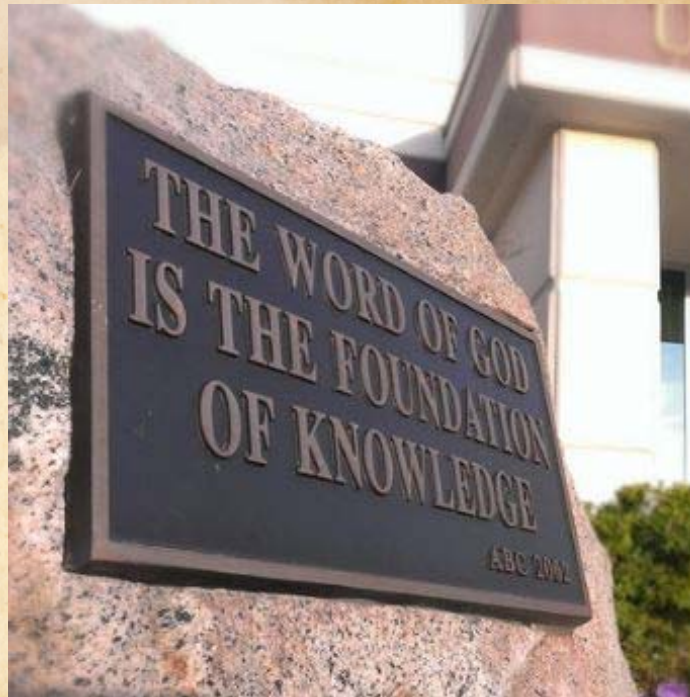


# Weeknight Bible Study

## January 20, 2022

### Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God (Booklet)

United Church of God, SF Bay Area





# Check-In Goals:

1. Fellowship in a Spiritually Uplifting focus in God's Word
2. Hear from All Participants as equally as possible

Please limit comments to no more than 2 minutes until everyone has had an opportunity to speak.

3. Discuss / Highlight / Collect Wisdom



## Discussion Topic:

### Fundamental #5. **God's Law and Sin**

- > The first statement... defines the association of sin with God's Law not just some arbitrary definition of sin. It is not defined or informed by the fluidity of locale or cultural influences.
- > People have a tendency to interpret their own comfort level of morals or what constitutes a transgression against another... God sets THE standard!
- > God's Law was NOT nailed to the cross... Christ came to magnify the whole Law and commanded its observance.
- > God's Law reflects His character... our keeping of it shows our love toward Him. In this we develop more of His character and His love.
- > Aspects of the Ten Commandments may be divided into two high levels... teaches us how to show Love toward God & how to show Love toward mankind. (Freedom comes "looking into the perfect law of liberty).
- > Seeking and living God's law is a Way of Life!



## Belief Statement:

### #5. God's Law and Sin

#### Fundamental Belief Statement:

We believe that sin is the transgression of the law. The law is spiritual, perfect, holy, just and good. The law defines God's love and is based upon the two great principles of love toward God and love toward neighbor. It is immutable and binding. The Ten Commandments are the 10 points of God's law of love. We believe that breaking any one point of the law brings upon a person the penalty of sin. We believe that this fundamental spiritual law reveals the only way to true life and the only possible way of happiness, peace and joy. All unhappiness, misery, anguish and woe have come from transgressing God's law (1 John 3:4; 5:3; Matthew 5:17-19; Matthew 19:17-19; Matthew 22:37-40; James 2:10-11; Romans 2:5-9; Romans 7:12-14; Romans 13:8-10).

Booklet section audio... <https://www.ucg.org/system/storage/serve/1345001/05-gods-law-and-sin.mp3>



## Discussion Scriptures

### #5. Scriptures

**1 John 3:4** NKJV Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

**1 John 5:3** NKJV For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

**Matthew 5:17-19** NKJV "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. (18) For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. (19) Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

**Matthew 22:37-40** NKJV Jesus said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' (40) On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

**James 2:10-11** NKJV For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (11) For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.



## Discussion Scriptures

### #5. Scriptures (Continued)

**Romans 2:5-9** NKJV But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, (6) who "WILL RENDER TO EACH ONE ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS": (7) eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; (8) but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, (9) tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek;

**Romans 7:12-14** NKJV Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. (13) Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. (14) For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

**Romans 13:8-10** NKJV Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. (9) For the commandments, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," "YOU SHALL NOT MURDER," "YOU SHALL NOT STEAL," "YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS," "YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." (10) Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.



## Example Apologetic Discussion

### Fundamental #5. God's Law and Sin

#### Discussion w/ Someone Who feels they are not 'hurting anybody' when they do what they want to do?

- > Begin by asking "Why do you feel that way?" (Seek to understand where they are coming from!)
- > Ask them "How do you accurately measure that?"
- > Open discussion to freedom of choice... emphasize that ALL choices have consequences (could be for good or detriment to oneself &/or others). Explore the concept of picking & choosing of standards that should be followed...
- > Ask how important it is to consider the consequences before making a choice?
- > Assuming they have a belief in a higher power... Ask them why or why not should that power have "some say" in how you conduct your life?
- > Say to the person... if you deeply care for others you should care how you affect them... give examples of breaking God's laws [without stating the commands directly] and once they are in agreement show them how that was outlined by our loving God in His (operating manual) handbook for how mankind can have life more abundantly.
- > Ask them to read with you **Deuteronomy 30:15-19 NKJV** "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, (16) in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. (17) But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, (18) I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. (19) I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;



## Example Apologetic Reference-1\_a

### Fundamental #5. God's Law and Sin

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine\\_law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_law)

#### Divine law

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
(Redirected from God's law)

**Divine law** is any body of law that is perceived as deriving from a transcendent source, such as the will of God or gods – in contrast to man-made law or to secular law. According to Angelos Chaniotis and Rudolph F. Peters, divine laws are typically perceived as superior to man-made laws,<sup>[1][2]</sup> sometimes due to an assumption that their source has resources beyond human knowledge and human reason.<sup>[3]</sup> Believers in divine laws might accord them greater authority than other laws,<sup>[4][5][2]</sup> for example by assuming that divine law cannot be changed by human authorities.<sup>[2]</sup>

According to Chaniotis, Divine laws are noted for their apparent inflexibility.<sup>[6]</sup> The introduction of interpretation into divine law is a controversial issue, since believers place high significance on adhering to the law precisely.<sup>[7]</sup> Opponents to the application of divine law typically deny that it is purely divine and point out human influences in the law. These opponents characterize such laws as belonging to a particular cultural tradition. Conversely, adherents of divine law are sometimes reluctant to adapt inflexible divine laws to cultural contexts.<sup>[8]</sup>

Medieval Christianity assumed the existence of three kinds of laws: divine law, natural law, and man-made law.<sup>[4]</sup> Theologians have substantially debated the scope of natural law, with the Enlightenment encouraging greater use of reason and expanding the scope of natural law and marginalizing divine law in a process of secularization.<sup>[9][additional citation(s) needed]</sup> Since the authority of divine law is rooted<sup>[colloquialism]</sup> in its source, the origins and transmission-history of divine law are important.<sup>[10][a]</sup>

Conflicts frequently<sup>[quantify]</sup> arise between secular understandings of justice or morality and divine law.<sup>[11][12]</sup>

Religious law, such as canon law, includes both divine law and additional interpretations, logical extensions, and traditions.<sup>[5]</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious\\_law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_law)

#### Religious law

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Religious law** includes ethical and moral codes taught by religious traditions. Different religious systems hold sacred law in a greater or lesser degree of importance to their belief systems, with some being explicitly antinomian whereas others are nomistic or "legalistic" in nature. In particular, religions such as Judaism, Islam and the Bahá'í Faith teach the need for revealed positive law for both state and society, whereas other religions such as Christianity generally reject the idea that this is necessary or desirable<sup>[1]</sup> and instead emphasise the eternal moral precepts of divine law over the civil, ceremonial or judicial aspects, which may have been annulled<sup>[2]</sup> as in theologies of grace over law.

Examples of religiously derived legal codes include Jewish halakha, Islamic sharia, Christian canon law (applicable within a wider theological conception in the church, but in modern times distinct from secular state law<sup>[3]</sup>), and Hindu law.<sup>[4]</sup>

**Antinomianism** (Ancient Greek: "against" and "law") is any view which rejects laws or legalism and argues against moral, religious or social norms (Latin: mores), or is at least considered to do so.<sup>[1]</sup> The term has both religious and secular meanings.



## Example Apologetic Reference-1\_b

### Fundamental #5. God's Law and Sin

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sin>

#### Sin

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In a **religious** context, **sin** is a transgression against **divine law**.<sup>[1]</sup> Each **culture** has its own interpretation of what it means to commit a sin. While sins are generally considered actions, any thought, word, or act considered immoral, selfish, shameful, harmful, or alienating might be termed "sinful".<sup>[2]</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_views\\_on\\_sin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_views_on_sin)

#### Christian views on sin

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Sin is an **immoral** act considered to be a transgression of **divine law**.<sup>[1]</sup> The doctrine of sin is central to **Christianity**, since its **basic message** is about **redemption** in **Christ**.<sup>[2]</sup>

Hamartiology, a branch of **Christian theology** which is the study of sin,<sup>[3]</sup> describes sin as an act of offence against **God** by despising his **persons** and **Christian biblical law**, and by injuring others.<sup>[4]</sup> Christian hamartiology is closely related to concepts of **natural law**, **moral theology** and **Christian ethics**. According to **Augustine of Hippo** (354–430) sin is "a word, deed, or desire in opposition to the eternal law of God,"<sup>[5][6]</sup> or as scripture states, "sin is the transgression of the law."<sup>[7]</sup>

Among some scholars, sin is understood mostly as legal infraction or contract violation of non-binding philosophical frameworks and perspectives of **Christian ethics**, and so **salvation** tends to be viewed in legal terms. Other Christian scholars understand sin to be fundamentally relational—a loss of love for the **Christian God** and an elevation of **self-love** ("concupiscence", in this sense), as was later propounded by Augustine in his debate with the **Pelagians**.<sup>[8]</sup> As with the legal definition of sin, this definition also affects the understanding of **Christian grace** and salvation, which are thus viewed in relational terms.<sup>[9][10]</sup>



# Example Apologetic Reference-2a

## Fundamental #5. God's Law and Sin (8 America Facts about... religion & government)

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/16/8-facts-about-religion-and-government-in-the-united-states/>



Pew Research Center

JULY 16, 2020

### 8 facts about religion and government in the United States

**1** While the U.S. Constitution does not mention God, every state constitution references either God or the divine. God also appears in the Declaration of Independence, the Pledge of Allegiance and on U.S. currency.

**3** Almost all U.S. presidents, including Donald Trump, have been Christian, and many have identified as either Episcopalian or Presbyterian. But two of the most famous presidents, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, had no formal religious affiliation. Most U.S. presidents have been sworn in with a Bible, and they traditionally seal their oath of office with "so help me God."

**4** Roughly half of Americans feel it is either very (20%) or somewhat (32%) important for a president to have strong religious beliefs, according to a survey this past February. But only around four-in-ten (39%) say it is important for a president to share their religious beliefs. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say it is at least somewhat important for a president to have strong religious beliefs (65% vs 41%).

**5** Americans are divided on the extent to which the country's laws should reflect Bible teachings.

#5 See next slide for detail

#6 UCG (& members) are apolitical... link to Study Paper on Recommendations slide.

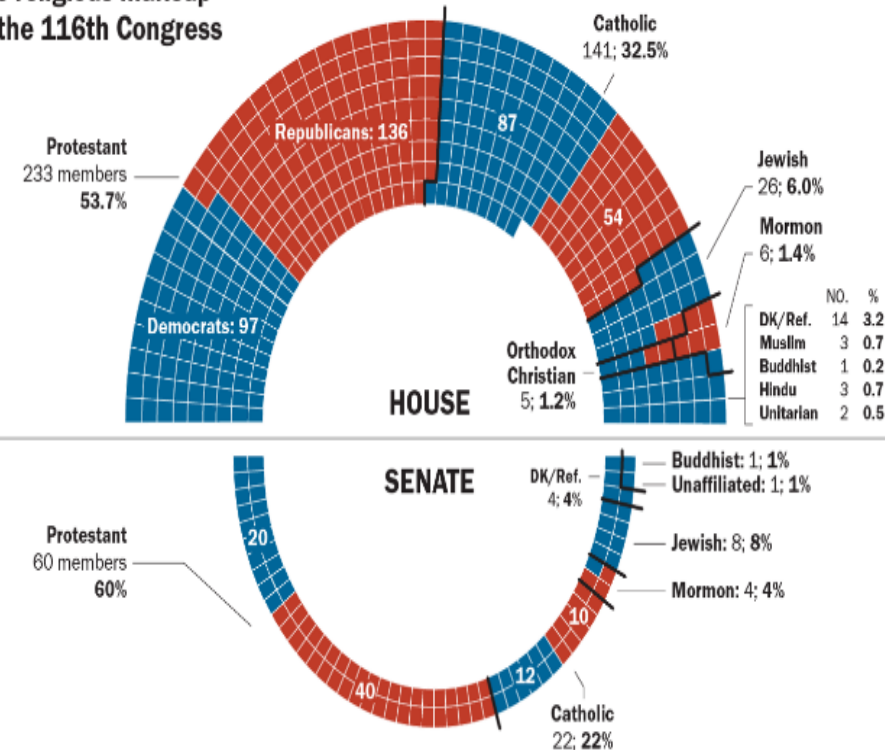
**6** More than six-in-ten Americans (63%) say churches and other houses of worship should stay out of politics. An even higher share (76%) say these houses of worship should not endorse political candidates during elections, according to a 2019 survey. Still, more than a third of Americans (36%) say churches and other houses of worship should express their views on social and political matters. (The Johnson Amendment, enacted in 1954, prohibits tax-exempt institutions like churches from involvement in political campaigns on behalf of any candidate.)

**7** Only about a third of Americans (32%) say government policies should support religious values. Two-thirds (65%) say religion should be kept out of government policies, a 2017 Pew Research Center survey found.

**8** Even though the Supreme Court ruled in 1962 that it is unconstitutional for a teacher to lead a class in prayer at a public school, 8% of public school students ages 13 to 17 say they have ever experienced this, according to a 2019 survey. (It is, however, possible that some teens who said they've experienced this could have previously attended religious private schools where teacher-led prayer is constitutional.) This experience is more common in the South (12%) than in the Northeast (2%). Four-in-ten U.S. teens in public schools (41%) feel it's appropriate for a teacher to lead a class in prayer, including 29% of teens who know that this practice is banned but say that it is acceptable nevertheless.

**2** Congress has always been overwhelmingly Christian, and roughly nine-in-ten representatives (88%) in the current Congress identify as Christian, according to a 2019 analysis. While the number of self-identified Christians in Congress ticked down in the last election, Christians as a whole – and especially Protestants and Catholics – are still overrepresented on Capitol Hill relative to their share of the U.S. population.

The religious makeup of the 116th Congress



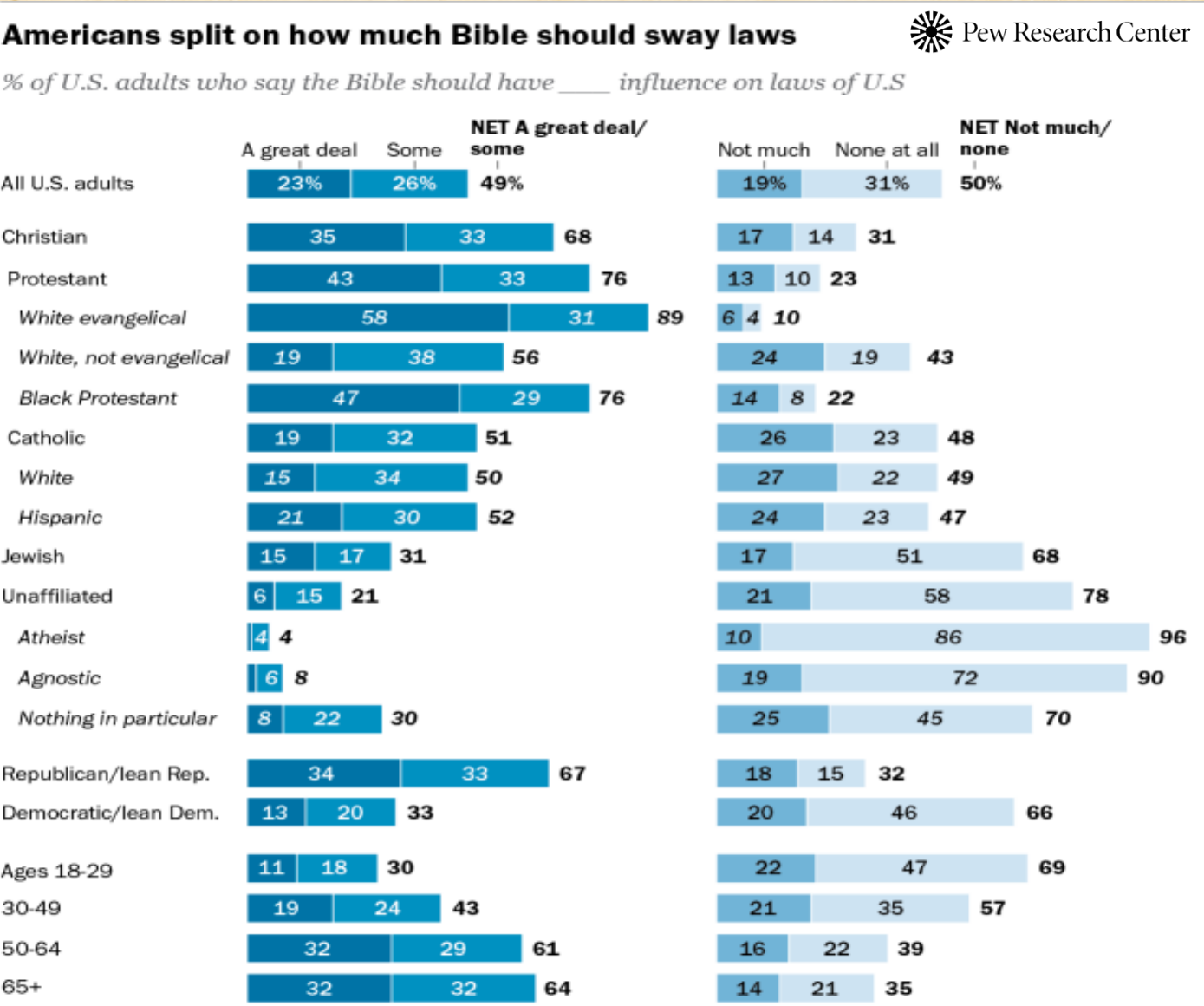
Note: Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals due to rounding.  
 Figures for Democrats include two independents who caucus with Democrats.  
 Source: Figures for Congress based on Pew Research Center analysis of data collected by CQ Roll Call, reflecting members of Congress to be sworn in on Jan. 3, 2019.  
 "Faith on the Hill: The religious composition of the 116th Congress"



# Example Apologetic Reference-2a

## Fundamental #5. God's Law and Sin (America is split)

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/13/half-of-americans-say-bible-should-influence-u-s-laws-including-28-who-favor-it-over-the-will-of-the-people/>



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown. Blacks and whites are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.  
Source: Survey conducted Feb. 4-15, 2020, among U.S. adults.  
"White Evangelicals See Trump as Fighting for Their Beliefs, Though Many Have Mixed Feelings About His Personal Conduct"

The U.S. Constitution does not mention the Bible, God, Jesus or Christianity, and the First Amendment clarifies that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." Still, some scholars have argued that the Bible heavily influenced America's founders.

Today, about half of [ALL] Americans (49%) say the Bible should have at least "some" influence on U.S. laws, including nearly a quarter (23%) who say it should have "a great deal" of influence, according to a recent Pew Research Center survey.

...Among U.S. Christians, two-thirds (68%) want the Bible to influence U.S. laws at least some, and among white evangelical Protestants, this figure rises to about nine-in-ten (89%).





Article / Reference / Sermon... Recommendations (w/ url links):

> UCG Doctrinal Study Paper: **“Voting and Involvement in Politics”**

url = <http://streaming.ucg.org/files/papers/UCG-papers-Voting-and-Involvement-in-Politics.pdf>

> UCG Sermon: **“Government and the Virus”** Presented by Mr. Steve Myers

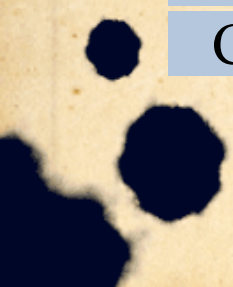
url = <https://www.ucg.org/sermons/government-and-the-virus>

> General Audio Resource: ABC Comparative Religion


Review of the world's major religions and the beliefs of each compared with Scripture.

Comparative Religion I url = <https://abc.ucg.org/courses/comparative-religion-i>

Comparative Religion II url = <https://abc.ucg.org/courses/comparative-religion-ii>







**~ The End ~**  
**& FELLOWSHIP :-)**

