

(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

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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

because of the shortness of time, diversity in background of the participants, and its own tremendous complexity.

(i) Does the authority of God in government, justice, marriage and family life constitute an area of his Kingdom outside the church?

(ii) Does the Kingdom of God demand that he act independently in the world when the church fails in its responsibility?

(iii) Can God's purpose in his Kingdom transcend his purpose for the church, or is it always an indication of God's larger purpose for his church?

(iv) The confession of the Kingdom demands that no absolute church structure is possible. The local, visible church is that community where the Kingdom of God comes into being.

(v) Triumphalism is when the church loses its consciousness of being a servant (see final section of paper).

The scriptural basis for most of our discussion centered around the John chapter 3 references to seeing and entering the Kingdom; the New Testament references to Psalm 110, Romans 13-15, and Ephesians 4-6; the kingdom parables, Revelation 11:15; and local church references in Acts.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AMONG THE KINGDOMS OF EARTH

José Grau

"The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Psa. 103:19).

God, the only absolute Ruler

We shall leave it to theologians to decide whether human government belongs or does not belong to the so-called "creation orders." One thing is certain, anyhow, the *ruling of God* over his creation and creatures. His Providence uses different instruments for the ruling of the world, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hands is mine indignation. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people . . ." (Isa. 10:5, 12, 14a). Here we see that human powers are recognized by all the authors of Scripture, as being parts of the Almighty God's interventions in his Providence.

We should keep in mind that those powers or rulers are acting as God's delegates. They are relative, never absolute, since it is God who "changeth the times and seasons, removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Dan. 2:21, cf. Isa. 40:23,24). Thus, God is not submitted to the order of his creation, nor is he in the realm of nature, in spite of the opinions of certain liberal theologians. But, on the other hand, he is not indifferent to the evolution of civil powers or the order of nature, in spite of the statements of deists of all times. God is sovereign in time, history, and space, i.e., in all his creation (cf. Isa. 40:23,24, 10:1-3).

Ruling powers and sin

As Hans Bürki judiciously remarked, "Earthly powers have to do with the sinful condition of men. One cannot say that the State be sinful in itself, nor that it is a natural or neutral institution. Yet one may affirm that ruling powers are always bound up with the law of God, and this according to the Bible, so that both state and individual have to do in several ways with Divine Law. Even God's law is a grace, a divine mercy. We must never forget that law expresses divine will, and this will is always 'eudekia,' i.e., kindness towards us. Even when it is sentencing, it comes to us as grace, for it kills, so that the Lord may heal us. The authority of God comes to us as a liberating power and not as a threat; for the law is always in favor of man and at his side, as an essential source of true liberty."

In scriptural thinking, *state* and *law* always belong together. And this because powers are ruling by God's delegation, in order to command that which is rightful (Prov. 8:15). And it is God's law that determines what is right and what is not. That is why Hans Bürki, quoting Gal. 3:19,22-24, says that the law was given because of sin and in view of the coming Savior. So, as long as a state is obedient towards the