

What To Do About Christians Who Vote Democrat?



I'm voting for someone who's going to make policies that Christians and non-Christians will live under, including my children and my grandchildren.

"On Christian Freedom" – by Martin Luther



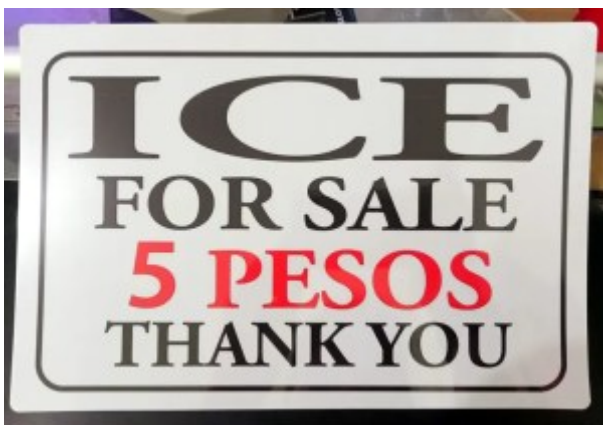
The believing soul, by its faith in Christ, becomes free from all sin, fearless of death, safe from hell, and endowed with eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Independence Day



On this 4th of July let us be thankful for the brave Christian Founders of America who stood against papal tyranny and stood for liberty. Intelligent men who knew both their God and their enemy.

Scenes of the Philippines



There are [photos below the text.](#)

On Friday, June 21st, I turned 74 years old. I'm thankful to my Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ, for reasonably good health at my age, normal blood pressure, no arthritis, and no diabetes as my father had, and for being completely off medication of any kind. And I'm *especially* blessed to have a ministry of sharing God's truth, His Word, and the true views that Protestant Christians used to hold before the Counter-Reformation of the Jesuits sidetracked evangelical Christians. And I'm super-blessed to have friends who value my work and the articles on this website. And I'm blessed to have a wonderful wife who supports my ministry. And I'm blessed to live in a land of peace and liberty with no crime in my area that I know of, a land where little kids walk the streets without danger of being abducted. It never gets cold but doesn't get too hot either because of the proximity of the sea. I hardly see police anywhere. I see only armed guards at entrances to banks and any establishment where there is a lot of cash or goods at hand.

The Philippines is still a poor country as are many Roman Catholic nations. Signs advertising ice for sale are ubiquitous and are indicative of its poverty. We sell our neighbors ice for about 10 US cents a bag and use the money to buy filtered drinking water which costs roughly only USD 0.50 per 5 gallons. Our next-door neighbors do not have either a refrigerator or a stove. They cook outside over a wood fire. They do have a phone, however. A phone is the one appliance nobody seems to lack. They connect to the Internet through what's called Piso WiFi. Put a 5 peso coin (about USD 0.10) in the slot and you get one hour of Internet. Haircuts are only about \$1.00 or 60 Philippine pesos. I always give them more than they ask or about 100 pesos. This is still 7 times less than I would pay in Guam.

Households owning appliances:

Television 75%

Refrigerator/Freezer 50%

Washing machine 49.2%

Radio 35.4%

Aircon 16.1%

Stove with oven/gas range 14.2%

Microwave/oven toaster 10.5%

Source: [Percentage distribution of households in the Philippines owning home appliances in 2022, by type](#)

Photos of my area in the Philippines



Caba Beach near sunset



Caba Beach near sunset



Imaga White Sand Beach sign



Imaga White Sand Beach sign.



Image White Sand Beach



Children walking on the main road to town.



Elementary school graduation ceremony.



A typical village road.



A poor family's house



A rich family's house



Near Caba Beach



Near Caba Beach



Wedding at Imaga White Sand Beach



Imaga White Sand Beach rocks in the background.

[Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner](#) [Chapter XIII Ritualism](#)



Roman Catholic people have to struggle with ritualism and superstition, forms and ceremonies which impress the eye but deaden the soul to spiritual truth.

How Does the Government of Israel Treat Christians? Christian Leaders in the West Should Care



Reverend Munther Isaac, the pastor at the Evangelical Lutheran Christian Church in Bethlehem

Do American evangelical Christian pastors care that the government of Israel is mistreating Palestinian Christians? Not according to Munther Isaac, a Palestinian Christian. Doctrines of dispensationalism pastors learned in Bible school and seminary have led them to believe Christians must support Israel in everything the Israeli government does. This is based on the heretical doctrine of John Nelson Darby's dispensationalism which C.I. Scofield promoted in his Scofield Reference Bible.

The Bible says in Romans 9:6b:

For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Who then is truly of Israel?

*Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on **them**, and mercy, and **upon the Israel of God**.*

The true Israel of God are those in Christ Jesus!

The rest of this article is a re-post from an article on [G. Edward Griffin's Need to Know News](#) website.

Tucker Carlson: How Does the Government of Israel Treat Christians?

Christian Leaders in the West Should Care

Last month, Republican Congressman Tim Walberg, a former Evangelical Pastor, said the US should not spend a dime on humanitarian aid for Gaza. He said he would like to see the area treated like Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to get it over quickly. He added that the same should go for Ukraine.

Tucker Carlson said that Christianity is the religion among all world religions that uniquely abhors mass killing and there's no excuse for that from a Christian perspective. Reverend Munther Isaac, the pastor at the Evangelical Lutheran Christian Church in Bethlehem, said that most leaders have a shallow knowledge of Israel but hold strong opinions shaped by their political party rather than investigation of the facts. Their decisions impact millions of lives. He said that Evangelical Christians support Israel because of the theology of Christian Zionism that teaches Christians must support Israel as the presence of Jews prepares for the end times and the second coming of Christ. Christians support Israel as a fulfillment of prophecy not realizing the consequences on real lives.

(Please understand that while I like many of Tucker's views, I don't support all of them.)

Reverend Isaac said that many Evangelical leaders believe that in the end times, leading to the return of Christ, after Jews are gathered in Palestine, two-thirds of them will be massacred and only the remaining third will to convert to Christianity.

He said that Christians should advocate for peace and that money and energy should be invested in peace rather than supporting Israel unconditionally. Israel should be held accountable for its actions. He added that the church is also part of the problem. The Bible does not call for unconditional support to a political entity.

Christians in the US have failed to stand up for other Christians because Israel is an ally.

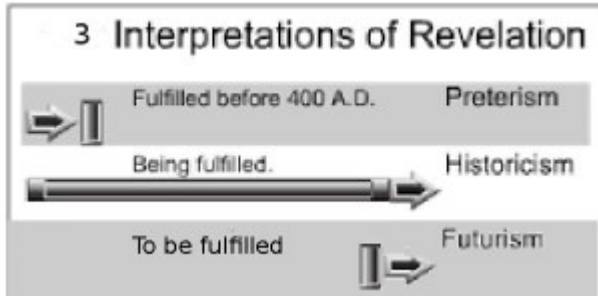
Christians in Israel have suffered collective punishment along with Palestinians and are not allowed to leave Gaza.

Rev. Isaac said the war in Gaza can be described as genocide because of the forced starvation.

He stated that the only way to rescue the Christian presence in Israel is to end the occupation and bring a peaceful solution to the situation. "This is what we're asking for."

Christians are suffering. He pleaded for the war in Gaza to stop.

False Interpretations of Divine Prophecy



Two Jesuits published their respective but quite counter interpretations, Ribera in 1591 published *Babylon and Antichrist*, the Futurist scheme; the other, Alcasar, the Preterist; that the prophecies have all been fulfilled in the fall of Pagan Rome.

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 light 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 Perian 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.

Why Do Jews Not Believe Jesus As Messiah?

A man asks, Why Do Jews Not Believe Jesus As Messiah? I need an answer from the Jews themselves.

Seven Things You May Not Know about Christmas



There is debate among some Christians about whether we should celebrate Christmas or not. I think we can if we scrape the lies off the Truth and celebrate it as it should be celebrated, as the birth of the Saviour, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, on earth.

Isaac Munter, pastor of a church in Bethel, said there will be no festive Christmas celebrations this year in his church because of the destruction and death in Gaza. But I think we can still praise the Father for sending His Son to earth to be our savior!

Angels of God notified shepherds of the birth of Christ and celebrated the fact.

Luke 2:11-14 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

My wife and I are against the trappings of this world related to the

Christmas season. We will never put up a tree or use any other symbols we consider to be Roman paganism.

When I lived in Japan, I took advantage of Christian holidays, Christmas and Easter (I'd rather call it Resurrection Sunday), to tell the Japanese about Jesus. It's a great time to share the Gospel in non-Christian nations. Many Japanese have never heard the Gospel even once. One Japanese lady used to think Jesus was born in America!

Some things many people may not know:

1. December 25th is supposed to be a Christian holiday celebrating the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. But the date chosen was in fact based on *pagan tradition*, a Roman custom called "*Sol Invictus*" meaning, **rebirth of the sun!** In other words, the December 25th holiday is really based on **sun worship**. Just think about it: Winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, occurs either on December 21st or 22nd depending on the shift of the calendar. The day starts to get longer finally from the 25th, hence, the "rebirth of the sun." The Bible does *not* specify the date that Jesus was born. He probably was not born in the winter because Luke chapter 2 says that at the time of His birth were, "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night". Shepherds usually don't graze their flocks in winter.
 2. People who call themselves Christians do not all celebrate December 25th as the birthday of Christ. The Orthodox Church celebrates it on January 7th.
 3. Some dedicated and sincere Christians refuse to celebrate Christmas **at all** because of the materialism the worldly merchants promote at this time.
 4. December 25th is the **359th** day of the year. The first time the word Satan appears in the King James version of the Bible is in 1 Chronicles chapter 21 – the **359th chapter!** I have researcher, Al Neal to thank for this fact. But I also confirmed this for myself by adding up the chapters using OpenOffice Calc (the same as Excel). According to Al Neal, the numerical value of the Hebrew word for Satan is **also 359!** See <http://www.jewfaq.org/alephbet.htm> that Hebrew letters can be converted to numbers.
 5. Santa is **Satan** when you move the third letter N to the end of the name.
 6. Christmas trees, mistletoe, jingle bells, etc. are related to paganism. The trees especially are related to pagan Druidism. The evergreen tree is based on sun worship. The sun's energy turns plants green. Druids therefore worshiped the sun through the evergreen tree.
 7. Many Japanese do **not know** that Christmas is supposed to be the celebration of the birth of the Son of God to earth. They celebrate Christmas by eating some cake with tea on the evening of December 25th. The only reason they acknowledge Christmas at all is because of Western, and especially American influence.
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Are The Church and Israel Two Different Peoples of God?

Israel and the Church

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Saints (Num. 16:3; Deut. 33:3) | 1. Saints (Eph. 1:1; Rom. 1:7) |
| 2. Elect (Deut. 7:6, 7; 14:2) | 2. Elect (Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1) |
| 3. Beloved (Deut. 7:7; 4:37) | 3. Beloved (Col.3:12; 1 Thess 1:4) |
| 4. Called (Isa. 41:9; 43:1) | 4. Called (Rom. 1:6, 7; 1 Cor.1:2) |
| 5. Church (Ps. 89:5; Mic. 2:5 (LXX)
Act. 7:38; Heb. 2:12) | 5. Church (Eph. 1:1;
Acts 20:28) |
| 6. Flock (Ezek. 34; Ps. 77:20) | 6. Flock (Luke 12:32; 1 Pet. 5:2) |
| 7. Holy Nation (Exod. 19:5, 6) | 7. Holy Nation (1 Pet. 2:9) |
| 8. Kingdom of Priests (Exod.19:5, 6) | 8. Kingdom of Priests (1 Pet. 2:9) |
| 9. Peculiar Treasure (Exod. 19:5, 6) | 9. Peculiar Treasure (1 Pet. 2:9) |
| 10. God's People (Hos. 1:9, 10) | 10. God's People (1 Pet. 2:10) |
| 11. Holy People (Deut. 7:6) | 11. Holy People (1 Pet. 1:15,16) |
| 12. People of Inheritance (Deut. 4:20) | 12. People of Inheritance (Eph. 1:18) |
| 13. God's Tabernacle in Israel
(Lev. 26:11) | 13. God's Tabernacle in Church
(John 1:14) |
| 14. God walks among them
(Lev. 26:12) | 14. God walks among them
(2 Cor. 6:16-18) |
| 15. Twelve Patriarchs | 15. Twelve Apostles |
| 16. Christ married to them (Isa. 54:5;
Jer. 3:14; Hos. 2:19; Jer. 6:2; 31:32) | 16. Christ married to them
(Eph. 5:22, 23; 2 Cor. 11:2) |

See the difference?

NEITHER DO WE.

Fundamental to dispensationalism is the idea that God has two different peoples and He pursues his purposes for them in alternating dispensations. This is false!

The Historical Roots of Christian Zionism, its Theological Basis and Political Agenda



The historical roots, theological basis, and political consequences or political agenda of Christian Zionism

[Munther Isaac's Speech: "Palestinian Christian Response to Christian Zionism" In Text Format](#)



Christian Zionism has ignored us Palestinian Christians at best, demonized us at worst. Whenever they speak about prophecy and Israel it is as if we don't exist!

[An Open Letter to U.S. Christians from a Palestinian Pastor](#)



By Dr. Munther Isaac

Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac is the pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, academic dean at Bethlehem Bible College, and the director of the Christ at the Checkpoint conferences. He wrote this letter in May 20, 2021.

I believe the heretic footnotes in the Scofield Reference Bible and the Dallas Theological Seminary's promotion of the message in those footnotes are to blame for American evangelicals embracing the false doctrines of Christian Zionism. It has led to their support of the antichrist state of Israel which has resulted in the suffering today.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!"

Palestine and Israel are back in the news. So again, we Palestinians hear this common refrain. But such calls for prayer are no longer enough. I say this as a Palestinian pastor who believes in prayer, leads prayer services for peace, and genuinely values your good intentions.

But good intentions are not enough.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus didn't say, "Blessed are the peace prayers." He said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." (Matthew 5:9, emphasis added).

Peacemakers of every faith pray – and they discern what's really happening, call things by their names, then speak truth to power. Here's how this works.

Call things by their names

Peacemaking begins by refusing to repeat the common descriptor of what is happening in Palestine and Israel: a conflict. Palestinians are not experiencing a conflict between two parties. **We Palestinians are experiencing an occupation: one nation controlling another;** the laws, policies, practices, and military of one state oppressing the people of another, controlling nearly every aspect of our lives. Palestinians in Jerusalem are not facing evictions from their homes. They are experiencing ethnic cleansing, which the U.N. has described as "a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas."

Non-Jewish citizens of Israel are not just enduring discrimination. They are experiencing apartheid. Israel's infamous 2018 [nation-state law](#) – which, among other things, stated that Israel's right to "exercise national self-determination" is "unique to the Jewish people" – along with other policies and practices, has transformed *de facto* discrimination into racism *de jure*.

The more than 2 million people living in Gaza are not choosing to experience hardship, food deprivation, a lack of clean water, and consistent energy. They are confined to the world's largest open-air prison where – unable to

come and go, import and export, or even fish in the open waters off their shore without Israeli permission – Israeli snipers [pick off their children](#) and Israel's air force bombs their city indiscriminately.

For over 70 years, Palestinians have not been arguing over who owns what land. No, we have experienced the terror and loss that comes from settler colonialism, the systematic removal and erasure of native inhabitants from their land, most recently in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem.

Calling things by their names is a necessary step toward resolving any conflict. Using the words racism and apartheid may cause pause – but these are the descriptors that define our daily lives.

Do not take our word alone for it.

Read the January [report](#) issued by the respected Israeli human rights organization B'tselem, "A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid." Read the April [report](#) from Human Rights Watch, "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution." Read Nathan Thrall's [analysis](#) in the *London Review of Books*.

Until peacemakers use terms that accurately describe our realities, the opportunities for peace remain distant.

Don't misuse Christian-Jewish dialogue

For years, Christian-Jewish dialogue was misused as a tool to silence criticism of Israel. In the 1990s, Jewish theologian Marc H. Ellis [wrote](#) about a significant, unspoken "agreement" between Christians and Jews. He observed that the "ecumenical dialogue" between liberal Christians and Jews had turned into what he described as an "ecumenical deal": repentance on the part of Christians for having aided in or having failed to speak out against the atrocities committed by Germany, and the prospect of an ongoing conversation devoid of any substantive criticism of Israel.

While the "deal" has broken down in many Christian denominations in the U.S. and in many quarters of the Jewish community, it is still used to silence Palestinian Christians, labeling us antisemitic when we criticize the state of Israel or speak out against the secular project of Zionism.

It is time Christians begin engaging new Jewish partners. Listen to groups like Jewish Voice for Peace, IfNotNow, B'tselem, Yesh Din, Rabbis for Human Rights, Breaking the Silence, and others who challenge the occupation. Listen to and dialogue with people like Marc H. Ellis, Mark Braverman, Rabbis Brant Rosen and Alissa Wise, and others who defend Palestinian rights out of their Jewish beliefs and convictions. Take the word of Bernie Sanders, who recently [challenged](#) the racist policies of the state of Israel.

Reexamine the church's theology

For years, Western Christian theology has been part of the matrix that

empowers the Israeli occupation. It's a theology that describes God's unique faithfulness to Israel, the fulfilment of prophecy, and the "return" of Jews to "their" land. Adherents embrace the myth that the land was devoid of people when the state of Israel was created, or worse, that it was occupied by the enemies of God.

It is time for Christians in some communions to confess and repent from their total disregard for the existence of Palestinians. It is time to change the theological narrative that renders the state of Israel invincible to errors and beyond any judgment.

Theology matters. And if any theology trumps the ethical-biblical teachings of Jesus on love, equality, and justice, then we must rethink that theology. If any theology produces apathy to injustice, it must be re-examined.

Don't describe Palestinian Christians' efforts at creative resistance as criminal: We believe the call for sanctions, economic measures, and our nonviolent demonstrations are *justified resistance*. To insist on our dignity and God-given rights in our own land is not antisemitic; even the recent [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#), a statement produced by more than 200 scholars of antisemitism and related fields, acknowledges this.

Some have accused Palestinian Christians of hating Jews and of rejecting the right to nationhood for Israel. Though they have gone unacknowledged or been rejected as disingenuous, our statements have clearly rejected antisemitism and racism of any form. Our hope, our desire, is to live side by side with our Jewish neighbors in a reality of a just peace.

My plea to fellow Christians

I call upon you to share – both in word and action – our vision of a reality in which we both end the occupation and live together in peace with our Israeli neighbors.

We do not hate Jews. We do not seek to destroy Israel. We want our freedom. We want to live in dignity in our homeland. We want to live in a reality where all the people of the land, Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Muslims, and Christians, have the same rights and live under the same laws, regardless of their faith, nationality or ethnicity.

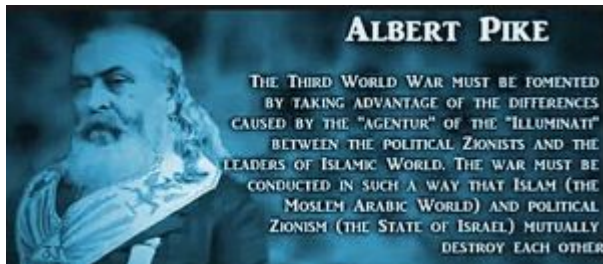
Many years from today, when our descendants look back on the long misery of the Palestinians, they will not judge kindly the willful neglect of the global church. We Palestinian Christians will not let you pretend that you did not know.

You will either take a stand to end the oppression of the Palestinian people or continue to be part of the matrix that allows it. The words of Elie Wiesel in his 1986 Nobel Prize acceptance [speech](#) cannot be more true today:

We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when

human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must – at that moment – become the center of the universe.

The Three World Wars of Albert Pike



Are you sure your eschatological beliefs are based on what the Bible actually says? Or are you following an end-time Bible teacher who is repeating the errors he learned from others?

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/

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.² 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.³ 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*."⁴ 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.⁵ 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.⁶

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).⁷ 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. ⁸

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."*⁹

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?"*¹⁰

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."*¹¹ 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.”¹²

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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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* (Kirksville: 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* (Kirksville, 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.