

The Kingdom and Missions

(Kingdom Communities, Business and World Missions)

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Introduction



Something great is happening with Christian businessmen, professionals and a mission's movement. It's not classic revivalists, it's not a campus mission revival, but it is from the Lord for this season of history. **This treatise is about the move of God among businessmen, professionals and specialists, and how to support and cooperate with them in the mission field.**

In this treatise, I will try to relook at the expansion of the kingdom of God, in light of, what spreading the gospel of the kingdom meant in early church culture (especially in regard to establishing communities, economics and the Great Commission), and its new application today. Some things have changed. Many principles remain the same and need to be reexamined. For all those who desire to see our Father's kingdom come and the name of Jesus exalted – read on.

Part One: Understanding the Open Door or Banging your Head

A side-door restoration is occurring. For years, many of the mission mobilizers lamented over the loss of so many capable candidates. They had entrepreneur giftedness and potential for pioneer leadership, but found few, if not any, outlets in the church. They had the grit of what apostles and five-fold ministers were made of. So they went off to colleges and universities - eventually started businesses, and circumvented missions and ministry leadership. Without a campus missions revival, they found themselves years later as successful businessmen or women, but of low impact for the kingdom of God. But God is having the last word.

The Lord is breathing on businessmen, educators, key professionals etc., to tackle the nations with a godly force that builds to a different beat, but marches to the same drummer. They are developing international structures that reach and keep a

fresh harvest of souls. They also care about widow, orphans and families long-term.

A special reason for this article is the unique move of God on Christians in the various marketplaces and spheres of life that are being nudged to reach the world with “what they can offer or are good at.” They are not in ordinary church structures, nor sense a full-time missions call. Traditional church planting doesn’t fit them. But, nonetheless, they are passionate to build God’s kingdom around the world. We need to acknowledge and support them.

When Jesus was wrapping up a section of teaching on the parables of the kingdom of God in Matthew 13, it reads, *“The He said to them, therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings of his treasure things new and old.”* There is always the divine partnership of God’s ways of doing things in the past and the principles learned - with the “right now “ prophetic understanding of how we apply it today.

We are in a fast-paced and fast-changing world. There are major issues, major problems and the good news is – major opportunities for the work of God. Our world looks more and more like an end-time scenario. People who lived just a century ago would not recognize the transportation, technology, communication, science, media etc. that is available today.



Yet, in so many places and strata of life the church is having a nominal impact. We need to be open to change. The tools are more modern, but the methods aren’t being retrofitted right.

As I share some of the insights that I have gleaned from others, learned over the years and received from the Lord, I hope to integrate them into a simple and clear understanding of how we can co-labor with God, and each other, to build the everlasting and ever increasing kingdom of God. Please forgive me in advance for some iconoclastic statements that debunk a few of the traditional ways or trendy mind-sets. It is not my desire to be a critic or elitist, but honor the many faithful at work yesterday and today. While at the same time, I hope to bring some insight to a better way to bear more fruit for our great God and Savior for those passionate for His purposes.

So what does the problem or “opportunity” look like?

Case Study #1

A successful businessman in construction did a few mission trips to a certain nation and saw the plight of children and the need for Christian schooling and childcare. So, he bypassed the struggling missionaries and local leaders giving them a courtesy acknowledgement and funds and builds his own center. The only problem was he overpaid on construction costs, got a run around with fees from municipalities and before the project was even completed had \$ 200, 000 siphoned off by a “local Christian project overseer.” Good heart, but did not need to go it alone in another culture.

Case Study #2

A network outsourcing entrepreneur looked to copy the many US companies that set up companies in developing nations to reduce manpower costs. He set up a Christian based foreign company in South America. Jobs were created, a Christian community sprung up with a church through the help of missionaries, and the local town was exceedingly blessed with improved economics. Better health. Better services. Kingdom living began to manifest.

After a few years of further research the entrepreneur found out the operation could be done 20% cheaper in a different country. This would broaden his profits and make him more competitive, if he shut down the first operation and relocated. The first town would be severely impacted, but he could try it again elsewhere. What should he do?

Case study #3

A group of missionaries works for years inside a poor city in a third world country. They see the potential to help the people and upgrade their lives while bringing a message of the gospel of Christ and His kingdom. There are health issues, economic issues, little understanding of how to better themselves, water supply problems and on and on. But, they have no money and know-how. Worst of all, there are professional business Christians who could make a huge difference. But, they are not connected to them. Should this remain a missed opportunity?

It's time to get wisdom. How about first relooking at foundational concepts?

Part Two – Let's Get Some Background

Father and King

Let's take a fresh look at some foundational concepts. Our God operates in “Family”

and “Kingdom.” When Jesus responded to the disciples’ request to teach them to pray in Matthew 6, there are two major realities that jump out to us. God is “Our Father” and He is “the King” of his Kingdom. In this we have the relational quality of Him to us, and the structural design of his dominion at the same time.

In contrast, let’s look at what we are not asked to pray for as a foundational blue print of prayer. We are not asked to pray for church structures, how to do ministry, more anointing, the implementation of Five-fold ministry and how to be a church planting movement. Note: You are probably as passionate for all the aforementioned as I am. But there is a deeper foundation just as Jesus said there is a deeper and more over-arching Law of Laws when He put forth the First and Second Greatest Commandments that are “love based” versus “rule based.”

What was intrinsic in what we call the “Our Father?” The Paradigm of a Father / King building a kingdom that consists of a way of relating to Him, provision, living in forgiveness, deliverance from oppression and full of his glory is where we are headed. It permeates every facet of life. It speaks of a holistic community radiating with the values of God’s kingdom. That includes jobs, government structures, shared-life, family care, resisting evil and so much more. It is not just about ministry only. It is all encompassing life; economically, socially, relationally, and of course permeated through and through with the knowledge of God.

Have we been sending out mission teams to do this?

Relooking at the Apostolic:

They typically came by ships? Let’s take a look at the early church context of what an apostle and his team was.

In the time of the Early Church and the Roman Empire, there was a secular or civil concept of envoys or “regents” being “sent out” by the Roman government to establish their authority and culture in a new land. Let’s look at what author John Eckhardt writes about in his book *Moving in the Apostolic*, Regal Books, 1999, p. 23.

“When I say the commission was apostolic; I mean it was given to sent ones. This is the basic definition of the word apostle. It was taken from the Greek word, *apostolos*, meaning a delegate, an ambassador of the gospel, messenger *he that is sent*. Before this word found its way into our Bible, it was a secular term used by the Greeks and Romans to describe special envoys who were sent for the purpose of expanding the dominion of the empire.

Many of these envoys were military generals with authority to go into new territories and fight, if necessary, to establish the Greek and Roman culture in that region. They were also responsible for teaching and training the new subjects in the laws and culture of the kingdom.

These envoys were given power and authority from the king to fulfill their mission.”

There are parallels that we can make with these civil concepts and apostolic methods that we can use today in building the kingdom of God. It gives us a more holistic perspective.

Church planting or church growth should be a subset of Kingdom building, value changes and community development. This does not diminish the goal to have a glorious church or its importance. Yet, we must acknowledge that God’s kingdom is his total rule over all creation and its functions.

Kings and Priests: Where are they today?

In the OT the functions of government and spiritual matters were divided, but mutually supportive. Kings were about the business of civil needs and expansion, while priests tended to spiritual matters and intercession. We are called both Kings and Priests in the NT as God has upgraded our status and the ability to be an intercessory people while reigning with Christ. With this new authority comes new responsibility. *But, we need to come up to the challenge of getting involved with building and economics, as well as, traditional equipping for spiritual ministry.*

In missions, this sometimes translates into so-called, “cart manufacturing” before getting horses to go somewhere. In other words, we are establishing support structures before we introduce the power to get you somewhere. For example, you may have to bring in a Christian factory before you promote following Christ among the employees. Or, you may need to bring in fresh water systems before you tell them about the God of living waters. The acts of love and kindness, in this case precede the message, while demonstrating it in practical areas.

Note: Some leader’s strengths are as a king. As long as they stay spiritually in tune, don’t ask them to forfeit leadership to those who are more priestly. Allow the leadership gift to lead.

A look at Elders, Community and Five-fold Ministry

Paul told Timothy to establish elders in each community of believers. Who were they? They were responsible men who were good providers, solid in character and examples. They were to oversee the general welfare of the people in all areas of life. These men were fathers of families and astute in life experience.

When you look at scripture, you will note that the Five-fold, especially apostles, honored them, appealed to them and saw them as the leaders of the people. Each of the trans-local ministries invested their giftings and callings to equip the people to grow in God. Elders either opened the gates to them (five-fold ministers) or closed them. (Note: The omission of pastors put in place to lead communities is glaring. It was always community minded elders who were spiritual overseers, also. It appears

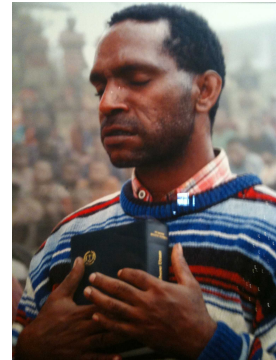
that pastors either served under them, or were a part of the trans-local ministry to train and equip, like the other five-fold.)

So the apostolic leaders went and trained up, and then appointed elders to oversee the full orb of community. Are we doing that, or just doing ministry training? Good Christians anywhere still need to support their families and upgrade society.

Part Three - Making Changes for the Better

Redefining the Great Commission for all to be involved

Why not have the whole church reach the whole world? What can you bring the unreached nations? How about computer skills, engineering, business know how, job development, musical recording, medical skills, teaching techniques for children and on and on?



We need to bring the kingdom of God to leaven (in a positive way) every area of life in target communities. It doesn't necessary matter who or where it starts, as long as it is affective for those people.

So the question is, "Do you need to ask permission to get started?" I say – get prepared, get wisdom, cooperate when possible, but go for it."

Especially those who have abundant finances, business savvy or expertise in critical life areas – they need to take their strengths and help the weak. They can make structures where there are none in the church or missions. They can be maverick while being cooperative with willing, existing churches and leaders at the same time.

Re-engineering missions:

We need to encourage, support and enable other enterprises/unique spheres (businesses, medical, educators, government trainers, sports etc.) to develop Christian kingdom communities where needed. But, let us ask the important "over-

arching” question before one would get started. *Do you qualify under God’s guidelines?*

The key concern is heart motivation. This is a great area of caution. Jesus said, **“You can not serve two Masters.” God’s kingdom and blessing the people must take priority over personal gain of wealth.** As kingdom ambassadors, we must bring a blessing, maintain a blessing, and if we depart – leave a blessing . . . all done in the name of the Lord Jesus. When love is pitted against economics, we must choose love.

The ideal situation is a win – win- win situation. The source business wins, the foreign nationals win, and the missionaries win. Most of all- God wins! Yet, keep in mind that economic trends change, there are corrupt government bureaus that may bait and switch, the devil stirs up trouble and new opportunities do entice entrepreneurs. What that means is that some companies may want to move operations from one country to the next because they get a better deal. That leaves the original people and kingdom community out of jobs and disillusioned. Some initiatives are purely benevolent. One may choose to take a loss of economics, but a win for the kingdom. (It is still more blessed to give than to receive.)

Note: Other new, and upcoming, enterprises should not have to go it alone without the mission’s organizations and churches aiding them. Why? Everyone has their unique gifting, resources and experience to help the other. Churches have great people who want to serve. Missionaries know the ropes on the field. So businessmen and professionals should include and support the missionaries who help these purposes, as well as, their business endeavors.

A tip: Just as ministry Boards often include a solid Christian businessman, the new “entrepreneurial-apostles” may be smart to include a wise and experienced “spiritual master-builder” on their Board. His input will have a different perspective.

Many a good-hearted businessman or philanthropist has had the nationals bamboozle them out of money, sell them property that they lost possession of, cause overpayment for projects, bank accounts tapped and fallen into government traps etc... . all because they were operating independently. Yes, even “Christians” ripped them off. Let’s work together.



Solutions: Relooking at the Three Case Studies – A Better Way

Case Study # 1: What if an on-the-ground advisory committee was formed of a Christian architect/Builder, pastoral leader, missionary, an educator and US liaison established to do a proposal? You could even offer them some benefit, such as: money, free tuition, vacation etc. Give them time limits. Next: During the implementation phase put a responsible missionary *on salary* to jointly oversee the project with the local nationals for accountability and progress updates.

You could avoid a good deal of the abuse, corruption and save money too. At the same time, people would be more vested in the project locally.

Case Study #2: Instead of shutting the first location, why not look at several alternatives, such as: diversifying the business, discussing alternative uses for the operation with other Christian businessmen looking for overseas facilities or bringing in a consultant to review efficiencies to improve cost effectiveness. (Ideas like: a second shift, new raw materials providers, modernizing equipment etc.)

Hopefully, there is a way to open a new work elsewhere and maintain the first location. Every attempt should be made to honor the people and kingdom progress in the original location.

Case Study #3: How about creating a website Clearing House where missionaries can contact businessmen and professionals to present opportunities? This could even be an association with a membership fee to support the hub.

The missionaries could present business and social needs to those who could jump in and help. There are like-minded Christian businesses looking for safe entries into the nations through trusted people. This is a win – win- win.

Kingdom Building or Church Planting?

The new missions movement today must have stronger elements of building all kingdom structures among a people and not just grouping them to build a church organization as a subset of community. This will take a new mindset to release the new pioneers from businesses, medicine, education or special professionals into a needy people group.

Once again, motivation and character must be pure. No man can serve two masters. When tough choices are to be made, God always comes before riches.

Let's declare and demonstrate the kingdom, and the church will burst forth in its center. A new wind is blowing to bring forth a new crop of fresh laborers and mission methods. Those successful at home are needed to share it abroad.

I want to encourage church and mission leaders to support the new “entrepreneurial apostles.” Give them a boost forward and honor their kingly leadership. Don’t try to make them submit to you, but co-labor and esteem each other with a servant heart. God will use them to develop a more complete society with staying power. Let God choose who is gifted to lead for each unique kingdom initiative.

Like many new things, we will need to be intentional about change and growth and promoting a new “wine skin.” But the wine is pouring! Let’s maintain quality eternal values, with investments of our treasures in heaven, while still being an earthly blessing. The payback is worth it.

In Summary - New Wine Skins and New Clothes needed:

1. Christian businessmen and women, and Professionals must enter into the World Mission arena – it’s time!
2. Dynamic, new associations should be made with missionaries, national leaders and entrepreneurial churches that are proactive and responsive.
3. Constant heart motivation must be checked so kingdom projects are resourced and maintained from The King’s heart.
4. Don’t take advantage of, but remember to support the ground breaking missionary workers that paved a way with their lives.
5. Allow for a learning and experimental curve – it’s new territory.

God bless you.

