

# What Christian Meetings should accomplish

I would love to know your reaction to the controversial Scriptures below *describing a **CHURCH!** where talk leads to action that runs on the brainpower of all members – not of just one, shining the Light of what God says about Darkness into all the Darkness, including those forums where voters decide whether to pattern our laws after the principles of Heaven or of Hell. I foresee in these verses the next step up that God’s Word offers America’s “church” in its Daniel 2 growth towards Revelation 21 marriage. But they are so different than centuries of tradition – challenging not only every church but every Christian political activist group – that we should first see if we agree on the importance of obeying God when we have to choose between obedience and centuries of church tradition. So that choice is the first of the seven categories of verses in this study:*

1. Obeying God beats traditional worship.
2. “Good works” are God’s goals for meetings, not just talk.
3. God answers prayers through forums where “all” reason and “exhort”. Sermons aren’t mentioned.
4. Bible heroes, like God, were very Political.
5. “The Gospel” is not just about Heaven, but also about Heroic Hard Work Here.
6. “Light in the Darkness” means quoting God about Darkness *in* the Darkness.
7. The “Cross” we must carry is an “easy yoke”, a “light burden”. It is a reward. It is Life, now. It may “cost” money, friends, wealth, careers, comfort, life, but not anything we need.

Appendix – links to more documentation are in six categories: *Historical Fiction <> Greek Word Studies <> Others whose agreement has encouraged me <> Archaeological Evidence <> Practical Applications <> More of my own general explanation*

The blue boxes are in case you want to mark by each point whether you agree with it (☑=agree, ☒=disagree) and email to [music@saltshaker.us](mailto:music@saltshaker.us), or mail to Dave Leach, 137 E Leach, Des Moines IA 50315. Or call 515-244-3711. For discussion or further documentation of any point, ask.

***This survey should take no more than ten hours. (If you look up the verses. 5 minutes if you just read the headings.)***

Can we agree that:

## 1. Obeying God beats traditional worship

- ☐ a. Human traditions must not displace God’s commandments. *Jesus rebuked priests for doing that. Matthew 15:6-9, 13*
- ☐ b. Cursed are those who add to God’s Word. *Revelation 22:18-19, Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, Proverbs 30:6, Isaiah 29:13, Colossians 2:18-20*
- ☐ c. “To obey is better than sacrifice” *Today’s application: better than going to “church” 1 Samuel 15:22*

□ d. **Worship that “feels right” can be wrong.** *“How can worship be WRONG that FEELS SO RIGHT? What’s the harm in a traditional ‘worship service’ even if it is different than the Bible, as long as I ‘feel God’s presence?’” 1 John 4:1*

□ e. **The fact that God will put up with imperfect worship is no assurance that God will still put up with it after more Biblical forms are made clear.** *Acts 17:30*

□ f. **God even blesses His enemies. So the fact that God blesses imperfect worship should not so satisfy us that we feel no pressure to enjoy the greater blessings God promises for greater obedience.** *Matthew 5:44-48, Isaiah 1:11-20, Romans 2:4*

## **2. “Good works”, not just talk with no intent to act, are God’s goals for meetings**

□ a. **The call to do “good works” is especially to groups/teams** *Titus is Paul’s letter of instructions for managing Christian meetings. 3:8 says the goal should be “good works”. All human experience agrees with previous verses that teams accomplish so much more than scattered individuals. The scenario of this verse is therefore group cooperative action, not individuals sent out from Sunday services to try to figure out how to do the best they can during the week alone, without even any group mentoring on Sunday.*

□ b. **People accomplish much more together than individually.** *This is true even of the godless: Genesis 11:6. How much more of God’s people! Matthew 18:18-20. This unity of purpose and action is especially the context of the promises of answered prayer in Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24, John 14:13-14, 15:7, 16, 16:23, James 5:14-16, 1 John 3:22, 5:14-15.*

□ c. **Talk, that does not prepare for action, is not a Biblical purpose of Christian meetings.** *Titus 3:7 calls it a waste of time. Verse 7 is contrasted with verse 8. Talk for the sake of more talk is ridiculed; action is praised. Verse 7 targets useless talk more specifically, but the contrast between talk and action in verse 7-8 supports a general sense that talk with no action for its goal is relatively useless.*

Just as patriotic speeches are needed to prepare nations for war, and verbal instructions from officers are needed to effectively direct soldiers in battle, spiritual preparation through discussion is necessary to prepare groups for doing “good works”. But decades of talk with no vision for group action outside the Matthew 5 “bushel” is not Biblical.

□ d. **Teaching and/or discussion with no intention of ever *doing* anything about Darkness is the faith of devils.** *James 2:17-20*

□ e. **Prayer without action is not prayer.** *James 2:14-17. The verbiage of the metaphor is that faith without works is dead. But the “blessing” for the cold hungry man is like a prayer. It is the hope that God will take care of the need without me having to lift a finger. We pray to God to help us serve, but we do what we can because God wants partners, not spectators.*

□ f. **The Goal of being “fed” by a sermon is not in the Bible, but to**

**FEED is in Matthew 25:42.** *In John 6, Jesus said His body is meat indeed. Hebrews 5:12-14 makes “strong meat” a goal, but spiritual awakening is not associated in the Bible with a sermon but with its opposite: 1 Corinthians 14:24.*

□ **g. We are called to help the helpless.** *In advising us to not enable the lazy, 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, Paul shows his expectation that without that advice, we will feed others. His advice directs our resources to the helpless.*

□ **h. Let’s not get distracted from serving others by verses warning that we can’t save ourselves.** *Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

*The emphasis is “not of yourselves”. Not that we may be saved if we do nothing. The man who does nothing in Matthew 25, both in the Parable of the Talents in 14-30 and in the Judgment Day scenario of 31-46, goes to Hell. James 2 warns that faith without action is not faith. People are judged “according to their works”, Revelation 20:12-13. Matthew 16:27. Romans 2:6. 2 Corinthians 5:10.*

*Jesus invites us to understand our relationship with God by pondering our relationship with our human parents. Can a baby raise himself, no matter how hard he works? Of course not. Yet, can a child who refuses to ever do anything be raised to adulthood? Of course not.*

*Hebrews 12 describes the discipline to which God subjects adults, by pondering the discipline to which loving parents subject their children. The goal is to grow up. Children/ parents, and humans/ God, do it together.*

### **3. God answers prayers through forums where “all” reason and “exhort”. Sermons aren’t mentioned.**

□ **a. Teams that reason with each other will reach their goals.** *Proverbs 15:22. This is true even of the godless: Genesis 11:6. How much more of God’s people! Matthew 18:18-20. This unity of purpose and action is part of the context of the promises of answered prayer in Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24, John 14:13-14, 15:7, 16, 16:23, James 5:14-16, 1 John 3:22, 5:14-15.*

□ **b. Seven verses of the Bible chapter with the most detail about a Christian meeting format encourage “all” to verbally participate.** *Verse 1: verbal participation – more important than spiritual gifts, and love? 5: more important than tongues. 12: You want a gift? Edify the church. 24-25: All, participating, brings revival! 26: Don’t limit ways people can participate. 31: Participate, one at a time. 39: Participation is one thing it is OK to covet!*

□ **c. The reason for Christian meetings is so that we can “provoke” each other to do good and become wise.** *“Exhort” means to correct, and to reason with. We must “provoke” each other to love and do “good works”. Hebrews 10:24-25. God’s format for Christian meetings is a forum where God speaks through Christians prayerfully reasoning with each other about what action they should take together.*

*Being “exhorted” is so unpopular among humans that it makes many violent, and it*

*is not easy for Christians. But it is a source of wisdom, which makes our “good works” succeed, and a wise man will love you for a sound rebuke, Proverbs 1:20-33, 9:8, 13:18, Psalm 141:5, Galatians 2:11-14; 2 Peter 3:15-16. The freedom to “exhort” one another nurtured by the Bible despite grudging Christian resistance has dribbled out of churches into Western Civilization to create freedom, safety and prosperity still unknown in God-denying nations. Verses in which God offers **wisdom** apply to individuals but were especially addressed to groups; James 1:5, Colossians 1:9, 1 Corinthians 12:8, Luke 21:15.*

□ **d. “All” in Christian meetings should “bring a message from God” to each other, according to the Bible chapter with the most detail about a Christian meeting format.** *1 Corinthians 14 describes “bringing a message from God” [the main definition of the Greek word for “prophecy”] as what “all” the people in a Christian meeting should be doing. This is explicitly stated in seven verses: 1, 5, 12, 24-25, 26, 31, 39. Especially verse 31. Verse 30 says whoever is speaking needs to wrap up his point and let another speak when something is “revealed” to another. This need not be some mysterious infallible communication, an assumption that has confused Bible commentators, but naturally describes what we daily “realize”, especially when we focus on God. We should daily credit God for these morsels of wisdom.*

*God meets needs which humans could have but won’t, including our need to hear from God. But it makes Him angry. Isaiah 63:5. 1 Corinthians 14 ordains Christian forums/ meetings as a means of hearing from God through each other. That is a very effective way to “test the spirits”, 1 John 4:1, to filter out nonsense.*

□ **e. Revival will come if “all” bring a message from God.** *Verses 24-25 promises your group will experience what most will call “revival”, if “all” will bring a message from God; in other words, will participate in the discussion, or the forum.*

□ **f. Biblical meetings are forums for Christian preparing for action.** *Verse 3 further defines “prophecy” as to “edify” (build up, inspire, equip, “exhort” (educate, correct, and “comfort”. This covers the full range of Christian communication. “Equipping” and “correcting” imply the goal of action, because there is no purpose for them in a meeting whose goal is only talk.*

□ **g. The discussion topic must be flexible enough to allow all to share what they have realized.** *Verse 30 says in so many words that God must be allowed to speak, and He speaks to us through each other, and is censored when any of us are limited to subjects other than what God has revealed to one of us, or are limited by impatience with digressions from the approved subject that starts growing after about a minute.*

□ **h. God meets needs (answers prayers) which humans who could have won’t, but it makes Him angry.** *God’s preferred means of answering our prayers is through the actions of each other, guided by wisdom and prayer. Isaiah 63:5.*

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Sermons may be valuable tools in their place,  
but they are given no place in the Bible,  
so their place can’t be to displace  
the form of worship God desires.



□ i. **None of the Greek words translated “preach” mean a “sermon”.** *That is, a lecture which cannot be interrupted for a question, clarification, or correction, or anything else. The Greek word describes a king’s representative who negotiates with/ reasons with subjects of the king. For a 32 page study of “Preach”, “preacher”, “Evangelize”, “Evangelist”, “ruling elders”, “divisions”, “orator” as understood by the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament see [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/Preachers-in-the-Bible-did-not-do-Sermons.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/Preachers-in-the-Bible-did-not-do-Sermons.pdf)*

□ j. **The Recorded Teachings of Jesus were not uninterruptable sermons, but interaction.** *6/ 7ths of Jesus’ teachings were presented through dialog – in response to questions or accusations of others, or the object of others’ questions or accusations. Jesus welcomed dialog and never criticized anybody for interacting with Him while He was teaching.*

*126 Teachings in the Context of Interactions: Matthew 3:15, 4:3-10, 8:8-13, 9:10-13, 14-18, 11:2-6, 12:1-8, 9-14, 22-37, 38-46, 46-50, 13:10-23, 36-52, 54-57, 15:1-20, 22-28, 16:1-4, 5-12, 13-19, 21-28, 17:10-13, 14-21, 24-27, 18:1-20, 21-35, 19:3-12, 13-15, 16-30, 20:1-16, 20-28, 21:15-16, 17-22, 23-45, 22:1-15, 16-22, 23-33, 34-46, 24:1-25:46, 26:7, 13, 51-56, 63-64, Mark 2:1-11, 16-17, 18-22, 23-28, 3:1-5, 22-30, 4:10-32, 6:1-4, 7:1-23, 8:11-12, 14-21, 31-9:1, 11-13, 14-29, 33-50, 10:2-12, 13-16, 17-31, 10:35-45, 11:20-26, 27-12:12, 13-40, 41-44, 13:1-37, 14:3-9, Luke 4:3-12, 16-30, 5:18-24, 30-39, 6:1-5, 6-11, 7:19-28, 36-50, 8:9-18, 19-21, 43-55, 9:1-5, 18-27, 46-50, 52-56, 57-62, 10:17-24, 25-37, 11:1-13, 14-36, 37-52, 12:1-59, 13:1-9, 10-21, 23-30, 31-35, 14:1-35, 15:1-17:10, 20-18:34, 19:1-27, 37-44, 20:1-18, 19-26, 27-47, 21:1-4, 5-36, 22:14-38, 23:27-31, John 1:47-51, 3:1-21, 4:5-38, 5:1-47, 6:22- 70, 7:14-29, 32-36, 8:1-59, 9:1-10:21, 22-39, 11:3- 16, 21-27, 34-44, 12:1-8, 20-50, 13:2-17:26, 18:33-38, 19:10-11, 20:19-29, 21:10-22.*

*20 Teachings where no interaction was recorded: Matthew 5:1-7:27, 10:5-42, 11:7-30, 13:3-9, 24-33, 21:13, 23:1-39, 28:10, 18-20, Mark 4:2-9, 6:10-11, 11:17, 16:15-18, Luke 6:20-49, 7:31-35, 8:5-8, 10:1-16, 19:45-46, 24:44-49. John 7:37-38.*

*Only one seventh of Jesus’ sermons were not answers to questions or charges, and were not interrupted. Interaction was the rule, and never discouraged, so it would have been welcome the other 20 times too.*

*God was happy to dialogue with humans even farther below Him than laymen are below pastors.*

*The fact that the KJV says Jesus “preached”, translated from κηρύσσω and euggallizw, combined with the fact that Jesus never gave an uninterruptible “sermon”, proves that these Greek words do NOT specify an uninterruptible sermon. Or even IMPLY such a “sermon”.*

□ k. **Paul never “preached” [by today’s definition] a “sermon”.** He “reasoned”. *Paul’s “manner” was to reason, Acts 17:2, 18:4, 19, 24:25. Same Greek word in Acts 20:7 where KJV says Paul “preached”. Dialegomai, source of our word “dialog”.*

□ l. **God wants to reason with humans.** *God said “come now, let us reason together”, Isaiah 1:18.*

□ m. **Jesus reasoned, responding with mouth-stopping logic, and praised people who reasoned right back.** *Matthew 22:21, 15:21-28, John 7:23, 10:35*

□ n. **Peter said we should witness through reasoning.** *We must always be ready with an “answer”, Greek apologia, a defense that addresses an accusation, 1 Peter 3:15.*

□ o. **Answered prayer is more likely when those praying have reached consensus, which is the fruit of reasoning together.** *Matthew 18:20. Consensus is reached through reasoning and reviewing evidence together.*

## 4. Bible heroes, like God, are very Political

□ a. **Prophecies are mostly about nations – political systems, not churches.** *How many exceptions can you find?*

□ b. **Bible heroes were either political leaders or lobbyists.** *Hebrews 11 is called the “Hall of Faith”. It lists Bible heroes who are “examples of faith” for us. Every one was either a political leader himself, or got in the Bible through interaction with a political leader. Even Abel and Noah were powerful government leaders according to Josephus. See [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/GodsPoliticalHeroes.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/GodsPoliticalHeroes.pdf)*

□ c. **Biblical political involvement “mixes politics and religion” the way America’s Founders did.** *Because politics without religion thinks immorality doesn’t matter, and religion without politics is silent about the government-supported sins destroying America. Saving America, and saving her churches, can’t be done separately. Never has happened.*

*Israel’s rulers in the “wicked” category separated politics and religion. Immorality didn’t matter under their rule. God’s Bible heroes didn’t leave them alone. They “lobbied” them, as 1 Timothy 2:1-2 instructs. (See below.) Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles.*

*Biblical political involvement doesn’t censor public discussion of the Biblical basis for political positions, the way Christian political activists do in America today.*

*Their obedience was to the institution of the government/ citizen relationship created by God, not to the perversion of that relationship by tyrants – as 1 Peter 2:13 instructs according to the Greek words, although English translations obscure their meaning.*

*Christian political activists are driven by their churches when occasional sermons identify government-enabled abominations and they want to do something. They are driven away from their churches because doing something about evil is “politics”, and is clearly prohibited by 2 Denominations 3:16. So they go out into the Darkness. But they leave their “swords” back in their pews! A verse is occasionally quoted in public by a handful of candidates, but a public discussion of how well political positions line up with the Bible is no longer heard in America. We are satisfied with an occasional verse, which is so refreshing in such a spiritual desert that we say “Oh thank God! He has heard of the Bible! Therefore we can trust all his positions to be Biblical!” But because we don’t double check our assumptions with our Swords, we sometimes get our positions terribly wrong. Immigration is an example of an issue about which God wrote over 200 verses but most Christians have no idea there are even six.*

*Politics alone, without the Bible, is very limited in its ability to solve very much of anything.*

□ d. **“Governments” is a Holy Spirit Gift.** *1 Corinthians 12:28. This is traditionally assumed to mean a “church administrator” since it could not possibly refer to a Christian political activist. The problem with that assumption is that no “church administrator” is mentioned in the Bible, but virtually every Bible hero dynamically interacted with political leaders. Every church today has at least a couple of people who are well informed politically. Were they allowed to discuss their evidence with others on church premises, and propose action together, that would end Christians voting to pattern our laws after the principles of Hell. The Greek word is kubernesis, κυβερνησις, where we get our word “gubernatorial”, referring to our elections for state governors.*

*If church members are ever to keep up with Hell's latest government-assisted attacks on their freedom of speech and religion, or on their children, it will be after they allow others besides their pastors to keep them informed. You don't learn this stuff in seminary. Even if you did, it's out of date now. You can only learn correct, up to date information about this from people who read Congressional Budget Office while they are in the tub, devour State Department press conference transcripts during lunch breaks, and go to sleep reading the Congressional Record.*

□ **e. God equates a Republican form of government (in which voters elect representatives) with submission to God.** *1 Samuel 8:7, Deuteronomy 1:13*

□ **f. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 tells us to lobby government.** *Several translations and Bible commentators assume the four kinds of communication in verse 1 are all shades of prayer to God, and do not at all indicate communication with leaders. The word "pray" does mean prayer to God, but "petition, intercede, and give thanks" just as often describe communication with humans.*

*Members fulfill the goal of 1 Timothy 2:1-2 to get government to let us live honest, godly lives without going to jail, by "**petitioning**" our representatives to base laws upon the principles of Heaven rather than of Hell, "**interceding**" for others harmed by our public policies, and to "**thanking**" lawmakers who serve us well (which is a wonderful way to build bridges with leaders). Such activity begins with prayer, without which we lack wisdom and direction, but God's list doesn't end with prayer as is widely assumed even by Bible commentators and by Bible translations.*

*All human experience confirms that petitioning political leaders, thanking them when they do right, and interceding for their victims, while costly to "Christian activists", reduces the oppression of others. It's the example given by Bible heroes. And James 2:14-17 mocks the idea of expecting God to do all our work so we don't have to lift a finger. For 15 pages of related Scripture and analysis of over a dozen translations and Bible commentators, see [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/1Timothy2.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/1Timothy2.pdf)*

□ **g. The Pharisees, Saducees, and the Sanhedrin comprised a political system** *John 11:48 states the political power they held, in the opinion of the Sanhedrin. They had police (John 7:45), jails (Acts 4:3), and laws they enacted (Matthew 15:2, Mark 7:3, 13 – called "tradition" but they were enforced), courts (John 18) to try violations of their laws, and punishments (John 9:34) including execution (Matthew 14:5, John 10:31; John 18:31 is often misunderstood to deny the clear authority of the Sanhedrin to execute offenders, but the next verse makes clear that it was only crucifixion, one form of execution, which was reserved to the Romans). That's a political system. Jesus was heavily involved in politics.*

□ **h. Jesus' teachings often came through interaction with political leaders** *Half Jesus' teachings were verbal exchanges with Israel's political leaders. [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/JesusInvolved.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/JesusInvolved.pdf)*

□ **i. Paul praised God that his ministry was known throughout the palace** *Philippians 1:13*

□ **j. The kind of "sabbath" or "fast" God wants: to set free the oppressed, not to just go to church** *Isaiah 58*

□ **k. Church mission: to shine the Light of what God says about Darkness, in the Darkness.** *What is darker: saying the wrong words during a baptism, or murdering your very own baby? The deepest darkness is usually enabled by politics.*

□ **l. Ekklesia doesn't mean "church". "Congress" is closer to its meaning.** *It is the one word which King James ordered his translators to translate his way, as "church", no matter what they thought was the best translation. Geneva had also translated it "church", but five translations before that translated it "congregation", before that word was associated with a Christian meeting. In Bible times it meant any meeting, and the most famous ekklesia was the meeting in Athens where citizens elected several political leaders including one who would manage religious events.*

□ **m. "Politics can't solve all the world's problems" is the excuse of a cold heart to address none of the world's problems.** *I cringe at Frank Viola's statement that it is vain to pursue "politics" in order to "solve all the world's problems". That mischaracterizes the purpose of political involvement into something much easier to refute.*

*No politician offers to "solve ALL the world's problems". Not even God has "solved ALL the world's problems" in 6,000 years. That is because God honors choice, declining to drag anyone into Heaven, and billions of people choose their problems – some as their first choice, but most as their second choice behind their desire to avoid the work and responsibility of accepting the ability and potentially infinite resources God offers them to heal their situation.*

*But God offers solutions to all the world's problems, (for example, Deuteronomy 28) and we are called to participate in extending that offer. (For example, Mark 16:15.) America itself – its Biblical political system, and its development of Bible resources made possible by its Biblical political system, offers an example to the rest of the world of ways to greatly reduce "all the problems in the world", though with a lot of thinking, reasoning, cooperation, love, and work.*

*"Politics won't solve all the world's problems" is called "a straw man" in logic – refuting an idea by mischaracterizing the idea as something much easier to refute. Like being unable to kill your enemy, so you make a replica of your enemy out of straw – and then "kill" your "straw man" so you can declare "victory".*

*But I wholeheartedly agree with Frank Viola if he meant to say "politics alone, without the Bible, as we see in America where public discussion of the Scriptural basis for our political positions is unheard of, is very limited in its ability to solve very much of anything". (I don't count as "public discussion" books and lectures with which there is very little interaction that reaches very much of the public.)*

## **5. "The Gospel" is not just about Heaven, but also about Heroic Hard Work Here**

□ **a. A key to Heaven is loving our "neighbor" [defined as "everybody"] here.** *Luke 10:33, Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 19:19, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:13, James 2:8, 1 John 3:18*

□ **b. Constant Bible study, prayer, and wonderful service is nothing without obedience.** *It means nothing to "seek God daily" and "delight to*



know His ways”, “delight to approach God”, study the Bible to know “the ordinances of justice”, and go to church every Sabbath, if we Christians do not “loose the bands of wickedness...undo the heavy burdens...let the oppressed go free, and...break every yoke...[give] bread to the hungry, and...bring the poor that are cast out to thy house...when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from” the needs of others of your own species. “honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.” Isaiah 58 warns of judgment for not helping the helpless **HERE**.

□ c. **“Confessing” Jesus is a key to being “saved”, but not just in front of friends who applaud you for saying it** Romans 10:9-10 “Confess”, from ‘ομολογέω, means, according to Bible Commentator Albert Barnes, “to ‘speak what agrees with something which others speak or maintain.’ Thus, confession or profession expresses our ‘agreement or concord with what God holds to be true, and what he declares to be true.’ It denotes a public declaration or assent to that, here expressed by the words ‘with thy mouth.’ ” The Greek words combine “homo”, the same as, from where we get “homogenized”, and “logo”, meaning “words”. When milk is homogenized the cream and the skim milk is permanently blended so you cannot swallow the one without tasting the other.

□ d. **Preaching the Gospel, casting out demons, wonderful deeds – Judas did that. We must also obey God or we will hear “I never knew you”.** Matthew 7:23. Not that we should avoid “good works”, or miracles, which the Great Commission promises will follow our faithfulness. But Bible commentator John Gill connects Matthew 7:23 to 1 Corinthians 9:27, saying even Paul dreaded such judgment; should we? “Judas, for one, was capable of pleading all these things; he had the gift of preaching, and a call from Christ to it, and yet [was] a castaway; he had the power of casting out devils, and yet could not prevent the devil from entering into him; he could perform miracles, do wonders in Christ's name, and yet, at last, was the betrayer of him. These pleas and arguments will be of no use to him, nor of any avail to any at the great day. It may be observed, that these men lay the whole stress of their salvation upon what they have done in Christ's name; and not on Christ himself, in whom there is salvation, and in no other: they say not a syllable of what Christ has done and suffered, but only of what they have done. Indeed, the things they instance in, are the greatest done among men; the gifts they had were the most excellent, excepting the grace of God; the works they did were of an extraordinary nature; whence it follows, that there can be no salvation, nor is it to be expected from men's works: for if preaching the word, which is attended with so much study, care, and labour, will not be a prevailing argument to admit men into the kingdom of heaven; how can it be thought that ever reading, or hearing, or any other external performance of religion, should bring persons thither?”

□ e. **If our experience with God is relaxing and entertaining, that is a red flag.** Matthew 7:12-14 warns that the path to Life is “narrow” – we can’t find it if we wander back and forth – and “difficult”. Doubling our capacity, as Matthew 25:14-30 requires, is as challenging for adults as it is for growing children. If it is never exhausting, never costly, never requiring every ounce of your will and strength or demanding more of your resources than you think you can afford, never causing you any suffering, maybe you have not yet “taken up [your] cross daily, and followed [Jesus].” Luke 9:23, Mark 10:21

□ f. **The Bible lists of helpless were examples. Few starve among us here in America except as a consequence of largely reversible choices. Today we must not overlook the helpless in our own culture and political system.** *We must give one of our coats to one who has none, Luke 3:11. We must rescue those being led away to slaughter, Proverbs 24:10-12. We must visit those sick and in prison, take in the immigrant, feed and clothe the naked and hungry, Matthew 25:31-46. The spirit of these examples, applied today, call us to reform abortion laws that protect abortion, reform criminal laws that deprive falsely accused defendants of the right to defend themselves in court [expensive lawyers – so they get a “plea bargain” which is not much of a “bargain”], reform immigration laws that abandon genuine refugees to die at our borders, etc.*

## 6. “Light in the Darkness” means quoting God about Darkness *in* the Darkness

□ a. **Exposing government-supported abominations by the Light of what God says about them accomplishes little, limited to an occasional sermon.** *Matthew 5:13-16 is two metaphors, but of what? One is of light kept under a “bushel”. Doesn’t that well depict a sermon that proclaims what God says about Darkness, but without any plans, vision, or marching orders to take the message outside the church, but the opposite: censorship of those annoying “controversial” congregants who know what other members could do together to take that message out where voters choose between the principles of Heaven and Hell?*

□ b. **Opposing government-supported abominations without the Light of what God says about them accomplishes too little, stripping Christian political activists of spiritual power.** *When Christian Activists go into the Darkness but censor the Light which is the real reason they are out there, isn’t that, still, keeping the light under a “bushel”? Activists exist because people hear Evil dramatically portrayed as abominations by the power of God’s Word, but churches won’t let them organize other members to fight evil, calling it “politics”, so driven from their churches, they go out into the Darkness but without the Light. They give the public every other logical reason for their positions other than the Bible verses which are their real reason. They strip their efforts of the Power of Scripture.*

□ c. **Evil grows because Christians censor their Light from Darkness. Letting it out will save America.** *When Christians in ekklesias and activist groups reason with each other to develop consensus about how to shine light in darkness together to relieve the oppressed, America will be safe, according to many passages here, and confirmed by all political experience.*

□ d. **America’s slide to Hell is not because of America’s unbelievers, but because of the “wicked ways” of “my people, who are called by my name”** *2 Chronicles 7:14*

□ e. **When Christians discuss America’s spiritual condition, we primarily moan about abominations supported by politics/government.** *Things like abortion, men in girl’s bathrooms, surgically turning boys*

*into pretend girls, government databases preparing for the Mark of the Beast. This makes it quite irrational for churches to forbid discussion of “politics”, and for Christian political activists to self-censor the zBible Light strong enough to sanitize evil.*

□ **f. The greatest sin of all human history is a political system.** *The Beast, and his Mark, is depicted in the Bible as the ultimate sin of all human history, the only one which sends all to Hell who take it. It is a political system. A world government. Revelation 13, 14:9-10. Shouldn't we take warning that we should stop voting for leaders promoting the expansion of Mark-of-the-Beast tracking technology?*

□ **g. As we look about for who to blame for America's slide, let's not gloss over the gap between our “worship services” and Bible guidelines.** *We are smart enough to perceive government-supported abominations as a measure of America's spiritual slide. Let's be smart enough to consider how dedicated our noninvolvement theologies are to keeping Biblical influence out of politics. Let's see the connection to “worship” traditions not found in the Bible that censor consensus building strategy discussions about how to respond together, to shine “Light” in those Dark forums in which voters decide whether to pattern our laws after the principles of Heaven or of Hell. And that displace that Biblical mandate with “worship services” where only one person talks and there is no discussion, and with “Sunday Schools” which tolerates little digression from “teacher”-approved topics whose goal is only education but not action.*

□ **h. The “Darkness” into which Jesus begs us to shine our “Light” is not ignorance of what to believe and say among friends where there is no cost or risk in the expectation of Heaven.** *That is a superficial view of Salvation promoted in “Romans Road” tracts, Chic comics, and “accept Jesus into your heart” repeat-after-me prayers. The Bible is far more interesting. It is an adventure that makes the most edge-of-your-seat thrillers boring by comparison.*

**7. The “Cross” we must carry is an “easy yoke”, a “light burden”. It is a reward. It is Life, now. It may “cost” money, friends, wealth, careers, comfort, life, but not anything we need**

*Our Cross equips any of us who accept it with super powers, protection enough to finish doing God's Will, provision of needs, along with all the risks and “impossible” obstacles faced by any other super hero. Except that our super powers are not finite like those of comic book heroes. With these powers we are equipped, if we will accept the mission, to save our nation, leave an inheritance for our children, experience the joy of seeing others rescued, and all the consolation of Heaven without waiting to die.*

*HELP! Half of America's Christians vote Democrat, doing things to America which send souls to Hell. The other half votes to keep “the stranger” (immigrants) unwelcome, which Matthew 25:41, 46 [warns](#) is another road to Hell! Especially since the most promised tool for driving out “the stranger” is [Mark-of-the-Beast](#) tracking technology (Real ID, updated into E-Verify) which is the Bible's surest [road to Hell!](#)*

*Meanwhile [“the worst and most bloodthirsty form of false religion that humanity has ever known”](#) is “rapidly spreading all over the world”, especially over Europe whose*

2030 goals of “[\*legal identity for all\*](#)” through its [\*national identity databases\*](#) are able to interface with the system being fast-tracked by U.S. Republicans, into a worldwide system.

*The response of “Church”? Don't allow members to pass voting information, in “church”, that might be “controversial”!*

(This is not the end of this article. This is an AL, Article Loop. From this point, return to the beginning and read it again.)

# More Stuff:

Historical Fiction, Greek Word Studies,  
Others who agree, Practical Applications, More of my own general explanations

## Historical Fiction

**Neb’s Dream about the “stone cut without hands”** which grows to displace the world’s tyrannies, featuring the perspectives of Daniel, Moses, Samuel, and even, of all people, Ahaz. Unfinished novel: [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/2022JuneTheMillenniumFreedomStoneNovelSneakPreview_unfinished.pdf)

[2022JuneTheMillenniumFreedomStoneNovelSneakPreview\\_unfinished.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/2022JuneTheMillenniumFreedomStoneNovelSneakPreview_unfinished.pdf)

**Near a pagan cliff** called the “Rock of the Gods”, out of which flowed a stream called “the gates of Hell”, Jesus said he would build His Εκκλησια on a Rock, “and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” This story features the perspectives of John, James, and King James. Why did King James order his translators to translate Εκκλησια as “church”, when Greeks associated the word with their public assemblies which elected their political leaders? [www.savetheworld.saltshaker.us/wiki/Upon\\_this\\_Rock\\_I\\_will\\_build\\_my\\_Congress](http://www.savetheworld.saltshaker.us/wiki/Upon_this_Rock_I_will_build_my_Congress)

## Greek Word Studies

**Nicolaitans Today (Νικολαιτης, compound word: ruler + laymen)**

[www.saltshaker.us/BibleStudies/Nicolaitans-Today.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/BibleStudies/Nicolaitans-Today.pdf) How could churches as dramatically fall from God’s model as this study alleges, for so many centuries, without such a momentous historical event being foretold in Bible prophecy?

Perhaps it wasn’t. This is apparently today’s manifestation of the very apostasy described in Revelation 2 as “the doctrine/deeds of the Nicolaitans”, from what we are able to deduce about this doctrine and its deeds. This 20 page article compares the 18 Bible commentaries on my computer, half of whom say we know exactly who these heretics were, while the other half say we know nothing about them. Only two find significance in the name itself.

My approach is to compare what God specifically says about the relationship indicated by that compound word: that of church leaders to the rest of the members, also defined in 1 Peter 5:1-2, and to take from



Revelation no more than that God is very serious about getting that relationship right. He hates deviation from it, which He foresaw down through the centuries.

It is not that hard to “foresee”, especially with six millennia of hindsight. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is a metaphor of God’s gentle nudging of human spirits away from our natural desire to be slaves of tyrants, from Nimrod through the violence of freed slaves wanting to return to slavery of Numbers 14:10, Israel petitioning Samuel to replace their Deuteronomy 1:13 elections with a dictator, the crowds trying to violently force Jesus to be their dictator in John 6:15, and the whole world’s readiness to worship a worldwide dictator in Revelation 13.

Why should we imagine churches to be exempt from this embedded human desire? Not that long ago churches were theological dictatorships which tortured people for disagreeing, a practice with zero Biblical support. Why should we imagine we have now completely overcome that fault so that no further improvement is possible?

**“Preach” in the Bible does NOT mean “give a sermon”.** A 32 page study of the Greek words translated “Preach”, “preacher”, “Evangelize”, “Evangelist”, “ruling elders”, “divisions”, “orator” as understood by the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament . The Greek word for “preacher” describes a king’s representative who negotiates with/reasons with subjects of the king. See [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/Preachers-in-the-Bible-did-not-do-Sermons.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/Preachers-in-the-Bible-did-not-do-Sermons.pdf))

**Mark of the Beast & Immigration. Why God cares; why we should.** We may not yet know exactly what John foresaw, but when we see systems that fit John’s descriptions, it is surely unwise to not vote for them. Yet conservative Bible-believing Republicans were the main force behind the RealID act of 2005, which combines state drivers license databases with data added from county records, and without signing up you can’t fly, open a bank account, or enter a federal building. The same Republicans push E-verify, which combines with RealID and adds that without it you can’t get a job. Republicans have pushed this in order to identify “illegals”.

This study parses Greek words and matches their meaning to today’s tracking technology to show that every element of the cursed Mark matches today’s Republican-supported positions except the identification of the 666. If everyone who takes the mark will be in Hell according to Revelation 14, can it be safe for Christians to vote for its development?

How smart has it been for not only churches but Christian political activists to censor Bible discussion that could have warned voters from

choosing Hell?

The spiritual threat isn't just from taking the Mark. It is also from not "taking in the stranger" which Matthew 25:41-46 says is another road to Hell. There are over 200 verses about immigration. Most Christians don't seem to know about more than a half dozen.

My "Mark of the Beast" study is at [www.Saltshaker.US/HispanicHope/Mark-Beast.htm](http://www.Saltshaker.US/HispanicHope/Mark-Beast.htm). It concludes with a comparison of Moses' census with David's census to explain exactly what it is about the Mark that God hates so much.

My study of God's win-win immigration solution is at [www.Saltshaker.US/HispanicHope/Solutions.html](http://www.Saltshaker.US/HispanicHope/Solutions.html). More immigration studies are at [www.Saltshaker.US/HispanicHope](http://www.Saltshaker.US/HispanicHope).

## Word Studies without the Greek

**Bible heroes were either political leaders or lobbyists.** Hebrews 11 is called the "Hall of Faith". It lists Bible heroes who are "examples of faith" for us. Every one was either a political leader himself, or got in the Bible through interaction with a political leader. Even Abel and Noah were powerful government leaders according to Josephus. See [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/GodsPoliticalHeroes.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/GodsPoliticalHeroes.pdf) )

**Half Jesus' teachings were verbal exchanges with Israel's political leaders.** [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/JesusInvolved.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/JesusInvolved.pdf) John 11:48 states the political power they held, in the opinion of the Sanhedrin. They had police, jails, and laws they enacted, and courts to try violations of their laws. That's a political system. Jesus was heavily involved in politics.

## Others who agree and have encouraged me

**Tabitha Price** was a speaker in Arizona in 2021 for Wycliff Bible Translators. I spoke with her about her experience with Christian churches in other nations which do not have the "worship service" formats we have featuring uninterruptible sermons. She told me she would write down some of her observations and send them to me. But I never heard from her again. Maybe it was because I honestly emailed her with my thoughts about her courage, being associated with information like that, since Wycliffe has to raise money from churches with the "sermon" model. Maybe the reminder of that cost gave her second thoughts. Or maybe she is in some Moslem or Communist prison.

Testimony about Christian gatherings in persecuted areas which enjoy robust interaction and action about all matters of concern should be valuable in overcoming the superstar status of American church tradition that severely throttles both interaction and action. Because I think many Christians realize that Christians suffering real persecution are more likely

to be true Christians, and their meetings are therefore likely to merit our serious consideration as models for ourselves.

**Watchman Nee**, pioneer in Chinese house churches, wrote “The Normal Christian Life”, (published 1980 by Living Stream Ministry. The book was originally published as “Concerning Our Missions” in 1939 in England; the two editions are the same except for Americanization of spellings.) in which he makes clear that sermons have no place in a Biblical church; in fact, the role of “pastor” is quite different today than in God’s Fellowship Handbook. (The Bible.) I quote him extensively in chapters of my book, “Who Owns the Pulpit?”. See Chapters 5-8,

[www.Saltshaker.US/BibleStudies/Icor-5.htm](http://www.Saltshaker.US/BibleStudies/Icor-5.htm) [www.Saltshaker.US/BibleStudies/Icor-6.htm](http://www.Saltshaker.US/BibleStudies/Icor-6.htm)  
[www.Saltshaker.US/BibleStudies/Icor-7.htm](http://www.Saltshaker.US/BibleStudies/Icor-7.htm) [www.Saltshaker.US/BibleStudies/Icor-8.htm](http://www.Saltshaker.US/BibleStudies/Icor-8.htm)

Nee was an influential miracle-working native Chinese missionary who died at the age of 69, in 1972, after 20 years in a Communist prison. Nee’s application of Scripture is not mere untested theory. Nee and an entire network of missionaries lived by it. It works. Not only did God say to do it, but it works. No one can say “Ah, maybe God commanded it, but we cannot do this, because it will never work.” Nee proved that it works.

My only disappointment is that in the videos I find of him on youtube, all I find is of him lecturing. No interaction. Oh well.

**Prem Pradhan**, native missionary in Nepal. Once he spoke in my home to an audience of 14. I recorded the conversation and made a transcript. See [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/PremPradhanNEPAL1994.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/PremPradhanNEPAL1994.pdf). 15 pages. Some excerpts: “So many, many American church denomination, they are now entering into Nepal. What you have here, the dead church, many dead church you have in America, they’re exporting their dead church in my country!...You need to pray!...”

“I come to America, and find the Catholic church and the Protestant church are identical! In both, one man stands against a wall and talks, and then ‘church’ is over. In Nepal, only Catholic church that way. Although the Greek Orthodox church, everyone stand.

“Devil is always after the church. Americans will take offerings, and send to Nepal, and build a building, and line up the benches, and stand up a preacher, and say here is the pattern. the pattern that America got from Calvin.

“In Nepal there are no benches where people sit who don’t know each other....

“Honor headship of Jesus, no man the head. Someone may be good speaker, but leave that behind. Read Gospel of John 6 or 8 times, then no need to tell what it says....”

**Gene Edwards** wrote numerous books featuring the theme of congregation participation instead of an uninterruptible sermon. He

described a small number of large churches with different schemes for fairly robust participation. The Wikipedia article about him ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene\\_Edwards#Church\\_Planting\\_and\\_Writing\\_Ministry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_Edwards#Church_Planting_and_Writing_Ministry)) says “Groups and churches that he planted pattern their gatherings around primitive Christian practices such as meeting in homes, writing their own songs, and meeting in an open, participatory style. These groups aim for a distributed ministry model in which no one in the group possesses greater authority than any other so that all will be encouraged to function and speak in the meeting.” I read at least a dozen of his books.

But when he hosted a conference in an East Coast state – maybe it was South Carolina, and I was considering going, I got the impression from his promos that it was not going to be that kind of participatory meeting but basically his own lectures. I contacted him about that, and his answer confirmed my impression. There would be little or no opportunity for others to interact by contributing information. So I stayed home. But his writing greatly encouraged my Bible study of a meeting format.

**John Robinson, pastor of the Pilgrims.** [www.1620.US](http://www.1620.US) features the documentary I filmed in 2008 when, as elected Elder of the Iowa Society of Mayflower Descendants, I traveled to Plymouth, Massachusetts for the triennial convention of the international organization. I interviewed world experts on what happened that first November and in their first years here.

Later I read some of Robinson’s 1,000 pages of Bible study available online. I learned that they hosted “Sabbath afternoon prophesying services” which were all that I have discerned from 1 Corinthians 14, which were, in effect, laboratories of free speech and religion, and of a vote for all. Their catechism lists the verses supporting their practice. I built a 1/6 size replica (roughly) of the Mayflower on a car, which I have



entered in parades the past four years. The message on its side: “They got freedom of speech and religion, and a vote for all, from the Bible.”

**[www.saltshaker.us/Salt/VersesThatLaunchedFreedom.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/VersesThatLaunchedFreedom.pdf)**

reports Robinson’s Bible study. Contents of the article after its introduction: <> How the Bible word “Prophesying” launched Freedom of Speech and Religion – 842 word summary <> Their own words: The Pilgrims’ Catechism on Freedom: 418 words if you just read the catechism questions and



answers; 1956 words if you also read the Scriptures cited and their Geneva notes. <> *Summary of the Freedom Verses noticed by the Works of John Robinson Vol 3, chapter VIII, & Catechism 1* With notes added by Dave Leach Pilgrims and how Pastor Robinson understood them – a 1097 word summary of the complete Biblical evidence in Chapter 8, Book 3, “Of the exercise of Prophecy” <> The complete Chapter 8, Book 3, “Of the exercise of Prophecy”. Robinson’s words number 1569. 6822 words if you also read all the Scriptures he cited in the Geneva version, with Geneva notes. <> A review: just the paragraph headings, 148 words, of the complete study

**George Barna and Frank Viola.** Their book. “Pagan Christianity”, is available on Amazon. ([www.amazon.com/Pagan-Christianity-Exploring-Church-Practices/dp/1414364555](http://www.amazon.com/Pagan-Christianity-Exploring-Church-Practices/dp/1414364555)) The Amazon promo: “Have you ever wondered why we Christians do what we do for church every Sunday morning? Why do we “dress up” for church? Why does the pastor preach a sermon each week? Why do we have pews, steeples, and choirs? This ground-breaking book, now in affordable softcover, makes an unsettling proposal: most of what Christians do in present-day churches is rooted, not in the New Testament, but in pagan culture and rituals developed long after the death of the apostles. Coauthors Frank Viola and George Barna support their thesis with compelling historical evidence and extensive footnotes that document the origins of modern Christian church practices.”

Barna summarized in an interview, “In the book, we are challenging something very specific: a paid professional clergy that receives a salary for being ‘the minister’ to a local congregation. We discuss the biblical, historical, and pragmatic reasons for our challenge.”

I marveled that Barna, who created Barna surveys which markets its surveys to pastors, could stay in business whose income is from people who his book says should receive no pay! But then I read that a year after his book was published, he sold his survey business. Hmmm.

It’s been a few years, but I know I read the book, though now I can’t find it. And I don’t remember reading that church leaders should receive no support, which would have made me wonder to this day how he fits that theory with 1 Corinthians 9:9-10. My challenge is not to the *existence* of church leadership but to its *role*. It is not to be virtually the only source of wisdom in a “worship” service. It includes teaching, but not to the exclusion of wisdom from all others, during which his role is that of moderator.

I love how co-author Frank Viola deconstructs the Sermon tradition. But I cringe at his statement that it is vain to pursue “politics” in order to “solve all the world’s problems”. That is the excuse of a cold heart to address *none* of the world’s problems.

**“The Problem with Preaching”** by John Mark Ministries: [<http://www.jmm.org.au/articles/18285.htm>] Points # 7-8, 10-15. Here is a summary of point #7:

7. Apostolic preaching recorded in Acts was extemporaneous and without strict rhetorical structure. Acts 2:14-35; Acts 7:1-52; Acts 17:22-34 8. Apostolic preaching recorded in Acts was most often dialogical (meaning it included feedback and interruptions from the audience) rather than monological (a one-way discourse).[xxiv] Acts 17:2,17; Acts 18:4,19; Acts 19:8,9; Acts 20:7,9; Acts 24:25. Even when Paul & others preached to unbelievers, there was always opportunity for interaction.

**The Pastor Has No Clothes** is the title of a book by John Zens. He points out on page 78, “Several things are evident in [1 Corinthians 14]. First, Paul is dealing with the whole church *as gathered*: “the whole church come together in one place” (v. 23: *cf* 1 Cor. 11:18). Secondly, there is *nothing* stated about the ministry of *one* person. Thirdly, there is *much* stated about the ministry of many: “that you all may prophesy” (v. 1); “when you come together, every one of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has an interpretation” (v. 26); you may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted” (v. 31)...This does not mean, of course, that at every gathering each person must participate verbally. But it does at least mean that the time together at some point was open to those who had something from the Lord to contribute (*cf.* Appendix with Barclay’s comments).”

He points on on the next page, “I am not suggesting in all of this that elders never teach in the church gatherings, or, conversely, that *all* must speak. But it is clear that words of edification in the local church is not *limited* to one ‘minister’. Where [in that tradition] is *any* opportunity given to others to speak unto edification [a purpose for interaction specified in 1 Corinthians 14:3, 4, 5, 12, 26] in our services? What grounds are there in the NT to limit public speaking to the elders, especially the ‘pastor’? 1 Corinthians 14 teaches the *exact opposite* of such an idea.”

Zens’ next sentence submits the absurd as the logical corollary to today’s throttling of interaction: “Are the basic perspectives of this passage now obsolete because the canon of Scripture is closed?”

Although such a theory should strike any Bible believer as absurd and heretical, pastor Terry Amann in Des Moines actually told me that although my interpretation of Scripture may correctly portray the practice recommended in 1 Corinthians 14, we have learned better ways of worshiping over the centuries. Amann is not otherwise any kind of liberal. He is very politically active, spending much time in our state capitol praying

with lawmakers, and discussing bills which he believes Christians should favor. He aligns with conservative Republicans in all the positions he has that I know about. I spent several months in his church, the Church of the Way.

**Archaeological Evidence.** Excerpts from “*Ante Pacem/ Archaeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine*” by Graydon F. Snyder, published by The SeedSowers, Mercer University Press, (c) 1985, 2nd printing 1991. A book full of photos of art created by early Christians in their homes, churches, and tombs; and photos and architectural perspective drawings of reconstructed house-churches and meeting halls.

Page 81: A hall 100 by 58.5 Roman feet built about 310 AD “must be the earliest-known structure built specifically for the Christian assembly....There were no special appointments or divisions for liturgical purposes. Only later was it necessary to divide clergy from laity (the screen of the mid-fourth century). The confessio and the altar were introduced no earlier than the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth...”Without denying the formal presence of ministers and elders or bishops in the governance structure of a local church, it must be maintained that the pre-Constantinian Church was remarkably democratic. In the letters and inscriptions there are very few references to clergy, and those are late. Only in the Crypt of the Popes in Rome do we have a clear interest in 'leadership' figures, but we understand the political nature of this attempt to replace saints with bishops. Still, even the presence of this struggle in Rome and such evidence as the letter to the brothers at Arsinoe indicates that there was a hierarchy in place. There was leadership, but clergy were not divided from laity, nor religious act from religious actor. Not until the end of the fourth century can we find church edifices with a choir or confession.

“Not only were religious distinctions minimalized, but social class structures were all but destroyed. The first Christians abetted that shift within the Roman world but obviously moved well ahead of society itself. One can see this fact in two distinct ways: the rapidity with which Roman family names were dropped and the total lack of reference to slaves. In both cases the Christian community demonstrably differed from Roman society at large.

“The characteristics of the house church noted in the period’s art match our picture of the Christians as a democratic, close-knit group. People found in the new faith community a place of deliverance and peace. Most of the

symbols from 180 [A.D.] reflect this deep sense of security. At the same time the Church extended itself by offering hospitality not only to its members but to society at large. We find this in the philanthropia of the Good Shepherd and the function of the meal as social diakonia [service].”

[In other words, the original “communion service” was a real meal shared with non-Christian guests.]

Page 153: “The financial function of the Church has not been sufficiently appreciated. At the time of Christ the Jewish Temple and its synagogues were probably the largest independent (of Rome) banking institution in the Empire. The account in Acts tells us the Christians threatened that financial function of the Temple with a counterstructure. Our knowledge of how that new financial structure developed has been very minimal. This letter indicates the office of the bishop was available for expediting financial transactions and even holding deposits.”

Page 158: “In addition to this deep sense of community that was expressed, no doubt, through common meals, worship, and assemblies, the community served as an economic institution. It could act as a bank, both local and international, and [in two surviving documents] employment is offered. In others...services are being performed. A kinship community also cares for its members financially, as the documents indicate.”

## Practical Applications

**“Multitude of Counsellors” Project** *With such resistance to God’s meeting format recommendations in both churches and Christian activist groups, here is a way to achieve at least part of God’s vision which political candidates could put together by inviting those they meet on the “campaign trail” who like to talk longer than campaign managers want their candidates to spend. See [http://savetheworld.saltshaker.us/wiki/Multitude\\_Of\\_Counsellors\\_Project](http://savetheworld.saltshaker.us/wiki/Multitude_Of_Counsellors_Project)*

**Saltshaker Papers.** <http://saltshaker.us/Salt/SaltshakerPapers.PDF>  
Proposed practical rules for groups to function as “saltshakers” within their churches. Also includes a brief history of the Fall of Freedom of Religious Expression in America, a Bible Study on “Salt”, and a Mission statement.

**www.Saltshaker.US Website:** [www.savetheworld.saltshaker.us](http://www.savetheworld.saltshaker.us). *Join the “Save The World” Club which is a fair way to describe God’s ignored blueprint for “Church”.* I have worked to create an online forum as much like 1 Corinthians 14 fellowship as I can imagine. You can’t build much fellowship with someone who won’t even tell you who they are, so to post, you have to give your real name, your state, and your political party. Optionally, you can sign with a bit more about your beliefs, and/or some contact information. Once you do that, you can not only post comments after



the articles of others, but you can interact with points you want to respond to, right where they are in the article. Just like in Wikipedia, although with your name next to your contribution.

**God's Relationship Primer** (Book) Free PDF at [www.saltshaker.us/GodsRelationshipPrimer.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/GodsRelationshipPrimer.pdf); paperback available on Amazon.

The more people want to accomplish together, the more they need rules to govern their communication, whether they number 200 million or 2. People act as if they have never heard of a handbook of relationship rules. But a Book in most homes has enough wisdom and love to save our marriages, friendships, nation, world, and churches.

## More of my own general explanation

**The Verses that Launched Freedom.** [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/VersesThatLaunchedFreedom.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/VersesThatLaunchedFreedom.pdf) *(This article is linked under [www.1620.us](http://www.1620.us) above. There its contents are summarized. Here its introduction is copied.)*

Freedom. What a funny idea.

Everyone else in the world knew it could never work. Only the Bible told the Pilgrims it would.

Or did it? Does the Bible really say what they thought it says? Do we indeed have God to thank for Freedom?

Or is our freedom just an accident based on their bad interpretations? Are claims of Freedom's Biblical beginnings merely the wishful thinking of looking back in time and hoping to validate what we have created?

In other words, does God actually care about our freedom, or is freedom destined to fade away as Jesus returns and takes charge as the world's King – as a “benevolent dictator” – because freedom is not God's eternal plan after all?

Or, did the Separatists mistake something God never thought of for His Plan, but now God likes it too and will let us keep it?

Has political freedom always been urged by God, important to God, and holy? To be valued, exercised, and protected by God's people?

The Separatists claimed they got the idea for their freedoms from the Bible. What verses did they quote? How did they assemble those verses into Freedom? (Also published at [www.ipatriot.com/verses-launched-freedom](http://www.ipatriot.com/verses-launched-freedom)

**The Last Five Reformation Theses?** [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/Last5ReformationTheses.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/Last5ReformationTheses.pdf) Martin Luther didn't finish his list of theses, since he only listed 95, and everyone knows when you get that close to 100 you need to come up with 5 more before your list will be considered complete. It would seem Luther left his list unfinished in order to invite others to help finish it. So here are 5 more:

96. Jesus begs us, and our churches, to crawl out from under our safe, non-

controversial “bushels” to where it is darkest, and shine the “light”, of what God says about Darkness across the whole “city”. Matthew 5:13-16. But American churches excuse themselves with Noninvolvement Theologies which rename the most grievous “darkness” as “politics”, and “shine your light” as “don't get involved”, resulting in America's Light darkening. (Continued at link.) Also published in an ipatriot.com article on Reformation Day, October 30, 2017, the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's 95 theses nailed to his church door. (Also published at ipatriot.com:) <http://ipatriot.com/last-five-reformation-theses/>

**“Who Owns the Pulpit?”** (book) [www.Saltshaker.us/BibleStudies/ICOR.htm](http://www.Saltshaker.us/BibleStudies/ICOR.htm)

Chapters One: “According to 1 Corinthians 14, today's churches are receiving only about 1% of the blessing God offers them. How we can return to 100%.” Chapter Two: “Did God write ‘for men only’ on the pulpit?” Three: “Pastors: God's Job Description.” Chapter Fourteen: “Case Histories of Actual Bible Discussions in other lands.”

a brief **History of Christian Political Involvement**. What Christians used to do, What Churches can legally do, What God says to do. [www.Saltshaker.us/BibleStudies/HistoryChristianInvolve.htm](http://www.Saltshaker.us/BibleStudies/HistoryChristianInvolve.htm)

**A slide show** of key Scriptures: [www.saltshaker.us/Salt/Prophecy-Slides.pdf](http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/Prophecy-Slides.pdf)

**“Sermons don't work”**, <http://www.saltshaker.us/Salt/Sermons-Dont-Work.pdf>

This is a review of sermon retention research – of how much of a sermon people remember – about 5% a short time afterward, the same rate as for university lectures – and how schools, universities, and businesses are replacing their lectures with more successful verbal interaction. This review is not scholarly or comprehensive. It is just excerpts from a few articles that came up when I googled “retention of sermon content” and “audience participation”. But two or three of these articles seem pretty scholarly and comprehensive, with summaries of research findings with plenty of links.

**Survey**. <http://saltshaker.us/Salt/BodyDividedSurvey.htm>

This shows how misguided Christian political activism has, by getting God's views on immigration wrong, fast-forwarded “Mark of the Beast” national tracking technology.

**Newspaper Op-ed**. After I returned from the triennial convention of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, as elected Elder of the Iowa society, I wrote about the “mixing of politics and religion” by our Pilgrim ancestors and my op-ed was published by the Des Moines Register. I was involved in the comment stream afterwards, which generated a LOT of very interesting dialog and information. I lot of it forced me to do further research in order to respond to challenges. The year: 2008. The link: [www.Saltshaker.us/Salt/Politics&ReligionMixedOpEd&CommentStream.pdf](http://www.Saltshaker.us/Salt/Politics&ReligionMixedOpEd&CommentStream.pdf)

**“The ‘Gift’ of GOVERNMENTS”** A tabloid I wrote and mailed to every Iowa church in 2008. I had done the same thing in 1986 with three

consecutive tabloids before the 1986 election; then, my only responses were from half a dozen requests to remove them from my mailing list. In 2008 I don't remember any responses. [www.Saltshaker.US/Salt/IowaChurchMailing2008.bmp](http://www.Saltshaker.US/Salt/IowaChurchMailing2008.bmp) (In 1990 I wrote a book by that title but it is not online now.)

**Fornication Cards.** This is a PDF of business cards you can print out with a message about fornication designed to break the desire of teens for it. A strong Biblical message, for which I would probably be arrested if I passed them out to teens directly. Or lynched by some parents. But maybe it is safe to offer them to parents who may share God's concerns. [www.Saltshaker.US/Salt/Fornication-Cards.pdf](http://www.Saltshaker.US/Salt/Fornication-Cards.pdf)

**Gospel Tract: Winning the Jackpot in a Wicked World.** This is not a traditional tract about a few things you need to intellectually believe to get your guaranteed ticket to Heaven. This reviews God's promises to help you conquer evil in yourself and in the world. It is a glimpse of Purpose for Life. [www.Saltshaker.US/Salt/WinningTheJackpotInAWickedWorld.pdf](http://www.Saltshaker.US/Salt/WinningTheJackpotInAWickedWorld.pdf)

**Awesome Cartoon** [www.Saltshaker.US/BibleStudies/TakeGodSeriouslyCartoon.JPG](http://www.Saltshaker.US/BibleStudies/TakeGodSeriouslyCartoon.JPG)

## How God Says to Heal America: Join the Discussion

God solicits your brainpower. God says in many ways, in many verses, reprinted here, that He speaks to us through each other, in conjunction with speaking to us through the Bible. God answers prayers especially of those who reach at least a little consensus through communicating with each other and with God. He *guarantees* success through a "multitude of counsellors". That is, through teams that listen to each other, making available to the whole group its full brainpower.

America's existence is a demonstration of this Biblical principle, which America's Founders risked and gave their lives to carefully extract from the Bible, as early as the catechism of the Pilgrims.

America's threats come from erosion of that Foundation, from hearing these sayings of Jesus and not doing them, that Rock of Matthew 7 which saves from storms every life built on it – from, for example, censorship in Christian meetings of strategizing how to get out into the Darkness, outside the safe comfortable "bushel", what God says about the Darkness. And from going out into the Darkness to fight the Darkness, but leaving their "swords" back in their pews.

God desires "teamwork" with teams that won't kick Him, or the needs of those He loves, off.

The Bible explains where tyranny is vulnerable. It explains the “ways” from which “My people, who are called by My name” must “repent”, 2 Chronicles 7:14, which will exploit this vulnerability to achieve a government where “we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” 1 Timothy 2:2. A government of “higher powers” that does not conflict with the Highest Power, “the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” Romans 13:1-4.

The Bible explains how vitally important to God it is that we do this.

The Bible explains that Government is not total answer, but the total answer doesn’t ignore government.

Evil can proceed only as far as “good” people, through their levels of ignorance and apathy, allow it, according to several verses where tyrants “feared the people” too much to do the harm to Jesus, and later His apostles, that their rage demanded.

The Pharisees “feared the people” too much to do evil. Even Pilate, with his 10,000 soldiers, “feared the people” too much to do good! How can this be? Isn’t the unrestrained power to do whatever he wants what identifies a tyrant?

The most apathetic, ignorant Americans grasp a little of this principle today, with our elections that make it easy and safe for sufficiently informed, concerned, and awake voters to correct evil government and laws. But before elections, even then, the Bible says, tyrants were restrained by too little ignorance and apathy?

“The Prince” is a short book written a few centuries ago by Machiavelli. He wrote it as a gift to his king, in Italy. His name has become a word in English meaning sinister, scheming, sick, and evil. It comes up in conversatins about political scheming. It is so embedded in English vocabulary that when I spell “Machiavellian” correctly, my word processor doesn’t put a squiggly red line under it.

The book describes ways a monarch can decieve his subjects into thinking the steps he is taking to secure power over them are really great blessings for the people.

When I read the book, what surprised me was how much deception it thought necessary to keep a monarch in power. I had thought monarchs’ power is so secure that they could be perfectly honest with the people about how brutal they are and no one could do anything about it.

But Machiavelli helps me understood how the Pharisees, Pilate, and the Sanhedrin “feared the people” despite all their police, soldiers, and cruel punishments. Therefore what has not changed in 6,000 years, we learn from



this fact, is that tyrants are safe only in proportion to the ignorance and apathy of the people.

The Bible targets ignorance and apathy like no other religion or philosophy. That is why tyrants fear the Bible, and persecute its followers, like no other religion or philosophy.

It is also why America's freedoms are threatened by America's culture today pushing God out of those forums where voters decide whether to pattern our laws after the principles of Heaven or of Hell. Churches won't allow strategizing and consensus building on how to get light into government-entangled darkness, and Christian political activists who spend their lives trying to heal Darkness try without turning on their Light.