern border in particular. I just heard yesterday that even the northern border has more terrorists on the watch list. And so, we have to protect our borders.

By the way, God's not opposed to borders. He kind of divided up the nation of Israel to the 12 tribes of Israel. And they had borders in which to live and the nations had borders. And so that's pretty biblical.

I've been concerned with how much money are we sending to the war in Ukraine that could be put into protecting our own borders. So there does seem to be a conflict of how we're spending our resources for some of these battles compared to what we need even to protect our own home front.

**Col. Douglas Macgregor:** Yeah, I agree. If I could just mention that the border crisis should be deemed as a war, and it is because it's one-sided and we're not coming to the forefront there. And so if we were taking it seriously, and we were to dispatch our military or our army over there, and put a stop to the cartels, to put a stop to all of the traffickings, to put a stop to all of the ridiculous rapes and child abductions, and this is a crisis and it's definitely been ignored to a big extent. I would really love to see Christians say, "We've had enough. We've got to stand up for what's right."

**Gary Hamrick:** I just had a friend who went down to the southern border to personally eyewitness some things, and he said he saw three buses unload of military age-fighting Chinese men! Now, why are three busloads of military-age Chinese young men coming across our border? Not for good reasons, I guarantee you.

**Col. Douglas Macgregor:** That's right. And by the way, a number of those are, I'm told, people that were actually sought in China for various criminal activities. Some of them were involved in the shadow banking industry with financial crime. This is a huge issue right now in China. They're really going to town, so to say, against senior party members and bureaucrats who have cheated and stolen vast sums of money. And these are probably some of those people. That's the biggest problem.

A friend of mine who is from El Salvador sent me an email last night and he wrote, "Don't people understand that a lot of the men who are from Latin America who want to join the US military, I know where they're from, they're MS-13 (an international criminal gang)! They're joining the Army or the Marines so they can get some experience, then get out and continue their criminal activities here with citizenship. This is a catastrophe for us. He pointed out that it has taken him six years to become an American citizen. So he was very upset about this whole thing."

I find people who have come here legally are among the most strident opponents of illegal immigration. And too many Americans are too busy watching the latest football game and following Taylor Swift's affairs to pay attention to what's really important. We have got to get their attention, and I don't know what it's going to take.

Well, would you stop for a second and tell us in your estimation what you think we could do? We're an organization that is not satisfied with simply complaining, we want to take action. We want to cooperate with people, particularly with churches across the country. And by the way, we are not exclusively a religious organization. You don't have to be a Christian per se to be a member of OCOC. We just regard those (Christian) values largely as essentially founding values of the country. I know it's not popular to say that but that's true. But the point is, how do we get more churches, more organizations, and people who are similarly minded as we are to join us? We welcome any suggestions you have in any context that you want to suggest to us after the program.

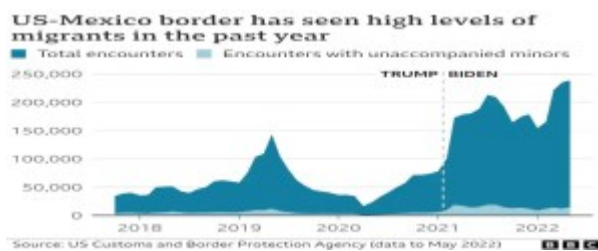
**Gary Hamrick:** I would be glad to share some of that with you. One of the things that I'm most concerned about is the lack of involvement of the local church in important civil and cultural issues, let alone governance. It's because there's silence in the pulpits! When pastors are not helping their people to become engaged in the issues of the day, they're not going to see the need and importance of doing so.

(End of transcript)

The above are the most important points in the video, about half of it. Please listen to the entirety below.

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## [The US Border Crisis – A Planned Foreign Invasion](#)



Retired US Marine and a former federal police officer Doug Thornton exposes the sinister reason behind the US border crisis. A must read!

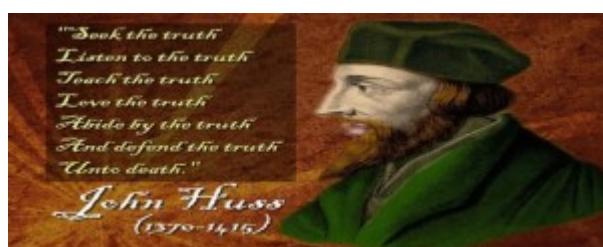
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## [Five Basic Postulates Of Protestantism](#)



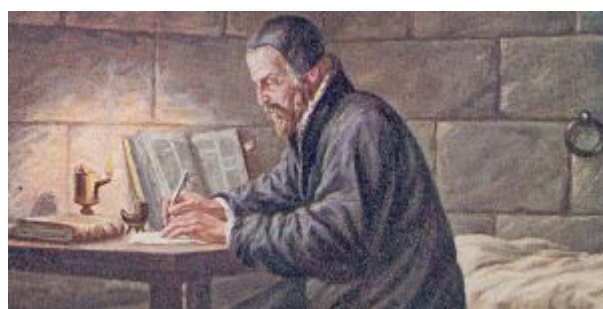
Five basic differences between Bible following Christians and Roman Catholics.

## God's Goose – The Story of John Huss



If there had been no John Huss there would have been no Martin Luther. And if there had been no Martin Luther then there would have been no Protestant Reformation and recovery of the gospel.

## William Tyndale's Concept of the Church



A regular visitor of this website suggested that I post testimonials of the martyrs and saints to inspire us all. The first person that came to mind was William Tyndale.

Quotes about Tyndale from [https://www.worldhistory.org/William\\_Tyndale/](https://www.worldhistory.org/William_Tyndale/)

William Tyndale (1494-1536) was a talented English linguist, scholar

and priest who was the first to translate the Bible into English. Tyndale objected to the Catholic Church's control of scripture in Latin and the prohibition against an English translation. His work formed the basis of all other English translations of the Bible up through the modern era.

Tyndale is recognized as the first to translate the Bible into English, rather than Wycliffe, because he worked from the original languages, not just the Latin translation, as Wycliffe had done.

Tyndale moved about to maintain safety after Henry VIII (r. 1509-1547) called for his arrest and was well-protected by wealthy merchants in Antwerp when he was betrayed by Henry Phillips, a man he thought was his friend, and imprisoned. He was executed by strangulation and his body burned at the stake in October 1536. Three years later, the English version of the Bible completed by his colleague Myles Coverdale (l. 1488-1569) was published in England with the king's approval. Tyndale and Coverdale are both honored in the present day as the first to translate the Bible into English even though it is acknowledged that Coverdale largely developed Tyndale's earlier work.

The following is a repost from

<https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/article/william-tyndales-concept-church>

## Introduction

A significant contribution to the reformation of the church in England was William Tyndale's translation of the Bible. With no support and little assistance, Tyndale produced an edition of the New Testament in 1526, and published translations of parts of the Old Testament from 1530 until 1534. Having profited from Luther's German translation and the writings of other continental reformers, Tyndale provided a version superior to the one by John Wycliffe. The Romanist clergy, however, noting that Tyndale's translation excluded words that were associated with such customs as penance, ceremonies, and confession to priests, decried the work as "*poison in the vulgar tongue.*" And the college of bishops claimed that Tyndale's version would infect the laity with the "*sickness of heresy.*" For it saw that Tyndale avoided vocabulary which papal decrees and other authorized documents had used to promote Romanist practices. In fact, wherever it was possible, Tyndale translated the original Greek and Hebrew with English words which had not been forced into false usage by Roman Catholicism.

It is not surprising that Tyndale's translation received much criticism from the Roman Catholic bishops. Especially Thomas More, who was the spokesman for English Roman Catholicism, inveighed against Tyndale.

In 1529 More wrote a treatise, the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies and Matters of Religion*, in which he attacked the vocabulary of the new English Bible. More chided Tyndale for "mistranslating" several words of theological importance: the translator used "love" instead of "charity" for the Greek

word *agape*, "senior" or "elder" instead of "priest" for *presbyteros*, and "repentance" instead of "penance" for the Greek *metanoia*. As one biographer observes, More declared Tyndale guilty of deliberately replacing theological terms with words not normally used by theologians.<sup>2</sup> And More tried to show that by means of these "radical" translations Tyndale was subverting the authority of the church and its doctrines.

Tyndale was obliged to reply to More, and he published *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* in 1531 to defend the vocabulary of his edition.<sup>3</sup> The debate between the two scholars was more than academic bickering, for as W. Clebsch notes, "resistance to More's attacks on certain words was for Tyndale philological and literary but above all *theological*."<sup>4</sup> The upshot of More's arguments was that Tyndale's translation was unauthorized, not sanctioned by the Roman Catholic church. With its unorthodox vocabulary, the English edition posed a threat to the authority of the church. More and Tyndale knew that the new translation of the Bible could become a powerful tool in the hands of the reformers. And More intended to halt the spreading of Tyndale's Bible by criticizing it forcefully.

One word in the new translation which annoyed More considerably was "congregation." Tyndale preferred this word to "church" as a rendering of the Greek *ekklesia* and the Hebrew *qahal* and *edah*. Herein Tyndale was following the lead given by Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German, in which Luther had avoided the word *Kirche*, preferring instead *Gemeinde*. Both reformers wished to avoid a word which in the popular mind referred to the so-called Holy Roman Church. Yet Tyndale's reasons for avoiding "church" were not merely epigonal, but were based upon his own observations of the government of the church in England, and of spiritual life. After all, it was for the English ploughboy that Tyndale had laboured.

As we investigate Tyndale's concept of the church, we must bear in mind that Tyndale is noted as a translator, not as a theologian. Unlike some of the continental reformers, he did not produce a systematic theology in which the doctrine of the church is exhaustively expounded. His statements about the church are unconnected, and little effort is made therein to link ecclesiology to other doctrines. For the doctrine of the church, Reformed readers are accustomed to turn to Book Four of Calvin's *Institutes*, to Articles 27-30 of the *Belgic Confession*, and to other Reformed confessions. However, because Tyndale was forced to defend, among other things, his translation of *ekklesia* with "congregation," he did write extensively about the church.

An examination of the concept of the church as it was formulated by one of the first English reformers will prove fruitful. Tyndale's writings reflect many scriptural ideas formulated by the continental reformers, especially Martin Luther. Whenever he deemed the thoughts of the other reformers sound, he incorporated them into his own writings, sometimes adapting them to the English setting. Tyndale was influenced also by other writers; John Hus, Huldrych Zwingli, and the followers of Wycliffe, the so-called Lollards, are but a few.<sup>5</sup> Yet Tyndale does display his own concept of the church, especially as he was forced to develop it in his translation of the Bible.



The purpose of this article is to reveal Tyndale's reasons for using "congregation" and not "church" in his English translation of the Bible, and to make some observations about Tyndale's concept of the church. I shall also note those features in Tyndale's ecclesiology which strike me as particularly Reformed, and shall offer some criticism of his ideas. Perhaps an appreciation for Tyndale's writings on the church will serve to sharpen our knowledge of a doctrine which remains relevant at the close of the twentieth century.

## Why Tyndale does not use "Church" in his Translations

As we might expect from a translator, Tyndale begins his *Answer* with an exposition of the meaning and usage of the word "church" in sixteenth century England. Tyndale observes that the word is used in different senses, and that some of these were promoted falsely by the Roman Catholic clergy to its own advantage. Since the word "church" may mislead the reader, Tyndale does not use it in his translation.

First Tyndale treats the literal meaning of the word "church":

it signifies a place or house, whither the Christian people were wont in the old time to resort ... to hear the word of doctrine, the law of God, and the faith of our Saviour Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

In short, "church" denotes the building in which the Word of God was preached. Tyndale goes on to describe the church building as it functioned before Roman Catholicism altered it.

In the ancient church building the minister preached the pure Word of God only, and prayed in a tongue that all men understood ... and of him (all) learned to pray at home and everywhere, and to instruct every man his household (11).

Tyndale makes it clear that the function which the building performed in former times was unlike that of the sixteenth century building. He states that for his contemporaries "church" no longer implies the place where the true Gospel is proclaimed. Indeed, he complains that in the so-called church of his age only voices without meaning are heard, and "*we be fallen into such ignorance, that we know of the mercy and promises, which are in Christ, nothing at all*" (11).

Tyndale avoids "church" in his translation because an important connotation of the word – the true preaching of the Gospel – is absent. Although he does not state so explicitly, Tyndale notes that one of the marks of the true church is lacking to the sixteenth century Romanist church. And as an advocate for reform, Tyndale is annoyed that Roman Catholicism had deprived "church" of this fundamental characteristic. It is unfortunate, however, that Tyndale overlooks the fact that the true church of Christ exists beyond human observation. Perhaps the decrepit state of the church in Tyndale's time

caused the reformer to think that the true church was not to be found in England. But we may say that the church which preached the gospel of Christ did exist and would always exist: the Word of God is everlasting. Careful and accurate use of the word "church" is therefore appropriate.

Tyndale also avoids "church" in his translation because it had come to signify the Romanist clergy, which he describes pejoratively as "*a multitude of shaven, shorn, and oiled.*" According to this apparently common usage the word could refer to the pope, cardinals, legates, bishops, abbots, or monks; indeed, to "*a thousand names of blasphemy and hypocrisies*" (12). In everyday parlance the entire hierarchy within Roman Catholicism was referred to by the word "church." Tyndale offers many examples of this usage; one must suffice. He quotes a commonly heard saying:

You must believe in holy church [i.e. the clergymen], and do as they teach you (12).

Tyndale avoids translating the Greek *ekklesia* or Hebrew *qahal* with "church," because the reader may get the impression that the existence of numerous Roman Catholic orders is justified by the word "church" in Scripture. Tyndale does not want to give this impression to the innocent reader who may not know that the Bible does not speak of monks, or abbots, or even of popes.

"Church" was used in the sixteenth century as an inclusive term for all those who *call* themselves Christians, "*though their faith be naught, or though they have no faith at all*" (13).<sup>7</sup> Just as "Christendom" is used in modern times to designate all those who call themselves Christians, so too the word "church" was used in the sixteenth century as a popular term for those who considered themselves Christians, although their thoughts, words and actions perhaps proved otherwise. Again, Tyndale suggests that the writers of the Bible did not employ the word for church in this sense; therefore he excludes "church" from his translation.

Tyndale also points out that the word "*has, or should have, another signification: a congregation; a multitude or a company gathered together in one, of all degrees of people*" (12). In this sense "church" refers to the *people* who are gathered together. And according to Tyndale the nature of that congregation is seen by "*the circumstances thereof.*" There may be a holy, righteous congregation, and there may be an ungodly, impious congregation. This distinction is based upon the two uses of *ekklesia* in the New Testament, as Tyndale himself knows well. Like the continental reformers, Tyndale uses Acts 19:32, 39, 41 (where the assembly in Ephesus is called *ekklesia*) as prooftexts that *ekklesia* is not used only to denote an assembly of Christians.

Tyndale explains what he means by a company of ... all degrees of people": "church" is used for "the whole multitude of all them that receive the name of Christ to believe in him and *not for the clergy only* (12).

To the modern reader Tyndale may seem to be stating the obvious, but in sixteenth century England many were led to believe that the church comprised only the Roman Catholic clergy. Tyndale struggles against the misappropriation of the term by one elite group. He offers a host of scriptural evidence which shows that *ekklesia* refers to the body of *all* believers. One text in which we read that the church comprises both the laity and the clergy is Galatians 1:13, where Paul writes that he had persecuted the church of God. Tyndale explains that Paul had tried to destroy "*not the preachers only, but all that believed generally*" (13). Comparing Scripture with Scripture, Tyndale adduces Acts 22:4 as further proof that Paul uses *ekklesia* in Galatians 1 to denote all the members of the church. For there he writes about his persecution of "*men and women*" of the church. Space prevents the discussion of all the other texts which Tyndale mentions in his condemnation of the restrictive use of "church." But the attention which Tyndale paid to this matter reveals to what extent the Roman Catholic hierarchy had appropriated for itself the word "church," and how it had excluded a vast number of believers.

While demonstrating that "church" refers to the laity as well as to the clergy, Tyndale offers another positive definition: "*... throughout all the Scripture, the church is taken for the whole multitude of them that believe in Christ in that place, in that parish, town, city, province, land, or throughout all the world*" (13). It is noteworthy that he speaks of the church local and the church universal in one breath. This is in keeping with the writings of the church in its early existence, during the apostolic and patristic eras. In one and the same sentence, Tyndale describes the church as the gathering of true believers in one place or throughout the world. It is interesting to note that the sharp distinction which many documents of the continental Reformation, and some modern theologians, have drawn between the local and universal church is not to be found here in Tyndale's treatise.

It is also interesting to read that Tyndale knows of a more strict usage of "church," whereby the word refers only to those who have been chosen by God's eternal decree.

"Sometimes it is taken specially for the elect only; in whose hearts *God* has written his law with His *Holy Spirit*, and given them a feeling faith of the mercy that is in *Christ Jesus* our Lord" (13).

From the words italicized in the quotation one may note that Tyndale describes the body of the elect in terms of the *triune* God. Such language reminds one of Calvin's definition in Institutes IV.1.7:

Sometimes by the term 'church' it means that which is actually in God's presence, into which no persons are received but those who are children of God by grace of adoption and true members of *Christ* by sanctification of the *Holy Spirit*.

Yet the differences between the two definitions are also telling: Tyndale avoids the word "grace," opting instead for "mercy;" he gives the law of God

a prominent position, and he does not speak explicitly of the sanctification of God's adopted children. Yet, according to both reformers, the elect are those who have been chosen by God the Father, saved by God the Son, and sanctified by God the Spirit. As we shall observe later, Tyndale knows that a difference exists between God's elect and the members of the manifest church.

## Why Tyndale uses "Congregation" in his Translations

Apart from the reasons stated above, Tyndale has no objection to the word "church." Indeed, in the *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, and in other writings, he frequently interchanges "church" and "congregation." To Tyndale they are, insofar as we are able to tell, synonymous. Yet he is steadfast in his use of "congregation" in the English translations of the Old and New Testaments. And just as Tyndale offers reasons based on philology for the rejection of "church," so too he offers philological reasons for the use of "congregation." Yet it should be obvious that the philological debate is merely the tip of a *theological* iceberg, and the diction hides a mass of theological reasons which was destined to collide with the ship of Roman Catholicism.

Tyndale provides philological reasons for his choice of "congregation." The word has a broad range of uses, Tyndale suggests, which reflects the broad range of uses which the Greek word *ekklesia* also possessed in the first century. Like the reformers on the continent, Tyndale knew that the Greek word *ekklesia* had been employed long before the New Testament church was established. It was a common term for the assembly of people at civic functions in Athens and other Greek city-states. Even in the New Testament *ekklesia* is used with this secular meaning; we noted above that in Acts 19:32, 39, 41 Demetrius the silversmith addresses a public assembly (*ekklesia*) in Ephesus. The word "congregation," according to Tyndale, is – like the Greek word – a "*more general term*" (13), and therefore appropriate in this, and similar, contexts.

Tyndale chose "congregation" also in part because Erasmus uses words other than *ecclesia* in his Latin translation of the New Testament. Tyndale reminds his opponent that Erasmus, More's dear friend, also employs unorthodox language in the Latin translation, which had appeared in 1516. Though his tone is less than kind, Tyndale's point is well taken: the Church has no right to impose its language upon Scripture. The Bible is the Word of God. Tyndale knows well, of course, that More and the other clergy saw in "congregation" a purposeful rejection of the language which the church had made standard over generations. Whereas "church" was a word with Roman Catholic associations, "congregation" belonged to the diction of the reformers.

At the conclusion of the philological rebuttal, Tyndale recapitulates the reasons for rejecting "church" from his English translation. "Church" is a word which in the New Testament denoted a place where the Gospel was preached. It did not denote the clergy only, did not exclude the flock of believers, did not refer to Christendom in general, and did not refer to the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Since his contemporaries might understand the word to refer to any, or any number, of these usages, Tyndale chose to avoid it.

Tyndale argues positively that in Scripture “church” applied to an assembly of people. The assembly might be secular or sacred. In the early history of the church the word was also used for the body of God’s elect, and for the mixed congregation of believers and unbelievers.

Tyndale concludes: in as much as the clergy ... had appropriated unto themselves the term that of right is common to all the congregation of them that believe in Christ ... and brought (the people) into ignorance of the word ..., therefore in the translation of the New Testament, where I found this word *ekklesia*, I interpreted it by this word *congregation* (13).

Tyndale’s *Answer to Sir Thomas More’s Dialogue* does not end there. After treating the words “church” and “congregation,” Tyndale explains his preference for other important words, such as “love”, “favour”, and “repentance.” Thereupon Tyndale gives a lengthy reply to More’s defence of the worship of images, pilgrimages, and prayers offered to saints. In several places Tyndale discusses the nature of the church, and shows that the truly Biblical ecclesiology is that of the reformers, whom More called the “*pestilent sect of Luther and Tyndale*.”

## Reformed Elements in Tyndale’s Ecclesiology

### Introduction

In the treatise, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More’s Dialogue*, William Tyndale defends the translation of *ekklesia* in the Bible with “congregation” and not “church.” Tyndale prefers “congregation,” since it does not lead the readers of the English Bible into thinking that the Roman Catholic church with its false doctrines and practices has its foundation in Scripture. Like the reformers on the European continent, Tyndale strives to establish a text of the Bible which is free of associations with Roman Catholicism.

Thomas More, the reader will also recall, in the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies and Matters of Religion*, attacked Tyndale for using unorthodox and revisionist language. It was obvious to all in England that Tyndale’s translation reflected many Reformed ideas. And therefore More’s treatise was not merely a critical review of the vocabulary of the new English Bible; it charged the “*pestilent sect*” of reformers with heresy. More defended the authority of the pope and the power of church tradition. He strongly restated the Romanist belief that the church is the sole, infallible source of divine truth. He argued that whatever the church states as true, the believers must accept as the Word of God. Indeed, More suggested, the church had existed before Scripture was written, and even since the writing of the Bible, the church has proclaimed other truths that are not contained in Scripture. The church, therefore, determines Scripture and is its only interpreter. Accordingly, More concluded, Tyndale’s translation constituted a heretical subversion of the church and its authority. <sup>8</sup>

In *An Answer to Sir Thomas More*, Tyndale treats many of the “*heresies and*

*matters of religion*" which More had discussed. The translator defends not only the vocabulary of his edition, but also the Reformed criticism of such matters as the position of the pope, the worship of images and relics, and pilgrimages. In discussing these matters, Tyndale has occasion to touch upon the nature and role of the church. The relationship between the church and Scripture, and between the church and Christ its Head, are but two of the topics Tyndale broaches. In so doing, the translator provides us with one of the earliest English documents which promoted the Reformed doctrine of the church. In this article we shall consider some of the attributes of the church as observed by Tyndale. We shall observe the influences of the continental Reformation upon Tyndale's thought, point out the Reformed character of Tyndale's ecclesiology, and shall conclude with some notes of criticism.

## **The Church is Formed by God's Word**

According to Tyndale, one attribute of the church is that it is formed by the preaching of the Word of God.

*"The whole Scripture, and all believing hearts, testify that we are begotten through the Word."*<sup>9</sup>

As proof for this attribute, Tyndale offers Romans 10:14: *"How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?"*<sup>10</sup>

He explains the text thus, *"Christ must first be preached, ere men can believe in him ... And therefore, in as much as the Word is before faith, and faith makes the congregation, therefore is the Word or Gospel before the congregation"* (24).

In stating that the preaching of the Gospel and the resultant faith are needed for the formation of a church, Tyndale follows the continental reformers. It was Luther who had described the church as *creatura verbi*: a creature of the Word. Tyndale espouses this tenet of the Reformation and refutes the Romanist ecclesiology as expressed by More, according to whom the church is above Scripture and its sole expositor.

In his *Dialogue* More had argued that the Roman Catholic Church is superior to the Bible in part because it *predates* Scripture, and that therefore it alone is able to instruct the laity in the meaning of Scripture and in the doctrine that it expresses. For this reason Tyndale's translation was so hated by the clergy, which realized the English Bible would undermine its authoritative position. But Tyndale, as A.G. Dickens notes, *"firmly believed that the Bible came first and should invariably determine the doctrines, institutions and ceremonies of a Church which had come to bear little or no relation to that of the New Testament."*<sup>11</sup> In stating that the church is a product of the preaching of the Word, Tyndale argues that the Church is subservient to the Word, and should conform to it.

Tyndale's reasoning follows that of the continental Reformers. Huldrych Zwingli, for example, had also written about the church's subservience to the

Word. One may recall that of the sixty-seven theses which Zwingli published in 1523, several concerned the authority of Scripture.

The first thesis reads: *"All who say that the Gospel is invalid without the confirmation of the church err and slander God."*

Following Zwingli, Tyndale replaces the authority of the Romanist Church with the authority of Scripture. The church must obey the Word of God by which it is formed. There is no divine revelation besides the Word, and the church may not claim to possess truths outside Scripture. In stating that the church is a product of the Gospel, Tyndale refutes More's contention that the church is superior to the Word.

## **Faith is the Basis of the Church**

We read in Romans 10:17, *"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."* Tyndale has already argued that the preaching of the Gospel precedes the formation of the church; now he argues that faith in Jesus Christ's saving work, which is granted through the preaching, is a cornerstone of Christ's church. Tyndale points out that all who are born anew and become children of God, are members of his church. Though one might question Tyndale's exegesis of Matthew 16:18, his statement that *"faith is the rock, whereon Christ built his congregation"* (31) is true. And this faith, Tyndale writes, is the *"foundation, laid of the apostles and the prophets; whereon Paul says (Ephesians 2:20) that we are built, and thereby of the household of God"* (31).

Following the continental reformers, Tyndale emphasizes the role of the saving work of Christ in the formation of the church. Without the satisfaction of Christ for the sins of the world, the church could not exist. After all, the church is Christ's body (Colossians 1:18), *"and every person of the church is a member of Christ"* (Ephesians 5:23b). *Now it is no member of Christ that has not Christ's Spirit in him"* (Romans 8:9) (31). Especially Ephesians 5:23b supports Tyndale's argument: *"Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour."* Faith in the expiation of Jesus Christ unites members into one body, and those who do not share in this faith, do not contribute to the unity of Christ's body. It is clear to Tyndale that *"both they that trust in their own works, and they also that put confidence in their own opinions, be fallen from Christ, and err from the way of faith that is in Christ's blood, and therefore are not of Christ's church"* (33-34). *Sola fide* is an important creed of the church.

Such line of reasoning leads Tyndale to the logical conclusion that the Roman Catholic church is not the church of Christ. For *"he that has no faith to be saved through Christ, is not of Christ's church. And the pope believes not to be saved through Christ"* (39), for he teaches to put trust in penance, pilgrimages, ceremonies, and the like – which *"all are the denying of Christ's blood."* (40) Since the pope has replaced Scripture with his own doctrine, and because the pope and the clergy have shown themselves in their conduct to be unholy, the Roman Catholic church cannot be the true church.

On the other hand, all those who *"depart from them unto true Scripture, and*

*unto the faith and living thereof*" (45) form the true church. Members of the true church, Tyndale writes, *"thou shalt always know by their **faith**, examined by Scripture, and by their profession and consent to live according to the law of God"* (45). Evacuation from the false church, from "Babylon," as the Second Helvetic Confession expresses it, is a necessity for all true believers. For Tyndale all believers should depart from the false church, namely, the Roman Catholic church. At a time when the only church in England was the Roman Catholic church as controlled by Henry VIII, even departure from this congregation of Satan was virtually impossible. Notions of forming a true congregation of believers were still in infancy. Nevertheless Tyndale urges those who have faith to leave the Romanist church.

## **The Church is an Assembly of Sinful Believers**

Tyndale's most complete definition of the true church or congregation is expressed in his rebuttal of the Romanist claim that the church cannot err. Thomas More had argued that the Roman Catholic church was infallible. To this Tyndale angrily retorts that if by church More means the Roman Catholic church, then the church certainly does err! And he cites many instances in which the church of Rome erred from the truth of God's Word.

But as for the question of sin within the true church of Christ, Tyndale posits that, whereas sin exists in all people, God forgives those believers who ask him.

The church is the whole multitude of all repenting sinners that believe in Christ, and put all their trust and confidence in the mercy of God; feeling in their hearts that God for Christ's sake loved them, and will be, or rather is, merciful to them, and forgives them their sins of which they repent; and that he forgives them also all the motions unto sin, of which they fear, lest they should thereby be drawn into sin again (30).

The church consists of believers who are miserable sinners; yet it consists of believers whose sins are forgiven. Quoting 1 John 3:9 (*"no-one born of God commits sin"*) and other texts, Tyndale states that the church consists of sinners who ask God for forgiveness and show amendment of life. The church comprises sinful *believers*, who are totally depraved and totally saved.

Tyndale does not forget the role of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of believers, for he writes that it is the Holy Spirit which *"keeps a man's heart from consenting to sin"* (31). In a sense, Tyndale dares to write, we are not sinners: "Not sinners if you look to the *profession* of our hearts toward the law of God, to our repentance and sorrow that we have, to the promises and mercy in our Saviour Christ, and to our faith."

And yet, Tyndale writes, *"every member of Christ's congregation is a sinner, and sins daily"* (32).

1 John 1:8 reminds us: *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves."*



Sin is a matter of fact, even in the congregation of Christ. *"Sinners we are,"* writes Tyndale, *"if you look to the frailty of our flesh, which is like the weakness of one who is newly recovered out of a great disease, by reason whereof our deeds are imperfect; and by reason whereof also, when occasions be great, we fall into horrible deeds, and the fruit of the sin which remains in our members breaks out"* (32).

Yet, as Tyndale also reminds us, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses (Romans 8:26).

## **Hypocrites within the Church**

Tyndale also treats the matter of unbelievers within the church. Like the continental reformers, he knows that there are hypocrites within the body of Christ (44). For this attribute of the church the reformers were indebted to Augustine, who had explained (*de Doctrina Christiana*, III, 32) that the church is "mixed": in the church believers mingle with unbelievers. Tyndale calls the church "double," that is, consisting of the "fleshly" and the "spiritual." Just as the disciples of Christ could not look into the heart of the betrayer Judas, so too one cannot know perfectly what is in the heart of the members of one's congregation. *The Belgic Confession* also speaks of *"hypocrites, who are mixed in the Church along with the good and yet are not part of the Church, although they are outwardly in it"* (Art. 29). And Calvin, too, would write about those *"who have nothing of Christ but the name and outward appearance"* (*Institutes* IV.1.7). It is remarkable that already in the first decades of the Reformation in England, the word "church" could convey the nuanced sense of *ecclesia permixta*, the "mingled church."<sup>12</sup>

## **The Church is the Gathering of the Elect**

We noted above that Tyndale describes the church as "double." He applies this sense also to the distinction between the elect of God (the "spiritual") and those not chosen to everlasting life ("the fleshly").

Tyndale explains:

there shall be in the church a fleshly seed of Abraham and a spiritual; a Cain and an Abel; an Ishmael and an Isaac; and Esau and a Jacob ... a great multitude of them that be called, and a small flock of them that be chosen. And the fleshly shall persecute the spiritual (107).

Tyndale sees this attribute of the church in his own times, in which the pope and the Romanists are the "fleshly" who persecute the little flock of Christ. Pretending and believing to be the true church, the Roman Catholics *"go unto their own imaginations"* and *"the manner of service they fetch out of their own brains, and not of the Word of God; and serve God with bodily service"* (107). On the other hand, the body of the elect, *"runneth not unto his own imaginations,"* but seeks the Word of God. And the *"little flock,"* as Tyndale calls the elect, *"receives this testament in his heart, and in it walks and*

*serves God in spirit*" (109). It is not surprising that Tyndale should depict the elect as a small and oppressed group within a large body of so-called believers, for in England the number of true believers must have appeared small in comparison with the large and powerful Romanist Church.

## **The Church as the Flock of the Shepherd**

Of the other attributes of the church discussed in Tyndale's *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* one in particular should not be overlooked. In the treatise Tyndale repeatedly refers to the church as "*little flock*." This Biblical expression had been used by the Lollards before Tyndale, yet the translator appropriates it for his own reasons.<sup>13</sup> In several places of *An Answer* Tyndale uses the image of the church as a flock of sheep. The church is gathered by the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Tyndale writes, "*God, when He calls a congregation unto his name, sends forth His messengers to call*" (107).

The church is formed by the power of God, and not by the impetus of man. The "*little flock*" is formed, guided, and fed by the Shepherd.

The "*little flock*," because "*they have run clean contrary unto that good law, they sorrow and mourn ... But the preacher comforts them, and shows them the testament of Christ's blood ... And the little flock receives this testament in his heart ...*" (108).

This image of the church as Christ's flock is, as all well know, a Scriptural image. Therefore, one will not be surprised to learn that it appears in the Second Helvetic Confession and in the writings of the continental reformers. Indeed, the image of the church as flock is used by modern Reformed theologians also: K. Schilder saw in *congregatio* the ongoing, active, church-gathering work of Jesus Christ, the Shepherd.

When one appreciates Tyndale's depiction of the church as the flock of Christ, one understands more fully his reasons for preferring "congregation" to "church" as the translation of *ekklesia* in the English Bible. For the English word "congregation" derives from the Latin word for "flock," *grex*. Tyndale the translator is keenly aware of this etymology of the word, and despite his penchant for non-Latinate words, he employs this one in his translation. It appeals to him for it conveys a meaning which the Biblical expressions for the church also convey. To Tyndale, "congregation" is altogether an appropriate word.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, a number of critical observations of Tyndale's ecclesiology are in order. Although Tyndale discusses the nature and the role of the church in *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, he makes no attempt to present an exhaustive, systematic argument. Important essential and accidental features of the church are lacking to Tyndale's treatise. There is no discussion, for example, of the marks of the true church. Discipline within the church is not treated. There is no explanation of the relationship

between the administration of the sacraments and the church. Matters which appear to the post-Reformation churches as crucial to ecclesiology are glossed over by Tyndale.

But one should bear in mind that Tyndale does not claim to put forth a complete doctrine of the church. And perhaps Tyndale's inchoate ecclesiology is to be explained by the circumstances in which he wrote. The reformation of the church in England occurred after Tyndale's death. During his lifetime there were few attempts to reform the church on the scale attempted by Luther and the continental reformers. Tyndale was among the first to begin to call for change in England. By providing an English translation of the Bible Tyndale made the important first step toward reform.

There are many other features of Tyndale's ecclesiology which might be discussed critically; here I shall merely list them. Some have noted a development in the theology of Tyndale which might be called inconsistent. Luther and Calvin also developed their theologies over time, yet their more systematic approach to ecclesiastical reform caused them to be more complete and consistent. There is little evidence that Tyndale envisages a schematic reform of the church; he appears content to make changes within the existing "multitude." Others have suggested that there is evidence for a development toward legalism in Tyndale's thought.<sup>14</sup> His view of the covenant has been described as that of a contract between parties: Tyndale has been linked to the development of Puritanism. Yet again others have observed an emphasis upon individualism in the theology of Tyndale. Even in the language of Tyndale's English Bible one could criticize the translator. But when all is said and done, it should be acknowledged that the role of William Tyndale in the Reformation of the church in England was not a minor one.

## Endnotes←□□

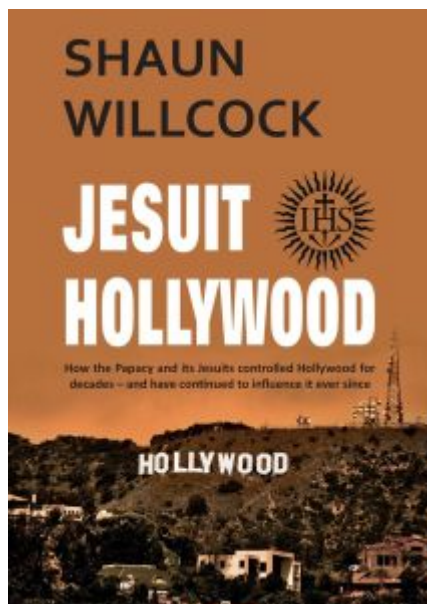
1. ^ Faber zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet.
2. ^ C.H. Williams, *William Tyndale* (London: Nelson, 1969), 76.
3. ^ The fact that More wrote a nine-volume rebuttal, the *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* (1532), attests to the gravity of the debate.
4. ^ W. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 144.
5. ^ The influence of Luther's ecclesiology upon Tyndale is obvious; consider, e.g., Luther's understanding of the church as described by H. Prien, "Grundgedanken der Ekklesiologie beim jungen Luther," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 76, 1985, 96-119. The influence of Lollard writings upon Tyndale's theology is treated by D. Smeeton, *Lollard Themes in the Reformation Theology of William Tyndale* (Kirkville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1986), esp. 159-220.
6. ^ W. Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, ed. H. Walter (The Parker Society. Cambridge: University Press, 1850), 11; subsequent quotations from *An Answer* derive from this edition.
7. ^ In the *Institutes* (IV.1.7), Calvin would also refer to this usage of the word: "Often, however, the name "church" designates the whole multitude of men spread over the earth who *profess* to worship one God

and Christ" (trans. F.L. Battles, *Calvin. Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vol. 2 Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1960, 1021. Subsequent quotations of *Institutes* derive from this edition).

8. ^ For a summary of More's *Dialogue* and Tyndale's reply, see W.E. Campbell, *Erasmus, Tyndale and More* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1949), 124-154.
9. ^ W. Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Tomas More's Dialogue*, ed. H. Walter (The Parker Society. Cambridge: University Press, 1850), 24; future citations of *An Answer* derive from this edition.
10. ^ Tyndale mentions two other texts for proof that believers form a gathering as a result of the preaching: John 15:3, John 17:17.
11. ^ A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken, 1964), 71.
12. ^ For discussions by other English reformers of the "mingled church" see P. Hughes, *Theology of the English Reformers* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1965), 225-262, esp. 228.
13. ^ For the influence of Lollard ecclesiology upon Tyndale's thought see D.D. Smeeton, *Lollard Themes in the Reformation Theology of William Tyndale* (Kirkville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1986), esp. ch.6.
14. ^ See, e.g., W. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 168.

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## Jesuit Hollywood



The influence of the Jesuits over Hollywood during its so-called "Golden Age". Evidence of the way in which the Roman Catholic institution pursues its never-ending objective of conquering the world, in particular what could be called the "Protestant world", by seeking to harness and make use of the most powerful entertainment medium the world has ever known: the movie industry.

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## Popery The Foe of the Church and of the Republic



The history of the pagan practices of the Roman Catholic Church which continue to this day.

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## The Key to Pope Francis's Identity



All about Pope Francis and who he really is.

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## The Fourth Kingdom of Daniel Chapter 7 – Rome





The fourth Kingdom of Daniel chapter 7 is the Roman Empire. It continues to this day through the Vatican, the so called Holy See.

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## The Concept of Separation of Church and State Grossly Misinterpreted by Liberals Today



This article is written primarily with US Americans in mind. I don't know what other countries in the world have a separation of Church and State. I know for sure the Philippines *doesn't* have it. I believe the Philippines is controlled by the Roman Catholic Church.

I'm writing this article because I think the principle of separation of Church and State is a *good* thing, not bad. This article explains why it's good, and how the Devil's people misinterpret it for evil.

So often I hear from Bible rejectors that American government agencies and public schools must not have any type of Christian activity or they are in violation of the Constitution. Does the US Constitution actually forbid Christianity?

Because of their belief in a separation of church and state, the framers of the Constitution favored a neutral posture toward religion. The members of the Constitutional Convention, the group charged with authoring the Constitution, believed that the government should have no power to influence its citizens toward or away from a religion. The principle of separating church from state

was integral to the framers' understanding of religious freedom. They believed that **any governmental intervention in the religious affairs of citizens would necessarily infringe on their religious freedom.** (Source: [Cornell Law School](#))

The key words are, "any government intervention". When the Supreme Court in 1963 passed a law which forbids any public school teacher to read the Bible to their class, would not you call that "government intervention" on others religious freedom? I sure would!

You may be surprised as I was to learn exactly who and why the separation of Church and State was implemented in the government of the United States of America. It was promoted by the Baptists! They are the only non-Catholic group that was never a part of the Roman Catholic Church. Baptists were previously known as Anabaptists. They existed long before the Protestant Reformation. There were many Bible-believing Christ-following groups that existed before the Protestant Reformation.

Not only were the Baptists persecuted by the Church of Rome, they were also persecuted by the Protestants in the early British colonies in America!

The following quotes are from [Religion in Colonial America: Trends, Regulations, and Beliefs](#)

Eight of the thirteen British colonies had official, or "established," churches, and in those colonies **dissenters who sought to practice or proselytize a different version of Christianity or a non-Christian faith were sometimes persecuted.**

In those colonies, the civil government dealt harshly with religious dissenters, exiling the likes of Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams for their outspoken criticism of Puritanism, and whipping Baptists or cropping the ears of Quakers for their determined efforts to proselytize. Official persecution reached its peak between 1659 and 1661, when Massachusetts Bay's **Puritan magistrates hung four Quaker missionaries.**

Virginia imposed laws obliging all to attend Anglican public worship. Indeed, to any eighteenth observer, the "legal and social dominance of the Church of England was unmistakable." After 1750, as Baptist ranks swelled in that colony, the colonial Anglican elite responded to their presence with force. **Baptist preachers were frequently arrested.** Mobs physically attacked members of the sect, breaking up prayer meetings and sometimes beating participants. As a result, the 1760s and 1770s witnessed a rise in discontent and discord within the colony (some argue that Virginian dissenters suffered some of the worst persecutions in antebellum

America).

The following are quotes from [Letters between Thomas Jefferson and the Danbury Baptists \(1802\)](#)

The Baptists write to Jefferson:

Our sentiments are uniformly on the side of religious liberty--that religion is at all times and places a matter between God and individuals--that no man ought to suffer in name, person, or effects on account of his religious opinions--that the legitimate power of civil government extends no further than to punish the man who works ill to his neighbors; But, sir, our constitution of government is not specific. Our ancient charter together with the law made coincident therewith, were adopted as the basis of our government, at the time of our revolution; and such had been our laws and usages, and such still are; that religion is considered as the first object of legislation; and therefore what religious privileges we enjoy (as a minor part of the state) we enjoy as favors granted, and not as inalienable rights; and these favors we receive at the expense of such degrading acknowledgments as are inconsistent with the rights of freemen. It is not to be wondered at therefore; if those who seek after power and gain under the pretense of government and religion should reproach their fellow men--should reproach their order magistrate, as a enemy of religion, law, and good order, because he will not, dare not, assume the prerogatives of Jehovah and make laws to govern the kingdom of Christ.

Jefferson's reply to the Baptists:

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church & State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

I hope you clearly see that Thomas Jefferson agreed with the Baptists that the laws of government should be limited only to civil secular matters, and not matters of religion or personal beliefs. The Baptists opposed the concept



of union of Church and State which the Roman Empire applied throughout its history. Worship of the emperor was compulsory according to Roman law.

When Constantine promoted Christianity as the State Religion in 313, it was *not* a good thing! The government stopped persecuting the established large church which became the Catholic Church, but continued to persecute Christian groups that did not agree with the Catholic Church in doctrines and practices.

The following quotes are from [How Constantine Created the Christian Church](#)

Constantine saw Christianity's belief in one god as a way to unify the empire that had been so badly divided for two decades. But he discovered that Christianity itself was not unified. So, he called the Council of Nicea in 325 to bring together the 1,800 bishops from around the empire to work out official doctrine and provide the basis for a unified Church. Constantine paid for the entire council and even paid for travel, giving bishops the right of free transportation on the imperial postal system.

The council laid the foundation of orthodox theology (Catholic theology) and declared several differing theologies heresies. Constantine's support initially gave Orthodoxy the ability to require Christians to adopt their doctrinal formulation. While during the next few decades, the church's fortunes waxed and waned, within a century, Christianity had been declared the official religion of the Roman Empire and non-Christian religions were in steep decline.

Do you see how the government took a hand in determining what is right and what is wrong in matters of Christian faith? This is exactly what the American Baptists wanted stopped!

The following are quotes from [Baptists: Separation of Church and State](#)

For Baptists, the concept of a free church in a free state rests not on political theory nor on human documents but on the word of God. The Baptist belief in religious freedom and its corollary, the separation of the institutions of church and state, comes from the Baptist commitment to the authority of the Bible.

What is meant by the terms "church" and "state"? The term "state" refers to governments. The Bible indicates that governments are ordained by God to provide law and order (Romans 13:1-5).

The term "church" refers to religious organizations. For Baptists, this includes both local congregations and various entities established for religious purposes, such as associations, conventions, schools and institutions for ministry.

Ideally, the relation of church and state is mutually beneficial. For example, the state is to provide order and safety; these are useful to the church in carrying out its mission (Acts 13-16). And the church contributes to a positive social order by helping to develop law-abiding, hard-working, honest citizens (Ephesians 4:24-32; 1 Peter 2:11-17).

Baptists contend that this mutual benefit works best when the institutions of church and state are separate and when neither seeks to control the other. The state is not to dictate doctrine, worship style, organization, membership or personnel for leadership of the church. The church is not to seek the power or the financial support of the state for spiritual ends. Such is the model set forth in the New Testament.

The Roman Catholic Church is in opposition to the concept of Church and State. The Pope claims temporal authority even today over the governments of the world whether they acknowledge him or not.

Likewise, after the Protestant Reformation got rolling, the Protestants continued the practice of controlling the government just like the Catholics did. It did not bare good fruit at all. In Geneva, the Presbyterians burned at the stake anyone who they considered a heretic. And they used the city government to do it. This is no different than what the Roman Catholic Church did throughout the centuries.

Islamic governments are in opposition to the separation of Church and State. It's illegal for Christians to preach the Gospel in Saudi Arabia.

The government of Israel has no separation of Church and State. It's now illegal to preach the Gospel in Israel.

The government of India seems to condone the persecution of Christians by Hindus.

All of the above is to show the reader the benefits of the separation of Church and State, and the evils of union of Church and State. Now let's talk about how the liberals are abusing the concept of separation of Church and State.

Quotes from

<https://www.flfamily.org/issues-research/legal-judicial/church-state/>

The so-called “wall of separation between church and state” has done more damage to America’s religious and moral tradition than any other utterance of the Supreme Court. While the First Amendment was originally intended to prevent the establishment of a national religion and thus ensure religious liberty, **the Supreme Court’s misuse of the “separation of church and state” phrase has fostered hostility toward, rather than protection of, religious freedom.**

Leftist liberal Democrats and some Catholic Republicans have grossly misinterpreted separation of Church and State by demanding any and all Christian-related activities to be banned from the public school system. The result has been the degradation of American society! School shootings! Drag queen story hour for little children! Biological males now compete with females in physical sports!

When I was a kid in the 1950s, it would have been unthinkable for the POTUS to promote the transgender movement and have an audience with an adult man who thinks he’s a 12-year-old girl! And a beer company gives free beer to the adult man who pretends to be a female who is underage to drink to celebrate his 365 days of “girlhood”. What kind of logic is that?! It’s utter madness!

I’m sure the reader can come up with many examples of misinterpretation of the separation of Church and State. Your comments are welcome in the comments section.