

We who have been delivered in Christ should not become servants of men (I Cor. 7:23), even if they claim to offer deliverance from our economic-social chains. We are bought with the price of the blood of the Lamb of God (John 1:29; I Cor. 6:18-20, I Pet. 1:18, 19). We are the servants of God.

Conclusion

Christ is the Savior; not only the liberator who comes, but the liberator who has already come. Deliverance in Christ is fundamentally related to the sin which is enchaining man in his deepest being. Therefore, the essence of the evangelistic message for every creature in the world is "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3, 4). The message of the Gospel points to the total liberation of man, in all dimensions of his personality and all his relations of his life.

Although the Gospel emphasizes the deliverance of the individual, there are evangelical principles that have been influenced and can influence here and now for the good of humanity. Even if the Church fulfills its mission faithfully to proclaim "the entire counsel of God," it cannot avoid either the auto-judgment or the trial of society because of the state of oppression in which millions and millions of human beings are living in different parts of the world.

However, deliverance will not be total until the return of Christ the Lord.

The transformation of this world in a reign of justice and peace for all human beings will not be the work of man but that of God. The Gospel is the message of hope — the hope in Christ, not in man.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE CHURCH IN CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANTISM AND CATHOLICISM

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The scope of this study paper is naturally limited: it is based on a selective bibliography, which may not be everyone's choice; it will be largely descriptive, though having an evaluative conclusion; its form will be highly schematic, thus running the risk of exaggerating positions, though with no intention to do so; and the material will be condensed, i.e., presented without much explanatory elaboration. Despite these obvious limitations imposed by space and time, it is to be hoped that the reader will enjoy entering into what is a fascinating contemporary discussion.

1. *The Kingdom and the Church in Jesus' ministry and teaching*

a. Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. It is the business of the Messiah to establish the Kingdom. Jesus, as Messiah, has therefore come to make actual God's victorious rule over his people (Bright).

b. The Messiah never appears alone. If Jesus is the Messiah there must be a remnant (Bright). There is no Messiah without a community. Those who are called into God's Kingdom form such a community (Ridderbos).

c. Jesus declares his intention to found a Church (not to be confused with the later, hierarchically ordered, structure) when it becomes obvious both that Israel rejects him as Messiah and the disciples accept him as such (Matt. 16:13 ff.) (Padilla).

d. According to some, it is the failure of the preaching of the Kingdom which leads Jesus to pay special attention to instructing his disciples, the *ecclesia designata* (Karrer). According to others, the Church is the calculated result of this preaching, the group of disciples forming the nucleus of the new people of the new covenant (Padilla, *Lumen Gentium*).

e. The rejection of Jesus as Messiah was basically due to his failure to re-establish the Kingdom of David. The new community which he introduced was an unprecedented new reality. The inclusion of the Gentiles within the people of God is already anticipated in Jesus' ministry (especially Luke) (Nunez).

f. Further evidence of Jesus' intention to form a Church is given by the following facts: he gathered men to himself ("follow after me") and instructed his disciples to gather more; he foretold that the gulf between this new community and the Jews would grow and

that the Kingdom would be taken away from Israel and given to another people (parable of the vineyard and the tenants) Ridderbos).

g. Summarizing: Jesus did not found an ecclesiastical organization, but as the Messiah he called out a remnant. This remnant is the new Israel, the people of the covenant, symbolized in the Last Supper as the fellowship of the Kingdom (Bright).

2. The Kingdom and Church in the New Testament after the Resurrection

a. One of the basic differences between the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, reflecting the changed historical situation, is that Jesus, the *preacher* of the Kingdom, becomes Christ *preached* as Lord (Kung). God's reign is operative in the reign of Christ. The transition is reflected by an application of Psa. 110:1 to the universal dominion of the ascended Christ.

b. Christ is now proclaimed as head (sovereign) both of the Church and of the universe (especially in Paul's captivity epistles). The exercise of his kingly rule is applied to both spheres, the juxtaposition of his authority over both spheres being seen most clearly in Matt. 28:16-20 (Bosc, Pereira, Grau).

c. Christ's authority over the universe is linked to his mediatorship of the act of creation (Colossians). As mediator he is also the reconciler of all things (Ephesians, Colossians).

d. The fact that Christ is both head of the Church and ruler over the entire creation means that the relationship between the *regnum Christi* and the Church is one aspect of the relationship between redemption and creation (Cullmann).

e. "The actual reign of Christ over the Church and the world is the manner of bringing about the sovereignty of God in the time of salvation (Schnackenburg). The time of salvation is the interim period between the two comings (Padilla). In this period Christ reigns as Lord of his Church and as such he creates it.

f. The Church is created by Christ through the Holy Spirit. Thus it is the result of both the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom and the activity of the Spirit (Padilla). "Those who hear the word with faith and become part of the little flock of Christ have received the kingdom" (*Lumen Gentium*).

g. Paul's particular contribution to the fulfillment of the Church's commitment to Jesus Christ is the development of the meaning and significance of life in the Spirit as the pledge of the full reception of our heritage in the future (Eph. 1, 4; Rom. 8). Life in the Spirit is synonymous with life in Christ. Also, to be transported into the Kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13) is to participate in the new life of the resurrected Christ (Col. 3:1-3) (Schnackenburg). "Christian life is not an effort to conform to a spiritual or moral ideal nor submission to a law, however exalted, but life in Christ" (Bosc).

h. The early Church, following its Lord, rejected the temptation

to establish a political kingdom in opposition to the Roman Empire. In this way it rejected the theocratic ideal of Israel (Nunez). "The early Church never imagined it could bring in the Kingdom. It was sent rather into the world as a missionary witness to a Kingdom already set up" (Bright).

3. Identification and Separation of the Kingdom and the Church

There are a few authors who make a complete identification between the Church and the Kingdom. A more numerous body make a partial identification. A third group tend toward a radical separation.

a. A study of Matt. 16:18-20 shows us that the Kingdom is organized into the form of the Church. The two do not appear as separate institutions. Jesus' near coming which he foretold (e.g., Mark 9:1) is in his Kingdom-Church (Vos).

b. The Church and the Kingdom are identified in the following passages: Rev. 1:6; Jas. 2:5; Col. 1:13; I Thess. 2:12. The Kingdom will come through the believing people who are the bearers of the Kingdom in the world. "However, the Church cannot just be identified with the Kingdom; at least when the 'Church' is understood as the visible order of the believing community and the Kingdom of God as the divine domain" (Karrer).

c. The Church is the Kingdom already in our midst: that Kingdom which Jesus came to announce and mysteriously inaugurate, which has begun now on earth and is advancing through sufferings to plenitude. The Church constitutes the germ and beginning of that Kingdom. It is the Kingdom veiled and in pilgrimage (Maritain).

d. The possibility of identifying the Church with the Kingdom already inaugurated, though not with the Kingdom finally consummated, is tentatively broached by several authors: the *regnum Christi* was born at Ascension and the Church at Pentecost, which took place at the Ascension for the whole creation took place at Pentecost for the Church. The Church is the heart and center of the *regnum Christi*. It forms the earthly setting of the *regnum Christi* as the body which Christ has chosen (Cullmann) (Cullmann bases his views on a temporal distinction which he makes between the Kingdoms of Christ and of God). "The Church is the expression of Jesus Christ's universal sovereignty, it is the concrete manifestation of the Kingdom" (Padilla). "She (the Church) becomes on earth the initial budding forth of that Kingdom. While she slowly grows, the Church strains toward the consummation of the Kingdom" (*Lumen Gentium*).

e. The third group of writers see the Church and the Kingdom always in strict contrast. Miguez stresses that the history of Israel was that of a prolonged conflict between God and his people. Bright is convinced that there is no hint in the New Testament that "the visible existing Church can either be or produce the Kingdom." According to Grau, the Kingdom cannot be limited to the frontiers of the Church because (i) it takes in the whole

of creation, (ii) the believing peoples have not yet reached their fullness. The tendency to identify the Kingdom and the Church arises from an over-emphasis on the present fulfillment of the Kingdom (Kung). The Church, therefore, is neither the forerunner of the Kingdom, nor does it build it up. There is no question even of continuity, the Kingdom emerging from the Church, for the reign of God is neither a product of organic development nor a process of penetration, but a wholly new work of God (Kung).

4. *The scope of the Kingdom and of the Church*

a. *Definitions of the Kingdom:* The Kingdom of God is God's kingly activity manifested in a breaking into human history and experience to visit and redeem his people in a manner decisive for their salvation" (Perrin); "the Kingdom of God is the active and dynamic exercise of the divine sovereignty" (Schuurman); "the Kingdom is God's active sovereignty over the world, especially and representatively exercised and testified to in Israel, perfected in Jesus Christ and promised in full manifestation in the Parousia of the Lord" (Miguez); "the Kingdom has three meanings: (1) the exercise of power or government; (ii) the sphere or territory governed; (iii) the community of those governed" (Cullmann); "in its present aspect, the Kingdom is the exercise of God's sovereignty over his creation, especially over those who willingly accept his will. It is also the salvific activity of God on behalf of man (Nunez).

b. The notion of *the Kingdom as a personal, internal reality*, strong among theological liberals in the nineteenth-century, though somewhat shattered by Schweitzer and Weiss, still continues in some modern authors. Perrin considers that the offer of the forgiveness of sins is the most characteristic note of the Kingdom. Individual experience thus becomes the sphere in which the Kingdom is manifested. The ethical teaching of the Kingdom is concerned with what the individual must do as he is caught up in the eschatological tension between present and future. There is a strong mystical tradition within the Catholic Church which points in the same direction, "by their prayers and active labors, religious men and women play an indispensable role in rooting and strengthening *the Kingdom of Christ in souls*, and in causing it to grow" (*Ad Gentes*, my italics). Identification of the Kingdom with the "invisible" Church springs from the same internalized interpretation. Also, wherever the Church has become introverted or has separated the material from the spiritual in its mission it testifies to the same interior concept of the Kingdom.

c. *The Kingdom as eschatological.* The kingship of Christ is established in his exaltation. It will become fully manifested when he returns in glory (Bosc). Miguez points out that the testimony of apocalyptic places the consummation of the Kingdom in a cataclysmic future. It underlines the radical discon-

tinuity between present history and the Kingdom and emphasizes the influence of the "mystery of evil" in human affairs. Schnackenburg stresses the continuity of all acts which make up the history of salvation: the eschatological reign, in the form of a visible Kingdom, is already announced in manifestations of power. For him (and Kung), against Cullmann, there is complete identification between the kingdoms of Christ and of God.

d. *The Kingdom as universal.* God's purpose of reconciling to himself the whole of creation gives to the kingship of Christ a universal dimension. The church awaits the new creation which is the manifestation of Christ's universal kingship (Bosc). But even now Christ's victory over disobedient powers and his liberating presence are working, outside the church in human "secular" history (e.g., scientific technology which is alleviating many kinds of suffering) (Schuurman). The new order to be established through Christ is the recovery of the perfect primitive divine order (Schnackenburg).

e. The consummation of the universal and eschatological divine kingdom means *the final and complete victory over all demonic forces*. In the present period of salvation; fear of hostile, demonic powers disappears for all who are united to Christ. Their liberty and their dignity are recovered (Grau). For Cullmann, the title, Lord, means that Jesus Christ rules as king not only over men but also over the invisible powers. Cullmann advances the novel thesis that these powers actually form part of Christ's rule (c.f. 2nd and 3rd above) and they are therefore entitled to obedience and active support (his interpretation of Rom. 13:1ff.). However, these powers are able to free themselves temporarily, converting themselves into the "beast" (Rom. 13). The self-deification of the state is a sure sign that the powers have broken free from the *regnum Christi*. These enemies will be destroyed in the last stages of Christ's rule (the millenium). Padilla rejects Cullmann's interpretation on the grounds that the Kingdom is a *soteriological* order which is entered only by the *obedience of faith*. Schnackenburg rejects it on the grounds that Christ now exercises as the glorified Lord, a true reign in which he maintains the evil cosmic forces under his feet.

f. *The temporary, provisional nature of the church* is stressed by Kung. For him the church belongs essentially to the present; the Kingdom to the future. The church embraces sinners; the Kingdom is only inherited by the righteous. The church is not a preliminary sign but an anticipation of God's reign which is present in the church in the word which promises forgiveness, new life, and constant renewal. The church exists in the time of salvation as a saving event for sinners.

5. *The Kingdom, the church, and the world*

At this stage we must introduce a new element, the world. If it is true, as the majority of our commentators insist, that the Kingdom extends beyond the church, then it must have some relation to secular human history as well. The nature of this relation is a matter of intense, polemical debate within modern theological thought (Moltmann, Metz, Teilhard de Chardin, the Theology of Liberation, Christian-Marxist encounter, etc.).

a. Almost every writer rejects as untenable the "Constantinian" relationship between the church and the state which arose in the fourth century and was justified *a posteriori*, principally by Augustine, by identifying the church with the Kingdom (a "post-Christian theocracy"). The Christendom notion of the church was carried over into the thought of the Reformers. It influenced their lack of an eschatological perspective, due largely to the too exclusive place given to the sovereignty of Christ over the church and the corresponding relegation of his kingship over the world (Bosc). "Neither the church nor the Christian society is God's Kingdom on earth" (Kung).

b. Equally clear, among most writers, is a rejection of the opposite extreme: i.e., an atemporal negation of interest in the world. If Constantinism is the result, in theological terms, of a strong post-millennialism, withdrawal from the world is due largely to the apocalypticism associated with pre-millennialism. Pre-millennialism also stresses the exclusiveness of Christ's Lordship over the church. Christ, as Lord, defends his church against the attacks of her enemies. Hostility on the part of a decaying world leads to withdrawal. However, negation of the world is not justified, for the Church awaits a new creation (Bosc).

c. If these two views have stressed, from different angles, the place of the church, there is another view which minimizes the church and stresses the correlation between the Kingdom and the world. Maritain characterizes this view (not his own) as portraying a near identification between the Kingdom and the world, "the world is itself the Kingdom in a state of becoming . . . the Kingdom is leaven *in* the world, it is not a reality beyond the world." Miguez calls this view which he does not share, *monistic*: there is only *one* history (i.e., no separate history of salvation) *in* and *from* which God is building his kingdom. Christian faith does not constitute a separate history but gives this one a new motivation and issues a new invitation to transform it.

d. Gutierrez, the most systematic representative of the Theology of Liberation, starts from a clear distinction between the church and the world, and between these and the Kingdom. The church and the world both contribute to the building up of the Kingdom. But the world is totally autonomous, i.e., man is the mature agent of his own destiny. The church meets to celebrate its faith and discuss its political options in the light of God's Word. The church is marked by its attitude to that process of liberation which God is establishing in this world. The struggle for and the construction of a just and free society is equivalent to accepting the Kingdom, even unconsciously; it is written into the history of salvation. The growth of the Kingdom is given in this historic process of liberation, it signifies a greater realization of man. Nevertheless, none of this is equivalent to the complete arrival of the Kingdom nor to a full salvation.

e. For Metz, the problem for the church in its relationship to the world is one of practice: how to find new ways to insert itself critically into society. The church ought not to establish itself as a mini-society on the edge of the macro-society of the secular world. The church lives in the light of the eschatological promises of God concerning a new world. This hope allows it to enter fully into the construction of

an eschatological order of justice, humanization, and universal peace. However, it opposes all idols, which spring from utopias, on the grounds that it knows less about the future than the humanists. Its prophetic voice must be raised against the identification of any planned future of man with the coming Kingdom of God. *Guadium et Spes* also raises a cautious but optimistic note concerning the relationship between the world and the Kingdom, "earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's Kingdom. Insofar as the former can contribute to a better ordering of human society it is of vital concern to the Kingdom."

f. Miguez also seeks to resolve the conflict between monism and dualism in the relation between salvation history and universal history. The Kingdom is not the elimination of human history but rather of its corruptibility, weakness, and ambiguity. The Kingdom is not an enigma (*where* is it?) but a mission (*what* ought I to do?). We must, therefore, recognize intermediaries between the Kingdom and our *obedience* without identifying them. These intermediaries are the Scriptures and the historical context. Both are necessary for true obedience.

g. Yoder resolves the conflict in a slightly different way. The church must be sufficiently experienced to be able to discern when, where and how God is using the powers (c.f. the sections above on Cullmann). Whether by collaboration or refusal, she is called to the creation of structures more worthy of man. That Christ is Lord, is a proclamation to which only individuals can respond, but it is also a social, political, structural fact which constitutes a challenge to the powers. The position of the New Testament church is not one of withdrawal. The "otherness" of the church consists in her being a herald of liberation and not a community of slaves. The church accepts that she is a new community created by the cross and not the sword. The believer's task is not to bring the powers to their knees but to hold their seduction and enslavement at a distance.

6. *Dangers of identification and of separation between the Kingdom and the church.*

a. When the kingships of Christ over the church and over the world are too closely associated, e.g., when the kingship of Christ over the world is pushed into the background, the church falls into the temptation of idealism and mysticism: it takes refuge in the world of ideas or of religious sentiment (Bosc). An easy identification between the two, says Kung, leads to an unhealthy dissociation. The church is then seen as the enemy of the Kingdom, which tends to use force and/or privilege to defend its own establishment. As a result the opposite reaction of apocalyptic chiliasm is generated which, when allied to social revolution gives rise to secularized imperial utopias (messianisms) using a socialist eschatology as a historical motivation. Kung warns, however, that dissociation from the church does not necessarily lead nearer to the reign of God. Bright suggests that a church which identifies itself with the Kingdom will soon begin to invite God to endorse its own policies — or demand the right to decide on every aspect of a person's life —

(Grau), and will reckon on the advance of the Kingdom in terms of numerical growth. In practice this position has fathered the fatuous conceit that righteousness with God can be gained by external conformity.

b. When there is too great a separation between the Kingdom and the church, e.g., when the kingship of Christ over the church is considered insignificant, the church falls into the temptations of individualism, moralism, rationalism, and utopianism. It is condemned to conceiving the realization of the Kingdom in a semi-magical fashion (Bosc). The danger of moralism is the danger of identifying the Kingdom with one specific culture (e.g., the liberal bourgeois) (Kung). The danger of utopianism, in any of its forms, even that of dialectical materialism, is that of identifying the future Kingdom of the Messiah either with an ideal state or with a particular, identifiable, political-social system (the error of the Zealots) (Munoz). According to Trestmontant (and Maritain) biblical thought is equally opposed to idealism and to materialism.

7. *The Kingdom and the church today*

a. *Relationship between the Kingdom and the church ideally conceived.* (i) The church is the organism where *the Gospel of the Kingdom* (already present) is preached and obeyed (Bosc). In its proclamation of the Gospel the church is a sign of the end. It constantly points to the fact that this age is passing away (Padilla). It is not a compromise community for the Kingdom. It exists to proclaim the Kingdom under whose authority it now lives (Kung).

(ii) The church participates by its life and witness to the Kingdom in *the present cosmic struggle*. It cannot escape the tension thus engendered between its present obedience and its future hope, e.g., by living at peace in the secular order, without betraying itself. The church can neither create nor abandon the Kingdom (Bright). The universal Lordship of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28) is exercised through the church in two ways: in the *conquest* of men of all nations as his disciples and in the upbuilding of the community in love in which a lost humanity is restored and the evil cosmic powers are destroyed in its midst (Schnackenburg).

(iii) The church is the community which *receives the gifts of the Kingdom* (Ridderbos, Grau). The gifts are gifts of a grace which is sovereign and thus free (Bosc). The gifts are essentially those — forgiveness (Ferrin), new life and constant renewal (Kung) — which keep the church from adopting a self-righteous and uncompassionate attitude to those outside (Kung).

(iv) The church is supremely the community that bears the fruit of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is directed towards the formation of a new people that will replace Israel in the history of salvation. A people that will yield the fruits of the Kingdom (Ridderbos). The church must demonstrate in her life and fellowship that man can live freed from the dominion of the powers (i.e., through substantial reconciliation) (Yoder). The moral requirements of the Kingdom are designed to challenge the church to be worthy of her calling (Matt. 7:21). The ethics of the Kingdom preached by Christ were taken over into the

catechetical instruction of the early church (ethical sections of Paul's epistles), where there is a particular stress on service ("who is greatest in the Kingdom of God?") and on indiscriminating reception of all into the fellowship (Schnackenburg).

(v) The Kingdom is, at the same time, the goal, limitation, and judgment of the church (Kung). The church is the symbol, sign and announcement of the Kingdom (Schuurman).

b. *The Kingdom, the church, and evangelism.* This final section will be a short, personal, attempt at an evaluation of the contemporary discussion in the light of the church's call to proclaim the Gospel to all people.

(i) Baird suggests that the Kingdom formed for Jesus Christ an integral world-view, i.e., a conceptual framework in which the entire revelation of God finds its focus. In God's universal rule we find included every biblical theme from creation to the new creation.

(ii) The early church used the word infrequently. However, when it did so it occurred in key contexts. The book of Acts, for example, begins and ends with a discussion of the Kingdom (Acts 1:6-8; 28:30-31). The concept is also present in the confession that Christ is Lord; that he reigns.

(iii) He reigns over both the Kingdom and the church. The two find their perfectly harmonious relationship when correctly linked to his Lordship. In theological terms, Christology is the key to understanding the present period of salvation. Thus it is of vital concern to guard closely the content of our proclamation of Christ. Naming Christ (Rom. 15:20), apart from the controlling influence of the full biblical revelation about Christ, is not preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom for, conversely, Christ cannot be understood apart from a proclamation of the Kingdom. From this fact two important consequences for evangelism follow: first, the Gospel cannot be compressed into neat formulas and served up as a "simple Gospel," for the simple Gospel is *no* Gospel unless it includes the dimensions of the Kingdom; second, *indiscriminate* use of the word Christ in evangelism may be self-defeating. It may convey no more than any political or ideological slogan.

(iv) The Lordship of Christ over the universe means that he is sovereign over the nations. This also has profound implications for evangelism. It is supremely relevant in a world which every day grows politically more conscious and more inclined to invest politics with the mystique of salvation (or liberation). Evangelism should include a prophetic ministry to the nations which is not partial (as in, e.g., the false nationalism of those evangelicals who refuse to condemn the aggression or oppression of their respective governments or the biased ideology of certain international church leaders who select the kind of racial bigotry they wish to condemn) but which, simultaneously, denounce the false freedom claimed by autonomous man to distribute his own justice and build his own future and announces the true freedom of the sons of God. Without this prophetic ministry our proclamation of Christ as Lord over the nations and the cosmic powers is devoid of any meaningful context.

(v) The church evangelizes from a place of political weakness. For example, every attempt to reintroduce the Constantinian concept of the church meets with the rebuke of the eschatological Kingdom inaugurated by the Cross (compare Luke 22:25-26; I Cor. 1:23-24; 2:2-5; 4:20 for a christian view of the meaning of real power). The church's methods of evangelism must consistently reflect this weakness. They are not, as some evangelicals claim, only controlled by the success syndrome or their contextual relevance, but also by what the ethic of the Kingdom, based on the Cross, constantly demands. The biblical ideas of the remnant, of discipleship, of fellowship, of the prophetic ministry, of a faithful testimony unto death, warn against the current evangelistic triumphalism of a concern for numbers.

(vi) There is little contemporary interest in the "ontological" relationship between the Kingdom and the church. Suffice it to say, that neither complete identification nor absolute separation is biblically viable. Rather the relationship has been sought for in practical terms: what does it mean for the life of the church that she proclaims and teaches the Gospel of the Kingdom? It means at least two things: First, the church either evangelizes by its life or it erects barriers to the Gospel by its life. The world is quick to judge the authenticity of its message by its courage in allowing that message to transform its total outlook. The Kingdom is either a world-view which offers a message which revolutionizes practice or else in today's world, it is spurious. Lenin once said of an ideology which proffers a false expectation, "there is no revolutionary practice without a revolutionary theory." Conversely, revolutionary theory is proved credible, or otherwise, in action. Second, there is less emphasis on what the Gospel offers and more on what it demands. We present it not as an immediate solution to every human problem but as a call to a new life-style. It is true, of course, that the Christian imperative springs from a Christian indicative, and that without this it leads to a destructive legalism. It is equally true, however, that the indicative without the imperative leads to a dead orthodoxy, sentimentality, individualism, or an esoteric mysticism.

(vii) The purpose of evangelism is that of forming a new people who express individually and in community the reality of God's reign. It is thus based on the fulfilment of the Kingdom in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and on its final consummation in the *eschaton*. All evangelism should reflect this tension between past historical certainty and future historical hope.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE VISIBLE CHURCH IN CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANTISM AND CATHOLICISM REPORT

Chairman: Rev. Chas. Tipp

Secretary: Harry S. D. Robinson

A nationally, denominationally and vocationally varied group were informed that the paper was simply an attempt to glean from contemporary writers both Protestant and Catholic their views of the Kingdom of God in its relationship to the visible church. Strong group support was given to the personal conclusions of the author as expressed in his final section.

The Church. There is a need for a dynamic and charismatic (using that word literally) re-understanding of the church. There can be no evangelism outside of the church since membership in the Body and Bride of Christ is explicitly in response to the faithful hearing of the Gospel. The church is the place where the rule and authority of Christ is to be seen.

The present local institutional churches have to be defined as biologically reproducible, as communities where the Kingdom of God becomes visible and where the Kingdom is encountered. In the New Testament there can be no evangelism except that which comes out of the church and receives converts into the church. Para-church structures are not biblical nor can they in fact preach the full Gospel because the church is part of the Gospel message. What have become known as para-church structures must be recognized and recognize themselves as a part of the church, not in an institutional sense but in a dynamic and charismatic sense.

The Kingdom. The attempt to picture the Kingdom as an essential basis of evangelization raised several different problems:

- (i) Can we distinguish between the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of God?
- (ii) Is the Kingdom in the world what the reformers called "common goose"?
- (iii) Can the Kingdom be seen as a manifestation of the Lordship of Christ outside of and unrelated to the church?
- (iv) Is there a model by which we can understand the Kingdom over against the church in the world?
- (v) Has confusion between the Kingdom and the church tended to make an easy Gospel and a weak church?

The Kingdom and the world. This subject was treated speculatively