

Ecclesia Prayer
Convocation

**The Biblical and
Historic Significance of
Ecclesia Prayer**

*including Prayer Proclamations for the
Individual, Home, Church and Culture in
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Ecclesia Prayer; Its Biblical and Historic Significance

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Introduction

Prayer has many dimensions. It is both personal as well as corporate. It is internal, in our hearts, and external, in public and proclamation. In this treatise, I want to share why both dimensions of prayer are critical in our day to see the remnant of God's people spiritually influence their culture. If we unite in our hearts under the focus of the model prayer taught by Jesus, we can, as the people of God from many churches and across denominational lines, see a measure of the Kingdom of God come forth in our generation. This is possible if we take our positions as citizens of Christ's Kingdom who assemble as representatives of heaven and earth; spiritually legislating and proclaiming *on earth what has already been decreed in heaven*.

We call this posture of prayer *ecclesia* after the Greek word used by Jesus in Matthew 16 and 18 for building His church. Jesus described His disciples as those who gathered as a legislative body like the Greek city-states who met several centuries prior to His coming. But the concept of *ecclesia* goes back much further than Greece for it describes the spiritual position of the Israelites at the base of Mt. Sinai and the nature of their political structure known as the Hebrew Republic. Jesus delineated the church as a continuation of the spiritual and natural function of the congregation of Israel. If God's people would embrace an understanding of what it means to meet and pray as a church (local and regional), it would inspire us to rise to our position as spiritual priests and kings (Revelation 1:6).

God created Men and Women in His Image with Responsibilities on the Earth

What was the origin of this kind of assembly called *ecclesia*? We must go back to God's original design for humanity in general and His people in particular. In Genesis 1:26-28a we read:

And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it...

We see in this passage several truths worth remembering. First, God says, *let us make man in our image*. In other words, it is the triune God in action. God's very nature is three in one and models for us three functions of government (legislative - Father, executive - Holy Spirit and judicial - the Son) as well as bringing together, in harmony, the concepts of the one and many, or unity and diversity. Just as the isolation of powers has corrupted governments into the extremes of monarchy (one), aristocracy (few) and democracy (many), so monism (extreme oneness or isolation) and polytheism (extreme diversity) have corrupted the image of God in the earth.

Second, God says we are made *in his image*. In other words, we have the responsibility of bearing the image of God's character in the earth. From the beginning, man (generic for men and women) were created unique from the rest of creation. We were created with a moral and rational responsibility of stewarding the earth. We were created to enjoy God's presence but *also* to fulfill our responsibility of taking dominion; or as the Hebrew word *radah* is defined, *to rule*.¹

¹ Strong's Concordance, word #7287.

We are to steward or manage the earth, and this would include the responsibility of taking dominion. This idea of dominion has three specific parts as defined by God. The first was to *be fruitful and multiply*. In other words, God's people had the responsibility of promoting a respect for LIFE. The very first right given by God in the Bible is the right to life. However, along with that right goes a corresponding responsibility to protect and preserve it.

The second responsibility was to *replenish* the earth. The Hebrew word used is *mala* meaning *to be full or to fill*.² It is used literally and figuratively, such as filling the earth with sin, violence or peace. It is also used to indicate filling with productivity, such as filling the land or filling the tabernacle. This responsibility indicates filling the culture with productive skills that lead to tools, technology and prosperity. In order to increase technology of all kinds, mankind must have freedom of choice, or the ability to take resources as they are found in the earth and reproduce them in a different form. We call this the God-given right and responsibility of LIBERTY.

The third responsibility was to *subdue* the earth. The Hebrew word here is *kabash* meaning *to bring into bondage*.³ The idea of bringing the earth into bondage, or even plants and animals, conjures up tyrannical images today, but this would be a misapplication of the word. Its meaning is to own the responsibility for stewarding something we are given. In other words, mankind was to take ownership of the earth as God's steward and be responsible for PROPERTY.

The measure of how God's people have influenced their culture is forever determined by how they cultivate a respect for life, preserve liberty of choice, and protect the ability to own property. First, the question is how well we do this among ourselves? Then, secondarily, how have we been a model and influenced the culture around us to promote these values?

The Calling of Abraham

Almost five hundred years after the great flood, around 2000 B.C., God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees to follow Him. He called him to separate from the ideology of his native culture that he might be prepared to increase life, liberty and property in the earth. Genesis 12:1-3 states "*Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*"

Abram, who would become Abraham (or "father of nations"), was called out to receive God's blessing. However, the purpose of this separation was not isolation. He was called out to *be* blessed that he might *become* a blessing. God has always called His people out of their culture spiritually to prepare them in both an attitude of love and an action of service to *be* a blessing, or in essence, transform people positively as a result. We must receive from God so we can give, but it is often more popular to simply receive and then forget about the sacrifice and training necessary to be a blessing and serve others.

The Scriptures are clear about the conditions for both receiving and giving. The condition to receive the blessing from God is circumcision (Genesis 17:10). Though initially a natural circumcision, it's still true spiritually, for spiritual circumcision is conversion (Romans 2:29). The condition of being a

² Strong's, word #4390.

³ Strong's, word #3533.

blessing was deeper and would require much more dedication and discipline. Abraham was called out to be blessed by God so that he would be a blessing to generations so that in time all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Genesis 18:19 declares *“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”* The requirement to be a blessing is to have a deep walk with God, deep enough so that we train our children in such a way that they train their children (three generations.) The goal is that each generation might know what a righteous culture looks like (as in heaven) and strategically know how to bring a measure of it on earth. This requires a capital investment in character development with a multi-generational vision.

It is to this promise that the book of Galatians describes the New Testament believer and church; *“Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying ‘in you all the nations shall be blessed.’”* (Galatians 3:6-8)

The people of God were called to *separate* from the influences of their culture for the express purpose of preparing to *bless* the nations of the world. They were to be a people separated unto Jehovah, learning the statutes and decrees of heaven, that they might bless the nations of the world through prayerful service and influence on earth. The result would be a progressive increase of the right and responsibility of life, liberty and property in the nations of the world. The initial goal was for Israel to be an example of what it was like to live in a culture where Jehovah was King and His laws were obeyed. Like the Greek word *ekklesia*, the people of God were to learn how to govern themselves and influence culture.

Ecclesia among the Hebrews

God raised up Moses about 500 years after he had called Abraham (1500 B.C.) After miraculously saving him from destruction as an infant and having his mother miraculously raise him in Pharaoh’s court, Moses came of age and *“refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.”* (Hebrews 11:24-25) The rights and responsibilities given to Adam and Eve – namely to propagate and preserve life, promote liberty and acquire property in the earth to steward before God were to now receive the protection of righteous civil laws in a nation formed by God Himself.

The return of Moses, deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and the journey to the base of Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments was a pivotal point in history. The nations that did not respect Jehovah granted privileges to the few, curtailed choice and protected government power from the influence of the people. Life, liberty (choice) and property were limited to the noble, the elite and the powerful.

It is important to note that right and wrong, from God, existed before written law defined sin. The writing of law, however, makes all universally accountable for temporal punishment.⁴ The “common law”, or law of the land, is depicted by Genesis 4:10 when Scripture states *“the voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground.”* In other words, the murder of Abel by Cain was wrong from the beginning, long before murder was forbidden and codified as written civil law. The earth, in symbolic and subsequent consequences embedded by God, cried out against it.⁵

⁴ See Romans 5:13-15 that only the law is imputed once written, but reigned previously, and 1st John 3:4 that the definition of sin is the transgression of the law – that is, God’s Law in the ten commandments.

⁵ See also Numbers 35:33 which indicates that sin, especially murder, pollutes the land.

The congregation that settled at the foot of Mt. Sinai was to be a kingdom of priests and kings. “...therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:5-6) The congregation of Israel was to act first as a priest and then as a king. They were to be an ecclesiastical body as well as a civil body. They were to have a vertical dimension (toward God) as well as a horizontal dimension (toward man). The Law itself was written by God on two tables. The first four commands defined a relationship with God and the second six a relationship with man. These two tables functioned as a “church” and “state.” It was a *jurisdictional* separation, but not an *isolation* of the two (as we see in today’s separation of church and state.)

The congregation of Israel was an ecclesiastic body where local priests ministered to the people and taught them to obey God’s law. The people were a diverse group for all were not Jews by birth or lineage, and thus one had to lawfully become a part of Israel.⁶ Their ecclesiastical structure was decentralized, with their religious leaders identified as an offering of the people to God; “and you shall bring the Levites before the tabernacle of meeting; and you shall gather together the whole congregation of the children of Israel; so you shall bring the Levites before the Lord, and the children of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites; and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord, like a wave offering from the children of Israel, that they may perform the work of the Lord.” (Numbers 8:9-11) Note that the people were the ones who ordained the priesthood into ministry. In other words, the leaders functioned by consent because each individual was considered a priest before God.

The congregation of Israel also acted as a king, formed into a civil body politic. Just as you could not become a member of the ecclesiastical body without properly being joined lawfully, you could not become a part of the civil body politic without fulfilling certain qualifications.⁷ Just as the ecclesiastical congregation was structured in a bottom-up fashion, with priests as servants of the people by their consent, so it was politically. Each individual was a king before God. Consider Dimont’s research:

“The Mosaic code... was the first truly judicial, written code, and eclipsed previously known laws with its all-encompassing humanism, its passion for justice, its love of democracy. It also helped to establish a new Jewish character and directed Jewish thinking into new paths which tended to set the Jews further apart from their neighbors. The ideological content of these Mosaic laws is of great interest. Here we find the Jewish concept of the state and philosophy of law. These laws were essentially divided into three categories: those dealing with man’s relation to man, those dealing with man’s relation to the state, and those dealing with man’s relation to God.... The Mosaic Code laid down the first principles for a separation of church and state, a concept not encountered in world history until three thousand years later, during the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century of our era.”⁸

God instructed Moses to set up a government (Exodus 18 and Numbers 11). He did so by pointing out the failures of monarchy (rule of one – where Moses sat in his tent alone trying to govern), democracy (rule of the many – where the people elected a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain), and aristocracy (rule of privileged few.) To curb aristocracy, princes were indirectly elected as a senate.

⁶ Genesis 17:10 indicates that the primary qualification to be a part of the ecclesiastical body of Israel was circumcision. Conversion is the “circumcision of the heart” and is the only lawful way to become a part of the New Testament Church as Romans 2:28-29 states. Jesus is the door, and no one can climb in another way – John 10:1.

⁷ See Leviticus 18:26 that requires an immigrant to submit to the laws of Israel as well as Deuteronomy 31:11-12 which indicates that the immigrant must learn the national language, citing two such qualifications to immigrate.

⁸ Dimont, Max I., “On Mosaic Law,” *Jews, God and History*, 1962, as quoted in Eidsmoe, John, *Historical and Theological Foundations of Law*, Volume I, Ancient Wisdom; American Vision Press, 2011, page 405.

God led Moses to construct a government that would operate by the rule of law, combining and blending the best features of a monarchy (leadership of one), aristocracy (leaders of tribes) and democracy (representatives of the people). By far, the most common form of government among all the nations has been a monarchy where one individual rules and there is little respect for life, liberty (choice) and property (wealth) for the people. Monarchs often ruled by the “divine right of kings” which made them essentially god on earth.⁹

Moses, as “president” was not a monarch under this Hebrew Republic but had to consult with a house of representatives that numbered over 600,000 and a senate of 70.¹⁰ In Exodus 18:20-27 Jethro gave Moses good advice on governing. Moses was to oversee the people selecting their civil rulers; “*able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.*” (verse 21) The “house of representatives” was a reflection of the people’s consent, for citizens were the kings from which the power flowed.¹¹

Rev. E. C. Wines, theologian and pastor in the late 19th century, commented on this passage and its significance governmentally “*no fact can be plainer, or more certain, than that the judges, instituted at the suggestion of Jethro, were chosen by the suffrages of all Israel. The direction of Moses to the people, upon that occasion, is very explicit. His words are ‘take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.’ The meaning is, ‘...you elect the proposed officers, and I will commission and induct them into office.’ It is very observable, that these magistrates were to be taken ‘out of all the people,’ and not from any privileged class.*”¹²

In Exodus 19:8 the Scripture states “*then all the people answered together and said, ‘all that the Lord has spoken we will do. So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord.’*” God had His Law – both ecclesiastic and civil - voted in by the people’s consent! It is true that He would be Lord regardless, and His Law would be supreme whether people consented to it or not – but it was covenantally binding when done by consent, for God desires freedom of choice. In this first ecclesia assembly *the people would decree His Law as valid back to Him!* In other words, ***a decree from the earth would agree with one already made in heaven!***

Why is this so significant? It is because this event is the first *ecclesia*, or formal meeting of the congregation of Israel at the foot of Mt. Sinai in covenant with God. Israel began to function in its priestly and kingly roles. It is interesting that Stephen’s address recorded in Acts 7:38 gives an account of the importance of this event; “*This is he (Moses) that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us.*” The word translated church in this passage is the word *ecclesia*.¹³ In other words, when the congregation of Israel made their proclamation to God that they would indeed ratify the laws given on Mt. Sinai by covenant, they were functioning as an Old Testament “*church;*” *an ecclesia!*

Consider what Patti Amsden says about the significance of Moses’ ecclesia as recounted by Stephen in Acts chapter 7: “*He recalled how Moses was used of God in the nation’s miraculous deliverance from*

⁹ See the research of William Federer, *From Change to Chains*, Amerisearch, Inc., 2011, pages 12-46, where he documents that the vast majority of all governments throughout history have been tyrannical monarchies.

¹⁰ Skousen, Cleon, *The Making of America*, National Center for Constitutional Studies, 1985, pages 49-51. Skousen’s excellent study reveals the government of Moses and the way it resembled a Republic under the rule of law.

¹¹ This is confirmed in Deuteronomy 1:13 which is a summary of Exodus 18.

¹² Wines, E.C., *Commentaries on the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews*, first published in the 1880’s, but Book 2 here republished as *The Roots of the American Republic*, by the Plymouth Rock Foundation, 1997, pages 17-18.

¹³ Word #1577 in Strong’s Concordance.

Egypt and then quoted Deuteronomy 18:15 as first, a testimony that Jesus was the promised Moses #2 and second, a warning because Moses had admonished the nation to hear the words which this prophet would say. Stephen was identifying Jesus to those who seemingly had not been able to see Him.”¹⁴ Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament picture of setting up a nation as an ecclesia!

“...consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward. But Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are...” – Hebrews 3:1-6

It is important to note that the congregation of Israel functioned vertically as priests and horizontally as a holy nation under civil law. Just as Abraham was called *out* unto God, and then prepared to *influence* his culture and be a blessing, so these two functions were retained in Israel as the people of God. The people of God have always had two identities – one heavenly, and one earthly. The congregation of Israel in the Old Testament set the standard, and the Church of the New Testament is to function in those same two identities, for we are to be “*kings and priests unto God and his Father*” (Revelation 1:6). We are to be both a bride (priest) and a city (king)¹⁵.

The Israelite nation functioned as an *ecclesia*; as priests and a holy nation, having several ingredients:

1. Israel first functioned as a priest and *then* as a holy nation (Exodus 19:6). Neither priest nor magistrate was to function simultaneously in each other’s office.¹⁶ Also, *the influence of Israel among the nations that surrounded her was to be primarily by example, for she had no authority to enforce her spiritual decrees or civil laws on other nations.*
2. Equality before God and the law for all citizens existed in Israel. Rev. Wines, from his extensive and exhaustive study, makes this statement; “*the members of the body politic, called into being by the constitution of Moses, stood upon a more exact level, and enjoyed a more perfect community of political rights, dignities, and influence, than any other people known in history, whether of ancient or modern times.*”¹⁷ The people’s choice was given (Ex. 19:7-8).
3. Each one represented themselves before God. The system was built on self-government. Moses was the initial mediator between God and the people, but now Jesus Christ is our mediator (Exodus 19:3; 1st Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 12:22-24). This means that God’s government in church and state is bottom-up, from the inside out, or government by consent.
4. The people made a legislative decree and Moses reported it back to God. The people were judged and held accountable for their own choice of God as Sovereign and His Law as binding (Exodus 19:6-9). This assembly had an executive (Moses), a legislature that ratified God’s law and a judiciary that would hold the people accountable. It was a functioning government.

¹⁴ Amsden, Patti, *Ekklesia: Kingdom Government in Operation*, Patti Amsden Ministry, Illinois, 2016, pages 20-21.

¹⁵ See Revelation 21:1-3 where the final picture of the Church is as a Bride coming from heaven and a city on earth.

¹⁶ See 2nd Chronicles 26:18 where Uzziah, the king of Judah, burned incense unto the Lord as a priest. The Bible is clear that this was a transgression and sin to merge the two offices of church and state for they should be jurisdictionally separated.

¹⁷ Wines, *Roots of American Republic*, page 11.

Ecclesia among the Greeks

Did the nation of Israel positively affect the other nations surrounding it? Consider 2nd Chronicles 17:7-10 “...in the third year of his (Jehoshaphat) reign he sent his leaders, Ben-Hall, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. And with them he sent Levites... and with them... the priests. So they taught in Judah and had the book of the Law of the Lord with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people. And the fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the land that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.” The teaching of God’s law among the people became an example of godly rule, and it produced peace. This occurred more than 500 years after the convocation at the foot of Mt. Sinai!

Moses told the Israelites they should be grateful for the unique nature of their laws. Deuteronomy 4:7-8 states “for what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?” Not only was God accessible to them as priests but He also gave them laws that they might be a holy nation. They were uniquely governed among the nations of the world as priests and kings.

Astute historians have uncovered evidence that Israel was a blessing to the nations of the world in other ways often unknown or ignored.

1. Literacy. – God placed the responsibility of education upon parents (Deuteronomy. 6:1-10). Since each family was to teach reading so children could be literate in the laws of God, education was universal. Tutors extended education in the teen years under parental control. Wines states “there is every reason to believe, that the ability to read and write was an accomplishment, more generally possessed by the Hebrews, than by any other people of antiquity.”¹⁸

Other nations did not have literacy among the people, but only in a limited way among the nobility, and that by cuneiform, or a picture language which lacked creativity and the ability to be expressive. It has been uncovered by archeologists and historians more recently that when the Law was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, it was the first language with the use of individual letters in history. The written law on the tables of stone was the very first alphabet!¹⁹

2. Liberty. – The protection of life, liberty and property was the first responsibility given to mankind. The Hebrews were known to have the highest ingredients of the protection of life, quality of liberty and ownership of property in all of antiquity.²⁰ The unique form of government among the Israelites, from the rule of law (to which all people, including leaders, must submit), to the separation of powers (legislative, executive and judicial), to a balanced blend of the one, few and many (a president, house and senate) in the passing of legislation, became well known.

After Israel rejected her liberty and desired a king like all the nations (1st Samuel 8 – around 1050 B.C.), she began her decline. Previously, during the time of the Judges, when her liberty was at its peak, the people had grown weary of governing themselves, and since “there was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” (Judges 17:6) This statement indicated that the individual and family

¹⁸ Wines, page 50.

¹⁹ See Jones, Miles R., *The Writing of God: Secret of the Real Mount Sinai*, Johnson Publishers, 2010.

²⁰ See Deuteronomy 1 and Numbers 1 for the property boundaries of the various Tribes and their population. It was unheard of in that day to have any ownership of property by population or self-government among regional states such as the Tribes.

were not willing to take the responsibility liberty required. Thus, this led to a change in the external form of government as well (1st Samuel 8). Even then, in mercy, God did not give Israel a total monarchy as she desired but limited the King by His Law (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). Soon, however, compromise, mixture of godly and ungodly, and division resulted in captivity; first Israel in 722 B.C. to Assyria, and then Judah in 586 B.C. to Babylon. But Jeremiah made it clear that all hope was not lost.

“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon. Build houses and dwell in them, plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughter; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters – that you may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace.... For thus saith the Lord, after seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:4-7; 10-11)

Four of the teens taken captive in Babylon are now famous – Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego. They embraced the attitudes Jeremiah expressed in his letter given to the captives. Their service and prayer for peace, even to their captors, brought peace to them as Jeremiah had predicted. Daniel lived into his mid-80’s to see this prophecy fulfilled. When put into leadership, Daniel de-centralized the government and imparted to Cyrus the Great what had been written about him years before by the prophet Isaiah (chapters 44-45). Through Daniel’s influence Cyrus enacted a decree to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city.²¹ Persia was also unique among all ancient empires because the law ruled, even above the king.²²

But beyond the alphabet, (which initially inspired the Phoenicians) and the rule of law among the Persians, what about the structure of the ecclesiastical and civil polity so unique among the Hebrews? Did it influence other nations? Consider what legal scholar John Eidsmoe states; *“Greek legal thinking... was a mixture of noble and ignoble concepts. Some view Greece as the fountain of modern thinking and the birthplace of democracy. But the Hebrew republic flourished a thousand years before the Golden Age of Athens and evinced a stability that was forever lacking in Greece. Solon (638-558 B.C.), the great lawgiver of Athens, traveled around 590 B.C. throughout Egypt and the Middle East to gain wisdom for legislation. During his travels he may have come into contact with Hebrew thought, even though many of the Judeans were in captivity in Babylon.”*²³

Consider similarities in customs the Greeks adopted, as noted by Archbishop Porter, quoted by E. C. Wines and repeated in Eidsmoe; *“The Athenians had a prescribed bill of divorce, and so had the Jews. Among the Jews, the father gave names to the children, and such was the custom among the Greeks. The purgation oath among the Greeks, strongly resembled the oath of jealousy among the Hebrews. The harvest and vintage festival among the Greeks, the presentation of the best of their flocks, and the offering of their first fruits to God, together with the portion prescribed to the priests, the interdiction against garments of divers colors, protection from violence to the man who had fled to their altars, would seem to indicate that the Greeks had cautiously copied the usages of the Jews. And whence was it, that no person was permitted to approach the altar of Diana, who had touched a dead body, or been*

²¹ Dang, Katherine, editor, *Universal History: Ancient History; Law without Liberty*, Philomath Foundation, 2000, page 613.

²² Rushdoony, Rousas J., *World History Notes*, Chalcedon Foundation, see <https://chalcedon.edu/store>

²³ Eidsmoe, John., *Historical and Theological Foundations of Law, Volume I, Ancient Wisdom*, American Vision Press, 2011, page 408.

exposed to other causes of impurity, and that the laws of Athens admitted no man to the priesthood, who had any blemish on his person, unless from the institutions of Moses? And has not the agrarian law of Lycurgus its prototype, though none of its defects, in the agrarian law of the Hebrews? Many of the Athenian laws in relation to the descent of property and the prohibited degrees of relationship in marriage, seem to have been transcribed by Solon from the laws of Moses. Sir Matthew Hale, in his history of the Common Law of England, affirms 'that among the Grecians, the laws of descent resemble those of the Jews.'"²⁴

Genesis 10:4 indicates that Javan, the son of Japheth, began Greek society. This would have occurred around 2300 B.C., following the dispersion when God confused the languages at the Tower of Babel. Japheth, the oldest son of Noah, settled in what we now know as Europe. Shem, the middle son, initially settled in the Middle East. Ham, the youngest, settled in northern Africa. Henry Morris documents that all three sons contributed key elements to the development of culture. Japheth's descendants, over time, were known for their intellectual achievements. Shem's descendants became known for their stewardship of the spiritual or religious. Ham's descendants were known for their physical and mathematical achievements, not the least of which was the ancient Pyramid at Giza.²⁵

The Greeks fulfilled the general legacy of Japheth to be sure. However, without a devotion to Jehovah, they continually reacted from one extreme to another, between the discipline of war and the celebration of pleasure (documented in Homer's *Iliad*). In later generations, the discipline of war would be expressed in Sparta and the celebration of pleasure in Athens. Greek mythology was the art of remaking God in man's image, but even here gods like Hercules largely resemble the story of Samson. Evidently there was a lot of borrowing going on from Jewish history among the Greeks!

The earliest civilizations of Greece were monarchies like all the other empires. But something changed in the mid 500's B.C. "*About the time of the Babylonian captivity, Greece began to emerge from the depths of ignorance and rudeness, in which her people had hitherto been sunk. A spirit of inquiry and research was awakened. Thales, Anaximander, Anaxagoras, Pherecydes, Pythagoras, Plato, Herodotus, and a host of other Grecian philosophers and historians, travelled into Egypt, Chaldea (Babylonia), and Phenicia, some of them residing in those countries for a long series of years. Hence they became acquainted with the more cultivated and learned of the Jews, saw their religion, and heard their conversations on the origin of the universe, on the power, sovereignty, spirituality and unity of their God; on the divine providence; on moral good and evil; on human duty; and on other topics, connected with religion and philosophy.... The testimonies of Jewish, pagan, and Christian writers... are sufficient of themselves to warrant the belief, that Greece, the parent of pagan letters and darts, Greece, the common mistress and teacher of Europe, owed the best part of her wisdom to Judea.*"²⁶

First with Solon, and then more fully with Cleistenes (570-508), the ideas of the Hebrew sacred assembly took their effect and so they sought to expand the power of citizens so they could participate in their government. "*For this reason he called his reforms insonomia (equality of political rights) rather than democratia (rule by the people).*"²⁷ The following ideas were incorporated into a new system of government that resembled, at least in some ways, the ancient Hebrew convocation.

- 1) The city-state was divided into ten tribes and each tribe into three sub-groups;

²⁴ Eidsmoe, page 409.

²⁵ Morris, Henry, *The Genesis Record*, Baker Book House, see <https://store.icr.org/>

²⁶ Wines, E.C., *Commentaries on the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews*, 1850 reprint edition, pages 332-334

²⁷ Eidsmoe, *Historical and Theological Foundations of Law, Volume II; Greece*, page 505.

- 2) The citizens governed themselves through a popular assembly called *ekklesia*;
- 3) It was direct democracy, with no representatives, all free males automatically belonged;
- 4) The Assembly met ten times per year, according to the ten-month Athenian calendar;
- 5) A Council of 500 (50 from each tribe) were chosen by lot, with regional representation;
- 6) Other executive functions included three chief officers (archons), one like a mayor, one a military commander, and one in charge of ceremony and religious matters;
- 7) A court with six judges chosen for one-year terms including trials with 200 to 1000 jurors
- 8) When their terms expired, public officials were held accountable for funds and actions
- 9) Public officials were selected by lot to avoid votes for those handsome, eloquent or capable
- 10) A procedure called *ostracism* where someone could be banished with 6,000 or more votes²⁸

It is obvious that these ideas greatly improved the centralized monarchy so common among the ancient empires. However, the simplicity of representative government, equality of citizens, rule of law and balance of the one, few and many are absent from the Greeks due to their rejection of Jehovah. It is also obvious that these decentralizing ideas and trend toward greater equality came not from the ingenuity or genius of the Greeks, but the influence of the Hebrews. As Eidsmoe summarizes *“this system of government was complex and carefully thought out, to spread out government power and make it difficult for anyone to become a tyrant.”*²⁹ Make no mistake, however, it was not a true representation like the Hebrews. Note Eidsmoe’s comments here:

*“There was little protection for minorities when the majority chose to enact measures that violated minority rights. The Assembly was so large and unruly that it was difficult to be heard above the tumult....in practice only trained and eloquent speakers dared to do so...selecting officers by lot may have limited power-hungry men from seeking office, but it also meant men were selected for offices for which they had no experience, no aptitude, or no interest...the possibility of ostracism probably discouraged citizens from expressing unpopular positions...only about 30,000 free adult males with military training and Athenian descent – about 10% of the population – were citizens. Women, children, and slaves had no rights and were treated as property, while foreigner’s rights were large unprotected.”*³⁰

Eidsmoe reveals another major flaw in the Greek *Ecclesia*:

*“This direct democracy required the free adult male citizen to serve not only in the Assembly but also on so many juries, commissions, etc. that he had little time to manage his home, family, property, and business, and he needed slaves to do this for him.... Plato argued that slavery was necessary for freedom, because free men needed slaves to do their menial work so free men could have time to perform their civic duties. Aristotle argued that slavery is the natural condition for some people whose limited capacity for reason makes them incapable of functioning as free men. Slaves, he said, would be as miserable in freedom as free men would be miserable in slavery.”*³¹

These facts highlighting the defects of the Greek system are often neglected by modern historians who wish to elevate Greek wisdom out of its historic context. Also, the responsibilities required for liberty and self-government become clearly possible only under a system built on Biblical law for there the duties of the individual, family, priesthood and state were jurisdictionally defined. It was John Adams,

²⁸ *Ibid*, pages 505-507.

²⁹ *Ibid*, page 507.

³⁰ *Ibid*, pages 507-508.

³¹ *Ibid*, page 508.

second president of the United States that admitted *“Much as I love, esteem and admire the Greeks, I believe the Hebrews have done more to enlighten and civilize the world. Moses did more than all their legislators and philosophers.”*³²

When a small remnant (under 3%) of the Jews returned to Jerusalem under Cyrus’ decree (from 539 to 444 B.C.), the engine of their education was the Synagogue. *“There were at one time four hundred synagogues in Jerusalem alone. To these the great body of the people resorted on the Sabbath, rather than to the Temple.... An object of pride and awe, adored and glorious, the synagogue was a sort of church, humble and modest, for the use of the people in ordinary worship, - a place of religious instruction... Hence, the synagogue represented the democratic element in Judaism, while it did not ignore the Temple.”*³³ The synagogue marked the location and dissemination of Jewish ideals, while the ecclesia was the active participation of the people in the governing of their commonwealth.

Another critical fact that we must not overlook is the tremendous influence that the Hebrew ideology and governmental structure had on Alexander the Great. It was his favor toward the Jews that caused his successors to provide for the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek called the *Septuagint* (so named for the 70 Jewish scholars who did the translation). After Alexander’s death in 323 B.C., the kingdom was divided as Daniel had prophesied (see Daniel 2), and Ptolemy Soter was assigned to Egypt, but had to fight for it. When Palestine refused to submit, *“Ptolemy invaded Judea, besieged Jerusalem, and took it by assault on the Sabbath, when the Jews refused to fight. A large number of Jews were sent to Alexandria, and the Jewish colony ultimately formed no small part of the population of the new capital. Some eighty thousand Jews, it is said, were settled in Alexandria when Palestine was governed by Greek generals and princes.... Under Ptolemy Egypt became a powerful kingdom, and still more so under his son Philadelphus, who made Alexandria the second capital of the world.”*³⁴

This inhabiting of Alexandria by a large Jewish population, many of them scholars, was providential. *“It became also a great intellectual centre, and its famous library was the largest ever collected in classical antiquity. This city was the home of scholars and philosophers from all parts of the world. Under the auspices of an enlightened monarch, the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, the version being called the Septuagint – an immense service to sacred literature. The Jews enjoyed great prosperity under this Grecian prince, and Palestine was at peace with powerful neighbors, protected by the great king who favored the Jews as the Persian monarchs had done.”*³⁵ The library at Alexandria had up to one million volumes, and the 70 Jewish scholars who translated the Hebrew Scriptures helped give this translation the name *Septuagint*.

The Word Ekklesia

All of this is necessary to understand if we are to see the significance as to why Jesus used the Greek word *ekklesia* when defining the church. The Septuagint version of the Bible (250 B.C.) used *ekklesia* for the assembly at the foot of Mt. Sinai. As Patti Amsdon observes, in Deuteronomy 9:10 and 18:16, the Greek word *ekklesia* is significantly used for the assembly of Moses. *“These... passages... from the Old Testament... are originally Hebrew rather than Greek. How could the word for assembly be translated into the Greek word ekklesia? The answer is found by looking at the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Whereas the Septuagint translates assembly as*

³² Adams handwritten comment on his copy of a book by the Marquis de Condorcet, as quoted in Eidsmoe, page 519.

³³ Dang, Katherine, *Ancient History: Israel*, page 460.

³⁴ *Ibid*, *Israel*, page 461.

³⁵ *Ibid*, page 461.

ekklesia, the Hebrew word for assembly is qahal. Qahal means 'congregation, assembly, company, or multitude' and is most frequently translated into ekklesia in the Septuagint."³⁶

With this background, it is easier to understand why Jesus used the word "ekklesia" for the assembly of believers and not the word for synagogue. The word for synagogue referred to the place where believers met, but not to the function of the believers in a sacred assembly. In today's modern church, it is critical that this distinction be made. We often refer to the church as the building, much like the synagogue. The church's role is merely to transfer the values of Christianity unto our own, but not to influence the culture surrounding us. We have settled for the priestly part of our role, rejecting the kingly part. We have not seen the church as a spiritual government that decrees back to God what is already settled in heaven that we might see *His Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven!*

Lexicons define the Greek word Ekklesia "*called out or forth, and a gathering of citizens called out of their homes into some public place; an assembly... an assembly of the people convened at the public place of council for the purposes of deliberating. In the Sept... the assembly of the Israelites, when gathered for sacred purposes.*"³⁷ Note the fact that the word is a continuation of the Old Testament sacred assembly under Moses as indicated in the translation of the Septuagint.

Vine defines the word "*from ek, out of, and klesis, a calling, was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens gathered to discuss the affairs of State (Acts 19:39). In the Sept. it is used to designate the gathering of Israel, summoned for any definite purpose... rep. the whole nation.*"³⁸ The essential idea is preserved of a sacred assembly of citizens (spiritual or natural) called for a specific purpose (or agenda). In other words, the meeting is not the purpose, it is the means to accomplish the purpose. As believers, we are also called out of the world, but also called to sacred business that can only be successfully accomplished through the New Testament Church – universal and local.

The New Americanized Encyclopedia Britannica, published in 1903, defined the term *ecclesia* to mean "*in Grecian antiquity, the general assembly of Athenian citizens, who met from time to time to discuss public affairs. Ecclesia were of two kinds, ordinary and extraordinary. The first of these were held, according to the laws of Solon, four times in each prytany, or period of thirty-five days; while the others were only summoned on some pressing emergency. When any measure or unusual importance was to be publicly debated, the people were summoned from the country by special messengers. An assembly thus convened was called a cataclesia.... The word ecclesia came to mean any assembly regularly convened, and in New Testament Greek it is used to denote the assembly of Christians in any particular place, or the Christian Church.*"³⁹

The New Testament Church as an *Ecclesia*

Jesus inaugurated His Church as a fulfillment of the Old Testament convocation of Israel. Though this does not supplant His promises to the Jewish people (Romans 9-11), it is imperative that believers understand the sacred significance of meeting as citizens of the Kingdom of God as well as members of the local church united by covenant. We do not meet, whether on a Sunday morning, mid-week Bible study, or prayer meeting, as if meeting is the goal. We meet to *spiritually legislate on earth what has already been legislated in heaven.* The Church is God's vehicle for manifesting the Kingdom!

³⁶ Amsden, *Ekklesia*, page 71.

³⁷ Thayer, Joseph H., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Bake Book House, 1977, pages 195-196.

³⁸ Vine, W. E., *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Fleming H. Revell, 1966, pages 83-84.

³⁹ *New Americanized Encyclopaedia Britannica*, The Saalfeld publishing Company, 1903, Volume III, page 2104.

In Matthew 16:13 it is recorded that Jesus asked his disciples, “*who do men say that I am?*” After giving Jesus several of the opinions they had heard, Jesus said “*but who do you say that I am?*” (v. 15) Peter’s confession, received by revelation, was the Rock upon which the Church is built; “*you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” (v. 16) Then Jesus makes a declaration in verse 18; a decree, drawing on the meaning of the word *ekklesia* translated “church” when he said “*I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*”

Jesus then declared “*and I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*” (v. 19) At first reading in the New King James Version, it appears that earth is dictating to heaven, binding and loosing things on earth that are then bound or loosed in heaven. However, a closer look at the Greek reveals a clearer picture of what Jesus said in this passage.

The Revised Standard Version Greek-English Interlinear says it this way; “*whatever thou bindest on the earth shall be, having been bound in the heavens, and whatever thou loosest on the earth shall be, having been loosed in the heavens.*”⁴⁰ Wuest’s Expanded Translation reads “*whatever you bind on earth (forbid to be done), shall have been already bound (forbidden to be done) in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth (permit to be done), shall have already been loosed in heaven (permitted to be done).*”⁴¹ In both of these examples, it is a decree made on earth that agrees with one already made in heaven. As Dennis Peacocke once said, *it is time catching up to eternity.* It is praying that His Kingdom would come, in some measure on earth, as it is already being conducted in heaven.

An Ecclesia Church Gathering

1. Like the holy convocation at the base of Mt. Sinai, but now fulfilled in Christ (the Rock upon which the Church is built,) *Christ builds His Ekklesia as a holy priesthood and a holy nation.* As 1st Peter 2:9 declares “*you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*”
2. In addition, *Christ builds His Ekklesia from the bottom or in the heart of individual believers,* as Galatians 3:26-29 declares “*for you are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*” Regardless of background, condition, or gender, we are equal before God in Christ.
3. Furthermore, in Christ we represent ourselves before the throne of God. However, we must be citizens of the Kingdom, converted by confession in Christ as Savior and Lord, for we represent the universal Church of Jesus Christ throughout the ages. As Colossians 1:12-14 declares “*giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*”

⁴⁰ Marshall, Reverence Alfred, and Phillips, Reverend Prebendary, *The R.S.V. Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1958, page 71.

⁴¹ Wuest, Kenneth S., *The New Testament: An Expanded Translation*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., page 43.

We unite and pray for *His Kingdom to come, on earth as it is in heaven*. Christ has promised to *build His Ekklesia, and the gates (or authority) of hell will not withstand it*. In other words, the Church is *governmental* in nature, and only invisible, spiritual governments can shift natural ones, for we know that as Colossians 1:16 also declares “*for by Him all things were created that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*”

4. Finally, like the convocation of old, *we pray boldly, decreeing* in the spirit on earth what is already a reality in heaven. This is not naming anything we want and claiming it through Christ. This is, as the Scripture declares, praying in the will of God, for 1st John 5:14 states “*this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*” In order to know the will of God, that we might proclaim in prayer what has already been done in heaven, we must study our Bibles and embrace a world and life view that agrees with it.

Relational Capital Required

In Matthew 18:17, Jesus also uses the word *ekklesia* when he says “*tell it to the church.*” The context is of broken relationships within the local church. If someone is at odds with us, it is our responsibility to initiate making it right. In other words, the *ekklesia* of God is a court of appeal where cases are resolved at the local level. The same keys of the kingdom with the same Greek language structure are given in verse 18 as were given to the universal church in Matthew 16:19. However, Jesus makes an interesting statement in verse 19 when he says “*again I say unto you.*” In other words, the way binding on earth comes into agreement with heaven is not just prayer proclamations for where “*two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.*” (verse 20) The church begins to agree with heaven when there is a concert of harmony between those who are corporately coming before God!

True *ekklesia* prayer realizes that a change in our community only occurs to the degree that relationships are resolved in local assemblies and among churches in a region. As the church goes, so goes the community. What occurs in the spirit realm within the church will be reflected in the community. *Relational capital within the church prepares us to invest in relational capital in our communities.*

This is precisely why Jesus did not use the Greek word for synagogue. Though the synagogue was the place where the Jewish church met, and through which the Hebrew community educated its adults, families and children, it alone could not and would not make an impact in a community. This is true today about our modern-day church. Jesus made a transition from a physical place to preserve Jewish tradition to a spiritual empowerment of His disciples to go into all the world and win people and as a result, influence culture. The primary place of influence is in the spiritual dimension of character development and *the method by which it is manifested – loving and respectful relationships.*

We are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Salt and Light are illustrations of relational capital. In Matthew 5:13 Jesus said “*you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.*”

As the *Ekklesia* of God, we are salt. Salt preserves as well as makes other people thirsty. The word in Greek for “lose its flavor” means “*become insipid*” like a simpleton or a fool.⁴² Digging a bit deeper,

⁴² Word #3471 in Strong’s Concordance.

we find that its root comes from a base that means “*to shut the mouth*” or keep something a secret.⁴³ In other words, when we are silent, foolish, or lacking in character development, the world sees our faith as good for nothing and we are trampled (*rejected with disdain*⁴⁴) or we might say over-regulated. Our active godly service in our communities as believers actually preserves our own liberty.

We are also called to be light. Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16 “*you are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*” Jesus indicates that we cannot light the world unless we first light the city. The church must sit on the hill, for self-government releases light to the city. But the church cannot be lit unless the home is lit and that is where it is often hidden under a basket. Finally, none of our homes will be light unless we shine with good works that cause others to glorify God!

Just as God called Abraham out of Ur that He might prepare him to influence and bless the nations, so He has called the believer to be sanctified; “*not of the world*” that He might “*send them into the world.*”⁴⁵ We are to be the bride of Christ, separated and holy, yet we are also to be a city where we impact the culture around us. We are of God, separate from sin, but we are also to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. As Galatians 6:14 states “*God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*”

Ecclesia Prayer

Before we address what makes Ecclesia prayer unique, we need to take a look at what Jesus meant when he said that His church should be a house of prayer for all nations, cultivating His presence.

A House of Prayer for All Nations

“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people... His watchman are blind... they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.” – Isaiah 56:7, 10a-11

Isaiah the prophet said these words hundreds of years before Christ. The challenge of bringing God’s people into an atmosphere of prayer has always existed. Isaiah exposes the condition of the leaders (watchmen) as a stumbling-block in welcoming the stranger (Gentile) because of their emphasis on unjust gain. It was to this passage that Jesus referred when he first cleansed the temple. “*And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables, and said unto them that sold doves, take these things hence; make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise.*” (John 2:15-16)

The disciples who had been called (only four at the time), witnessed this event. Clearly it was Jesus’ intent to communicate that the *place* where His people met ought to be an atmosphere of prayer. The reference to a “den of thieves” was not to the economic market itself but rather the unjust practice of getting gain by defrauding those who had to exchange their money to purchase their sacrifices.

⁴³ Words #3474 and 3466 in Strong’s Concordance.

⁴⁴ Word #2662 in Strong’s Concordance.

⁴⁵ See John 17:16-19.

Jesus would also cleanse the temple at the end of his ministry on Monday of Passion Week following his triumphal entry on Palm Sunday, quoting directly from Isaiah 56:7 when he said: *“It is written, My House shall be called a House of Prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.”* – Matthew 21:13 (Mark 11:17) Not only were the Levites and the Sanhedrin charging exorbitant rates of exchange (practicing usury), but they had a monopoly on the animals for sacrifice.

The house of God was intended to be filled with His presence. Though it may inhabit a building, we are the primary house that cultivates His presence. The primary method for doing so is prayer. Could unconfessed sin be the ultimate contrast to the presence of Christ in prayer? This is a pre-requisite for functioning as an effective *ekklesia*, for one priority of prayer is the changing of our heart. It is walking in communion with God, learning to hear His voice as well as express our hearts in petition to Him.

Our bodies are individually a temple of the Holy Spirit, but together we are a corporate temple when we flow together in harmony.⁴⁶ With these concepts of both an individual and corporate temple (house) of prayer, the context of Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount becomes clear. *“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”* (Matthew 6:5-6)

The common thread binding together charity for the poor and needy (alms – v. 1-4) and the presence of the King within (fasting – v. 16-18), is constituted by the phrase *“see in secret.”* In other words, Jesus speaks of all acts of charity beginning as personal, private, and in one’s heart – invisible - *“in secret”*. If charity begins externally, where it is seen of men, it is no longer done with the right motive and heart.

The corporate *“house of prayer”*, or the local church gathered as a priest representing the Kingdom is only as effective as the individual temples that have already been cleansed. It begins in secret *before* it is shouted from the housetops! It is important to see that prayer sits as the mediator of getting what is done in our hearts out to others through service beyond our borders!

At the time of Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the lame, halt, poor and outcast were not allowed into the Temple. It was not a *“house of prayer for all people”*. These people could not benefit the money-changers or the bureaucracy! Alfred Edersheim describes what happened when Jesus cleansed the Temple on Monday after Palm Sunday. *“By His authority the Temple was cleansed of the unholy, thievish traffic which a corrupt priesthood carried on, and so, for the time, restored to the solemn Service of God; and that purified House now became the scene of Christ’s teaching, when He spoke those words of blessed truth and of comfort concerning the Father - thus truly realizing the prophetic promise of ‘a House of Prayer for all the nations. And as those traffickers were driven from the Temple, and He spoke, there flocked in from porches and Temple-Mount the poor sufferers - the blind and the lame - to get healing to body and soul. It was truly spring-time in that Temple, and the boys that gathered about their fathers and looked in turn from their faces of rapt wonderment and enthusiasm to the Godlike Face of the Christ, and then on those healed sufferers, took up the echoes of the welcome at His entrance into Jerusalem - in their simplicity understanding and applying them better - as they burst into ‘Hosanna to the Son of David.’⁴⁷*

⁴⁶ See the contrast between 1st Corinthians 3:16 where the plural is used, and 1st Corinthians 6:19 where the singular is used in Greek for *“you”* respectively.

⁴⁷ Edersheim, Alfred, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Macdonald Publishing, 1886, Book V, chapter 2, page 378.

It is in this context of Christ's desire that the Church be a place of prayer for all people that the Lord's Prayer is taught to the disciples. So when Jesus cleansed the temple, it was those, the neediest, who were crying to God in secret, that poured into the Temple to be in close proximity with Him! It was these very people, the humble, broken, and open, who would turn the Temple into a "house of prayer" but had been shut out by the "den of thieves."

What might happen to our local churches if we truly demonstrated being a house of prayer? First, it would require walking in the light with both God and one another – giving and receiving forgiveness!⁴⁸ In addition, the result would be the very people for whom the Church was designed would be drawn into our midst – and we might become what we were designed to be - a *house of prayer for all people!* It would lead, subsequently, to the goal of including special *Ekklesia* prayer.

Dennis Peacocke, who began teaching on the *Ekklesia* decades ago, declared in a recent re-publication of his original teachings "*the word "church" has been emptied of its true biblical meaning as Christ's governing body, and believers must recover and practice its true godly design and purposes. The Ekklesia replaces the Jewish synagogue as God's governing tool on earth through His children.*"⁴⁹ So how should we pray if we have such an identity as local churches?

As Dennis relates, "*the borders of our ministry are the borders of our prayer life.*"⁵⁰ The degree to which we "tend our garden," fulfilling our responsibility personally, is the degree to which we can join with others and effectively see greater results in the culture. *Ekklesia* prayer is not commanding that things be done in Jesus name, or commanding God to do them. It is not arrogant, and neither is it built merely in a knowledge of Biblical world view or where the gates of hell are forming strongholds. *The measure of seeing God's will be done in an area is proportional to our willingness to have our character formed by Christ within and investing relational capital in our community outside the church.*

The Unique Nature of Ecclesia Prayer

1. First, we cultivate the presence of Christ through an atmosphere of prayer in the daily life of the local Church. Then, we will be more effective when calling a special assembly that recognizes its importance as a functioning *government of the Kingdom of God*. We come as priests representing our families, neighborhoods and community, but we also desire to exercise kingly functions. We are burdened for believers and unbelievers. We come desiring to see others empowered and their choices widened. We come to intercede for people individually as well as the institutions in society through which they express their hopes and dreams.
2. We come together as covenant members of a local church, whether within one church or among several churches. We realize that the *authority* in which we pray is measured by the capital investment we have made relationally within our churches as well as our communities. Like the Hebrew convocations of old, we come to our meeting that we might make our voices known before God Himself, standing in intercession for others and reasoning for mercy before the throne of God.

⁴⁸ See Mark 11:25-26 where Jesus speaks of the necessity of forgiveness in the context of cleansing the Temple at the end of His ministry and making it a House of Prayer for all people. See also 1st John 1:6-10 for Scriptural documentation on the necessity of walking in the light of forgiveness with God and one another.

⁴⁹ Peacocke, Dennis, *Ekklesia*, Go Strategic, Santa Rosa, California, 2015, page 8.

⁵⁰ Peacocke, *Ekklesia*, page 10.

3. Finally, we decree in prayer what has already been settled in heaven. We recognize that visible thrones and principalities will only change in proportion to invisible thrones from heaven. Also, they will only change gradually as our lives and character are transformed by Christ. The prayer proclamations we decree are legislative acts that can result in voluntary changes in the civil realm. We have no authority to directly legislate in the civil realm, but we do have authority to agree with God in the heavenly realm. It is our responsibility to enact the will of God and ask for a measure of His Kingdom to come. The result will be the eventual displacement of powers of darkness as we resist them through submission to our Father which is in heaven.

Ecclesia Convocations of Prayer

How does a local church begin to implement ecclesia prayer? How can multiple churches in a regional area strategically pray together? What kind of strategy ought we to incorporate so that we see a measure of the Kingdom of God come to earth as it is in heaven? Patti Amsden puts it this way: “*the legislative or governmental function of the ekklesia is not the same type of gathering as Sunday church or even prayer gatherings.*”⁵¹ Our regular church services and intercessory prayer gatherings are priestly functions that are part of being the bride of Christ. However, when we see the need to exercise our role as kings, in shifting a measure of the culture, and seeing the authority of hell relinquish territory, we must call a convocation of prayer that shifts our focus to *thy kingdom come*.

Prayer Changes Us

“*And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.*” – Luke 11:1

Prayer to a Jewish disciple of most Rabbis at the time was external, ritualistic and passive. Prayer was a show of religion so that others might have greater respect for you. The purpose of prayer inherited by the disciples from the traditional Rabbis was either to change God’s mind or change others. Jesus wasted no time in correcting these errors. His teaching was simply this – prayer primarily *changes you!* Jesus taught that the condition of one’s heart was imperative.

Tozer put it this way: “*Christian theology teaches the doctrine of prevenient grace, which briefly stated means this, that before a man can seek God, God must first have sought the man. Before a sinful man can think a right thought of God, there must have been a work of enlightenment done within him; imperfect it may be, but a true work nonetheless, and the secret cause of all desiring and seeking and praying which may follow.*”⁵²

Prayer requires humility and rules out pride. Prayer is not primarily getting God to do what He should do. It is not primarily giving God permission or releasing Him from the limitations placed upon him by human beings. Humans aren’t sovereign, He is. Prayer is not manipulating God, but rather God doing something *in* us that will result in a transformed life. Transformation begins in the heart and then works through the mind with our behavior ultimately being changed.

It becomes obvious then, that Jesus is articulating that God’s primary method for change is from the internal to the external, whereas man’s method is to move from the outside in. Pretending (being a

⁵¹ Amsden, *Ekklesia*, page 181.

⁵² Tozer, A. W., *The Pursuit of God*, Christian Publications, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1970, page 11.

hypocrite) involves learning to act spiritual when the right people you want to impress are watching. In this case, it would mean praying at specific times when you will be seen. Be sure, however, of this primary point, *what a man or woman is within their heart will eventually be seen externally.*

Why can't we get believers to be more active in serving their community, feeding the poor, or practicing the disciplines of fasting and personal Bible study? Why might believers not heed a call to *Ekklesia prayer* for the Kingdom to come in a measurable way in their neighborhood? It is because in their hearts, in their secret closets or homes, they aren't what they pretend to be in public. One can only fake it for a limited amount of time. The real change will come when we are committed to private prayer and communion with our King – and this must become a way of life.

Jesus practiced what he preached. He taught that “sitting at his feet” was the “one thing needful” when it was demonstrated by Mary to the chagrin of Martha (Luke 10:38-42). He often got alone in a solitary place to pray a long time before dawn, even when “all were seeking after him” (Mark 1:35-37). He sent his disciples away one time when he went to a mountain to pray all night (Mark 6:46-47). Jesus was verbalizing here what the disciples had begun to observe.

It is time we sought to restore our first love in secret prayer. We are to be quick to hear, and slow to speak (James 1:19). We must learn to receive first, and then give (Matthew 10:8). We are to be hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Then, our good works *will* flow out of our closet since we will be fueled by the Spirit of God and others will give Him the glory (or credit - Matthew 5:16). The reward will then be the impact of a godly life upon an ungodly society.

Expressing our Heart to God

“But when you pray, use not vain repetition, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things you have need of, before you ask him.” – Matthew 6:7-8

All of us are guilty at times of mouthing clichés in prayer to God. But God is not interested in praying parrots who simply repeat what they have heard others pray or think they are going to get God's attention based on the words or length of prayers they pray. God is interested in you pouring out your heart to him and expressing your desires, doubts and fears through a controlled, yet creative, tongue.

There is nothing inherently wrong with writing out a prayer. Neither is there anything wrong with reading it in public. The key is whether it has come from your heart or merely is done to fulfill a duty. That is why Jesus rebukes *vain* repetition, and not just repetition altogether. The word means to do something “*with no purpose*” other than for yourself. After all, vanity is pride, and the Bible declares that we pray “*amiss*” when it is centered on ourselves (see James 4:1-3).

Jesus made it clear – the Father already knows what you need. Prayer is primarily not to inform God but to express our hearts. Prayer is not for the purpose of informing Him about what is going on, though at times in public it may help to inform others. *Prayer is the means by which we can express our heart to God, learning to hear and understand His heart for us as well.*

One of the best ways to begin praying is by praying the Scripture. There are many prayers given in the Bible, and these often express our hearts as well. A mature praying believer will be able to express their

hearts through the reading of portions of Scripture, especially in public when this can benefit others also. Beginning in private, reading the prayers of the Bible, is a great way to start.⁵³

Proverbs 10:19 states *“in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, but he that refraineth his lips is wise.”* A controlled tongue is a good thing. Saying whatever you want to God as if he was your best friend is not always wise. First, God is more than your friend, He is your Creator. A certain fear, respect and awe is needed in the placing of your thoughts before Him. Second, we must guard the condition of our heart and the motive with which we pray. This leads us to the third purpose for prayer from the context of Matthew 6 and Luke 11.

The Discipline of our Priorities

“After this manner therefore pray ye...” – Matthew 6:9a
“And he said unto them, when you pray, say...” – Luke 11:2a

In both Matthew and Luke Jesus told them to pray a certain way. Far from merely repeating the words, the context suggests a model for maintaining priorities, order and discipline to keep one from becoming self-centered. Repeating the Lord’s Prayer is fine; for Jesus said to *say* it in Luke. On the other hand, repeating it does not substitute for understanding its purpose, as Jesus clearly warns us in Matthew.

The “Lord’s Prayer” is a pattern or display of priorities. The word “say” in Luke 11:2 means *“to relate, lay forth a discourse”* and is not limited to repetition. The purpose of this prayer was to teach His disciplines, first by observation, and then by instruction. We need to be willing to understand the pattern of praying so that we are disciplined in keeping God’s priorities in prayer rather than our own.

*“the Lord’s Prayer is given to us as a guide, a pattern, a model, or a framework for what Christian prayer is all about. When we think about the Lord’s Prayer, we tend to go to one of two extremes. One extreme is to demand that whenever you have a church service, you must recite the Lord’s Prayer. Certainly there is nothing wrong or unbiblical with that practice. The other extreme is never to use it in public or private worship. Surely this is an overreaction. The way of wisdom is somewhere between those two extremes”*⁵⁴

The Pattern of our Prayer Life – Personal and Corporate

We can avoid these two extremes when we see this prayer as a *pattern* revealed to us so that we can implement it every day, every hour, and at all times. Consider an overview of the prayer and the areas we will consider in more depth in later chapters.

Part One - Who God is and who we are in Christ - “Our Father...in heaven, hallowed be thy name”

God dwells in heaven and His name is His nature – holy, sacred, and reverent. God is our Father, Christ is His Son and the Spirit emanates from Him. In Christ we are more than conquerors. Simply put, *we must learn to begin our prayer time by confessing who God is and who we are in Christ!* This is partially done through praise and worship, but also good to declare who He is, focusing on Him and not our need or what it is we are to accomplish.

⁵³ See Lockyer, Herbert., *All the Prayers of the Bible*, Zondervan, 1959

⁵⁴ Pritchard, Ray., *And When You Pray*, Broadman and Holman, 2002, page 12.

Part Two - Manifesting the Kingdom of God on earth - “*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...*”

The Kingdom is the rule or government of God. His will is always being done in Heaven, but we are His instruments to cooperate with Him in bringing a measure of that government on earth. The Kingdom of God manifests by bringing order (priorities) and government (restraint according to His law) to the individual, home, church and culture. This is, in essence, *ecclesia prayer*. Though the full Kingdom will not manifest until the King returns, *we travail in prayer that a measure of His rule will manifest on earth, bringing order, government and justice!*

Part Three - Asking God to meet our needs - “*Give us this day our daily bread, forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for every, Amen.*”

Our daily bread (whatever we need that day) can be asked for and expected in proportion to the way we maintain our relationships with others. After all, if we don’t love others who we can see, we aren’t truly loving God who we can’t see.⁵⁵ This repentance from sin and a willingness to forgive that we might experience the forgiveness of our Lord directly relates to our deliverance from the enemy and freedom from yielding to temptation. *It is this discipline of priorities, putting our needs last, but recognizing that our obedience to God in forgiving others will be seen in our provisions and freedom that makes our prayers so effectual!*

Finally, it is all for His glory and the advance of His Kingdom. No prayer is to be so short-sighted as to merely meet our needs or expand our personal influence. So the memorization of the “Lord’s prayer” is a beginning and not an end. Let the disciplines of this prayer become a pattern for both private and public prayer in all of our lives. Then, we can expand this kind of disciplined prayer to the *ecclesia* level as we ponder the practical ingredients of a convocation.

Ingredients in an Ecclesia Convocation

Patti Amsden deduces five characteristics of an *Ekklesia Assembly* based on the example of Acts 15 and the Council at Jerusalem. Gentiles were being converted, and some held that circumcision was required just as it was in the days of Moses. Since there was a great disagreement among such leaders as Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:2) the convocation was called to resolve what would and would not be required.

(1) Called to Gather

First, those who were called to gather came understanding their spheres of authority, both spiritually in Christ and as it related to regional function (as apostles, teachers, prophets, etc.) for as Patti Amsden observes “*authority arises from that which Christ delegated to every believer, but also from one’s placement or calling in the body.*”⁵⁶

(2) An Agenda is Set

Second, there was a set agenda. “*The agenda defines what will be considered. The agenda forecasts where the discussion go and thus allows the delegates to prepare, study, and determine where they stand*

⁵⁵ 1st John 4:20.

⁵⁶ Amsden, page 182.

on the issue.”⁵⁷ An ecclesia prayer convocation must be disciplined in focus. If not, people will pray in all areas of their choice and there will not be an effective focus of harmony which is required spiritually for optimum results.

(3) The Issue is Well Defined

Third, the issue to be discussed was well defined. We need to study what the Word of God says about an issue before we form an opinion. This requires position papers so that we can be brought into harmony with one another on aspects of Biblical truth. Remember, whatever is eventually decreed on earth must be in agreement with what has already been decreed in His Word (heaven.)

(4) Agreement on Biblical Premises

Fourth, the transcendent truth which will operate as our premise must be agreed upon. Key premises and principles from the Word need to be clarified so all know the presuppositions from which we reason. All who lead or participate should be citizens of the Kingdom of God, adhering to the Word of God as our rule of faith and conduct. We might not all see every issue the same, but we can come into harmony through discussion. Consider this, *if we as the people of God cannot discuss our differences civilly and politely with respect to one another, what hope is there that our culture can do this?*

(5) Spiritual Legislation and Judicial decrees

Finally, the result of the convocation produced a decree of (spiritual) legislation or judicial decision. *“When the convocation occurred in Acts 15, the ruling or the new law was based on the scriptures... the ekklesia used the keys of the kingdom to declare heaven’s law in the earth.... The legislative declaration set a new ordinance into operation. Letters were written and distributed to all the local assemblies of the findings of the convocation.”*⁵⁸ The canon of Scripture is closed, but this pattern remains true.

Imagine the power and influence of a multi-church based *ekklesia prayer convocation* that studies an issue of real consequence in a community. Position papers are produced, the meeting is called, the agenda given, and the discussion ensues. The result, after some time, is a decree given in prayer to the heavens from the earth that agrees with what has already been true for eternity!

Consider the Biblical picture of this kind of convocation. Consider those who will join us: *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God; the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church (ekklesia) of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. See that you do not refuse Him who speaks from heaven.”* – Hebrews 12:22-25a

The influence of a multi-church *ecclesia* convocation will be as wide as each of the leaders and churches have relational capital invested into the community. No convocation of believers has any power or jurisdiction to enforce any law or decree. However, if we are faithful *priests*, we have influence with God, for He has formed our character. If we have been faithful *kings*, serving others and investing in the life of our communities, what a united church has decreed in prayer to the God of the Universe will have both spiritual and natural consequences that will improve people’s life, liberty and property!

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, page 183.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, page 184

Proclamations / Decrees of Prayer
Ecclesia Convocation in Milford, New Hampshire
February 3, 2018

Personal Prayer Proclamation “To Walk in the Word”

Father, in the name of Jesus, I commit myself to walk in the Word. Your Word living in me produces your life in this world. I recognize that your Word is integrity itself – steadfast, sure, eternal – and I trust my life to its provisions.

You have sent your Word forth into my heart. I let it dwell in me richly in all wisdom. I meditate in it day and night so that I may diligently act on it. The incorruptible seed, the living Word, the Word of Truth is abiding in my spirit. That seed is growing mightily in me now, producing Your nature and Your life. It is my counsel, my shield, my buckler, my powerful weapon in battle. The Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. It make my way plain before me. I do not stumble, for my steps are ordered in the Word.

The Holy Spirit leads and guides me into all truth. He gives me understanding, discernment and comprehension so that I am preserved from the snares of the evil one.

I delight myself in you and your Word. Because of that, you put your desires within my heart. I commit my way unto you and you bring it to pass. I am confident that you are at work in me now both to will and to do all your good pleasure.

I exalt your Word, hold it in high esteem, and give it first place. I make my schedule around your Word. I make the Word the final authority to settle all the questions that confront me. I choose to agree with the Word of God, and I choose to disagree with any thoughts, conditions, or circumstances contrary to your Word. I boldly and confidently say that my heart is fixed and established on the solid foundation – the Living Word of God! Amen!

Written by Charlene Jehle, taken from Scripture and adjusted from several sources as well as *Prayers that Avail Much*, Germaine Copeland, Harrison House Publications, 1997.

Proclamation of Prayer
Ecclesia Convocation in Milford, New Hampshire
February 3, 2018

Personal Prayer Proclamation “To Pray and Fast”

Lord, I pray you would help me to fast and pray to your glory. Enable me to put aside my favorite activity – eating the food you provide for me – in favor of exalting you as everything in my life. Show me how often and how long I should fast and enable me to accomplish it. Help me to be well enough and strong enough to fast in the way you want me to.

Thank you that when I fast you will breakdown the strongholds of the enemy in my life and loose all the bonds of wickedness. I pray you will break any wrong thinking or obsessions in me. Release me from the heavy burdens I have been carrying. Break every yoke of bondage in my life. Show me whom and what I should pray for as I fast.

Help me to do what I can to help others and feed the hungry. Show me where I should extend myself to those who are afflicted or suffering. Thank you that as I fast, you will take care of the details of my life and give me direction. Thank you that my “light shall break forth like the morning” and my “healing shall spring forth speedily.” Thank you that when I call, you will answer.
(Isaiah 58:8-9)

In Jesus name, Amen.

Written by Charlene Jehle, taken from Isaiah 58 and adjusted from other resources.

Proclamation of Prayer
Ecclesia Convocation in Milford, New Hampshire
February 3, 2018

Prayer Proclamation for Marriages

Father, in the name of Jesus, it is written in Your Word that love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us. Because You are in us, we acknowledge that love reigns supreme. We believe that love is displayed in full expression, enfolding and knitting us together in truth, making us perfect for every good work to do Your will, working in us that which is pleasing in Your sight.

We live and conduct ourselves and our marriage honorably and becomingly. We esteem it as precious, worthy, and of great price. *We commit ourselves to live in mutual harmony and accord with one another*, delighting in each other, being of the same mind and united in spirit.

Father, we believe and say that we are gentle, compassionate, courteous, tenderhearted, and humble-minded. We seek peace, and it keeps our hearts in quietness and assurance. Because we follow after love and dwell in peace, our prayers are not hindered in any way, in the name of Jesus. We are heirs together of the grace of God.

Our marriage grows stronger day by day in the bond of unity because it is founded on Your Word and rooted and grounded in Your love. Father, we thank You for the performance of it, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture references: Romans 5:5; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 3:14; 1:10; Philippians 2:13; 2:2; Ephesians 4:32; Isaiah 32:17; Philippians 4:2, 1st Peter 3:7; Ephesians 3:17-18; Jeremiah 1:12

Prayers that Avail Much, Germaine Copeland, Harrison House, 1997, pages 236-237

Proclamation of Prayer
Ecclesia Convocation in Milford, New Hampshire
February 3, 2018

Proclamation Prayer for Children and Grandchildren

Father, in the name of Jesus, I pray and confess Your Word over my children and grandchildren, surrounding them with my faith – faith in Your Word that You watch over it to perform it! I confess and believe that my children and grandchildren are disciples of Christ, taught of the Lord and obedient to Your will. Great is the peace and undisturbed composure of my children and grandchildren, because You, God, contend with that which contends with them, and You give them safety and ease them.

Father, you will perfect that which concerns me. *I commit and cast the care of my children and grandchildren once and for all over on You, Father.* They are in Your hands, and I am positively persuaded that You are able to guard and keep that which I have committed to You. You are more than enough!

I confess that my children and grandchildren obey their parents in the Lord as His representatives, because this is just and right. My children (_____) and grandchildren (_____) honor, esteem, and value as precious their parents; for this is the first commandment with a promise; that all may be well with them and that they may live long on earth. I believe and confess that my children choose life and love You, Lord, obey Your voice and cling to You; for You are their Life and Length of their days.... They are blessed when they come in and when they go out.

I believe and confess that You give Your angels charge over my children to accompany and defend and preserve them in all their ways. You, Lord, are their Refuge and Fortress. You are their Glory and the Lifter of their heads.

As parents, and grandparents, we will not provoke, irritate, or fret over them. We will not be hard on them or harass them or cause them to become discouraged, sullen, or morose or to feel inferior or frustrated. We will not break or wound their spirits, but we will rear them tenderly in the training, discipline, counsel, and admonition of the Lord. We will train our children and influence our grandchildren in the way they should go, and when they are old, they will not depart from it.

O Lord, my Lord, how excellent (majestic and glorious) is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory on or above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and unweaned infants You have established strength because of Your foes, that you might silence the enemy and the avenger. I sing praises to Your name, O Most High. *The enemy is turned back from my children and grandchildren in the name of Jesus!* They shall increase in favor with God and man. Amen.

Scripture references: Jeremiah 1:12; Isaiah 54:13, 49:25; 1st Peter 5:7; 2nd Timothy 1:12; Ephesians 6:1-3; Deuteronomy 30:19,20; 13; 3,6; Psalm 91:11,2; 3:3; Colossians 3:21; Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6; Psalm 8:1,2; 9:2,3; Luke 2:52

Adapted by Paul Jehle from *Prayers that Avail Much*, Germaine Copeland, Harrison House, 1997, pages 287-289

Prayer Decree
Ecclesia Convocation in Milford, New Hampshire
February 3, 2018

Prayer Decree over the State of New Hampshire

Covenant to be confirmed – or loosed over New Hampshire for its independent convictions

1. New Hampshire's origin dates to the 1629 division of land when Captain John Mason named it after the English county of Hampshire, later named Hampton and Southampton. It was one of the towns the Pilgrims departed from England in 1620 with the *Speedwell* and *Mayflower*.
2. Church covenant of Exeter, dated July 5, 1639 states in part: "*We... brethren of the church of Exeter, situate & lying upon Piscataqua, with other inhabitants there... do in the name of Christ & in the sight of God combine ourselves together... binding ourselves solemnly by the grace & help of Christ & in his name & fear to submit ourselves to such godly & Christian laws... enacted amongst us according to God, that we may live quietly & peaceably together in all godliness and honesty.*"
3. New Hampshire shared a Governor with Massachusetts from 1641 to 1680.
4. Original seal of 1775 depicted a fish and pine tree surrounding a bundle of five arrows (five counties); inscription "*vis unita fortior*" – *a united force is stronger* – NH motto till 1784.
5. New Hampshire was the first state to declare independence and have a constitution in 1776.
6. New Hampshire's Motto comes from Captain John Stark who stated to those brave men who followed him to Bennington in 1777 "*live free or die – death is not the worst of evils.*"
7. Rev. Samuel Langdon preached *The Republic of the Israelites An Example to The American States*; inspired deciding vote (57-47) as 9th State to ratify the US Constitution June 21, 1788.
8. NH is known as the "granite state." A granite boulder with the USS Raleigh, is on its seal
9. Though the "man on the mountain" fell in 2003, we decree that the granite that attracts tourists will symbolize a new spiritual conviction for healthy relationships with God, one another and true convictions to live free from the control of addictions & centralized governmental control.
10. We decree revival to the individual believer and his family in New Hampshire
11. We decree life to the church in New Hampshire
12. We decree unity on the essentials of the faith so that the New Hampshire Alliance may flourish
13. We decree that the health of the church in New Hampshire will be reflected in the state's government so that laws made on earth may agree with laws already in place in heaven.

Covenants to be discontinued, repented of, or bound

1. The trend toward isolation of individuals and families rather than independence under God
2. The ignorance of the history and significance of New Hampshire's identity
3. Ungodly world views that enable dependency and ungodly control of the individual
4. Family dysfunction and the isolation of relationships of parents, children and grandchildren
5. The withdrawal of true biblical churches that may focus more on isolation than self-government
6. The making of unity (and uniformity) our goal rather than the exaltation of Christ
7. The continued departure of believers, pastors and denominations into forms of religion other than Christ-centered Biblical Christianity and its fundamental doctrines.
8. The ignorance and rejection of the Judeo-Christian biblical premises for law and government

Prayer Decree
Ecclesia Convocation in Milford, New Hampshire
February 3, 2018

Prayer Decrees over New England

Covenant to be confirmed – or loosed over New England

Massachusetts – 1620 – the “old colony state” - cradle of liberty and self-government

1. The original church covenant of the Pilgrims in 1606 - “...as the Lord’s free people, joined themselves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in the fellowship of the gospel to walk in all his ways, made known, or to be made known unto them (according to their best endeavors) whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them...”
2. The Mayflower Compact of 1620 – “Having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith and honor of our King and Country”
3. Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Maine all came out of Massachusetts.
4. Jonathan Edwards, and his friend George Whitefield, led the Great Awakening here.
5. Led the colonies in resisting British tyranny throughout the Revolution – “We have this day restored the Sovereign, to whom alone men ought to be obedient. He reigns in Heaven...From the rising to the setting sun, may His kingdom come.” (Sam Adams, August 1, 1776)
6. Led the nation in standing for liberty, including abolition of slavery.

Connecticut – 1639 – the “constitution state” – the rule of law

1. Thomas Hooker’s migration from Boston to Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor, and his subsequent sermon preached on May 31, 1638 from Deuteronomy 1:13 inspired its constitution.
2. The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, January 14, 1639 - “Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God by the wise disposition of his divine providence so to order and dispose of things that we the inhabitants and residents of Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield... the Word of God requires that to maintain the peace and union of such a people there should be an orderly and decent government established according to God... to enter into combination and confederation together... to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the gospel of our Lord Jesus which we now profess”
3. Connecticut hosted George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards(at Enfield) in Great Awakening.
4. Connecticut’s government was the first full replica of the “one, few and many” with a bicameral legislature similar to the ancient Israelites. At the recommendation of Noah Webster, in *Sketches of American Policy*, its government was eventually used as a model for the U.S.
5. Roger Sherman, a delegate from Connecticut, broke the deadlock at the Constitutional Convention in 1787 with the “Connecticut Compromise” after Franklin had called for prayer.

Rhode Island – 1639 – the “ocean state” – cradle of equality before God and the law

1. The Aquidneck (Pocasset) covenant of March 7, 1638 declared in part - “We whose names are underwritten do here solemnly in the presence of Jehovah incorporate ourselves into a Body Politic... unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and to all those perfect and most absolute laws of his given us in his holy word of truth...”

2. The civil covenant of August 20, 1639 “*We whose names are hereunder, desirous to inhabit in the town of Providence, do promise to subject ourselves in active and passive obedience to all such orders or agreements as shall be made for the public good... only in civil things.*”
3. Rhode Island, under the leadership of Roger Williams, had good relationships with Natives.
4. Rhode Island hosted George Whitefield during the Great Awakening.
5. Rhode Island had the first expression of equality, protecting religious liberty, with the first Jewish Synagogue built in Newport on December 2, 1763 – the Touro Synagogue.
6. Rhode Island was the last state to ratify the Constitution on May 29, 1790 after George Washington had already been sworn in as President.

Vermont – 1777 - the “green mountain state” – the cradle of productivity

1. The Crown Point Military Road proved a feat of productivity and pioneering in 1759.
2. The British gained control of the area after the French and Indian War in 1763.
3. In 1770, the “green mountain boys,” led by Ethan Allen, resisted New York’s aggression.
4. Disputes of borders between New York and Massachusetts led Vermont to declare independence as a state January 15, 1777 - “*It is absolutely necessary, for the welfare and safety of the inhabitants of this State, that it should be, henceforth, a free and independent State; and that a just, permanent, and proper form of government, should exist in it, derived from, and founded on, the authority of the people only, agreeable to the direction of the honorable American Congress.... all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and unalienable rights, amongst which are the enjoying and defending life and liberty; acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety,*”
5. In 1791, Vermont ratified the U.S. Constitution, becoming the 14th State of the Union, a state free of slavery, and a subsequent leader in abolition.

Maine – 1820 - the “pine tree state” – cradle of pioneering

1. In what is now Maine, the Popham colony was established in 1607 as the northern part of the Virginia Company’s exploration. Jamestown was the southern part of its competition. The colony was abandoned after nine months, but a ship and fort were constructed as its legacy.
2. Much of its original territory was under the control of Massachusetts Bay for years, but under constant conflict throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.
3. In 1779, the British dubbed the area “New Ireland” attempting to establish themselves there.
4. The area of Maine was one of the greatest patriotic supporters of the American Revolution.
5. The Treaty of Paris in 1783 that ended the War left Maine’s boundaries very vague.
6. On June 19, 1819, the Massachusetts General Court separated the District of Maine from the rest of the Commonwealth.
7. Maine was admitted to the Union March 15, 1820, following the Missouri Compromise since she came in as a free State “*We the people of Maine, in order to establish justice, insure tranquility, provide for our mutual defense, promote our common welfare, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of liberty, acknowledging with grateful hearts the goodness of the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe... and, imploring God's aid and direction in its accomplishment, do agree to form ourselves into a free and independent State, by the style and title of the State of Maine and do ordain and establish the following Constitution...*”

Covenants to be discontinued, repented of, or bound

1. That New England’s reputation of being the “graveyard of pastors” would be ended.
2. That the New England States would cease the support of ungodly causes – religious and civil.
3. That deadness be broken as revival and awakening arise and break forth in our midst.

Prayer Decree
Ecclesia Convocation in Milford, New Hampshire
February 3, 2018

Prayer Decree over the United States of America

Covenant to be confirmed – or loosed over the United States

1. 1776 - her Birth certificate – the Declaration of Independence – *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness... and for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.”*
2. 1789 – Thanksgiving Proclamation by President George Washington – *“Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor... for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed... that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions... To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue”*
3. 1800 – John Adams’ prayer for the White House, which was carved into the mantelpiece of the State Dining Room in 1945 – *“I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof.”*
4. That revival, awakening and reformation occur at every level of society in America – from the individual, to the family, church and region.
5. That the original wells of revival, where significant events have taken place, be restored to see movements of the Spirit of God again.
6. That we might confess and repent of the sins and seeds of slavery, racism, and ever other form of false ideology and religion that has taken us captive that we might be forgiven and restored.
7. That we might be restored to our first love as a nation, serving God, our fellow man beginning with our own neighborhoods.

Covenants to be discontinued, repented of, or bound

1. That the invisible control over the United States government and economy be exposed
2. That the national debt be exposed for what it really is and reduced exponentially
3. That the President, Congress and Judiciary fulfill their oath to obey the Constitution
4. That the size of the national government be reduced to its constitutional dimensions
5. That the States restore their self-government according to the Constitution
6. That the apathy and timidity of Pastors of Bible churches be broken and they speak the truth
7. That government charity could be reduced in proportion to churches providing private charity
8. That family idolatry would diminish as believing families restore godly altars of prayer
9. That carnal believers would diminish as they grow to maturity within our churches
10. That all forms of addiction be broken off individual believers