

# Rediscovering the Kingdom of God

Seminar Presented by  
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(Canberra 14/9/2013)

## Why is the Kingdom of God important?

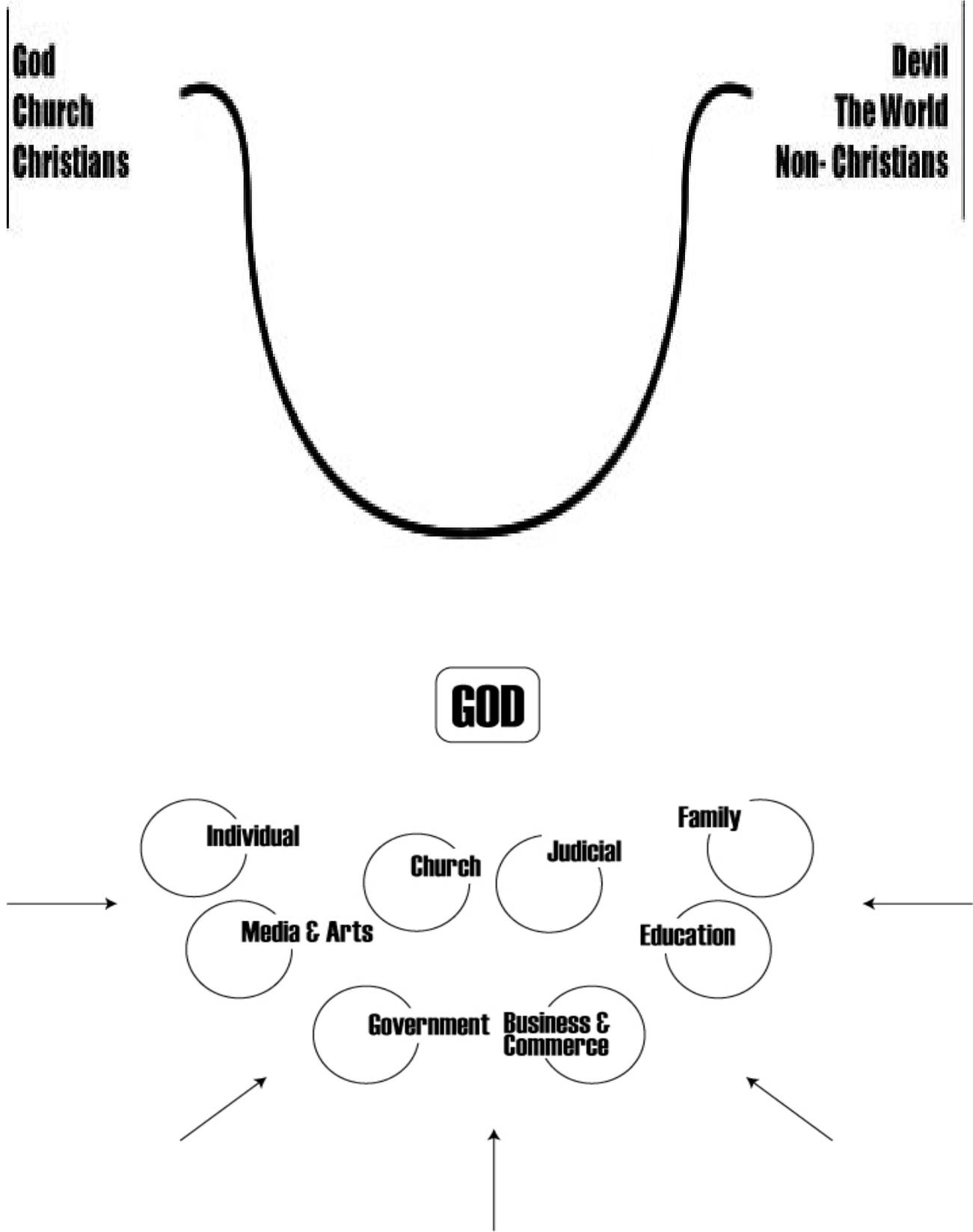
- The Kingdom of God is the central message of the New Testament.
- The first thing Jesus spoke about was the Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 4:17)
- The last thing Jesus spoke about to His disciples was the Kingdom (Acts 1:1-3)
- Jesus said the purpose He was sent to earth was to preach the Kingdom (Luke 4:42-44)
- All of the parables Jesus taught were about the Kingdom (Matthew 13:19, 24,31,33)
- Jesus said the gospel of the Kingdom must be preached to all the ends of the earth before He can return (Matthew 24:14)
- Acts – the book of the disciples responding to Jesus’ command begins and ends with the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3, 28:30-31)
- “If Jesus made the kingdom of God the centre of his message and the centre of his endeavour, the greatest need of man, as I see it, is to rediscover the kingdom of God.”  
(E.Stanley Jones)

## 8 statements about the Kingdom

### 1. Kingdom is the sovereign rule of God

(Colossians 1:15-17)

- “Our father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Kingdom is God's will being done.
- In other words Christianity is about heaven invading earth not about us escaping to go to heaven. ‘All the major events that followed Jesus’ inauguration of the Kingdom – the resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit are “not designed to take us away from this earth, but to make us agents of the transformation of this earth” (Wright)
- “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). This means every part of creation is subject to Christ.
- Abraham Kuyper put it well when he said “There is not one square inch of the entire creation about which Jesus Christ does not cry out, ‘This is mine! This belongs to me!’” This means all of life is sacred. To divide the world into sacred and secular domains is to deny the sovereignty of God.



## 2. Kingdom is a present reality

- When Jesus began his ministry he said “The Kingdom of God is at hand”. Later on he talked about things that were to happen in the future concerning the Kingdom.
- So we see here an important principle about the Kingdom.
- It is both ‘now’ and ‘not yet’. There is a tension here that needs to be recognized.
- If we focus solely on the ‘now’ of the Kingdom we can reduce the Kingdom to social action focused on changing the world.
- Alternatively if we focus on the ‘not yet’ emphasis we fail to address the current pains and needs of the world

## 3. The Kingdom is more than the church

- If the Kingdom is the central message of the gospels and summarizes the essential heart of Christianity – why do we hear so little about the Kingdom of God
- The answer is quite simple. We have substituted the church for the Kingdom
- Many Christians believe building the church is the primary, if not only, way to express the Kingdom
- “You can often get hold of 'church' and miss the Kingdom, but when you get hold of 'Kingdom' what follows is a clear sense of church” (Christopherson)
- Sunday church gathered – Monday church scattered.
- Sunday should be about equipping people for Monday

## 4. Awareness of the Kingdom is within every person

- When Jesus was talking to the Pharisees in Luke 17:21 he made another important observation about the Kingdom. He said to them “the Kingdom is in your midst” – referring to himself but this can also be translated the Kingdom of God is within you.
- Romans 1:20
- “Two things inspire me to awe: the starry heavens above and moral universe within.” (Kant)
- Because we are made in the image of God each of us has within us what Wright calls ‘the echoes of the Spirit’. He identifies four characteristics:
  - ✓ Longing for justice
  - ✓ Quest for spirituality
  - ✓ Hunger for relationships
  - ✓ Delight in beauty

### 5. Kingdom happens inside and outside church meetings

- Most Kingdom activity will take place outside of church meetings.
- Holy Spirit is already at work in His world.
- The Holy Spirit can and does speak and work within the lives of those who have not yet met the King of the Kingdom.
- Holy Spirit can take us into uncharted waters - Cornelius and Ethiopian eunuch
- “Don't ask God to bless what you are doing, rather find out what He is doing for that is already blessed.” (Bono)

### 6. Kingdom is expressed in a variety of passions

- As we have established the Kingdom is all about the will of God being done on the earth.
- For this to happen “God’s passion must become our passion” (Wright)
- When we consider the nature and character of God we recognize that His passions are broad and diverse.
- The means the Kingdom will be expressed in a wide variety of passions.
- We are called to pursue the passion God has placed in us and to validate and appreciate the different passions He puts in others

### The Kingdom is an outworking of the Trinity

Father	Son	Holy Spirit
Creation	Salvation	Completion
Above	Among	In us
Science	Scripture	Experience
Social Justice, art & politics, responsible dominion	Evangelism, discipleship, personal ethics	Emotional health and spiritual power, signs and wonders, worship
Reflective	Proactive	Affective
Rationalism	Activism	Emotionalism
Providence	Justification	Sanctification
Creation commission	Evangelism commission	Relational commission

## 7. Kingdom fruit is more than evangelism

(Matt 21:43)

- Producing Kingdom fruit is essential to maintaining the Kingdom
- What is Kingdom fruit – doing the will of God
- Evangelism and social action
- Long term
- Deals with all of life
  - ✓ Wealth without work
  - ✓ Pleasure without conscience
  - ✓ Commerce without morality
  - ✓ Politics without principles
  - ✓ Knowledge without character
  - ✓ Science without humanity
  - ✓ Worship without sacrifice

### Kingdom focus

- Make poverty/slavery/disease history
- Corporate social responsibility
- Media that serves the common good
- Individual transformation
- Environmental stewardship
- Community that cares for all its members
- Family strength
- Restorative justice
- Effective churches
- Recovery of the beauty of the arts
- Science that serves the common good
- Governments that serve the common good

## **8. Every Christian is an agent for the Kingdom**

- To illustrate how this happens Jesus used a parable of the wheat and the tares.  
(Matthew 13:36-43)
- The field is the world and it belongs to Jesus.
- He sows people of the Kingdom into the field to produce the Kingdom.
- Kingdom is produced by seed going into the ground – dying – producing life
- While there is opposition it is in this context that the will of God is done on the earth.

### **What does all this mean for me?**

1. What is the passion and dream God has given you?
2. How has He equipped you in terms of personality, gifting, experience?
3. Where has He planted you or where does He want to plant you?
4. What does it mean to produce the Kingdom in that sphere?
5. What is the vision God is giving you for producing the Kingdom?