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# The Importance of Faithfulness in the Life of the Believer



*The apostle Paul, Jusepe de Ribera, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg.*

**I** am continually encouraged by your enthusiasm, cooperation, and help in achieving our joint strategic ministry objectives. Thank you! Why are we doing this save the clear command of the Great Commission?

Read on, my friend.

Ralph Drollinger

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- Former Cabinet Members / White House Senior Staff: Wednesdays 7am, Zoom.*
- Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served.*
- House Members: Thursdays 8am, AG Hearing Room, Longworth 1302, hot breakfast served.*

*The views expressed in each Bible study are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study Sponsor.*



## ■ MINISTRY UPDATE

### Michael Johnson

Montana Ministry Leader



Michael Johnson, CapMin Ministry Leader for Montana and senior pastor of Big Sky Fellowship Church in Helena, has been making presentations to church congregations to encourage Christians to lead CapMin Bible-studies to local leaders in their communities.

Pastor Johnson is encouraging retired pastors, lay pastors, Sunday School teachers, retired businessmen and others who sense a call to establish Local Government Ministries in their neighborhoods.

CapMin has committed to building Bible-study based ministries for city and county commissioners, mayors, school board members, judges, administrators, and city and county clerks, among many others in the 40,000 communities across the United States. In Montana, Pastor Johnson began with his own church, an affiliate of the Southern Baptist

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## I. INTRODUCTION

How do we facilitate more men and women in public office who are mature in Christ—governing authorities who not only have the courage to fight the right battles but the strength, *faithfulness*, and perseverance to go the distance? In order to mature public servants in Christ, we need strong Bible teachers, evangelists, and disciple makers at every level along their career paths. Thank you for faithfully opening doors in local governments, state capitols, and foreign nations! Your partnership is so helpful and effective!

Paul too had such good friends as you are to Danielle and me. One such friend was Tychicus. Paul trusted him with the most important of tasks: to personally deliver some of his letters—the original *autographa* of Scripture—over hundreds of miles of perilous journey! How come? Like you, he was a reliable and trustworthy friend and partner in the ministry of the gospel. Let’s drill down on this character quality this week.

Near the end of his letter to the believers in the Ephesian church, the Apostle Paul conveys some personal comments about Tychicus, his close friend and partner in ministry. From this narrative passage, we can glean important insights into the matter of *faithfulness*. Ephesians 6:21–22 states the following:

*But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing,*

*Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.*

Paul (writing in Greek) employs a tense known as the “epistolary aorist,” describing the action from the perspective of the person who will read his letter. Accordingly, “I am sending” is our most accurate understanding, whereas *I have sent* is most accurate rendering to the Greek; i.e., Tychicus had not been dispatched prior to Paul’s writing this letter.

When we hear the word *faithful* today, our attention is often drawn to the context of marital fidelity. For sure, using *faithful* in that context is an accurate understanding of the biblical word usage. But as used here and illustrated in the life of Tychicus, the character quality of *faithfulness* has a broader application. Stemming from the Greek word *pistos*, it means in the passive use of the verb (i.e., not acting but affected by the action represented by the verb) “trusted” or “reliable.” In contrast, *apistos* means “untrustworthy” or “not worthy of another’s confidence.”

Theologically, *faithfulness* is a fruit of the Spirit fully bequeathed by the Holy Spirit to and upon every believer at the point of salvation (cf. Galatians 5:22–23). Accordingly, *faithfulness* is a possessed quality in the life of the believer, but, nonethe-



## ♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

**Luke 16:10**

*“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.”*

less, one that needs to be continually honed. Reliability, in our vertical relationship to God, as well as horizontally in our relationship to ministry partners, is a requisite, indispensable characteristic that assures both great communion *with* God and fulfillment of the Great Commission of God.

Paul was writing from prison in Rome as indicated by the preceding passage in Ephesians 6:20, *“I am an ambassador in chains....”* There is where he penned what are commonly referred to as the Prison Epistles: Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon. Many commentators believe that he wrote Colossians in close proximity to Ephesians, in that the Colossian epistle would also be delivered to Colossae by Tychicus. Colossians contains an epistolary aorist passage similar to the one under study. Note Colossians 4:7–9:

*As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information. For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts; and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.*

Each passage from the two epistles not only refers to Tychicus as a characteristic *faithful* man, but actively illustrates that very same attribute.

Paul, who was unable to go because of his imprisonment, sent Tychicus as an apostolic emissary to these churches on his behalf. Paul trusted nonetheless in God’s sovereignty, stating in Philippians 1:12, *Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel.* His situation necessitated ministry teaming in order to fulfill the Great Commission. How could the gospel possibly progress in a geographic sense while he remained in prison if it were not for *faithful* teammates who would go and travel in his place? Part of God’s sovereign orchestration of Paul’s circumstances serves to illustrate his ability to effectively trust in a fellow worker, one who, over many years, had proven himself to be *faithful*. Tychicus personified the following two Scriptures:

A wicked messenger falls into adversity, but a faithful envoy brings healing (13:17).

*Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him, for he refreshes the soul of his masters* (25:13).

Today, fruit packers manufacture a *cold snow*, if you will. After being picked in the field, packers immediately douse produce in icy-cold water in order to impede its deterioration. The idea is that a good messenger preserves the message of the one who sent him. Note the summation of Tychicus’ character quality of *faithfulness* as illustrated by Hoehner in



Be faithful in the smallest matters; those victories become mental imprints for developing lifelong responses.





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Convention (SBC) which known for its strong commitment to evangelism. After finding “overwhelming support” among members of his own congregation, Pastor Johnson networked with pastor friends in nearby SBC-affiliated churches and asked to speak to their members.

Evangelism had always been a very high priority for Pastor Johnson, but he didn’t consider political leaders as a mission field until he was recruited to join Capitol Ministries in 2019. He was inspired by Ralph Drollinger’s book, *Rebuilding America: The Biblical Blueprint* which showed through Scripture that many Old and New Testament books show the biblical priority of reaching “*kings and all who are in authority*” with God’s Word. The book is under revision and will be published this year under the title, *All in Authority: Reigniting the Bible’s Top-Down Missions Strategy*.

“Of course we need to take the gospel to everyone, but political leaders is one of the most unrecognized groups that needs to be reached,” Pastor Johnson said. “They weren’t even on my radar until I read Ralph’s book. I was thinking about reaching tribes in Papua New Guinea, and they certainly are important, but we here have the most influential group in the world in our backyards and no one is thinking about them.”

his outstanding commentary on the book of Ephesians:

Later in his second Roman imprisonment, Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus to relieve Timothy in order that Timothy could come to Paul (2 Timothy 2:4) and Paul sent either Tychicus or Artemas to Crete to relieve Titus so that Titus could visit Paul in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). Tychicus, then, bore five letters (Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, 2 Timothy, Titus) and probably relieved two of Paul’s apostolic legates. It is no wonder that he was called a “beloved brother and faithful servant of the Lord.” Servant (*diakonos*), emphasizes the activity of the servant and in this case signifies faithfulness in his activities for the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

The first mention of Tychicus is in Acts 20:4. Of Asian descent, he had been chosen by Paul to take the relief offering to Jerusalem. Therein was the start of a beautiful relationship; Tychicus was not only *faithful*, but this passage also informs us that he was available and teachable. These are three concomitant characteristics for being used mightily by God. Are you *faithful*, *available*, and *teachable*—or just one or two of those, if any?

Now note one particular means Paul used to evoke *faithfulness*, availability and teachability: Paul was *collegial* with his partners in ministry.

## II. FAITHFULNESS STEMS FROM COLLEGIALITY

Paul says of Tychicus in this week’s passage, *beloved brother and faithful minister*. What exactly does this larger statement mean? Commentator Ellis says,

In this context the term “*brother*” means not so much “fellow-Christian” (though Tychicus was obviously this, and the term has this meaning in v. 21) as [it does] “co-worker” or “helper.”

This is significant. In the world of ministry, Paul didn’t make people refer to him in some sense of hierarchical superiority. It is not as if Paul paraded around in some robe like some ministers do today. Nor did he sit up front in the churches he founded in some extra-large chair—as if he was somehow above those to whom he ministered. That arrangement is not biblical Christianity, my friend! Rather he had a collegial relationship with those whom He disciplined and with whom he partnered in ministry. Even though he personified apostolic authority, his leadership style was not one of pulling out the org chart. *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* define *collegial* as “marked by power or authority vested equally in each of a number of colleagues.” I realize there are problems with this leadership style as over time a tendency to breed disrespect and license relating to the one in authority can result. However, such problems have to do more



with the immaturity of those under a collegial boss than the leadership style of the boss himself. Nonetheless, collegiality is an indispensable biblical-based component of effective leadership (with its inherent risks) that greatly aids in developing *faithfulness* and motivation. Being collegial to your staff works not only in the advance of the Great Commission in ministry but also for you as a leader in your office.

**Motivation in work and ministry are enhanced when followers sense shared ownership.**

I hope you sense collegiality in and from me as we attempt to germinate and mature effective ministries not only in state capitols but also in the thousands of local city and county government offices throughout America, as well as in foreign federal capitols throughout the world. What a task we are about! How we each need to be *faithful*, motivated partners in the gospel in order to achieve such a divine task as this! I count each of you as strategic partners and peers in our joint monumental effort to help create a movement for Christ among the world's governing authorities!

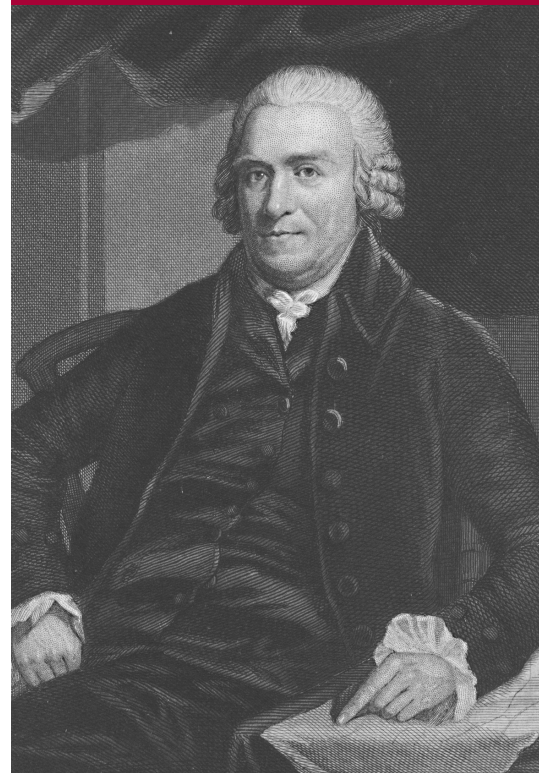
While the practice of collegiality is no guarantee of developing *faithfulness* in another, its undertaking can certainly help. Viewing others as teammates and partners was tantamount as to how Paul dispatched his authority in leadership. In Philippians 2:3b this internal attitude

of Paul's—how he viewed leadership—is further revealed when he states, *regard one another as more important than yourselves*. As a result of Paul's trusting others who were trustworthy, Tychicus could be counted on to complete the smallest tasks and the most difficult. Paul had successfully created self-starters, self-sufficient teammates for the sake of the gospel. Tychicus developed into a doctrinally solid believer who had a passion for world evangelism; he represented Paul well, being void of disloyalty, undermining comments of disrespect (cf. 1 Peter 2:18), and gossip. Paul took notice of that dependability, and God used Tychicus mightily in His kingdom work. Collegial Paul had created a co-equal co-laborer for Christ!

Paul had his personal weaknesses (cf. Romans 7) as we all do, and we know that collegiality requires transparency and thus a risk of vulnerability. It follows that Tychicus could have exploited Paul's foibles and undermined or damaged his leadership. Instead grace and not an extra biblical judgmental spirit characterized Tychicus's demeanor with others; he undoubtedly possessed skill and dispatch in personal relationships. Undeniably, he was mature in this regard having earned the highest levels of trust; again he was deemed seasoned enough to transport portions of the original New Testament!

**Grace with one another is key to our fulfillment of the Great Commission.**

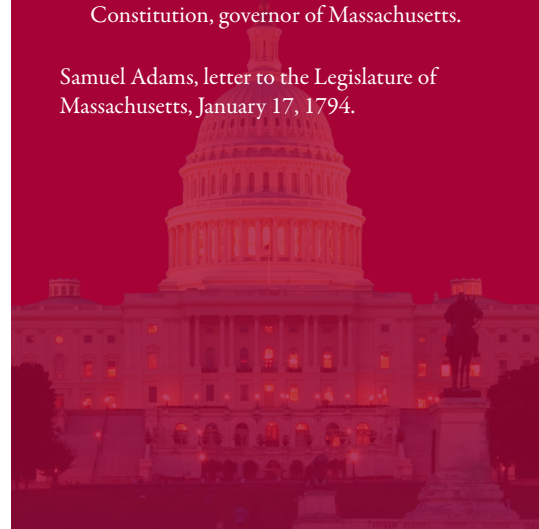
*Samuel Adams*



**“In the supposed state of nature, all men are equally bound by the laws of nature, or to speak more properly, the laws of the Creator.”**

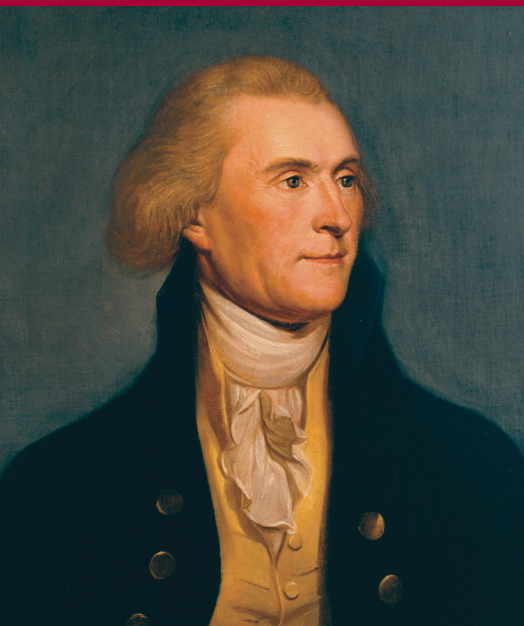
— Samuel Adams, signer of the Declaration of Independence, father of the American Revolution, ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, governor of Massachusetts.

Samuel Adams, letter to the Legislature of Massachusetts, January 17, 1794.





Thomas Jefferson



Unfortunately, the shortage of such grace in present-day and historic American Evangelicalism has resulted in many Christian leaders who are not collegial—having been burned by others. In contrast, may our partnership always be characterized by abundant grace.

Beloved public servant friends, you are wonderful, effective, powerful partners in ministry! I am so blessed by what we have seen God do in our partnership already—opening numerous doors for new ministries in local, state, and international governments! May God grant us the ability to germinate hundreds more ministries throughout America and the world in the days and years ahead! What follows are further insights into *faithfulness*.

### III. FAITHFULNESS STEMS FROM GOD'S CHARACTER

First Thessalonians 5:24 and 2 Thessalonians 3:3, respectively, state the following:

*Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.*

*But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.*

To grow in Christlikeness means we must grow in God's attribute of *faithfulness*! To become more like Jesus means we must become increasingly *faithful* to Him and others! Christ

was *faithful* to the Father even to the point of death—death on a cross! This *faithfulness* stands in stark contrast to far too many believers who are *faithful* only to the degree it is advantageous to themselves.

Are you *faithful* even when it costs you something to remain *faithful*?

### IV. FAITHFULNESS STEMMS FROM CULTIVATION

*Faithfulness* must be cultivated and developed continually throughout our lives. Psalm 78:8 and Luke 16:10, respectively, depict this necessity:

*And not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God.*

*He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.*

We should be strict with ourselves to be *faithful* in the smallest matters; those victories become mental imprints for developing lifelong responses.

### V. FAITHFULNESS WILL BE COMPENSATED

*Faithfulness* is an intricate, key character quality, and among other things, an attribute every public servant should discern in employees when considering hiring or promo-

“How prone all human institutions have been to decay; how subject the best-formed and most wisely organized governments have been to lose their check and totally dissolve; how difficult it has been for mankind, in all ages and countries, to preserve their dearest rights and best privileges, impelled as it were by an irresistible fate of despotism.”

— Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, signer of the Declaration of Independence, diplomat, governor of Virginia, Secretary of State.

Thomas Jefferson, letter to Edward Carrington, January 16, 1787.



tion. The following Scriptures serve to indicate the biblical connection between *faithfulness* and reward:

*A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished* (Proverbs 28:20).

*Then I put Hanani my brother, and Hananiah the commander of the fortress, in charge of Jerusalem, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many* (Nehemiah 7:2).

*And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?”* (Luke 12:42).

*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service* (1 Timothy 1:12).

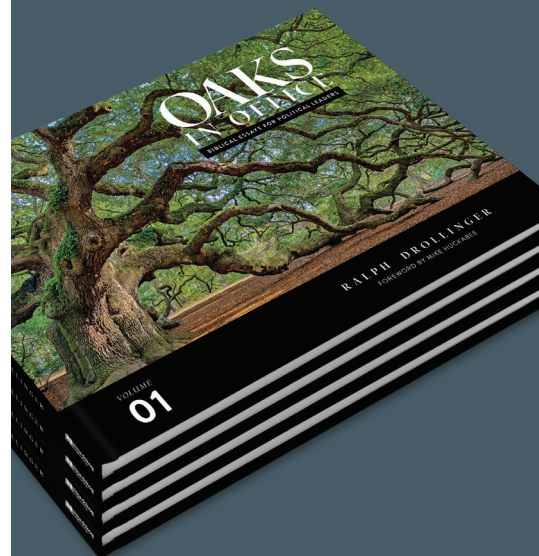
*The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many*

*witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also* (2 Timothy 2:2).

These passages serve to illustrate the correlation between *faithfulness* and reward in both this life and the next. Make no mistake: God intends the motivation of rewards to compel us to be increasingly *faithful!* God rewards *faithfulness!*

## VI. APPLICATION

Tychicus was *faithful* to God and to others. Subsequently, God blessed and strengthened him. Paul noticed that quality and entrusted him with the most important of tasks: personally delivering original *autographa* of Scripture over hundreds of miles of perilous journey! Why? *He was deemed faithful!* That is to say he was found to be reliable and trustworthy. May that be said of us as we team to plant ministries among public servants throughout America and the world. Therein are everlasting dividends redounding to His glory!



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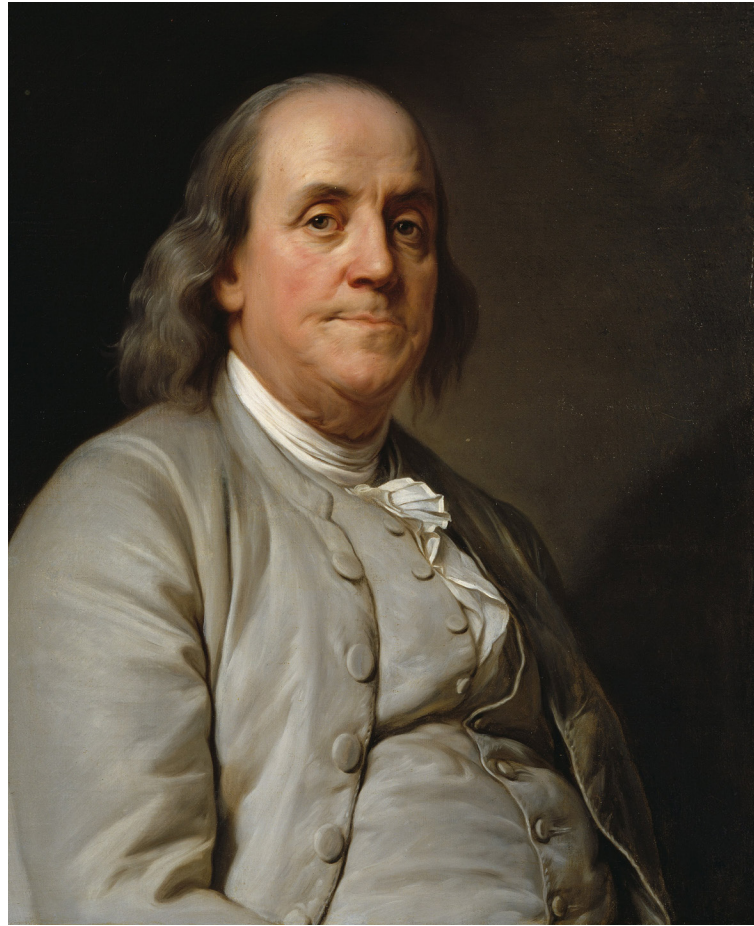
With each purchase, you may download the book’s fifty-two chapters for free in PDF form so you may use them with your own Bible study group. Study and leader questions are offered at the end of each chapter.

1. Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Ada, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2002).



# The Importance of Faithfulness in the Life of the Believer

Benjamin Franklin



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- Annapolis, Maryland
- Atlanta, Georgia
- Augusta, Maine
- Austin, Texas
- Bismarck, North Dakota
- Boise, Idaho
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Denver, Colorado
- Dover, Delaware
- Carson City, Nevada
- Charleston, West Virginia
- Cheyenne, Wyoming
- Columbia, South Carolina
- Columbus, Ohio
- Concord, New Hampshire
- Des Moines, Iowa
- Hartford, Connecticut
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- Bujumbura, Burundi
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- Georgetown, Guyana
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- Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Libreville, Gabon
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- Lusaka, Zambia
- Malabo, Equatorial Guinea
- Maputo, Mozambique
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- N'Djamena, Chad
- Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
- Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
- Porto-Novo, Benin
- Quito, Ecuador
- Riga, Latvia
- San Jose, Costa Rica
- Suva, Fiji
- Tegucigalpa, Honduras
- Vilnius, Lithuania
- Warsaw, Poland
- Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire
- Yaoundé, Cameroon

“That wise Men have in all Ages thought Government necessary for the Good of Mankind; and, that wise Governments have always thought Religion necessary for the well ordering and well-being of Society, and accordingly have been ever careful to encourage and protect the Ministers of it, paying them the highest publick Honours, that their Doctrines might thereby meet with the greater Respect among the common People.”

— Benjamin Franklin, signer of the Declaration of Independence, diplomat, printer, scientist, signer of the U.S. Constitution, governor of Pennsylvania.

Benjamin Franklin, *On that Odd Letter of the Drum*, April 1730.

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