

THE RADICAL GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

*A Vision of Victory for the Church of the 21st
Century*

Orlando Mostert

Chapter 12: The Radical Kingdom Church Discipling the Nations

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KINGDOM VISION

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KINGDOM VISION

I present to you a whole new vision of the times in which we live. All your prophecy books and televangelists tell you that the rapture is any moment, the Antichrist will take over the world, the Kingdom of God will only come one day in the future.

Here is the alternative Kingdom Vision:

- Jesus is now Lord; He is now ruling in the heavenlies.
- We are in the Kingdom Age which means we have all power now over the power of Satan and our job now is to disciple the nations.
- The world system is now under judgment and will collapse; “Babylon” is falling.
- The Kingdom of God is spreading in power and glory until it will fill the earth.

World systems are collapsing ... but the Kingdom of God is rising. Nations will be discipled into the Kingdom of God, there are already more than 700 million charismatic evangelicals worldwide. Soon the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Get ready for a greater outpouring of God’s presence and power in his church:

The Kingdom Vision ... a vision of victory for the church of the 21 Century.

Orlando Mostert

June 2012

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INTRODUCTION

If I am correct in my understanding of God's prophetic plan then we can expect a great tribulation of His judgment over the earth that will result in economic collapse as well as the collapse of functioning nation states. If I am further correct that the Lord's plan is not to take us out of the earth but that we are here to destroy the works of Satan, then there is only one conclusion to draw: Revelation 20 and Micah 4 are lying ahead of us. The church will fulfill its calling of "healing the nations" (Rev.20: because the nations will come to us and say "teach us your ways" (Micah 4: The church will indeed fulfill the Great Commission of discipling the nations.

But for this great purpose of God to be fulfilled, our vision of the church will have to change as well as how we organize our church life.. The coming great collapse means that church as Sunday morning meeting of several hundred relative strangers in a quiet suburban setting is coming to an end. And the future of the church is not larger mega-churches of 5,000 meeting on a Sunday morning (just more strangers!). The future of the churches in the coming world collapse are real committed believers of Covenant Communities of 3-10,000 members living debt free, self sufficient in the basics of food, energy and housing, with a stable community currency and each person fully employed in the work that the Lord has given them to do. Innovative, creative, wealth creating communities that tell the world by their lifestyle; This is who we are and this is how we live...would you like to be part of this wonderful family of God?

You think that is a utopian dream? Tell the Amish that. They don't send missionaries into the world, yet they have 20 million visitors a year coming to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania to see how they live! This is how we are going to survive the coming world collapse and this is how we are going to disciple the nations into the Kingdom of God.

In this chapter I am going to present you with four critical concepts to understand the vision of the "Radical Church of the 21st Century":

1. I am going to present to you 8 problems with the way we are conducting church at present and why we have come to the end of the current church model.
2. Then I want to present you with the New Testament idea of the "ekklesia" and how that differs from "church".
3. That will allow me to introduce you to the idea of Covenant Communities, the next great move of God needed to bring in the great harvest.
4. And then lastly I want to show you the "Kadosh" and "salt of the world" strategy for healing the nations and discipling the nations will bring about the "ekklesia" of God on earth.

I am going to present to you a radical idea that is in actual fact the logical result of the Radical Gospel of the Kingdom. It is this. If we have any expectation of accomplishing the great things that the Lord wants to do in the earth in these days ahead then how we organize ourselves as the church needs to be radically changed. By that I mean we have reached the limits of what you can do with church as a Sunday morning meeting. We need to re-

organize the structure of the church in such a way as to create and release more power and resources for the work of the Kingdom.

Kingdom Agenda or Church Agenda?

When I say we have a problem with the present church model then it implies that I am measuring what the church mission is by a vision or idea of

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what that mission is which must be different to what most church leaders are teaching as the church mission. And that is so. I call it the Kingdom Agenda as opposed to the church agenda. The Kingdom agenda is simple:

- Disciple the nations
- Destroy Satan and his works
- Bring the Bride of Christ into the full stature of His image, spotless and pure.

At first glance most evangelical preachers will agree with me and say but that is what we also believe and we are doing that as best as possible. The reality however is somewhat different. What they actually believe is that none of these goals can realistically be met before the Rapture. The church is not going to actually disciple the nations; that will be left to 144,000 Jews in the Great Tribulation. Satan will not actually be defeated and destroyed by the church because the Antichrist will take over the world and the church will be taken out of the world to protect us from the Antichrist. As for a spotless bride, they actually believe millions of lukewarm worldly evangelicals in love with the world and the things that are in the world are going to make the Rapture because they have been “born again”.

The Present Model Church

Let me first give a warning. I don't like moaners and complainers who like to criticize those in the ministry who have sacrificed their lives in fulltime service for the gospel and seem to find fault with every small problem in the church. None of us are perfect and the wonderful grace of the Lord allows Him to use imperfect vessels with sometimes imperfect motives to accomplish His work. What follows is not a criticism of the church because I believe where the church is now is exactly how the Lord has led His church up to now. Who am I to fault Him who is head of the church? I praise those brave missionaries who have gone to the farthest ends of the earth to plant new churches. I honor those who Sunday by Sunday preach with love and passion the wonderful gospel message. We have all been blessed countless times by an encouraging word from the pulpit.

What I am suggesting is that we stand on the brink of new outpouring of power from the Lord that will require a radical new vision of what is possible and what the radical implications of the Kingdom Agenda will require of us in the years ahead. This “new wine” outpouring will require “new wineskins” to contain the power and blessings to be released. This vision could not have been seen before as the church and world circumstances were not ready.

1) The Problem of Community

We are supposed to be a body, a family, a community of believers. The reality is we end up fellowshiping with the back of someone's head on Sunday morning. We are in actual fact a gathering of strangers and the larger the church the bigger the problem.

The Barna Research group after doing a study of the mega-churches in America found out that the church audience basically changes every three years. So preachers after three years start their old sermons over again because it is a new group of people.

We try to remedy this with cell groups and people enjoy cell groups for the simple reason that when we do fellowship with one another we really like each other...I mean we really do! We can meet a complete stranger from another country but the moment we know they are fellow Spirit filled believers barriers drop and we hug and share. I want to be around fellow Christians as much as possible, I like their company. What can we do to increase our fellowship contact?

2) The Problem of Needs

Our churches are full of people with needs. That is because we are normal humans and because we throw open our doors and say to everyone who will listen, “You have a problem? Jesus is the answer...come to Him all you who are heavy laden”. So now we have churches full of people with needs but I can promise you from decades of experience...their needs are not being met. Part of the problem is that we actually don't know what

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their problems are and when we do know the local church does not generate enough resources and “problem solvers” to deal personally and effectively with people’s needs. So we fall back on the sermon as the solution. Some problems can be solved by an individual hearing the Word...like the problem of sin and salvation. But most problems cannot. They can only be solved through the mediation and ministry of others. But that is exactly how the Lord designed life and its challenges. You cannot succeed on your own, you need to be part of a community. But we have no real community so many needs are unmet in the church. Paul recognized this same problem in the Corinthian church because they did not “discern the Lord’s body (i.e. that we are all part of His body and need each other’s ministry)...for this cause many are sickly and weak among you...” (1 Cor. 11:30).

3) The Problem of Giftings and Ministries

For every problem that people have there is a solution. Paul writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor.11:29-30) and says many of them are weak and sick because they do not discern the Lord’s Body. I believe that within the church, the Lord’s Body there are the ministries that are needed to minister to the needs of every person. There are solutions to all the problems we face. It does not come from one man in the pulpit, it comes from a multitude of people each having a unique gifting that others need to complete their lives and fulfill their callings.

But our problem here is two-fold. Firstly once again we do not know who among us has what giftings and abilities and secondly we do not know what the needs of the people are. For the most part everyone sitting in church are using their abilities to build up corporations, government, social institutions and world systems. They have enormous contributions to make within the church to the needs of people but there is no room for them, there is nowhere for them to give expression within the vision of the local church to their gifts and abilities. So how do we get the broad community of believers involved in the mission and ministry of the church?

4) The Organizational Leadership Problem

If you are part of a church where the same man is preaching every Sunday then both you and your church have a major problem. You are part of an organization, not an organism. Organizations are led by one man visionary leadership. That is how I run my business, that is how nations are run, that is how corporations are run. It is the best way to run an organization; one man visionary leadership that can give direction, make quick executive decisions and oversee the smooth running of the operation. But that is not how the church operates. We are a Body whose head is Jesus Christ. He makes His will known through a plurality of people. He ministers through a plurality of people and many times will select the weak and unimpressive among us. The whole New Testament vision of the church is that leadership is plural. Elders rule the church and even Apostles went out in groups. That is how an organism works. You need a multitude of ministries impacting into your life for you to grow into a balanced disciple. You need personal mentoring. You need personal accountability for you to make progress in your spiritual walk. You need a spiritual coach!

Our problem is that we have continued the one man hierarchy of the Roman Catholic system except we now have a Pope in every pulpit. Pastors are not necessarily teachers, or evangelists or prophets or apostles. But they try to be far too often. That a man is a good orator does not qualify him to be the speaker every Sunday. The result is a weak and sickly church body. Pastors should be personally mentoring their flock, instead they are trying to do all the other jobs. The result is Christians who are never personally discipled and mentored by their pastor but are preached at every Sunday with no accountability as to whether the Word is being implemented in their lives. Proper diverse teaching ministries are not developed and so people go to church for years and cannot from scripture defend the basics of the faith. Prophets are not developed or allowed to minister and so sins remain hidden and not ministered to, people are not hearing from God for personal directions. Apostles are not encouraged and supported and so the miracles are missing and new churches not established. Evangelists are not supported and so

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revivals are missing and new converts lacking.

How do we move the church beyond one man leadership and develop a true Biblical Five-Fold gift leadership in our churches? As long as the church is structured as an organization, then one man leadership is inevitable. The issue then becomes how do we move from church as organization to church as living organism?

The Leaven of the Pharisees Problem

Problems 5,6 and 7 have to do with the age old problem of the Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Let me explain to you what the problem of the Pharisees and Sadducees was and why it is inherent in the way they organized themselves and why we are facing the same problem today (which is why Jesus warned us against the problem).

The Sadducees originally back in about 167 BC were a holiness movement that fought alongside the Maccabee brothers to kick out the Syrians and to restore the Temple and the Priesthood. They were the descendants of Zadok the priestly order. Their rallying cry was holiness unto the Lord and a purified Temple and purified priesthood. After regaining control of the Temple and its sacrifices the money started rolling in. By the time Jesus appeared on the scene they had become so worldly that they no longer believed the authority of scripture, they did not believe in Angels or the resurrection etc. But they clung tenaciously onto their Temple rituals because that was big money. I think here of many modern day churches like the Methodists who started under John Wesley as a Holiness movement and today how many Methodist ministers see no problem with homosexuality or deny the Virgin Birth or divine inspiration and authority of scripture?

The Pharisees however started as a "Word" movement. Back to scripture. Preach the Word! Reject worldliness in the form of Hellenizing Greek philosophy and stick to the plain Word of God as your standard of truth and authority. But the Zadokites kept them out of the Temple and its lucrative income stream so the Pharisees came up with an alternative. The scripture said Israel was to gather three times a year in Jerusalem at the

Temple to hear the Word read by the priests. This excluded them, so they started local community synagogues with weekly meetings to hear the Word read. But not just hear the Word read but hear the Word explained and expounded on by them so that you can understand how to keep the 613 laws of Moses. A very inspired innovation not found in scripture but started with the best of intentions.

And they taught and explained. And then they started Bible Schools where famous and learned teachers taught (Paul studied under Gamaliel) and if you completed a training program with one of these famous teachers you graduated as a "Rabbi" qualified to start your own synagogue (which meant your own income was secured).. But as the years went by the entire religious establishment of Pharisees and Sadducees lost the whole plot. The appearance of Jesus and the announcement that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand was a dangerous theology that threatened their cosy relationship with the Roman overlords. But it also threatened the synagogue building program of the Pharisees and it threatened the Temple revenue stream of the Sadducees. In addition the upstart carpenter from Nazareth teaching with authority was a challenge to the authority of their professional qualifications.

Our church of today is facing the same problem of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The professional religionists have captured the church and turned it into an organization providing cash flow and public admiration for its leaders. The preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom does not fit the needs of these organizations. They need stable worldly political and economic systems to function well.

5) The Information Overload Problem

The Pharisees were endless talkers and writers. Books upon books, commentaries, sermons upon sermons. Endlessly. But to gather more people to your synagogue you needed to be famous. To be famous you needed to find new and unusual applications of obscure texts and have this included in the Mishna and Gemarah a huge and lengthy commentary on the Laws of Moses that made up the Talmud. So you have weekly sermons you had to come up with for Sabbath that became more and

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more obscure as competing Rabbis came up with ever more books and writings on ever more obscure interpretation of every last “jot and tittle” of the Law.

Today in our evangelical churches we face this same “leaven” of information overload as if lack of information was our problem. Meetings, conferences, sermons, books, tapes, DVD’s, endless talking and meeting. But we are so proud that we are not “under law” but under grace. And yet we are yearly facing thousands of new “laws” as thousands of new books seminars and sermons come out purporting to reveal to us the “laws of success”, “the laws of prosperity”, “the laws of hearing the voice of God”, “laws of divine healing” and on and on. Ten steps to this, 7 laws of that and the more books come out the more confusion among the people. The more the “laws of tithing” are applied the poorer the people become. The more books on “hearing the voice of God” the more confusion...

6) The Authority and Influence Problem

How to get people to follow you or join your synagogue or believe you? That is the authority and influence problem. Your authority problem you solve by getting recognized academic credentials and your influence problem you solve by making a reputation.

In Jesus’ day if you studied to become qualified as a Rabbi and therefore had the title “Rabbi” you were listened to because you were academically qualified to be listened to. You had authority on the basis of your knowledge. We send young people to Bible School and upon graduation with a degree they now qualify to be “Pastor” of a church. So you graduate in your 20’s and now you are qualified to be a “Pastor”. The Biblical qualification was that you were to be an “elder”, which at a minimum means an older person experienced in life. Twenty-somethings are not Biblically qualified church leaders but they are organizationally qualified leaders because they have the organizational qualification: an educational degree, they know things. And today increasingly “Dr” in front of your name helps of course to sound “authoritative”. Have

you noticed how many of our evangelical preachers are now “Doctor”. By the way do yourself a little Pharisee\hypocrisy test. If your local leader advertises himself as “Dr” then ask him for his doctoral thesis as you want to read it. If he (or she) can’t produce it, as in fact most of the ministry “Doctors” in the pulpit cannot, you know you have a Pharisee/hypocrisy problem in your leader that needs to be ministered to i.e. someone who wants to give the appearance of academic “authority” without actually having done the rigorous academic work.

The other way to establish your leadership credentials in the church and gather followers is by reputation. The church is rife with this problem as were the synagogues and Pharisees of Jesus day. Building a reputation requires constant self-promotion. There are many different kinds of crowd pulling reputations these days. A reputation as a miracle worker, a reputations as a great orator or a funny man in the pulpit able to entertain the masses. Or a reputation as a prophet that always gives happy success prophecies. Or the reputation of a great organizer that gets things done and deserves your financial support. All these require great PR skills. You need to keep the great one constantly in the media to get the attention of the church. You need to constantly extol his great works. You need to constantly have his picture and name prominently advertised. Forget Jesus as a model of leadership who “made Himself of no reputation but became a servant”. Forget Paul’s injunction “now we know no man after the flesh”. The end justifies the means does it not? As long as people are getting saved and blessed its ok?

7) The Synagogue Building Problem

Synagogue is a Greek word meaning to gather together and was the model for Jewish people to meet on a Friday night Sabbath, sing, hear a scripture reading and an exhortation from the Rabbi. Not long after the Apostles passed from the scene the church adopted the synagogue model of organization except the meetings were held on a Sunday. Paul went to synagogues all over the Roman world to reach out to Jews in every city and when he converted them he pulled them out of the

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synagogue and into the local church. He did not start rival “Messianic Synagogues”. The New Testament Church was based on city wide communities of believers not buildings for a Friday night Synagogue meeting or Sunday morning meeting.

At first glance the synagogue model does not look too bad. Jesus attended synagogue. You gather together, you sing, you hear scripture and you get a sermon. We have all been blessed by meetings like this. I like attending this type of church model. If the praise and worship is flowing and the sermon is inspired exhortation you walk out blessed and ready to tackle the week. But the problem that always develops is what Jesus warned against, “the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matth.16:6). You eventually end up with a “lets build more synagogues” agenda rather than let’s build the Kingdom of God. That is what organizations always end up doing, they duplicate themselves. They must grow in their own image. That growth imperative is relentless. The leaven of the Pharisees required a constantly expanding synagogue building program just like our organizational “church growth” agenda needs constant new church construction. And that requires dynamic leaders that can draw crowds and finances. And that requires reputations and public relations and self promotion but the end justifies the means does it not?

But here is the problem...up to now the church building program has worked well to establish footholds in communities and countries as a local witness for Christ. But what happens when major revivals break out under a powerful new anointing of the spirit and millions come streaming into the Kingdom? The local church model will not be able to contain the overflowing mass of people and their needs. We need new wineskins to contain the new anointing....

8) The Problem of a Collapsing World System

If you see the Kingdom Vision then you realize it is time to exit out of a failing Babylon world system. And since we do not believe the Lord intends to

exit us off the earth but intends for us to disciple the nations the question then becomes...exit how and where to? When the Lord tells us in Revelation 18 to get out of Babylon so we are not partakers of her judgment then what practically are we talking about? And the Kingdom message is this: it is Rev. 18 time, not rapture time!

The current suburban church with Sunday morning meeting is dependent on a functioning world system, a growing economy and a stable government. But that is not our future. The great 2010-2030 transition means disappearing oil supplies, banking and financial collapse, bankruptcies, famines, earth changes, resource depletion, plagues and exploding populations. The western business model of endless growth based on abundant cheap energy and growing consumer credit is over.

The idea that we can just continue with church on Sunday morning and that the government, the corporations, the banks, insurance companies, medical aids and retirement funds will meet the other material needs of our congregations for the future until Jesus comes is a dangerous illusion!

The Zimbabwe Lesson

In 1990 a number of international ministries came together with a vision for massive church planting in Zimbabwe. The goal was to double the churches from 10,000 to 20,000 by the year 2000. It worked! They actually achieved it. And then came the farm seizures and the collapse of the Zimbabwe economy and the 20,000 churches were plunged into poverty and a third of the population fled across the border looking for food and jobs. If they had planted living communities that were self sufficient in food and energy it would have been an entirely different result. What happened to Zimbabwe is where the world economic system is heading...collapse. We cannot continue with Sunday morning meetings led by one man ministries and think we are doing “church growth”, not if you want to have the testimony of the church in the book of Acts, “Neither was there any among them that lacked..”

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Is Sunday Morning Church Working?

On the surface it would seem that there is an ever expanding growth in churches. The growth of mega-churches has been an amazing phenomenon all over the world. But we need to be honest with ourselves: masses of people coming to meetings does not always mean real church growth. In a survey done in America it was found that the typical congregation of a mega-church turns over in three years time. It means the people you see there now are not the people who are there in three or five year's time. In fact we don't really know who is sitting in the pews and we do not know what their problems are. They come anonymously to a meeting, have a wonderful time raising their hands in praise and worship, hear an inspiring exhortation from a gifted speaker and go home feeling a lot better. This is not community or fellowship, we are not one as Jesus prayed in John 17. This is a religious meeting.

Now look deeper into the lives of our fellow believers: How many marriages are in trouble? How many are in financial trouble? To what extent are the fruits of the Spirit evident in our lives? After years of "teaching" how many Christians can actually defend the foundation truths from scripture?

How does this compare with the church in Jerusalem of which the book of Acts says, "Neither was there any among them that lacked..." (Acts 4:34). How does this compare with the vision of Micah 4. Is the world coming to us saying "teach us your ways"? In fact in what ways are our lifestyles any different to our neighbors around us?

Are Our Church Ministries Working?

By that I mean that the Lord has given us Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers, Evangelists for the building up of the saints...unto the work of the ministry. (Eph.4:11)

But where are they? Across our many churches I see only Pastors in control of one man ministries. Where are the other ministries that are supposed to be supported by the local assembly? There is no such thing in the New Testament Church as one

man leadership. Why? Because the church is a functioning community an organism, that needs a multitude of talents to function. Instead we have today organizations that for all practical purposes are functioning as religious entertainment led by a particularly gifted speaker. But one man does not have all the revelation needed to function in all the ministries needed by an assembly of God's people no matter how gifted a speaker he is or how anointed he is. If you are in a church where one man is speaking every Sunday morning then you are in ...a church, not an ekklesia. Your spiritual life and growth will eventually suffer, no matter how gifted that man is.

If the full restoration of the Five-Fold ministry leadership is to be restored to the church then we will have to move from church to ekklesia. If the restoration of the many other ministries that the Lord is raising up within the Body of Christ are ever to flourish then we need to move from church to ekklesia. That is why Loren Cunningham had to start YWAM outside the church, or why David Wilkerson had to start Teen Challenge outside the church, or why orphanages and old age homes are done outside the local church or why Prophets and Apostles have to hold special conventions to get their message across to the church, or why so many ministries are starved of funds and support. Why? Because we do not have functioning ekklesias; communities, where all these various ministries can flourish together in a living organism, each one with a gift to bless every other believer.

The New Testament Ekklesia

What is the difference between Church and Ekklesia?

It will help our understanding of we look at the original Greek words used in the New Testament as well as some good dictionaries. In the Oxford Universal English Dictionary we have the following meaning for Church:

Old English, circe; Middle English, chirche; whence: church. From the Greek, kuriakon; Scottish form Kirk. The Greek word "kuriakon" means belonging to a lord. This word is used twice in the New

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Testament: In 1 Corinthians 11:20 it is used in “the Lord’s supper” and in Rev.1:10 it is used in “the Lord’s day”. So a “kuriakon” or a Kirk or a Church is “something belonging to a lord.”

The Greek word used 115 times in the New Testament for “church” is *ekklesia* coming from two Greek words, “ek” meaning out and “kaleo” meaning call, giving a meaning of those who have been “called out”. The other three times where this word was translated properly is found in Acts 19:32,39,41 where it is correctly translated “assembly” to describe the town council and civil body of Ephesus. The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words by Lawrence Richards (Zondervan Publishing House) gives us a good description of what an “ekklesia” was understood to be at the time that Paul used the word:

“In Greek culture an ekklesia was a political assembly. By the fifth century BC ekklesia had come to mean an official gathering of the full citizens of a Greek city-state (Polis) who were called together to make political and judicial decisions. The Greeks never used ekklesias to refer to religious gatherings.”

In fact if Paul wanted to use a word for a religious gathering he could have used “Synagogue” which is not a Hebrew word but a Greek word meaning a gathering of people. Synagogue’s were everywhere. Paul preached in them all over the Roman world. They were well known religious meeting places and are the equivalent of what we today would call “church”. But the Synagogue system of religious meetings was not what Paul had in mind when he thought of what the church was meant to be; he purposely used a political word well used and understood in his day. **Athens was an ekklesia. An assembly of people gathered together in a city-state. The church is an ekklesia, a body of people in community who are called out of the world and called to live as a community under God’s laws as a witness to the world.**

Now you might say, what’s the difference? To illustrate the difference I need to take you back to the dawn of the Reformation when there was a heated battle on this very issue. The issue then that divided the church is the issue that is once again

going to divide the church as we move into the Kingdom reality: **are we a community of believers living our lives according to God’s Kingdom laws or are we a Sunday morning religious meeting leading our lives under an oppressive Babylonian economic, political and cultural captivity?**

The Battle over Ekklesia or Church.

There is an interesting history behind the translation of the King James Bible and it actually had to do with the battle over the Greek word “ekklesia” and it’s proper translation and interpretation. This little known historical battle had on its one side William Tyndale (the English martyr who translated the Bible into English) along with the Reformation leaders in Geneva and on the other side King James and the establishment Church of England. An important result of this dispute was that a group of Puritans from the south of England rejected King James and his interpretation of church as a religious meeting and headed for the New World in 1620 to form an “ekklesia” or what they called a “Holy Commonwealth”. Which is why today it is still called the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These were the Puritans who boarded the Mayflower and before landing at Plymouth Rock signed the Mayflower Compact dedicating their new “ekklesia” to the glory of God and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

Tyndale, Geneva and King James

William Tyndale, an Englishman, travelled to Wittenburg, Germany to meet with Martin Luther when he heard that Luther had translated the Bible into German. He staid on and set about translating the Bible into English and three thousand copies were printed up and smuggled back into England. This caused an uproar in the Anglican hierarchy who immediately banned the translation. For his efforts Tyndale was captured and burnt at the stake. Why this extreme fear from the authorities in England? Tyndale made two important corrections in his translation that they realized would undermine the Church-State hierarchy. He translated “ekklesia” as “congregation” (just as Luther had done in the German using “gemeente”)

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and he translated “presbuteros” as “senior” instead of “priest”. That meant no church and priests but communities and elders. Unfortunately, “congregation” today has lost its original meaning for us as for most of us it merely means the folks attending the local church. But back then “congregation” meant the community of believers and that was a radical and dangerous idea at the time.

The outworking or result of this idea of “ekklesia” in the Reformation was to have a huge political and religious impact. In 1536, as the Reformation ideas were spreading like wildfire, Calvin came to Geneva and Geneva declared itself an independent Protestant city-state (an “ekklesia”) breaking away from the Duchy of Savoy and formed a ruling council of elders. It was the embodiment of the Reformation idea of the “ekklesia” a community of believers under an elected eldership. Queen Mary of England (Catholic daughter of Henry VIII) persecuted the English Protestants and many fled to Geneva where they produced the great English translation, Geneva Bible with its famous notes on the scriptures in the margins. These marginal notes again explained what the church was really supposed to be. The Geneva Bible became the most popular Bible among the Puritans. It too was banned in England by both Mary and King James but a loophole in the law allowed the Protestants in England to continue to publish the margin notes which explained the difference between “congregation” and “church”.

By the time King James ascended the throne he was desperate to keep the Puritan movement under state control and in the “church” so he authorized a new translation of the Bible to counter the effects of the Geneva Bible and its radical ideas. He gathered 50 of the best learned men in the Kingdom and gave them instruction to produce a new English translation. They were instructed to faithfully translate from the Greek and Hebrew but they were from the start instructed by King James that “ekklesia” was to be translated “church” and not “congregation”. In 1611 this “Authorized Version” of the Bible appeared but the Puritans stuck to their Geneva Bible and it took 80 years before the King James “Authorized Version” would supplant the

Geneva Bible.

Today of course King James’s Bible is beloved by all evangelicals but the King’s interference in its translation has done its work through the centuries...today nobody knows there is a radical difference between an “ekklesia” and a “church”. But the Puritans knew the difference and that is why they went to the New World to establish “ekklesias” in order to escape the “church”.

Oliver Cromwell and the English Commonwealth

Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan army marched against King Charles with the Geneva Bible under their arm and sword in hand declaring that God’s rule on earth was a “Commonwealth of the believers” and that Kings were not above the law of God. After cutting off Charles’s head they declared England to be a “Commonwealth”. The Puritans who landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620 with the Geneva Bible in hand declared it to be the “Commonwealth of Massachusetts” which it is still called today. They lost half their number in the first year to starvation, disease and war but by 1640 more than 4,000 Puritans from England had joined them to further the vision of the Kingdom of God on earth, the New Jerusalem. Their community was to be a “commonwealth” of believers who by their example of living the Word of God before all men, they would be a light unto the nations.

It was this vision of what the church was meant to be in the world that inspired the vision of the Geneva Protestant Republic, the English Commonwealth and the Massachusetts Commonwealth. They wanted to live in communities of believers that did not just say we are Christians but would demonstrate to the world by practical example: This is how Christians live!

It is this dynamic witness to the world that Micah the prophet speaks of when he said:

“But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains and it shall be exalted above the hills and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of

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the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob and he shall teach us his ways and we will walk in his paths... (Micah 4:1-2)

It is this vision of the “City on a Hill” that would draw the nations into the Kingdom of God by its example, that inspired the Reformation Puritans. Sadly this vision has been lost in the years following the Reformation. But I declare this truth:

When the Church of the 21st Century discovers the difference between “church” and “ekklesia” it will be ready to disciple the nations and the Lord will be ready to pour out the anointing of power needed to bring in the harvest of hundreds of millions into the Kingdom!

Is It Practical Today?

But the question remains, can we actually still believe it is possible in today’s 21st Century to hold on to the idea of the church as a community of believers who can order their community structures and build their lives and relationships according to Biblical laws? Furthermore is it even possible to make such a break from the world system? What about our jobs and schools for the kids and retirement and medical aid and the many thousands of interrelationships we have with our modern society that makes modern civilized life possible?

But even more importantly, surely we are supposed to “go into all the world and be a witness” and not withdraw ourselves into some weird socialist, hippy commune, or Israeli style Kibbutz or Catholic style Monastery, where all is love and flowers.

Covenant Communities: The Next Great Move of God

Here are the radical ideas behind the radical concept of Covenant Communities:

What the Lord is doing in the world in our day and what the Lord wants to do in His church and through His church will require three radical changes in the church.

1. A deeper level of covenant commitment to each other moving beyond casual church friendships at meetings or cell groups.
2. A redefinition of what is the church; a community and not a meeting.
3. A reorganization of how we relate to each other, moving from casual friendships to committed bands of warriors working together to accomplish tasks for the Kingdom of God.

When we do these things, the answer to Jesus prayer in John 17 will be fulfilled, “that they be one...that the world may believe that you have sent me”. One result of these coming changes in the church will be the rise of “warrior bands” doing exploits in business, the arts and science etc; another will be the move from “mega-church meetings” to “mega-communities” that are debt free, fully employed, self sufficient in food and energy and fulfilling the mission of “healing the nations”.

My presentation to you of the Gospel of the Kingdom is founded on a number of key biblical concepts which if true will require a whole new approach to how we define and conduct church. I state categorically and scripturally that we are now in the Kingdom Age, Jesus is now Lord and that means He is now ruling over all the powers of heaven and earth to accomplish His will on earth.

It is easy to nod assent to the above statement without realizing the enormous implications for the church. It means that the Lord is working out His will through time, through history, but primarily through the church. The church is His body on this earth. (read the entirety of 1 Corinthians 12!) It houses His presence and His power, it reveals His character to the world and it does His will on earth. And yes, He does all this through fallible human beings who are sinners saved by His grace.

The Church and Babylon Falling

Now let me make a prophetic prediction. If I am correct in my presentation to you of where I believe we are on God’s Kingdom timeline then I predict the following:

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God is intervening now in our time in human history to collapse the world system as we know it. By that I mean the institutional systems that keep the world system running like the nation state, national economies, banking systems, world trade, cheap energy, law and civilized behavior...these all are visibly crumbling. Sunday morning meetings as our primary expression of church are dependent on these world systems functioning. Change is coming to the world and as also to the church.

Covenant Communities Defined

A covenant community is where two or more people are bound in a relationship whereby certain “covenants” or promises are made to one another.

We are familiar with many such arrangements. A man and a woman covenant with each other when they make vows at the altar that are to last “until death us do part”. Citizens write a constitution or a covenant to organize a nation. An employee and an employer make a covenant with each other over work responsibilities.

Each of these many kinds of “covenant communities” whatever their size of participants has common characteristics. I promise to do certain things in return for certain benefits to the relationship. I pay taxes to my government and the government performs certain functions for me. I give my time and work to my employer and I get a paycheck at the end of the month. All of us are involved in various covenant commitments. The issue I present to you is not would you like to participate in a covenant community? You are already participating in a number of them as an employee, as a citizen of a country, as member of a pension or insurance fund etc. The issue is this...is it not time for you to be moving into new and different covenant relationships with the Godly community of believers based on Kingdom principles?

With Whom do we Covenant?

Here is a warning from the Lord that needs prayerful consideration: “Take heed to thyself, lest

you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither you go, lest it be a snare in the midst of you” (Ex. 34:12) A snare is a trap. How many of God’s people are caught up in traps that compromise their Biblical values because their covenant relationships with the world require actions that on the face are legal but in actual fact are unethical?

I believe the Lord is wanting to bring His people into closer covenant relationships **one with another** in order to bring about a manifestation of His Kingdom on this earth. That means new covenant relationships within the church to create businesses, communities, education, arts, entertainment etc. And that means moving out of destructive and unprofitable covenant relationships with worldly organizations and their pagan ways.

The Third Covenant Concept

I am going to introduce you to the idea of the Third Covenant and then apply it to several situations as a spiritual strategy for you to try.

You will make two important Godly covenants in your life that will utterly change your life for the good and after which you will never be the same. Your first covenant is with the Lord Jesus Christ when you surrendered your life to Him. We call it the “born again” experience. At that point you came into a covenant relationship with Him. Jesus called it the New Covenant. He gives you His eternal life, you give him your broken life. You enter into God’s family in a new covenant relationship of Father and son.

Your second life changing covenant you enter into is the day you stood at the altar and pledged your life to your wife or husband to be. For richer or poorer until death do you part you committed your life to that person. You have never been the same since and from that came the greatest earthly blessings you can imagine, your children, your home and joy of family.

As a Christian you know that talking about Jesus or going to church or believing in God is not enough to save you. You need to enter into a covenant

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relationship with Him...you need to be “born again”. As a married person you know that living together with another person is not marriage and family. You need to put a ring on her finger and make that lifetime covenant commitment before God and people.

The Third Covenant idea is this:

In the same way we made a commitment of our lives to the Lord and to our spouse, so it is time that we realize that we the church are the Body of Christ and we need to act accordingly and start making serious covenant commitments to each other. We really do need each other and we need to come into serious covenant commitment relationships with each other to fulfill God’s calling in our lives.

We talk church, we go to church, and two hours later we walk out nicely blessed but we have no real commitment to the fellow believers in that fellowship. In fact we don’t really know anybody and we really just carry on with our lives Monday to Saturday entirely unaffected by other Christians in our lives. We are like two young people who decide to live together because it is fun and when it is no longer fun and they find someone else it is on to the next relationship. The church is full of those kinds of churchgoers. The result is a spectator and entertainment religion with most Christians moving to another “church” if the entertainment is more suitable.

If we are going to fulfill the Great Commission of discipling the nations then it is going to take more than casual meetings and entertainment. If we are going to possess the high places of international finance and business, of top quality education and entertainment, of health and prosperity and in any meaningful manner take these “mountains” for the Lord and His Kingdom then it is going to take committed covenant relationships among Christians.

The Rise of Warrior Bands

I believe the Lord wants to raise up what I want to term “warrior bands” to take territory for His

Kingdom. Let me qualify that statement with this simple definition:

The Kingdom of God has come wherever Jesus rules as King!

When I make Jesus ruler over my life then the Kingdom of God has come in my life. My wife and I made Jesus ruler over our home and marriage. The Kingdom of God has now grown to include my home. I have made Jesus ruler over my business. I run my company according to His principles and so the Kingdom of God has now expanded into the business world.

Can you see the progression here? But I want to do more things to bring about the Lordship of Jesus, but to do that I need to get into covenant relationships with other believers to do the greater things. There are certain things I could accomplish by myself. But when I entered into a covenant relationships with my wife my effectiveness for the Lord increased enormously. There are certain things my wife and I can do in our home and business for God’s Kingdom, but our effectiveness can increase far more when we enter into covenant relationships with others.

The Lord wants to raise up “warrior bands” of believers who are in committed covenant relationships with other believers for the purpose of tackling a project and seeing it to completion. Wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name, there He is in the midst. And if He is there then that grouping of believers are in a covenant relationship with the Lord and with each other to accomplish His will for that group.

Let me give you some ideas:

In college I formed a covenant relationship with two class mates to meet three times a week at lunch time and fast that lunch and spend that time in prayer and confessing our faults one to another. The purpose of the covenant was that for one semester we would commit ourselves to overcoming sin in our lives through total honesty and prayer for each other. It worked wonders for our spiritual growth.

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Transform your usual cell group meeting into a purposeful covenant community. Make a covenant with one another to achieve some spiritual goal for a certain period of time. Don't just sit around randomly talking and aimlessly having meetings for the sake of meetings. Ask the Lord for tasks to do. If you are there to study the Bible then do it purposefully. Take a book of the Bible (i.e. Romans) or a topic in the Bible (i.e. prophecy) and as a group study it until you master it! Have a goal set by the Lord and then commit yourself and your fellow believers to achieving it.

Form an action group to do some specific task. In my teen years some of our teens in the church formed a hospital visitation group. We decided to use our Sunday afternoons to visit Johannesburg General Hospital and visit and pray with the sick people. Form or be part of an action group that commits itself to do actual work for the Kingdom agenda. It can be small like visiting the sick but it forms the habit of committed disciplined work.

But the idea extends to all sorts of areas as well. Remember that the rulership of Jesus must be extended to all areas of life and all things must be brought under His authority. That means business, the arts, sciences, entertainment, education etc. If God has called you to the business world then form a covenant community with other believers to bring together skills, capital, creativity and bring products and services to the market that our Lord Jesus would be proud of. And yes give first preference to hiring fellow believers. We need other warrior bands to start Christian schools so our kids can be educated with Godly wisdom.

Company or Community?

As we get used to success in smaller tasks the Lord will call forth larger covenant communities to do greater tasks. The world has formed its own covenant communities to do large tasks. That is the origin of the "company". It comes from two Latin words "cum" and "panis" meaning "together" and "bread". You get the idea...breaking bread together in fellowship to get a specific job done. The "companies" of the world have taken the place of the "communities" of God's people who are

supposed to get together to get work done.

The idea of the company was started with the Dutch East India Company and the British East India Company. These were large undertakings that were too big for an individual but not suitable for government. Large amounts of men, skills and capital had to be brought together to accomplish large tasks. This was extended in the 1800's with the rise of the great railway corporations and industrial factories that needed a lot of people, skills and capital to be brought together to accomplish a large task. This is something we Christians are going to have to learn from the world system...there are certain major tasks ahead of us that will require large groups of Christians to come together with their skills, manpower and capital to accomplish great things. And that does not mean bigger meetings and bigger offerings! The time for talking is over...there is work to be done and big work that needs to be done.

The Coming Christian Communities

I believe the next great move of God is not more and bigger mega-churches meeting on a Sunday morning. I believe the next major move of God is going to be the formation around the world of actual Christian communities in the range of 2-10,000 people. I know all the horror stories of cults and failed hippy communes. That is not the vision of community that I see. We can learn from the mistakes of the past and design world class communities based both on the Word of God as well as best international design practice. I am not going into the how of creating such communities, that is the topic of another book. Let me just give you a list of why you need to seriously start seeing this vision:

- The world system consisting of the nation state is falling apart. Governments everywhere are no longer able to provide the services they promise the voters.
- The world economic system is falling apart. There is no sustainable pension systems for those now growing old, there are no jobs for the unemployed youth. There is no economic

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security anymore for anyone.

- That means that the old model of church in a quiet suburb on a Sunday morning is not sustainable. It is predicated on a stable government and a stable economic system.
- The church of the 21st century will have to face the reality that it will need to create its own government and its own jobs as the world system crumbles.
- Even before the nation state system crumbles it is becoming increasingly evident that the services it is supposed to supply like health, education, safety it can no longer provide. Families already need to start supplementing those services but there is only so much a family can do, the church will need to step up into that gap.
- The world financial system is not only imploding but the very life blood of all economies, the nation's money is being actively destroyed by the actions of politicians and bankers. No fiat money system has ever survived long term. Think of how the Zimbabwe government made millionaires and billionaires out of their people by printing up huge notes and don't think it won't happen elsewhere in the world.
- The world globalization project will collapse and the future will revert back to local economies and local production. That means local communities providing for their needs and that can include local community currencies which are already happening everywhere.

Living among and with sinners is an expensive business. The cost of living shoots up when you have to pay for an army of bureaucrats, accountants, lawyers, police, prisons, endless regulations etc. All these things are needed when you live among sinners because they will do whatever they can to steal, rob, cheat and con your productive work from out of you. To try to protect yourself you need these armies of "service industries". Live in a 5,000 member community of Spirit filled evangelical Christians and see how many police, lawyers, prisons, accountants and bureaucrats you need to keep yourself and your property safe.

Once living in such a functioning Christian community now think of all the ways such a community can save overhead costs using voluntary workers who will care for the sick and the aged, will help you with your car or house repair. Think of Amish communities in America who live debt free, provide for themselves without government subsidies and help newly wed couples to build their houses debt free as a community project.

Now think of all the new world technologies available to us like fiber-optic cables making massive bandwidth available for internet connectivity among communities around the country. And what do you use such connectivity for? Lots of things like live school and university lecturers by the best teachers to teach our young people with great interactive video tutorials. How about online shopping among our communities where we make shoes, clothing, furniture, furnishings made to order, eliminating costly retail stores and stocks. How about our own electronic currency banking, trading system among communities.

How about each community being self sufficient in basic food production and trading specialized foods among each other. With modern greenhouse hydroponics massive amounts of food can be grown in small spaces. With new biotechnologies now available biomasses like grass can be converted into fuels and chemicals that previously came from petroleum. If we combine this with Permaculture farming techniques we can also heal the earth and provide nutritious organic foods for ourselves.

Best New Urbanism design practices mean we can design ultramodern communities that eliminate the car from the community center and instead we design our communities in such a way that we work, shop and live in walking distance or with community transport systems.

Church, we can establish a new mode of living as an example to the world that this is the world of tomorrow, this is how we eradicate poverty and hunger, this is how we educate our children, this is how we create a stable community money system, this is how we live debt free.

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All the world's systems are failing or about to collapse. We not only need to get out of these failing systems but we need to create the alternative systems based on the Word of God and based on our covenant relationship with our Lord and with each other to show the world...**This is who we are...and this is how we live. Don't you want to be part of our covenant family?**

Rev. 21-22: The New Jerusalem Kadosh Strategy

Now look at that wonderful scripture in Revelations 21-22 that describes how we are going to heal the nations. And remember from our previous writing that this is not some big city coming out of the sky at the end of the Millennium! This is exactly what John says it is, the Bride of Christ (21:9) which is the church doing what the Lord called us to do now in the Kingdom Age which we are now living: Manifest the presence and the power of God on earth in order to heal the nations. Read what he says:

21:24-27 "the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it...and they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it and there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles neither works abomination or makes a lie."

Then in Rev.22:1-2 John sees a river of life flowing from the city with the tree of life growing from the waters which is for "the healing of the nations" but outside the city John says (22:15) are "dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and murderers and idolaters and whoever loves and makes a lie."

John sees a vision of the church as a community of believers, a city, a New Jerusalem. He sees the believers as "kings" and "priests" (Rev.1:6 "for he has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father..."). There is no temple in this city because the saints are both the tabernacle of God where God now dwells as well as the priests ministering to the people and nations. But the saints are also described as kings who go out among the nations and bring back "glory and honor" from the nations into the city or community. The result is that the unsaved and the sinners are outside but inside are all the things that are "holy" (or in Hebrew

"kadosh"). Which brings up the prophecy of Zachariah and the meaning of 'kadosh'.

Zachariah 14 describes the same scene in Revelation. The Lord comes into Jerusalem, He rules over the nations, a river flows out of Jerusalem (the bride of Christ), the wealth of the nations come to Jerusalem. But he makes an interesting comment in verse 20: "*In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses Holiness Unto the Lord and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts.*"

You will understand this better when you realize what "holiness unto the Lord" means. The word "holy" in Hebrew is "kadosh" which means "seperated". So what Zachariah is saying that the day is coming when the most common household items will be separated for the use of the Lord just as if it was an implement in the Temple of God. Horses, pots etc etc all are now "kadosh" in that day.

What does that mean for us as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zach.14 and Rev. 21 and 22 as the New Jerusalem the city of God, the temple of God, the Body of Christ. It means that we are going to form "ekkelsias" composed of priests and kings. Our kings are each believer who the Lord has called to conquer territory for the Kingdom of God here on earth. Here are some of the kings and what they will bring in to the kingdom:

- There will be teachers who will bring in best teaching practices for our children's education.
- There will be farmers who will bring in food production into the Kingdom.
- There will be doctors who will bring in healing and medicines into the Kingdom.
- There will be technologists and scientists who bring in new discoveries in energy production, material sciences, nano-technology and many other wonderful new technologies into the Kingdom.
- There will be IT specialist that will create new social networks for the people of God around the world to connect with each other.
- There will be economists that will design a new

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Kingdom system of economics with new community money and international trade systems among God's various ekklesias all over the world.

- There will be bankers who will provide us with a sound banking system that brings the savings of God's people to real productive investments that all of God's people can share in.
- There will be construction engineers that will design and build for us the most modern and comfortable living communities that we can raise our families in.

In this model of the church of tomorrow every one is a king and everyone is a priest. Everyone has something to bring into the New Jerusalem and what they bring is Holy unto the Lord; that is it is only to be used for the Lord and His kingdom. Their gifts and labor are not going to be wasted on a world system that corrupts and wastes the lives and work of the people. Even the person who manufactures a pot will be doing it as "Holiness unto the Lord"!

That is the Kingdom "Kadosh" strategy. It is what we used to call in the days of Apartheid here in South Africa, "Separate Development". But this time our separate development strategy is not based on racial preferences because the Lord wants all races and nations to participate in His kingdom. Instead our separate development strategy is based on Rev. 21 and 22: We work with and commune with our fellow believers and outside the community are the unbelievers. This will result in the Salt Strategy going into effect...

The Kingdom Salt Strategy

In Matthew 5:13 Jesus in his sermon on the mount made one of His most quoted statements, "Ye are the salt of the earth" and He goes on to amplify that statement by saying "You are the light of the world..." I don't know about you but every sermon I have ever heard on that statement goes something like this: salt is a flavor for food, salt heals wounds, salt preserves meat etc etc. The idea basically is that we are the flavor to the world's banquet always there to help them in their time of distress. But is

that what the Lord was really saying?

The problem of our wrong interpretation stems from our misunderstanding the phrase "salt of the earth". For listeners in 1st Century Roman empire it had a very dramatic impact which has been lost to us over the centuries. The phrase comes from both Old Testament scripture and Roman history and those hearing Jesus' words that day who knew their scripture and their recent Roman history knew that Jesus was using fighting words. The Romans let the whole world know what they do to their enemies when they utterly destroyed Carthage, their early mortal enemy for the control of the Mediterranean region. They not only destroyed the city of Carthage but they sowed salt into the ground so that nothing can grow there again and Carthage could never be rebuilt.

In Judges 9:45 we read, "*And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city and slew the people that were therein and beat down the city and sowed it with salt.*" Like Rome and Carthage, Abimelech was conducting total warfare. That is what it means to be the "salt of the earth". Jesus did not say you are the salt of the food or that you were the salt that comes out of the earth, salt in that time in Israel came out of the Dead Sea salt pans. Jesus was referring to total commitment to the Kingdom of God and getting onto God's agenda. He knew this already at age 12 when He told His mother. "I must be about my father's business."

He expands this with we are the light of the world and a city on a hill. You can have light or darkness but you can't have both. When you shine the light of the Kingdom the enemy cannot spread His darkness. When you build the city on the hill for all to see, the enemy's city depopulates. There are too many Christians who are advancing the world's agenda and building the world's cities and not The City of God.

The Salt Strategy and Dominionism

I have used this introduction of the "Kingdom Salt Strategy" as means for analyzing some other strategies that are gaining popularity within the broad church worldwide. There is an increase

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everywhere in teachings on “The Kingdom” and many ministries are slowly coming around to the conclusions that I am proposing in this book that the Lord indeed wants His Kingdom to spread until it covers the earth, that indeed there is still coming a greater outpouring of power on the church in order to manifest His Kingdom in this world. Even though most of them still talk “end times” and that mostly because their audiences are used to hearing that, their actions speak otherwise. They are talking more about winning nations for Christ which of course does not fit into any “end times” theology. But my concern is that the strategies now being devised just are not going to work. I do not want to be critical, I want to be analytical and compare what the Word Of God lays out as a strategy for victory. We all have the same goal in mind, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth...”, but how do we get there?

One of the major movements in the church that is getting a lot of attention is variously called “Christian Dominionism” or “Seven Mountains” strategy. The basic idea is that the Lord wants us to take the “high places” of the earth such as government, the economy, the media, education etc. for His Kingdom. This goes along with other city campaigns such as “let’s take Los Angeles for Jesus” which are basically that the Lord wants us to take cities for His kingdom. There are many variations of this type of approach. What they all basically come down to is the “salt as flavor” approach. We must infiltrate the world’s systems and change them from the inside and win them for the Kingdom...a sort of reverse takeover. Now frankly I think that would be really great if it could actually be done...but I don’t think it can be done.

In America there has been a great move in this direction on a number of fronts. For instance, evangelical Christians have taken it upon themselves to infiltrate the Republican Party and get Christians into government to change government policy to reflect Christian values. Others are forming their own Christian political parties with a hope to win power and change the nation. Is this the direction the Lord wants us to take? The question is...which is the correct salt strategy?

Infiltrate Babylon? or Come out of Babylon? Preserve Babylon? or Collapse Babylon?

Here is what I believe is going to be the Lord’s strategy for our times. When the church gets the vision of “ekklesia” and Covenant Communities and we start building our own Kingdom based communities and economies it means the following: We are not available to be their workers or their consumers. When we have our own banking system, our savings cannot be used for their corrupt financial Ponzi schemes. That is God’s “salt strategy”. Everything that we bring into the Kingdom for God’s use is something the world can no longer use for their purposes. And with more than 700 million evangelical charismatics in the world how long do you think it takes before we have our international world trade system? When the evangelical Christians of the world withdraw their support and participation in the world system, that system collapses under the sheer weight of the corruption and greed of the sinners. That is God’s salt of the earth strategy!

However there is a far larger group of wonderful Kingdom visionaries who have different view of strategy. They believe in salt as a preservative, we must infiltrate and take over the world “seven mountains”...I disagree but you make up your mind as to where the Lord is leading you.

Snares on the Seven Mountains

One of the more popular books in the evangelical community is The Seven Mountain Prophecy that very nicely puts together what is a common preaching theme these days: We must go into the world of media, business, finance, politics, sports, entertainment etc. and possess them for Jesus and “win them for Jesus”. A very exhilarating idea! Especially since if you are going to have any possibility of doing this you will need to rise to the top.

And to rise to the top of these various “mountains” you will need to be blessed for success and prosperity. So now you have any number of celebrity Christian business people, sports stars, entertainment personalities, politicians, giving “endorsements” for Jesus. But who is influencing

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who? This is a valid question. Here are the basic problems that make the “possess the mountains of the world for Jesus” a failure that it has already shown itself to be:

Three Problems

To possess their world of politics, media, business, entertainment etc “for Jesus” you are facing three critical problems:

1. You have to join their organization and enter into a covenant relationship with them meaning you have to play by their rules. Their rules are legal but invariably Biblically unethical and contrary to the mind of Christ.
2. The higher you climb up their organizational mountain you will inevitably reach the point where you will be required to do something which is technically legal but Biblically unethical and un-Christ-like.
3. Their organizational “mountains” might look sturdy, profitable and secure but in actual fact we are in the time of Babylon Falling and all their worldly systems are in the process of crashing. You are wasting your time trying to win “the Titanic for Jesus”, your job is to save the passengers and get them onto a different boat with a different captain.

Where I agree with my Seven Mountain brethren is that the Lord has called the church to more than just getting people saved and into heaven. We are also called to pull down the strongholds of Satan that bind people. Jesus came to destroy the works of Satan and that ministry is passed on to His church. But how we do this must be based on God’s Biblical strategy which I believe is based on the following:

- We are called to come out of Babylon not build Babylon, participate with Babylon or join forces with Babylon. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. This is a great scriptural principle which many ignore to the cost of their fiancés and their personal integrity. Proverbs warns in numerous passages to avoid having to do anything with fools.
- The mountain of the Lord will rise over all the other mountains of the earth and they will

flow to it (Micah 4:1-6). That means we do not flow to their mountains, they flow to ours that we build for the Lord.

- Worldly power systems are built on sand and bonded by greed. They all eventually fall apart from their own internal contradictions, infighting and illusions. There is nothing wrong with working within these organizations for an honest day’s pay for an honest day’s work. But we are not going to “convert” worldly organizations into Godly organizations.
- We are going to have to do the hard work of starting our own organizations through Godly covenants with fellow believers purposely dedicated to further the principles of God’s Kingdom.

How do you win “Hollywood for Jesus” when success in that environment requires constant self-promotion, glamour and superficial beauty? How do you rise to the top of a Fortune 500 company and not at some point compromise your Biblically ethical behavior because your dedication to the constant expansion of the company and its profit must at all times be paramount. How do you run a successful political party without having to vilify and denigrate your opponents? Ever hear a “born again” politician praise and commend his opponents? Ever hear of a company helping a struggling competitor with no strings attached? I can go on and on and even cite some obvious examples.

Problems with the Influence Strategy

I have a real question about the influence strategy. Who is influencing who? Here is a warning from James 4:4:

“...know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whosoever will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God.”

1 John 2:15 also warns:

“Love not the world neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world the love of the father is not in him.”

How tragic have been the lives of so many dear

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children of God who have lost their first love for Christ and become enamored with the glitz and glamour of the world. They rise up the corporate ladder, they build financial empires and their hearts become cold towards the Lord. The corporate infighting, the backstabbing, the cut corners, the lies and deceit...don't kid yourself, I know how the corporate world works and how modern politics work.

But Who is Influencing Who?

Be a sports star for Jesus! Be a media star for Jesus! Be corporate CEO for Jesus! Lets take the media for Jesus! Lets take government for Jesus! Lets take Cape Town for Jesus! It all sounds so thrilling, but look closer at the lives of those thrown into the world system, look at their family lives, their marriages, their children, their finances, their prayer life....and I will be honest with you, we are suffering as a people of God. This world system is corrosive on your spirit. And so I ask you again to make an honest assessment...who is influencing who? Are we changing the world by joining them in their agenda or are they changing us? We are enemies of the world system not its friends, we are not there to help it function better but to sow salt in the system.

I am not here to tell individual Christians what the plan of God is for their lives...each one must be obedient to where the Lord has called them to serve. I do however want to advise the broad body of Christ that before we all get involved with other people's agendas, is this really the best use of scarce and limited resources and are there not better and more effective ways of getting to the same goals?

But let me be clear about our Kingdom salt strategy. When I say we and the world system are not friends but enemies, I am not making any suggestion that anyone does any act of ill will towards any person or institution in the world. Throwing salt into the system is not an overt act of violence or disobedience or ill will. All that it entails is that we merely withdraw our support from the world system. It will implode on itself as long as sinners behave consistently as sinners. This brings us to the Babylon collapse strategy and why the infiltrate and influence strategy will always

eventually fail.

The Kingdom Salt Strategy

Here is the difference between the Kingdom salt strategy and the "infiltrate and influence" strategy. Supposing you say, let's get our teachers in a school or a university where we can influence the curriculum and the pupils. Fine, there are many fine Christian educators in the public school system and in fact it would not be wrong to say that the best of the teachers in the system are Christians. But why should we not have our own private Christian schools and universities staffed by the best Christian educators teaching godly young people who are disciplined and behaved and not disruptive in the classes and turning out top notch scholars? The statistics in Soweto schools are horrendous, not just academically but the fact that one third of the girls have been raped by the time they leave matric. How do we send our Christian young people into such an environment? How can Christian teachers teach in such an environment?

Lets take some corporate examples.

Why should we Christians work for a regular corporate insurance company and take out their products? Why are we not insuring ourselves among ourselves with our own insurance company? Insurance is an actuarial science. It's statistics. There will be so many accidents, so many deaths, so many sick people in any given population and then they also figure in a large measure of fraudulent claims. I'm willing to bet my monthly premium on an insurance company with fellow Christians as policy holders that our rates are going to be lower than an equal number of unbelievers. We live healthier, lower risk, practice divine healing and have Godly protection over our lives plus we are not going to rob our fellow Christians with fraudulent claims.

What about banking and finance. We put our savings in the bank and our investment money into insurance products and unit trusts. Is any of it going into any sort of productive investments? Not really. Banks mostly loan out to consumer debt, insurance companies build more shopping malls and buy

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government debt and unit trusts are more like Ponzi schemes where you hope the next guy will buy your units at a higher price than what you paid and he hopes the next guy will buy higher still. This is not creating wealth, this is making money by shuffling around existing assets at higher prices, also known as asset inflation. Why not our own community banks?

Why are we not buying our shoes and clothing through online internet portals linked directly to Christian owned clothing and shoe manufacturers instead of Chinese imports. Tens of thousands of our clothing and textile workers have been laid off since the government has allowed imports to flood into the country. We have great fashion designers, good workers and craftsmen. Frankly I'll pay more if I know it supports a Christian family and the money circulates inside the country and does not flow out to China. That worker's wage again buys my product and strengthens the church.

What do these examples have in common? When we support each other and work together we get stronger and more blessed and more prosperous. We grow, the Kingdom of God grows and the world system shrinks. That is the salt strategy. We build our own structures, we don't support theirs. How long do you think sinners can keep their civilization going if they lose our support? Their world soon becomes a wasteland destroyed by their own greed.

We charismatic evangelicals are now 25% of the South African population. In Brazil it's the same, in America it's the same. And our great move of God is spreading around the world. Take our insurance premiums out of their insurance companies and how long do you think they survive? Take our savings out of their banks and how long will they survive? Take our students and teachers out of their institutions and how long do you think they can produce any academic results? And we can devise similar strategies in other sectors of the economy.

What is the future of the church?

The future of the church lies in real functioning communities that are coming out of the world

system while we still have governments and resources to draw upon to build those communities. These communities are real living organisms that are able to employ all the ministries and gifts of the Body of Christ to accomplish the work that the Lord has given the church to manifest His Kingdom on the earth. These communities are a witness to the nations that this is who we are and this is how we live. The response of the world is going to be found in Micah 4, "Teach us your ways...".

The point is this: There is only so much you can do with the limited time and resources that the current Sunday morning church model we have today can accomplish. In the current church model of meetings there are never enough finances to properly do the work of the Kingdom because people's limited finances are being spent in the Babylon system just fighting for survival. The "laborers are few" because people are working hard for Babylon to survive with little time left for Kingdom ministry.

If your goal is to get people to heaven then those limited resources are enough to accomplish that task. If your vision is to get heaven on earth then those resources are insufficient for the task ahead. We will have to change the model of how we structure church life. That is why the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom is not popular and will never be popular among professional religious leaders. It makes the current organizational structure redundant. That is why it is so popular to preach we are all about to be Raptured out of here, or that the Kingdom has not come yet and the Antichrist is going to take over the world. If you keep preaching the defeat of the church by Satan then you can continue with church as usual and hope the end comes quickly and as painlessly as possible and Jesus comes quickly to evacuate us out of here. But that false teaching is about to come to a dramatic end as the ongoing world collapse intensifies and the broad church begins to realize we are here for the long run; we are here until we have victory and there is no quick

Rapture to rescue us before the whole world Babylon system collapses.

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I urge you...find a group of believers with whom you can form your own covenant community with. Seek those who have a vision for the Kingdom and start doing practical planning. There are dark days ahead for the world system and you need to prepare yourself for the work ahead. You can't do it alone,

you need to be part of a community of believers...but fear not, He is with us, wherever two or three are gathered together in His name. **Or where two or three thousand are gathered together in an "ekklesia"...**