

The Kingdom of God and the Global Mission of the Church

Missions Fest 2008

The “recent” discovery of the Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God in 19th Century liberalism.

Albert Schweitzer – The kingdom is future (Apocalyptic eschatology)

CH Dodd – The kingdom is fully realized (Consistent eschatology)

GE Ladd – “now and not yet” (Inaugurated eschatology, proleptic theology)

Crucial to Jesus’ ministry

- “*Gospel*” of the kingdom
- Opening announcement of his ministry (Matthew 4.17, Mark 1.15, Luke 4.43)

Brings out the cosmic dimension of our faith

- Basic idea: Long awaited redemption has begun = Now and not yet
- Summarizes the great themes of *creation fall and redemption* (Connects redemption to creation and new creation); eikon and new Adam
- God is reclaiming the world.

Brings out the fulfillment theme in salvation history

- Luke 4:14-20
- Joel’s prophecy of the Spirit (Joel 2.28-30)

KOG points to God’s wholistic concern for humanity and the world

- Problem of individualism (mention *God grew tired of us*)
- Versus-
 - Community, world, universe
 - All aspects of what it means to be human
 - Creation as a guide for understanding recreation

“God’s concern does not end with the redeemed individual as an individual. Rather he desires a reconciled humankind living on the renewed new creation and enjoying his own presence.” Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*.

Leads to the concept of the Missio Dei – the mission of God

- The more we understand the concept of the kingdom of God, the more we see *the mission theme at work in Scripture*. Movement in history; God’ plan as dynamic, not static; not Platonic.
- Mission is central: God is accomplishing his purpose in history
- Incarnation as mission
- The problem of “Proof texting mission”
 - Missions is often defended by one or two passages like Matthew 28 (great commission) or Isaiah 6 “here am I, send me”
 - Gives the impression that mission is a relatively small theme in scripture, but in fact God’s mission is the central theme of the Christian faith.
- *Helps us to think globally about our faith and the mission of the church*. The good news is God is doing his work with or without us. It doesn’t depend on us (America)

Growth in the global south

“Mission has transformed the map of global Christianity. From a situation at the beginning of the twentieth century when approximately 90 percent of all the world’s Christians lived in the West or North, the beginning of the twenty-first century finds at least 75 percent of the world’s Christians in the continents of south and East – Latin America, Africa and parts of Asia and the Pacific. The whole center of gravity of world Christianity has moved south.” Christ Wright, *The Mission of God*

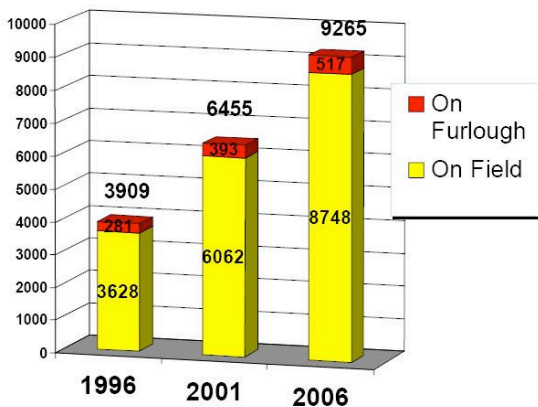
East-West vs. North-South

Mission from everywhere to everywhere / Mission from below

“It is the churches of the majority world that are now sending the majority of people into all kinds of cross-cultural mission work. So one is as likely to meet an African missionary in Britain as a British one in Africa; the same is true for Brazilians in

North Africa; Nigerians in parts of West Africa, where few white people now venture, and Koreans almost anywhere in the world.” *Christ Wright*

Growth rates of Christianity in the 20 th Century	
North America	1.2
South America	2.1 (100 million Christians)
Asia	2.7 (100 million Christians)
(Eastern Asia)	4.0
Africa	3.7 (360 million Christians)
Europe	0.4
Oceania	1.7



Before we did not understand what it meant to do missions... but now we are mature enough to realize that we are capable of establishing our own missions goals and priorities.

Figures: Chart of the growth rate of Christianity in the 20th century (from *World Christian Trends* – Oxford); Chart of Latin American missionaries serving throughout the world (www.comibam.org); quote from Peruvian leader Reynaldo Rubio.

The Ministry of Sunday Adelaja “Churchshift” ; KP Yohannan “Native missions”

Nigerian by birth, Pastor Sunday had built the largest evangelical church in Europe. At age 38, he helped win Ukraine's democracy through the Orange Revolution. Pastor Sunday's greatest burden is to mobilize 10,000 churches in the United States and 100,000 churches worldwide that will *SHIFT* how church is done in the 21st Century to bring national transformation.

Associated challenges and problems:

1. Various mission models at work:
 - a. “Traditional” sent missionary from US or Europe
 - b. Missionaries sent from other regions
 - c. Indigenous workers supported by foreign resources
 - d. Distance education and resource development
 - e. Travel based mission support
2. Education
3. Partnership (Specially financial)

Conclusion

The recovery of the kingdom of God and the current global situation help us get a wholistic understanding of the shape of God’s work in the world today.

- The kingdom of God is about the process of God’s complete restoration is at work in history.
- The global situation sends a message: God is at work all around the world in many different and powerful ways.
- Places us again in a situation where we need to respond to the challenge of the Good news: “The kingdom of God is at hand – repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15)