

Trinity Bible College and Graduate School

A Qualitative Study on the Role of Kingdom Theology as a
Framework for Mission in the Marketplace

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree

Master of Arts Missional Leadership

To the faculty of

Trinity Bible College and Graduate School

December 2023

Abstract

Kingdom theology, particularly since its heightened popularity in the last half century or more, has presented the contemporary Church with an opportunity to reassess its mandate as the primary organization through which God intends to reach a lost and hurting world. This need is none more obvious than within the realm of the marketplace and public square. The individualistic nature of the Western worldview has given rise to a form of Christianity that often looks very little like the life one sees modelled in Jesus Christ, His apostles, and the early Church. What has transpired is a dichotomous form of thinking within the Church that separates what has been termed as the 'sacred and the secular.' In other words, many Christians around the world do not view their work as possessing any relevance to the advancement of God's kingdom. The emphasis which Kingdom theology places on Jesus, within His historical context, emphasising His mission and ministry, opens the way for a discussion concerning what it means to truly live as a disciple of Christ. Since most of His teachings and miracles took place within the marketplace environment, scripture attests to the emphasis Jesus has placed on His Church to be a people exemplifying and declaring His message outside the four walls of a local church building.

This paper does not, however, explore the topic of Kingdom theology and its relevance to the marketplace in isolation. Rather, incorporating the themes that arise from investigations done into the topics of mission, creation, God's temple, and work, Kingdom theology is expressed as an over-arching theme that weaves itself throughout these categories of theological thought. The purpose of this approach is to remind believers in Christ of, 1) their inherent created value as human beings, which is communicated within the creation narrative presented in Genesis, 2) their designated role in partnering with God on His mission, articulated within the theological understanding concerning creation and God's temple, 3) the

right orientation with which they are to carry themselves within the marketplace, encapsulated within the themes of mission and Christian ethics and, 4) the supreme rule and reign of God, in Christ, over all creation, which is an important concept driving the Kingdom theology narrative. There is no kingdom without a king. This paper is my attempt to re-orient the Church's thinking towards a worldview that sees all of life, from relational engagement through to socio-economic endeavour, as carrying the potential to be offered up in worship to God, and for the advancement of His kingdom within *all* spheres of humankind's existence.

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Dedication

For my wife, Mariza; who in the three years it has taken me to complete this degree, gave birth to our second daughter, endured many a sleepless night - and tiring day - as she has mothered our beautiful girls. I am forever grateful for your harder work behind the scenes, allowing me to do what I do. Your love, support and encouragement have meant the world to me. A better wife, and kingdom partner in life, I could never find. Love you.

For my daughters, Madison Grace, and Isabella Joy. You are my delight and, although you do not fully grasp this right now, my prayer is that you will see, in me, what I have tried to pursue all these years – a life lived for Christ and His kingdom. May you follow in His footsteps.

Finally, all of this is for You, Father God. The opportunity and provision for this came from Your hand. It is a dream come true. Thank you, Lord.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my parents, Glen and Marilyn Nixon, for their support in everything I have put my hand to. I feel blessed to have had such loving guidance and provision. You have done your best with me, and I want to thank you for all of it. I love you both.

To my brother, Ross, and sister-in-law, Laura. You have pushed me into thinking differently, and clearly, about life and faith. Now that I have the time and headspace for it, I hope to have many more moments with you discussing the things of eternal value and consequence. My thanks and love to you both.

To Ryan Matthews, the eldership team, and our family at Freedom House Church. Thank you for the opportunity to pursue this degree. Your support, encouragement and questions have helped me tremendously in this process. I pray this work is of some use to us as we pursue Him and His kingdom together. Love and appreciate you all.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my supervisor, Dr Scott Townsend, as well as Dr Derek Morpew, Dr Noel Sanderson, Dr Paul Alexander, and Dr Carol Alexander, for their invaluable work, insight, assistance, grace extended, and instruction given throughout my journey in pursuing this degree. It has been a privilege completing this qualification through Trinity Bible College and Graduate School.

Introduction

In the book of Colossians, the Apostle Paul encourages those believers who find themselves in the position of a household slave, to work at whatever they are doing as “for the Lord.” His argument being that they are in fact serving the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.¹ Whilst this paper is not a commentary on the topic of slavery in the first century Roman world, it is important to note that the slaves Paul was referring to were not slaves as one might understand the concept today. Keener notes that to be a household slave in this period of history was to eventually be afforded the opportunity to free oneself from slavery; and, slavery - such as that which Paul is addressing in this epistle - provided household slaves, in general, with an existence “better off than average freepersons in the Roman Empire.”² Today these people might be better compared to modern day employees than to slaves - as modern society has come to understand the term; hence, my reference to this scripture that encourages believers to do their work with the Lord fully in mind.

In letting this scripture contextually define for Christians a God-honouring way of doing work, I propose that the purpose of this paper is to investigate and establish the role of Kingdom theology as a framework for how Christians should view their careers, businesses, and places of work today; incorporating it into their lives to effectively communicate God’s intention for humanity and the workplace. My proposal is that an important part of God’s intention, as scripture communicates, is that He wants to be intimately present and involved in people’s lives as they go about their everyday activities. Burkett states that God’s principles and instruction, informing the way people conduct themselves in business, are not

¹ Colossians 3:22-24 (New International Version) ²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵ Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

² Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2014), Philemon, Kindle.

offered “cafeteria style,” where one gets to pick what one likes and dismiss the rest of God’s word concerning business.³ He further states that God’s word “sets up the whole structure by which a business is to operate: a foundation,” further emphasizing that, “[if one desires] long-term growth and stability, God’s way is the only way.”⁴ Exactly what ‘God’s way’ is, is one of the key themes this paper aims to address. One understands that businesses are there to turn a profit; however, theology offers an approach that emphasizes the important need for believers to genuinely welcome Jesus’ lordship over all aspects of their lives - both professionally and personally - with one of the goals being to reach those people groups on one’s doorstep, or in their neighbouring office cubicle.

The predominant view among believers, at least insofar as their behaviour would currently suggest, confirms that within the church there is still a significant chasm in people’s minds that needs to be overcome when it relates to understanding exactly what is meant by God’s kingdom, and how it applies to the workplace. Keller notes that in order for Christians to “make a real difference... [there must be] a reappropriation of the idea of vocation or calling, a return in a new way to the idea of work as a contribution to the good of all and not merely as a means to one’s own advancement.”⁵ What Keller means exactly by ‘a contribution to the good of all,’ necessitates further discussion and, in addition, requires an understanding of what he means by the term ‘good.’ Furthermore, this statement also requires Christians to examine whether one’s motives and lifestyle exhibit an individualistic or a more biblical other-oriented perspective.

To adequately address this topic, I will briefly examine the initial plan and purpose for humanity as described in the first few chapters of Genesis. The reason for this is that one

³ Larry Burkett, *Business by the Book: The Complete Guide of Biblical Principles for the Workplace* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), chap. 1, pdf.

⁴ Burkett, *Business by the Book*, chap. 1.

⁵ Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavour: Connecting Your Work to God’s Plan for the World* (Great Britain: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012), Introduction, Kindle.

cannot understand, in its entirety, the role of work as a calling and vocation, perhaps even as an evangelistic tool, without first establishing a healthy theology concerning God's temple and His kingdom. A workable, missional-oriented framework must consider and synthesize a theology of mission, a theology of God's temple, of His kingdom, and work as He has ordained it. It is also important to outline the themes concerning Kingdom theology and its role in establishing what it means to walk in Christ's footsteps. Morpew, in conjunction with this, contends that the Kingdom of God in a broad sense, encapsulates "the biblical story of the kingdom," bringing into focus "Christ's teaching on the kingdom,... the implications of the kingdom, [and] the outworking of the kingdom."⁶ Jesus announced, demonstrated and taught about the kingdom extensively.⁷ I will, therefore, examine His worldview in light of His understanding of the Old Testament; and provide for Christians, the means to re-establish for humanity, in view of the New Testament scriptures, the perspective that He is King over all of our lives, including our work, as Colossians 3 states.

Keller has also noted that many Christians in the marketplace who are seeking the right advice and guidance when it comes to doing business with integrity, and in a God-honouring way, "have been frustrated by the shallowness of the advice and examples" that many pastors have offered from the pulpit.⁸ Miller states, in his comments on the Faith at Work movement in the United States, that there has been "insufficient scholarly research" or "definitive texts" that "offer[s] critical reflection and a theoretical framework to help guide the movement."⁹ Sherman confirms Miller's assertions when she references Christian marketplace people, across all sectors of society, as "having received almost no teaching... on how to integrate

⁶ Derek Morpew, *Breakthrough: Discovering the Kingdom* (Cape Town: Vineyard International Publishing, 2019), Introduction, Kindle.

⁷ Morpew, *Breakthrough*, Introduction.

⁸ Keller, *Every Good Endeavour*, Introduction.

⁹ David W. Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), Introduction, Kindle.

their faith and work.”¹⁰ This is part of the reason why I will be examining the topic of this paper. One of the key ideas I will be positing is that the local church must clearly communicate why, and how, the ‘priesthood of all believers’ can, and should, effectively minister in their specific marketplace environments.

Kingdom theology invites one to revisit the kingdom narratives in scripture; and, in view of this understanding one has regarding God, His kingdom, creation, and His temple, one can meaningfully comprehend the teachings of Jesus and how the Spirit-filled church can show the ‘nations on our doorstep’ what the God of the Bible is like. Certainly, one can never fully comprehend all that there is to God; however, what I propose to undertake in this paper, is to establish a firm theological grounding in one’s mind concerning the Kingdom of God, and then look at the ways in which the Church can influence and play a significant role in the arenas of corporate culture, ethics, and making a good profit that is honouring to the Lord. It is my contention that within the paradigms of God’s kingdom, an ethical, biblical standard exists that can positively influence the socio-economic fabric of the communities, cities and nations within which companies exist and operate, thus allowing believers to metaphorically tend and expand the gardens within their spheres of influence. I believe this to be important because as has already been implied, many believers do not have the tools or knowledge to meaningfully conduct themselves in the workplace for kingdom impact. In the following chapters this paper will aim to outline and explain the key themes upon which I am basing this thesis. These pertain to God’s creation, His temple, His kingdom, and a theology of work and ethics in view of Christ’s lordship and the church’s mandate to be ‘on mission.’

¹⁰ Amy L. Sherman, *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2011), chap. 5, Kindle.

Part I

Understanding a Theology of the Kingdom, Mission, Creation, God's Temple, and the Marketplace

Chapter 1

Understanding Mission with Reference to the Marketplace, and as an Expression of God's Kingdom

To begin, the following is an examination of the term 'mission.' Bosch explains that traditionally, "a theological synopsis of 'mission'... [has] been paraphrased as (a) [the] propagation of the faith, (b) expansion of the reign of God, (c) conversion of the heathen, and (d) the founding of new churches."¹¹ As Bosch also notes, the term was primarily used up until the sixteenth century to describe the activity of the Trinity in terms of the Father sending the Son, and the Son and Father sending the Holy Spirit.¹² Later iterations of the term *mission*, "presuppose a sender, person or persons sent by the sender, those to whom one is sent, and an assignment," with the sender having the authority to do so.¹³ Bosch further asserts that "[M]ission is a multifaceted ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualization, and much more."¹⁴ Dayton and Fraser define the church's mission as "its participation in and cooperation with what God is graciously doing redemptively here on

¹¹ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 2011), Introduction, Kindle.

¹² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, Introduction.

¹³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, Introduction.

¹⁴ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, chap. 13.

earth.”¹⁵ Hirsch observes that when looking at the concept of mission, “the Western church has generally preferred the inherited status quo and has very seldom ventured far from the entrenched ecclesial paradigm.”¹⁶ Bosch states that the Trinitarian definition of mission has now been expanded to include the “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.”¹⁷ Hirsch, I believe, agrees with Bosch, Dayton and Fraser, given that he says the church must be shaped by Jesus and the mission He is on.¹⁸ In other words, the Church is to redefine the ecclesial paradigm in which it has operated for centuries and see itself in greater detail as the agency through which God does His sending into all the world. Stott enhances this position by declaring that God is, in fact, the “God of Mission” and that if He has “promised to bless all the families of the earth” through Abraham’s seed as Genesis 12 explains, then the local church is obligated to take the gospel everywhere it goes; for it is encountering ‘all the families of the earth’ every day.¹⁹

This is, partly, at the heart of this paper. It is my conviction that for the Church to fulfil its mandate to make disciples, as Jesus instructed in Matthew 28, Christians must rediscover the “ancient energy lying dormant at the heart of the church,” finding solutions in the past, and coming to terms with “identifying, engendering, and activating dynamic missional movements,” thereby becoming the most “potent force for transformational change the world has ever seen.”²⁰ From a biblical perspective, one need only look at the scriptures to note that God sent people for all manner of reasons, and not only the traditionally held evangelistic

¹⁵ Edward R Dayton and David A. Fraser, “Mission and the Church,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (California: William Carey Library, 1992), D-18.

¹⁶ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements*, (Michigan: Brazos Press, 2016), Introduction, Kindle.

¹⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, chap. 12.

¹⁸ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, Introduction.

¹⁹ John R. W. Stott, “The Living God is a Missionary God,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (California: William Carey Library, 1992), A-18.

²⁰ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, Introduction.

emphasis often ascribed to missional work. Wright states that sending language is used in numerous biblical accounts and stories.²¹ He goes on to say that the range of assignments God sent people to fulfil, in these accounts, includes “famine relief, action for justice, preaching, evangelism, teaching, healing and administration.”²² All of these themes corroborate the statement made by Bosch about mission being a multifaceted endeavour.²³

Another example of Hirsch’s ‘solutions from the past’ has been explored by Hunter, when he states that the “common life of the congregation that permits people to discover faith for themselves, at their own pace, now appears to be much more influential than special-event-preaching evangelism.”²⁴ In other words, it is the day-to-day living alongside one’s neighbours, as followers of Jesus, that makes the difference. If people come to faith more gradually than quickly, as Hunter suggests, then this lends itself to approaching one’s place of work as an opportunity to take our time in introducing people to Jesus Christ and the ways of His kingdom. Wright states that the Bible “teaches us various ways in which engagement by believers in the ‘secular’ public square is entirely consistent with God’s calling and God’s mission for his people.”²⁵ Wright further highlights the Apostle Paul’s position when he suggests that “Christians should be diligent workers,”²⁶ referencing the apostle’s letter to the Thessalonians.²⁷ Clearly put, Wright is stating that “Christians are to be good citizens... good workers, *and thereby*... good witnesses [emphasis added].”²⁸ Through Paul’s teaching, the early church understood that its missional engagement was not necessarily to be

²¹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God’s People: A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission*, (Michigan: Zondervan, 2010), 23-24.

²² Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 24.

²³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, chap. 13.

²⁴ George G. Hunter III, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West... Again*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), chap. 4, Kindle.

²⁵ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 229.

²⁶ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 234.

²⁷ 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 and 5:14 ¹¹ and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.... Warn those who are idle.

²⁸ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 234.

undertaken as travelling to another part of the world - although there is need for this - but, rather meaningfully engaging via the witness of their biblical, God-honouring conduct in the marketplace.

In conclusion to this chapter, I will provide a brief summation of Wright's thoughts concerning mission, to consolidate everything that has been said thus far; and, to inform our thinking about mission moving forward as I engage with the topic of this paper. Wright encourages his reader to consider the holistic concept of mission, as opposed to the singular evangelistic approach that has characterised much of the church's activities in this regard.²⁹ He states that when he references *mission*, he is considering "all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole of creation," and that "[m]ission, like science, has a conceptual, generic breadth."³⁰ In other words, Wright is suggesting that mission should be considered in its various iterations in the same way that the sciences have many iterations. Medicine, engineering, economics, and geology are examples of different sciences that are generically grouped together when using the term *science*; yet, their differences and individual relevance are acknowledged. When the term *mission* is utilized, as Wright states, "the multitude of activities that God's people can engage in, by means of which they participate in God's mission," should be considered.³¹ Furthermore, although everything is not 'cross-culturally evangelistic,' everything the local church does "should be missional in its conscious participation" with what the Lord is doing around the world and in its specific contexts.³² Now that the concept of mission has been introduced, and how it encapsulates more than events-based evangelism, or ministry into other countries, I will examine some key ideas

²⁹ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 25.

³⁰ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 25.

³¹ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 25.

³² Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 25-26.

pertaining to Temple theology, and how they relate to the workplace, in my continued argument for Kingdom theology as a framework for mission in the marketplace.

Chapter 2

A Brief Survey and Overview of Temple Theology and the Creation Mandate as it Relates to Work

Having laid a foundation for understanding mission and the Church's fit into the *Missio Dei*, or Mission of God, I will now explore some of the key themes relating to the beginning of the Christian story, with particular emphasis drawn from Temple theology. The Christian story does not begin with the incarnation, and Jesus walking the earth in bodily form. It begins in Genesis and explores God's original intent for His creation, and humankind. As Wright attests, "[w]e really must begin where the Bible begins,"³³ and as many authors have stated, it is within these first few chapters of the book of Genesis that God's intention for creation and humankind is discovered.

Bartholomew and Goheen explain, with reference to the ancient Near Eastern context within which Genesis was written, that "God is pictured as the Monarch, whose sovereignty extends by right and by power over... his creation."³⁴ The ancient Near Eastern context is of importance, because it was understood by its audience as making clear the fact of God's authority, sovereign rule, and His establishment of His creation as "His own vast kingdom."³⁵ To this end, Beale states that, "the Garden of Eden was the first archetypal temple, and that it was the model for all subsequent temples."³⁶ He goes on to suggest that "[s]uch an understanding of Eden will enhance the notion that the Old Testament tabernacle and temples were symbolic microcosms of the whole creation."³⁷ What Beale, Bartholomew and Goheen

³³ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 48.

³⁴ Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding our Place in the Biblical Story* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2006), 12.

³⁵ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 12.

³⁶ Gregory K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2004), chap. 1, Kindle.

³⁷ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, chap. 1.

are stating is that the Creator God, whose ‘chambers’ include all of creation, did His creating fully intending it to be the temple within which mankind facilitates and worshipfully stewards that which He has made. Beale further notes that, “the Old Testament tabernacle and temples were symbolically designed to point to the cosmic eschatological reality that God’s tabernacling presence, formerly limited to the holy of holies, was to be extended throughout the whole earth.”³⁸ Herein lies an important point to grasp; “[t]he Garden of Eden was the first archetypal temple in which the first man worshiped God.”³⁹ In other words, the original space *within which man existed, and worshipped, and served the Living God*, was a temple that God instructed mankind to reproduce all over the earth. The disordered environment outside of Eden was to become like Eden through the fruitful, multiplying and worship-oriented work given to humanity by God.

To further elaborate, Wright explains that in the beginning, God assigns to humanity a “delegated form of God’s own kingly authority over the whole of his creation.”⁴⁰ He explains that kings and emperors in ancient times would set up images and statues of themselves in the “far flung corners of their domains,” in order to communicate to all people in a region exactly under whose authority a specific realm fell.⁴¹ Similarly, as Wright contends, “God installs the human species as his image within creation [authorizing] humans to exercise authority.”⁴² Walton explains it by stating that people were to maintain order - to subdue and rule as God’s vice-regents – thereby extending order under God to all the earth.⁴³ Bartholomew and Goheen expand upon this by explaining that the term ‘image’ infers a striking similarity between God and humans, without denying the obviously radical differences.⁴⁴ The

³⁸ Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, chap. 1.

³⁹ Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, chap. 2.

⁴⁰ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 50.

⁴¹ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 50.

⁴² Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 50.

⁴³ John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2 and 3 and the Human Origins Debate*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2015), chap. 12, Kindle.

⁴⁴ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 14.

similarity, they suggest, is “humankind’s unique vocation... to rule over the non-human parts of creation on land and in sea and air much as God is supreme Ruler over all.”⁴⁵ Ultimately, what Bartholomew and Goheen are suggesting is that, “humankind’s ‘dominion’ over creation may be to say that humans are here as God’s royal stewards... [t]o develop the hidden potentials in God’s creation so that the whole of it may celebrate his glory.”⁴⁶ In essence, all of creation is to worship Him.

Walton states that Adam and Eve’s role in the garden was specifically designed to communicate Israel’s role, and that of believers in Jesus Christ according to 1 Peter 2:9, as “priests to the world.”⁴⁷ If mankind were to initially tend the garden and ‘rule and reign’ as vice-regents in worshipful service to God before the fall, then it is the position of this paper that the Church must revisit this mandate post the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. What is meant by this is that, as the book of Romans explains, Christ is the one through whom humanity regained that which was lost at the fall.⁴⁸ In Jesus, God’s image is restored to humanity.⁴⁹ Furthermore, it is Christ whom John refers to when he states that, “the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.”⁵⁰ Christ was God ‘tabernacling,’ or dwelling, among His people, showing them what a human life should look like when it is walking in fellowship and submission to God. Additionally, at Pentecost, when the Spirit of God was poured out, an ‘upgrading of this tabernacling’ took place, in the sense that God no longer dwelt among humankind in the body of one Man, but now in all those who would call upon Jesus as Lord and Saviour by His Spirit.⁵¹ All humanity has subsequently been invited back into the role it was created to fulfil. If the world is “the very theatre of God’s glory, the

⁴⁵ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 14.

⁴⁶ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 15.

⁴⁷ Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, chap. 12.

⁴⁸ Romans 5:12-17 (New International Version)

⁴⁹ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 20.

⁵⁰ John 1:14 (New International Version)

⁵¹ Acts 2:1-39 (New International Version)

kingdom over which He reigns,”⁵² then work must surely be an expression of that. It is with this in mind that I turn to the theme of work and how what Christians accomplish in the marketplace is of utmost importance, and must be understood as a form of worship and witness unto the Lord.

The Genesis of Work

Up to this point, the argument being presented is that one cannot reduce the concept of mission to event-based-preaching and evangelism, and that mission is a complex concept theologically, ideologically, philosophically, and in praxis. Furthermore, an understanding of the original intent for humanity upon its creation, is necessary in correcting much of the Church’s perspective concerning ministry and work. This perspective is the unfortunate separation of the ‘sacred and secular,’ as has popularly been espoused in Western church contexts. Beale notes that Adam’s first priestly role in the Garden - his *work* - was not just to manage and care for it; but, in keeping out uncleanness, he was “managing the affairs of the sacred place where God’s presence dwelt and maintaining its orderliness in contrast to the disordered space outside.”⁵³ Wright states that, “God intends his wise, creative, loving presence and power to be reflected, ‘imaged’ if you like, into his world through his human creatures. He has enlisted us to act as his stewards in the project of creation.”⁵⁴ Through the work of Jesus, and by the power of His Spirit, Wright states that humankind is equipped to “help in the work of getting the project back on track.”⁵⁵ However, what exactly does this ‘project of creation’ entail for the Church today? In answer to this, I will briefly focus on the realm of work.

⁵² Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 17.

⁵³ Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, chap. 3.

⁵⁴ Tom Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2007), chap. 13, Kindle.

⁵⁵ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, chap. 13.

Wright describes a common assumption within the Church that God is not interested in the public square, or in the world of work.⁵⁶ The problem this creates, as he explains, is that this dichotomized thinking – the separation of the ‘sacred and secular’ – has given rise to a “dichotomized Christian life” for many believers.⁵⁷ Wright rejects this view of Christian living by stating that “clearly and comprehensively, in both Testaments, [the Bible] portrays God as intensely interested in the public arena of human social and economic life – [He is] interested, involved, in charge, and full of plans for it.”⁵⁸ Reflecting on the original instruction God gave humankind, to “extend the geographical boundaries of the garden until Eden covered the whole earth,” bringing order and hospitality to that which lay outside the original borders of God’s garden paradise,⁵⁹ it is this paper’s position that the project the Church is to be involved in, as redeemed humanity, remains the same as that which God gave in the beginning. This is for humanity to bring about order and beauty to a world that, although disordered, is rich in the resources required to bring about the order that God desires.

Wright puts it succinctly when he says that, “Work is God’s idea.”⁶⁰ As Genesis 1 and 2 clearly demonstrate, one can identify “God as a worker – thinking, choosing, planning, executing, evaluating,” and creating humankind *in His image*.⁶¹ Wright asks, “what else could humans be, but workers, reflecting in their working lives something of the nature of God?”⁶² Bartholomew and Goheen also offer up an answer to this question by stating that humankind’s responsibility to caringly develop the world, is not simply an agricultural instruction, but “is true for all aspects of creation.”⁶³ They suggest that, “[T]his is culture

⁵⁶ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 222-223.

⁵⁷ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 223.

⁵⁸ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 223.

⁵⁹ Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, chap. 3.

⁶⁰ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 223.

⁶¹ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 223.

⁶² Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 223.

⁶³ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 19.

(beyond agriculture) in all its richness and diversity: marriage and friendship, art and scholarship, the making of things with our minds and hands, economic and political structures, games and sports, among a thousand other good gifts.”⁶⁴ Their argument is that as God’s stewards, humanity’s responsibility is “to discover and to develop the potentials our Creator built into his creation, but do so in a way that... honours God.”⁶⁵ Wright says that presently, the Church is to follow Christ, and by the power of the Spirit “build *for* the kingdom.”⁶⁶ The way the Church engages in bringing about restoration to the Lord’s creation, can only be achieved by humble submission to His Lordship, and guidance by His Spirit. Something the first humans failed to do. If God’s image has at last been restored to humanity in Jesus, then it is incumbent upon the body of Christ to fully embrace the mandate seen in scripture, which is to “[live] in fellowship with God, in harmony with the creation, fulfilled and happy in our calling to understand... enjoy and develop this good earth.”⁶⁷ One must note that this is not development in the sense of a purely ecological, or even agricultural emphasis, where hands-on working with the natural environment is all that matters. Whilst this is certainly part of that narrative, the reader should note that when this paper utilizes terms such as *environment* and *creation*, it assumes that which is both man-made and natural. It is this paper’s position, as will be further examined, that God intends for humanity to restore and rebuild all environments, be they economic, social, or natural.

In furtherance to this, in terms of the Christian worldview, the majority of Christians worldwide believe that, “all that happens here on earth is nothing more than transient and temporary,” and that “it doesn’t matter very much.”⁶⁸ Wright states that many believers live under the false, and unfortunate, assumption that not much eternal value can be ascribed to

⁶⁴ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 19.

⁶⁵ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 19.

⁶⁶ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, chap. 13.

⁶⁷ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 20.

⁶⁸ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 226.

the work people do in the local or global public square.⁶⁹ Wright disagrees with this general sentiment and presents a view that suggests what is done on earth, in service to God and according to His purposes, will have value and purpose in the life to come.⁷⁰ It is this paper's position that the Church would do well to take note of this. All that is done 'as unto the Lord,' and in whatever capacity, will be *enhanced* in God's new world. What is seen at work around people is, metaphorically speaking, the outside disorder - a "marketplace riddled with sin, corruption, greed, injustice and violence,"⁷¹ - compared to the 'Edenic' solution inherent in every follower of Jesus who has been redeemed and spiritually recreated in Christ. This solution has eternal consequences for the believer. As Bartholomew and Goheen explain, the mandate that Israel failed to honour - which was being a light to the nations - was faithfully fulfilled in Jesus.⁷² Having gathered His initial band of followers and charging them with the continuation of what He had begun, Jesus' work continues in His Church, two thousand years later. Biblical salvation, as Christ taught, involves "the restoration of the whole life of humankind and ultimately of the non-human creation as well;" essentially, redeeming creation from the corruption that humankind ushered in at the fall.⁷³

Followers of Jesus may never see the fulfilment of what God has called His Church to, in this life; however, the promise that seems to be the common thread throughout scripture, and which Wright, Bartholomew and Goheen attest to, is that people's professional and personal

⁶⁹ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 226.

⁷⁰ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, chap. 13. "Every act of love, gratitude and kindness; every work of art or music inspired by the love of God and delight in the beauty of his creation; every minute spent teaching a severely handicapped child to read or to walk; every act of care and nurture, of comfort and support, for one's fellow human beings, and for that matter one's fellow non-human creatures; and of course every prayer, all Spirit-led teaching, every deed which spreads the gospel, builds up the church, embraces and embodies holiness rather than corruption, and makes the name of Jesus honoured in the world - all of this will find its way, through the resurrecting power of God, into the new creation which God will one day make. That is the logic of the mission of God. God's recreation of his wonderful world, which has begun with the resurrection of Jesus and continues mysteriously as God's people live in the risen Christ and in the power of his Spirit, means that what we do in Christ and by the Spirit in the present is not wasted. It will last all the way into God's new world. In fact, it will be enhanced there."

⁷¹ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 227.

⁷² Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 152-153.

⁷³ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 153.

lives matter to the Lord in equal measure, and will bear fruit in this life, and once Christ returns. In these first two chapters, I have attempted to illustrate the richness of the themes of creation, God's temple, and mission; all with a view to laying the groundwork for my exploration of Kingdom theology and its usefulness as a framework for how one can better engage the marketplace from a missional perspective. It is now to these themes that this study turns.

Chapter 3

A Survey of a Theology of Work and the Marketplace

Having established an understanding of the concepts related to God's mission, His creation, and its purpose in serving as His temple, I will now focus more intently on outlining a theology of work and the local church's relevance to the marketplace and public square. Wright reminds the Church that it should recognize "the whole Bible as the story of the mission of God, from creation to new creation, and to see that we exist as God's people within that great story, to serve God's purpose in creation itself and in the midst of the nations."⁷⁴ Since the Bible begins with God working in creation, and making humans in His image to further His purposes in this regard, I propose that establishing a healthy theology of work is necessary for every believer to meaningfully carry out their God-ordained calling in the marketplace and public square. To adequately address this specific topic, this portion of the paper will occasionally return to concepts that originate from the creation narrative, the reasons for which will become clearer as this chapter progresses. Returning to Wright, who states that, "[W]e exist to serve God's mission,"⁷⁵ it is my position that Christians should keep this notion at the forefront of their minds constantly when considering their work and how the Lord wants to use them in the marketplace. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to outline the thinking in academia concerning a theology of work, and how these relate to the marketplace arena in which many Christians find themselves.

In his book *Every Good Endeavour*, Keller makes the statement that, "[I]n the beginning, then, God worked. Work was not a necessary evil that came into the picture later, or something human beings were created to do but that was beneath the great God himself. No,

⁷⁴ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 148.

⁷⁵ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 148.

God worked for the sheer joy of it. Work could not have a more exalted inauguration.”⁷⁶

‘God worked for the sheer joy of it.’ This statement should have believers in Christ asking themselves if this is reflected in their everyday work experience. This is not to place guilt on believers who find themselves in situations where their work is not satisfying, or modelling the ‘joy of work’ just described. Rather, Sherman states that work is intrinsically good, if it does not contradict biblical ethics, and does have, or add, value.⁷⁷ She goes on to explain that in today’s society, the unfortunate reality for many people sitting in one’s congregation is that they are unable to live in their “vocational sweet-spot” due to the pressures of life; namely, the need to look after sick loved ones or to lay one’s life down for the necessity of simply providing for those in their family.⁷⁸ An example of this is that many people in the Third World context never have the opportunity to work in a field for which they have the aptitude, skill, or passion, due simply to the fact that their circumstances and existence within human history have conspired to make it nearly impossible to live in their vocational sweet-spot.

One’s perceptions concerning work, in my opinion, must be rooted in what Keller affirms when he states that in the beginning, “we see God not only working, but commissioning workers to carry on his work,” and that “though all God had made was good, it was still to a great degree undeveloped.”⁷⁹ In addition, the corruption and disorder that sin has introduced into the world, coupled with one’s own individual, imperfect state as a sinful being, means that people will never fully enjoy the benefit of complete restoration in work, or any other sphere of life, until Christ’s return. It is my opinion that in terms of one’s work-life, a person can begin to undertake that which God has begun in them; that is, redemption and renewal in Christ, and enact it in the marketplace, even if the job does not equate to one’s ideal work

⁷⁶ Keller, *Every Good Endeavour*, chap. 1.

⁷⁷ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 6.

⁷⁸ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 6.

⁷⁹ Keller, *Every Good Endeavour*, chap. 1.

situation. The question needing to be addressed, and which this chapter will explain, is how do believers go about restoring the marketplace, and approaching their work in a manner that is redemptive and promotes human flourishing. I propose that the focus for believers should be that it is not so much *what* one does for a living that is crucial, but the *way* it is done. Simply put, it is the motives of the heart – whether the work is done ‘as unto the Lord’ – that truly matters. To conclude this point, Sherman, in quoting Newbigin, states that ultimately, when one’s work is committed to the Lord, their labour is not lost and it will find its place in the completed kingdom.⁸⁰

Witherington, in his quote of Kipling, states, “Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made [B]y singing: — ‘Oh, how beautiful!’ and sitting in the shade.”⁸¹ Whatever the Church finds itself engaged with, out there in the marketplace arena or public square, one’s perspective needs to encapsulate what Witherington and Sherman are alluding to. The world itself has great potential for beauty, human flourishing, and socio-economic ‘goodness,’ and it is the local church’s duty to lead the way in giving itself to the work of the Lord, even if it does not specifically suit one’s tastes. Getting down to the ‘business of gardening,’ as Witherington has mentioned, is what the church is called to do. Like Witherington, part of the question this paper is posing, and which I am hoping to answer is, “[h]ow work looks different in the light of Kingdom come, [and] how work looks different if one believes Christ has changed the eschatological situation by his coming and that this affects the way we look at all we do as Christians.”⁸² This is affirmed in Christ’s words to His disciples in Matthew 20, where He encourages them not to pursue a prestigious high position, but to adopt the

⁸⁰ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 6. “Every faithful act of service, every honest labor to make the world a better place, which seemed to have been forever lost and forgotten in the rubble of history, will be seen on that day [at the final resurrection] to have contributed to the perfect fellowship of God’s kingdom. . . . All who committed their work in faithfulness to God will be by Him raised up to share in the new age, and will find that their labor was not lost, but that it has found its place in the completed kingdom.”

⁸¹ Ben Witherington III, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2011), chap. 1, Kindle.

⁸² Witherington, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*, chap. 1.

posture of a servant, for this is where true greatness lies within God's kingdom.⁸³ The eschatological situation that Jesus introduced is as significant today as it was then. As this paper will address in further detail later, in Christ the kingdom is present, but it has not yet reached its fulfilment. This is, in part, the Church's role, and one which it must continue to undertake seriously – ushering God's kingdom into its many spheres of influence. Most of a believer's existence, as a servant in God's kingdom, is spent in the marketplace and public square; therefore, a thorough understanding of how the kingdom of God can impact the marketplace is required.

Having stated this, a theology of work should incorporate and begin with an understanding that work came about before the Fall.⁸⁴ Firstly, work is a gift given to humanity by God, intended for its good, and something for which it was created.⁸⁵ Keller asserts this notion by stating that, “we see God not only working, but commissioning workers to carry on his work,” further noting the instruction God gave humankind in Genesis 1v28 to ‘fill the earth, and subdue it.’⁸⁶ Witherington, in agreement with Keller and Sherman, quotes Ryken when he states that, “human work is shown to have worth and dignity as a service to God and as something that gives purpose to human life. Work here is a creation ordinance, a God-appointed necessity for human life.”⁸⁷ Witherington contends that given the use of the verb ‘subdue’ in Genesis 1v28, the earth needed tending, taming, and cultivating. It was not “a finished product,” but was, from God's perspective, in need of change and development.⁸⁸ This is not to contradict what scripture teaches in terms of creation's ‘goodness,’ but rather that within the wild, untamed environment surrounding Eden, every good resource was available to humankind to take that which God had provided in His garden paradise, and use

⁸³ Matthew 20: 25-28 (New International Version)

⁸⁴ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 6.

⁸⁵ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 6.

⁸⁶ Keller, *Every Good Endeavour*, chap. 1.

⁸⁷ Witherington, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*, chap. 1.

⁸⁸ Witherington, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*, chap. 1.

it as a template for how God wanted the earth developed, or in other words ‘subdued and filled.’⁸⁹

Secondly, one’s understanding of a theology of work should embrace, as already stated, its own intrinsic value, and a means to participate in the work that God is doing.⁹⁰ In quoting Banks, Sherman states that God is our “vocational model,” and that the many different vocations in existence express different aspects of God in the work that He is doing globally.⁹¹ Remembering that God is Himself at work encourages Christians to look for the ways in which their work can reflect His character, nature and heart for humanity, and the world at large. These ‘aspects of God’s work’ that one’s vocation has the potential to express, include the following: Redemptive work, Creative work, Providential work, Justice work, Compassionate work and Revelatory work.⁹² While these categories express specific spheres of work, and the myriad of careers available within each, I believe that thematically, they can also be embraced within a specific job type that might appear unrelated.

Redemptive work, for example, as outlined by Sherman, generally describes those activities that exhibit God’s saving and reconciliatory actions generally undertaken by pastors, counsellors, writers, and musicians.⁹³ Although these speak to specific job descriptions, I propose that any kind of work can employ God’s redemptive purposes. From domestic workers to accountants, the opportunity to exhibit God’s redemptive nature is ever-present and does not need to specifically be part of the job description per sé. Theologically, it is my opinion that work, when done well and ‘unto the Lord,’ points people to the God of the Bible in some way, and so is essentially missional in nature, enhancing the eschatological reality that Jesus began. Similarly, creative work might seem quite narrow in how one

⁸⁹ Witherington, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*, chap. 1.

⁹⁰ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 6.

⁹¹ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 6.

⁹² Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 6.

⁹³ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 6.

perceives it; however, the creative aspect to God’s nature is available to anyone who is open to being led by His Spirit in their field of study or work. Sherman describes creative work as that undertaken in drama, music, weaving, pottery, design, carpentry, and artisanal pursuits;⁹⁴ however, a nurse or doctor is surely able to find creative means of applying their medical knowledge and expertise in ways that bring about healing for the sick or infirm. The same can be said for the other aspects of God’s work. Providential, Justice, Compassionate and Revelatory work, like the two already mentioned, can be applied across the others to varying degrees, producing a tapestry of workplace success and significance that reflects, and glorifies God the Father.

To silo work into categories potentially limits the opportunities available to people to express their gifts, talents, and skills, in ways that might not ordinarily be associated with their job descriptions. As has also already been mentioned, God is portrayed as a worker from the very beginning, and He “continues working to sustain his world.”⁹⁵ In addition, all these categories of work that are inter-linked due to Christ’s genius and creativity at work through His followers, are essentially established as vehicles “for cooperation and relationships as we fulfil the dominion mandate,” which in turn suggests that “economic systems operate to enable aspects of the image of God to flourish in us.”⁹⁶ Having discussed a theology of work, I will now outline the importance of Christian ethics in the workplace, within the context of the discussion thus far.

⁹⁴ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 6.

⁹⁵ Scott B. Rae, *Introducing Christian Ethics: A Short Guide to Making Moral Choices* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2016), 159.

⁹⁶ Rae, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 159.

Chapter 4

Surveying Christian Ethics in the Marketplace and Organizational Culture

In view of what has been outlined thus far, I feel it necessary to discuss the importance of Christian ethics within the marketplace, with an emphasis on its importance in establishing a healthy, God-honouring business culture. It might seem superfluous given what has been discussed already; however, I believe it is important to outline some key ideas in this regard, due to the pervading ‘sacred versus secular’ divide that exists, whether subtly or definitively, in many Christian’s minds. Believers cannot conduct themselves within the realm of mission and the workplace without adequately establishing an ethical standard for themselves that is rooted in scripture and Christ’s teachings. Furthermore, it is my opinion that the church works in contradiction to its understanding of God’s temple, if it is not above reproach in the eyes of the world as much as possible.

Keller states that many businesses ultimately base their ethical behaviour on a “cost-benefit analysis,” where the argument is that, “integrity is profitable; [and] dishonesty isn’t.”⁹⁷ However, Keller posits that the Christian faith is “an ethical bedrock – a much firmer foundation for acting with integrity than offered by the pragmatic approach of a cost-benefit analysis.”⁹⁸ Stearns alludes to this, as well, when he speaks of the Church’s responsibility to be “salt and light,” leaving a redemptive mark on the world wherever it engages.⁹⁹ This ‘salt and light,’ the ‘yeast’ which Stearns attests to in quoting scripture here, includes, in my opinion, the need for Christians to operate ethically within every sphere of

⁹⁷ Keller, *Every Good Endeavour*, chap. 11.

⁹⁸ Keller, *Every Good Endeavour*, chap. 11.

⁹⁹ Richard Stearns, *The Hole in Our Gospel* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), chap. 23, Kindle. “Jesus seeks a new world order in which this whole gospel, hallmarked by compassion, justice, and proclamation of the good news, becomes a reality, first in our hearts and minds, and then in the wider world through our influence. This is not to be a far-off and distant kingdom to be experienced only in the afterlife. Christ’s vision was of a redeemed world order populated by redeemed people—now. To accomplish this, we are to be salt and light in a dark and fallen world, the “yeast” that leavens the whole loaf of bread (the whole of society).”

life. Proper conduct within the marketplace, from a Christian perspective, should not be encouraged because it is profitable alone. It should be encouraged because the local church understands what has already been stated in this paper; which is that everything in creation, and all that humankind has undertaken in terms of development, technological, and societal advancement which encourages human flourishing, ultimately belongs to God. Furthermore, as previously stated, the Church is called to represent Christ well, and follow Him in His mission on earth. I propose that it can influence the marketplace positively in this regard without over-emphasizing evangelism as the sole means of advancing God's kingdom.

In quoting Myers, Keller illustrates this by stating that, “[W]hen Christians articulate cultural values, they should be values that non-Christians can embrace as well, not because we have some prior commitment to ‘pluralism,’ and thereby seek to be inoffensive, but because we have expressed values which [because of common grace] are in fact common values.”¹⁰⁰ This foundational understanding leads me to the theme of why it is important for believers in Christ to have a robust understanding of their ethical imperatives within business. An answer to this could be summed up in Rae's statement that, “[f]ollowing Jesus and cultivating the virtues of his character go closely together, suggesting that the moral life and life with Jesus are inseparable.”¹⁰¹ It is a violation of what scripture teaches to practice a God-honouring lifestyle only within one's church community, and to then engage in the marketplace as if God, and by implication His ethical standard, do not exist. Rae further states that, “[w]e are... moral beings created by a moral God;” and, therefore, it is the responsibility of the local church, within all its spheres of influence, to exhibit the character and standards set by the Lord.¹⁰² What Rae and Stearns describe, are what constitute the

¹⁰⁰ Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just*, (Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton, 2010), chap. 7, Kindle.

¹⁰¹ Rae, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 12.

¹⁰² Rae, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 10.

posture the Church needs to adopt when looking at its role in influencing the marketplace. Before I comment on how believers can go about doing this, let me briefly examine a few reasons why one should adopt this position. Furthermore, to be clear, when I mention the church, I am speaking about the body of believers within the local church context - and which exists globally - who are not necessarily doing 'church work,' or who are on a church's payroll, but those who engage in the marketplace and public square daily.

The Why and the How

Quoting Niebuhr, Witherington mentions five basic understandings concerning the relationship between Christ and culture.¹⁰³ He goes on to explain that the one Niebuhr subscribed to, and which is affirmed by Witherington, is the "paradigm of Christ transforming culture."¹⁰⁴ In defining organizational culture, Chand states it simply as "the personality" of an organization.¹⁰⁵ For this reason, I posit that establishing the *why* will assist and equip every believer in the marketplace to pioneer, and influence, *how* businesses and corporate environments are run. Chand suggests that this organizational personality is characterized by an entity's beliefs, values, assumptions, the way success is celebrated, how problems are addressed, and the levels of trust and respect that exist throughout the organization.¹⁰⁶ This is where I believe the transformative nature of 'Christ influencing culture' - through His church - comes into effect. If work is itself a part of one's service to

¹⁰³ Witherington, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*, chap. 6. "In the first, which he calls "Christ against Culture," Christ and an evil world are seen in fundamental opposition, and Christ calls his followers to retreat from culture. In the second, "Christ of Culture," Christ and culture are viewed as being in harmony, with Christ embodying the best of culture and showing us how to reform the worst of culture. In the third, "Christ above Culture," culture is not seen as fundamentally evil, but nothing in it can save us, for we need Christ's supernatural intervention. The fourth, "Christ and Culture in Paradox," sees human culture as deeply fallen, but not abandoned by God, so Christians still have roles to play in it. In the fifth, "Christ transforming Culture," human culture is seen as fallen, but capable of redemption through Christian shaping of it."

¹⁰⁴ Witherington, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*, chap. 6.

¹⁰⁵ Samuel R. Chand, *Cracking Your Church's Culture Code: Seven Keys to Unleashing Vision and Inspiration* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 19, pdf.

¹⁰⁶ Chand, *Cracking Your Church's Culture Code*, 20, pdf.

Christ, as Rae reminds the church,¹⁰⁷ then the answer to the question of ‘*why* the church is called to positively influence the marketplace?’ should become obvious to the believer. Since an organization’s culture can be likened to it possessing a personality, and since culture pervades all of society, in every sphere; and furthermore, because the church is called to be ‘salt and light’ – essentially ‘culture influencers’ - in a world predominantly governed by sin, it appears to be important to the cause of Christ that the church rejoins Him on His mission in all spheres of life, including the marketplace. In view of John 10v10, where Jesus explains that theft, destruction, and death are brought about by the enemy, and that He came to give abundant life; it is my position that part of the church’s continued mandate is to implement the original instruction given to humankind to extend Eden’s borders throughout the earth. Having said this, I will now briefly look at *how* the church can engage in the marketplace for positive kingdom impact and human flourishing.

What I am proposing is what Townsend presents in his discussion on the New Creation Model, where the church needs to rethink its understanding of new creation as only being something exclusively spiritual in nature.¹⁰⁸ Townsend states that rather than adopting this understanding alone, the church needs to communicate and advance its newness in Christ in terms of “community, organization and function as well.”¹⁰⁹ Townsend mentions this topic within the context of the secularization of church organization and functioning, whereby it has adopted business models as a means to implement the establishment, and ‘success,’ of its structures and systems.¹¹⁰ I agree with him when he asks if this is the correct approach to building churches, and it warrants addressing; however, this is not the main point I am

¹⁰⁷ Rae, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 168.

¹⁰⁸ Scott Townsend, “New Creation: An Organizational Development Model for the Christian Organization.” Organizational Development and Strategic Planning Lecture Notes at Trinity Bible College and Graduate School, Ellendale, ND, September, 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Townsend, “New Creation: An Organizational Development Model for the Christian Organization.” Lecture notes.

¹¹⁰ Townsend, “New Creation: An Organizational Development Model for the Christian Organization.” Lecture notes.

making in this paper. My approach is to provoke the local church to take that which works in the marketplace in terms of operations, culture, and strategy, and put a ‘kingdom spin’ on it to advance the kingdom *within* the business realm. This is not to say that businesses must become ‘churchy’ in their culture, operations, and administration; but, rather to say that church people, who understand the ways of Christ and His kingdom, influence the marketplace in view of the points raised earlier in this paper concerning work and its place in God’s story. This is also not to say that the Church cannot learn from businesses that are run in a God-honouring way either. However, to adopt business principles within an organization that is mainly referred to in scripture in familial terms, is to make the Bible say something about the Church that it is clearly not saying. So, in view of this, *how* should the Church approach its role in business?

Rae reminds one that God’s “creativity, initiative, and resourcefulness, displayed in creation, are also traits that have been given to us by virtue of our being made in his image.”¹¹¹ Furthermore, he states that, “individual responsibility, a strong work ethic, and other entrepreneurial character traits, such as initiative and perseverance, are critical to a life of economic prosperity.”¹¹² Townsend states that believers are able to express the new creation reality in all environments through what they “say, plan, participate in, and create, [thereby] reflecting the future reality of new creation by Jesus Christ.”¹¹³ This is to be lived out in the marketplace as well; and as Rae confirms, “the very work itself is a part of their service to Christ.”¹¹⁴ Moral distinctiveness is an avenue that believers in Christ must adopt if they’re to meaningfully influence the marketplace. Wright provokes the Church to think this way when he asks, “[W]here are the saints who will actually live as saints – God’s different

¹¹¹ Rae, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 159.

¹¹² Rae, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 161.

¹¹³ Townsend, “New Creation: An Organizational Development Model for the Christian Organization.”
Lecture notes.

¹¹⁴ Rae, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 168.

people, God’s counterculture – in the public square? Where are those who see their mission as God’s people to live and work and witness in the marketplace, and pay the cost of doing so?”¹¹⁵ He goes on to say that being morally distinct relies on moral integrity, two things which are “essential to Christian mission in the public arena.”¹¹⁶ There is more to say in this regard, and I will address this idea of *how* one can be better equipped to live this out in later chapters. For now, I will turn attention to the theme of Kingdom theology and its related elements. Thereafter, in Part Two of this paper, I will look at its relevance and association with the other topics I have raised, and begin an analysis of its importance to the Church’s mandate in joining God on His mission in the marketplace.

¹¹⁵ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 236.

¹¹⁶ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 236.

Chapter 5

An Overview of Kingdom Theology

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the key themes that make up the topic of Kingdom theology, and which are important for my treatment of this subject within the parameters of this thesis. Since I will be referencing Kingdom theology throughout the rest of this paper, especially in Part Two, I will not provide an exhaustive explanation here. In Part Two I will attempt to bring Kingdom theology understanding into each of the topics of mission, creation and God's temple, and God's plan for work, where the more detailed kingdom narrative will come to the fore. It does not serve the purpose of writing this paper to go into a lot of detail here, and risk repeating myself when it comes to communicating the relevance of Kingdom theology to each of the themes I have just mentioned.

Ladd, in his book *The Presence of the Future*, makes the following observations about the Kingdom of God in his closing chapter. Firstly, he says that "God acts in history," and that, "[T]he Kingdom of God means that God is King and acts in history to bring history to a divinely directed goal."¹¹⁷ Venter affirms this when he states that when the phrase 'Kingdom of God' is used in scripture it "is a dynamic concept – it means the action of God's rule more than the realm or place of God's rule."¹¹⁸ In other words, God's kingdom has no borders. It is rather to be found wherever God's reign is enacted on earth. Furthermore, Ladd states that the Christian faith is, in essence, one that announces the Kingdom of God as the "goal of history and the only hope of man's redemption."¹¹⁹ The importance of God's kingdom in history-past and its future influence necessitates, in my opinion, the need for the Church to live in the

¹¹⁷ George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism*, (Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), chap. 14, Kindle.

¹¹⁸ Alexander Venter, *Doing Church: Building from the Bottom Up* (Vineyard International Publishing: Cape Town 2000), 39.

¹¹⁹ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

reality that God does indeed concern Himself with individuals, and humankind at large. As Ladd puts it, “[A]ny theology which is able only to ‘converse with God at long range’ because God is so ‘Wholly Other’ that he cannot act in the plane of history has lost something essential to the biblical faith.”¹²⁰ In support of this, Morphew states that Church history, as outlined in the Old and New Testament scriptures, and later Christian writings, “bears witness to the increasing in-breaking of the Kingdom as we approach the end of the end.”¹²¹ When one looks back on Church history through to present day, many renewals and revivals are evident. Venter states that, “[R]enewals are Kingdom breakthroughs *within the church* [emphasis added],” where reform and refreshing takes place.¹²² He goes on to say that, “[R]evivals are Kingdom breakthroughs in and through the church *into the world* [emphasis added],” where many people come to faith as a result.¹²³ This suggests that God *is still* interested in present day history and is something the follower of Christ needs to bear witness to in all spheres of life.

The second element, which Ladd raises relating to kingdom theology and one’s understanding of it, is “the radical nature of evil.”¹²⁴ He describes it explicitly by stating that there are “demonic forces manifest in history and in human experience which move against the Kingdom of God.”¹²⁵ This is important for the Church’s understanding of its role in society, as it must approach life assuming that there are powerful, spiritual entities in direct opposition to the advancement of God’s kingdom. Ladd even goes so far as to say that “[O]rganized society reflects an evil character,”¹²⁶ which appears to be what the Apostle Paul is stating in Ephesians 6v12, in his comments on who the church is truly up against in terms

¹²⁰ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

¹²¹ Derek Morphew, *The Kingdom Reformation: Rediscover Jesus Review Everything*, (Bergvliet: Vineyard International Publishing, 2020), 410.

¹²² Venter, *Doing Church*, 43.

¹²³ Venter, *Doing Church*, 43.

¹²⁴ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

¹²⁵ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

¹²⁶ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

of this ‘clash of kingdoms.’ That Jesus attributes many of humankind’s challenges, tragedies, and afflictions to a “superhuman personality, called Satan, Devil, and Beelzebub,”¹²⁷ and that evil can only be overcome “by the mighty intervention of God,” should encourage the Church to partner with God in His *Missio Dei*, as opposed to distancing itself from Him when outside of the church community gathering.

Boyd, in his book *God at War*, states that the biblical authors’ world-view, included the existence of evil spiritual entities at war against God and humanity.¹²⁸ It is this assumption of the actions of antagonistic, dark spiritual forces that war against God and His people, that the Church needs to accept and adopt once more. To conclude this second point, Wright also discusses the importance for the Church to acknowledge that when considering the opposition God’s kingdom receives from political forces, for example, the ultimate source of these earthly powers’ strength and influence are the “dark forces that ultimately owe their origin and strength to the power sometimes called ‘the satan,’ ‘the accuser.’”¹²⁹ It appears that in order for the local church to fully comprehend the nature of God’s kingdom, it must also acknowledge the very real personality and presence of evil that exists in the world today, and which influences every sphere of human existence. This provides believers with a healthy, biblical understanding of what it means to be advancing God’s kingdom. The inference being that it is against these forces of darkness at work in this world that the Bride of Christ takes ground.

¹²⁷ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

¹²⁸ Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997), Introduction, Kindle. “Hence for all their emphasis on the radical uniqueness, sole eternality and absolute sovereignty of Yahweh, biblical authors generally assume the existence of intermediary spiritual or cosmic beings. These beings, variously termed “gods,” “angels,” “principalities and powers,” “demons,” or, in the earliest strata, “Leviathan” or some other cosmic monster, can and do wage war against God, wreak havoc on his creation and bring all manner of ills upon humanity. Whether portraying Yahweh as warring against Rahab and other cosmic monsters of chaos or depicting Jesus as casting out a legion of demons from the possessed Gerasene, the Bible as well as the early postapostolic church assumes that the creation is caught up in the crossfire of an age-old cosmic battle between good and evil.”

¹²⁹ Nicholas Thomas Wright, *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels*, (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2012), chap. 7, Kindle.

The third correlative point which Ladd raises is “that man cannot of himself” overcome evil, and that the kingdom is a supernatural act of God in the past, present and future age to come. Ladd states that God’s present, and future judgement at Christ’s second coming, are judgements and expressions of His kingly rule.¹³⁰ To further explain his point, Ladd states that, “God has entered into history in the person of his Son to redeem history.”¹³¹ This is inferred both in Christ’s initial entry into human history and His return to execute final judgement. This “consummation of the Kingdom,” as Ladd puts it, “will itself be beyond history, for it will introduce a redeemed order whose actual character transcends both historical experience and realistic imagination.”¹³² Furthermore, Venter also reminds the Church that, “Jesus has been given all authority in the heavens and in the earth. The Church, the community of the Kingdom, is commissioned with that authority to advance God’s rule and reign to the ends of the earth.”¹³³ In my understanding, what this stipulates is that for one to grasp the concept of Kingdom theology, one must understand that in Christ’s arrival on earth in human form, God’s kingdom was announced and enacted in His ministry and mission. Furthermore, when Jesus returns, scripture teaches that He will execute final judgement; part of which involves judgement on the work done by His Church in carrying out His mission, which He announced in Matthew 28:18-20¹³⁴ and Acts 1:8.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 7. “God has once again become active in history. He has visited his people in the mission of Jesus to bring them the blessings of his Kingdom. But when the offer is spurned, a visitation of judgment will follow: both a judgment in history and an eschatological judgment at the end. Both are judgments of God’s kingly rule.”

¹³¹ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

¹³² Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

¹³³ Venter, *Doing Church*, 41.

¹³⁴ Matthew 28:18-20 (New International Version) ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

¹³⁵ Acts 1:8 (New International Version) ⁸“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

This brings me to Ladd's fourth point which is that the Church must understand its role and present relationship to the Kingdom of God.¹³⁶ Ladd states that the Church is to bear witness to God's future victory based on the victory already achieved in history, witnessing to the world of "the triumph of God's Kingdom [which has been] accomplished in Jesus."¹³⁷ The Church is to be a dynamic, daily witness, and symbol of hope, whose mandate it is to prove that God has not given up on humanity, or His creation.¹³⁸ Further to this, the Church is not to be confused with the Kingdom of God in and of itself.¹³⁹ As Venter states, the Church's role as the community of God is to receive and express His rule in varying ways and contexts as directed by the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁰ He goes on to say that the Church is 'penultimate', meaning that as a human creation - in a sense - it expresses the 'already but not yet' nature of the kingdom.¹⁴¹ This is in terms of its witness to what God has done in history, what Jesus ushered in through His incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection, and what is pointed to through the Church's faithful witness to Christ's present activity in the world, His return, and the final judgment to come.

In conclusion to this chapter, I offer a summation of what Kingdom theology entails, as put forward by Morphew in his treatment of the work carried out by Cullmann and Kümmel, two German theologians whose work proved foundational to the development of Kingdom theology.¹⁴² Morphew describes Kingdom theology as a specific approach to the "primary message and mission of Jesus as *enacted, inaugurated eschatology*."¹⁴³ Morphew states that Cullman established the insight of the 'already and not yet' nature of the kingdom; which

¹³⁶ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

¹³⁷ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

¹³⁸ Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, chap. 14.

¹³⁹ Venter, *Doing Church*, 44.

¹⁴⁰ Venter, *Doing Church*, 44-45.

¹⁴¹ Venter, *Doing Church*, 45.

¹⁴² Morphew *The Kingdom Reformation*, 407. Morphew also makes mention of Ladd, Wimber, Jeremias and Ridderbos, in his acknowledgement of the work carried out by these scholars and theologians. His emphasis here, however, rests upon the work carried out by Cullmann and Kümmel.

¹⁴³ Morphew, *The Kingdom Reformation*, 408.

means that in Jesus, the arrival of God’s kingdom in the person of Christ is evident, but not the culmination or complete fulfilment of it.¹⁴⁴ Jesus *is* the fulfilment; however, the mystery that accompanied much of His teaching spoke of an age to come – the Messianic Age - when all would be completely restored and renewed.¹⁴⁵ This has implications for the Church, which I will present in Part Two of this paper. Concurrently, what Morphew also presents in his work is that Jewish eschatology, or end-time understanding, has an “essential connection between the Old Testament and New Testament stories of the kingdom.”¹⁴⁶ The world Jesus entered had expectations that had been developed over the centuries, as far as the Jewish world-view of His day was concerned. Jesus set up a new way of operating for humanity in that in Him the “power of the future age broke[n] through, from the future, into the present, setting up an altogether new dimension,” had arrived.¹⁴⁷ This is what Morphew means when speaking of enacted inaugurated eschatology, and furthermore, it has implications for one’s understanding of the Church’s place in the world, considering that followers of Christ have been given the mandate to continue the work Jesus began. I will now explore this in more detail in Part Two of this paper, as I unpack the implications of Kingdom theology for each of the themes I have discussed thus far.

¹⁴⁴ Morphew, *The Kingdom Reformation*, 407.

¹⁴⁵ Morphew, *The Kingdom Reformation*, 409.

¹⁴⁶ Morphew, *The Kingdom Reformation*, 407.

¹⁴⁷ Morphew, *The Kingdom Reformation*, 409.

Part II

A Synthesis of the Four Major Themes Covered within Kingdom

Theology

Chapter 6

Kingdom Theology's Relevance to Mission

What I have been proposing in this paper, by way of my exploration of the themes addressed in Part One, is that the Church once again aligns itself, in every way possible, with the commonly held Christian belief that Jesus is King. Logic would suggest that to speak of the Kingdom of God, is to acknowledge His rule and reign as King over all of creation. I posit that this is not a fanciful idea, only to be declared and discussed within the safety of a church gathering, but that it necessitates every believer to live his or her life subject to what the Lord says and does. Lutzer, quoting the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 1v20-23, explains that Jesus is the supreme authority under which the Church is to operate.¹⁴⁸ Lutzer's position is in defence of Christ's headship over not just His Church, but all of creation as well. He states that not only does Jesus strengthen His people, unite His Church, represent it before the Father, and presence Himself with all believers by His Spirit; He also has the right to rule presently and in the future as King.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, he argues that Jesus "is not waiting to be crowned King, but He is waiting to be *recognized* as King."¹⁵⁰ In his comments on the Acts of the Church, which essentially provides an historical overview of the missional inroads

¹⁴⁸ Erwin W. Lutzer, *Christ Among Other gods: A Defense of Christ in an Age of Tolerance* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2016), 181. "God seated Him [Christ] at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all."

¹⁴⁹ Lutzer, *Christ Among Other gods*, 180-188.

¹⁵⁰ Lutzer, *Christ Among Other gods*, 185.

made by the early Church, Morphew states that it does not announce a hope which is probable, but rather “an accomplished fact: Jesus is King.”¹⁵¹ He also proposes that during this period in the Church’s history, the gospel is spread “through the missionary strategy of the church,” and that it is not a “vague universal principle,” but one in which Jesus is boldly declared as King.¹⁵²

In today’s world, a healthy, biblical world-view seems to stand in direct opposition to society on issues like politics, economics, philosophy, and religion, for the most part. As Lutzer’s book title, *Christ Among Other gods*, mentions, it seems that the Church is wrestling with a significant shift now in the religious outlook of much of Western society. Christ is indeed served up as an ‘option’ among other gods, which in my view necessitates the position of this paper to once more encourage the local church community to view *all* of life as a mission field. Roxburgh addresses this when he states that society seems to have lost its “internal map;” a map that helped to establish the moral compass, certainly for much of the West, and that guided the general conduct and behavioural ethic of communities originally rooted in Christendom.¹⁵³ Wagner, in commenting on the local church’s need to rethink its missional strategy, states that, “when Jesus came, he introduced the Kingdom of God into the present world.”¹⁵⁴ He goes on to describe how this was a direct confrontation and invasion of the Kingdom of Darkness, which is ruled by “the god of this age” as 2 Corinthians 4v4 highlights.¹⁵⁵ What both Roxburgh and Wagner seem to be saying is that the local church community can no longer afford to simply view itself as an insular, closed off community

¹⁵¹ Morphew, *Breakthrough*, chap. 10.

¹⁵² Morphew, *Breakthrough*, chap. 10.

¹⁵³ Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), Introduction, Kindle.

¹⁵⁴ C. Peter Wagner, “On the Cutting Edge of Mission Strategy,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (California: Wilian Carey Library, 1992), D-58.

¹⁵⁵ Wagner, “On the Cutting Edge of Mission Strategy,” D-58.

fighting hard to protect itself from the outside world. Rather, it is to take on the clear directive from its King, which is to advance against hell's gates.¹⁵⁶

I posit that this cannot happen effectively, if one's single-minded perspective on mission is one of people exclusively travelling internationally and evangelizing cross-culturally. Wagner describes a cultural and evangelistic mandate that is resting on the Church. This cultural mandate seeks to honour the biblical teaching that the gospel is essentially for every people group and society in existence, for the benefit of the whole.¹⁵⁷ The evangelistic mandate specifies the seeking of those people "alienated from God by sin."¹⁵⁸ Those societies and people groups who are geographically distant and unreached, as well as those who are culturally distant and unreached, is what needs to be held in tension whenever the local church interrogates its missional mandate.¹⁵⁹

In his treatment of the level and scope of the authority of Jesus, when He announced and demonstrated the Kingdom of God, Morphew says that Jesus "exercised the authority of God Himself."¹⁶⁰ This clearly pointed to His divinity, and thereby kingly authority as the Messiah, God's true King over Israel, who instructed His followers to continue the work He had begun, empowered by His Spirit.¹⁶¹ Returning briefly to Roxburgh's use of the map analogy, the Church can no longer operate according to the paradigms and world-views, or the 'maps,' "that no longer connect or match the dramatically changing environments in which [it] is living."¹⁶² I propose that the "strange lands," as Roxburgh puts it,¹⁶³ into which the Church is now thrust are not necessarily geographical in nature, but include the cross-cultural

¹⁵⁶ Matthew 16:18 (New International Version)

¹⁵⁷ Wagner, "On the Cutting Edge of Mission Strategy," D-46.

¹⁵⁸ Wagner, "On the Cutting Edge of Mission Strategy," D-46.

¹⁵⁹ Wagner, "On the Cutting Edge of Mission Strategy," D-52.

¹⁶⁰ Derek Morphew, *Demonstrating the Kingdom: Tools for Christian Disciples* (Cape Town: Vineyard International Publishing, 2019), 27.

¹⁶¹ Morphew, *Demonstrating the Kingdom*, 29.

¹⁶² Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making*, Introduction.

¹⁶³ Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making*, chap. 9.

international communities on our doorstep that have arrived as a result of the increasingly globalized nature of this world. Roxburgh states that little of what the Church encounters today can be worked out, neatly measured, and programmed.¹⁶⁴ Multiple cultures, worldviews, religious affiliations, and ideologies are on the local church's doorstep, and especially within the marketplace environment. The complexities of modern life require, in my opinion, the need for the Church to actively engage in the work of the Kingdom of Christ, in *every* sphere of society, both locally and abroad. If the Church truly believes that Jesus is King, then it is subject to His commands and missional strategy, which is to take the message of His rule and reign to 'Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth' as Acts 1v8 declares.

¹⁶⁴ Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making*, chap. 9.

Chapter 7

Kingdom Theology and Humankind's Function within Creation

In my treatment of this theme, I will not be focusing on the material origins of creation as have been investigated and discussed by many scientists, theologians, and academics over the centuries. That is not the purpose of this chapter. A faithful reading of scripture suggests that the doctrine of creation, *ex nihilo*, is supported by texts like John 1v3 and Colossians 1v16; not Genesis 1 as many make the mistake of announcing.¹⁶⁵ My intention here is to outline the specific points relating to the creation of humankind, and the subsequent instructions given to Adam and Eve, as a foundation for informing the Church's understanding of its mission and mandate to influence society, advance God's kingdom, and impact the marketplace arena. This discussion is concerned with function and establishing order within God's creation, not arguing for, or against, the material origins of all that exists.

Goldsworthy, states that, "[T]he generation, or creation of the heavens and the earth, of the whole universe and everything in it, centers on the people of God in the place where they are put to live under the loving guidance and rule of God," and that Adam and Eve, "living before God in the Garden of Eden provide us with a pattern of the kingdom of God."¹⁶⁶ Wright asks the question, in view of the creation narrative, "[D]oes life have any value, meaning and purpose?"¹⁶⁷ Walton seems to address this question when he explains the role and function of humankind, as God's image-bearers, within His created order. He states that, "humanity corporately functions as God's vice-regents - stewards who are charged with subduing and ruling as articulated in the very context in which the image is granted."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, chap. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 99.

¹⁶⁷ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 40.

¹⁶⁸ Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, chap. 21.

Walton asserts four ideas, or categories, around which this concept revolves. Firstly, it is the idea of humanity's *function*, which speaks to one's understanding of the role humans are to play as God's stewards "who are charged with subduing and ruling."¹⁶⁹ Secondly, it is that humanity's core *identity* is designated by God, and that it is this very designation of humankind as His image-bearers, that determines this fact. In other words, it is a "spiritual act of special creation" by God alone, one that humans could never establish for themselves.¹⁷⁰ Thirdly, Walton states that humankind is to function in its identity as God's *substitutes*, communicating "important ideals about the king and about kingship... represent[ing] His presence in sacred space."¹⁷¹ The fourth category Walton raises is that there is a *divine-human relationship*, which is best expressed in the way a son or daughter might relate to their parents. Stated another way, humans carry the image "born in heaven even though it is made on earth."¹⁷² These are the "foundational values and principles"¹⁷³ in which humanity was, and still is, called to operate. Goldsworthy says that the "essential relationships that structure the universe are set out in these creation accounts."¹⁷⁴ Not only does this describe the relationships that exist within the natural world, but also the relationship between humanity and God, as well as humanity and the creation over which it was made to rule according to His instruction.

McKnight states, in his summation of what the creation account is explaining in terms of humanity's beginnings, that the world was created as God's temple, with Adam and Eve placed in the garden temple of God as His divine image-bearers.¹⁷⁵ He goes on to say that they were to "represent God, to govern for God, and to relate to God, self, others, and the

¹⁶⁹ Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, chap. 21.

¹⁷⁰ Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, chap. 21.

¹⁷¹ Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, chap. 21.

¹⁷² Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, chap. 21.

¹⁷³ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 45.

¹⁷⁴ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 99.

¹⁷⁵ Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2011), chap. 3 Kindle.

world in a redemptive way.”¹⁷⁶ The consequences of their disobedience is well documented in scripture, yet as McKnight reminds us, God’s purpose and plan does not change. He sends His Son to do what Adam could not, and establishes Jesus as Messiah - which means king – to rule His Kingdom.¹⁷⁷ The point McKnight is making is that “the idea of King and a kingdom are connected to the original creation.”¹⁷⁸ This is important for the Church to embrace because in Christ, as Townsend has stated, the people of God are renewed according to 2 Corinthians 5v17 and Galatians 6v15, and called to “reflect the future reality of new creation by Christ Jesus.”¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Jewish world-view, against which the creation account was communicated, did not perceive any difference between the spiritual and physical realm; rather, it considered them interlocked, interconnected and, in Jesus’ teaching, equal recipients of His redemptive work on the cross and subsequent resurrection.¹⁸⁰ In my view it is therefore incumbent upon Christ’s followers to declare, and usher in, the new creation reality that Jesus paid for with His life. This is not simply to focus on the internal spiritual nature of life, but to go out into the world, including the marketplace, and represent His kingdom by means of tangible, effective, ‘hands-to-the-plough’ engagement with society and business. Christ Jesus has set the tone for how the Church should conduct itself in the world. I will now briefly turn attention to addressing why this is important, considering the biblical teaching concerning the church as a temple of ‘living stones.’

¹⁷⁶ McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel*, chap. 3.

¹⁷⁷ McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel*, chap. 3.

¹⁷⁸ McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel*, chap. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Townsend, “New Creation: An Organizational Development Model for the Christian Organization.”

Lecture notes.

¹⁸⁰ Townsend, “New Creation: An Organizational Development Model for the Christian Organization.”

Lecture notes.

Chapter 8

Kingdom Theology and God's Temple

In this chapter I will be focussing on the New Testament's use of language to describe the Church. Metaphors are used within the New Testament to assist the Church in understanding how it is to relate to the Trinity, and why it is called to live a holy and altogether distinctive life. Grenz outlines three metaphors which give one insight into the nature of the Church's fellowship with God, and individuals' fellowship with each other. These metaphors are firstly, the church as a nation and royal priesthood, according to 1 Peter 2v9; secondly, the Body of Christ, with Jesus as the Head, which is described in Ephesians 1v22-23 and 1 Corinthians 12v27; and thirdly, the one I will be focussing on which is the Temple of His Spirit, as outlined in Ephesians 2v19-22 and 1 Peter 2v5.¹⁸¹

This notion of the church as His temple finds its origins in the Old Testament, where Israel's temple was God's earthly dwelling place; however, the focal point has now shifted for God's people from a special building for congregating, to a fellowship of His children.¹⁸² Beale and Kim state that Old Testament scriptures, such as Ezekiel 37v26-27 and Leviticus 26v11-12, underpinning New Testament temple language like that found in 2 Corinthians 6v16-17, exhibit a non-architectural temple; one in which God's "end-time presence" is with His people.¹⁸³ Beale and Kim go on to state that this necessitates an understanding of the Church's call to live with purity and a posture of reconciliation across all cultures and environments.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 466 – 467.

¹⁸² Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 467.

¹⁸³ G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Illinois: InterVarsity press, 2014), 102.

¹⁸⁴ Beale and Kim, *God Dwells Among Us*, 102-103.

Returning to the theme of Jesus as King, and the implications for His Church in terms of why it needs to adopt Kingdom theology in all its thinking, is evident in Beale and Kim's comments about Jesus and God the Father. They state that "God's presence returned at the coming of Christ," as the "Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacled] among us" according to John 1v14.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, they state that, "[A]fter his resurrection and ascension, God's tabernacling presence descended in the form of the Spirit, so that those identified with Christ are included *as part of the temple*. [emphasis added]"¹⁸⁶ Another consideration, in terms of the original 'rule and subdue' mandate on humankind in Genesis 1v26-28, is the reconciliatory nature inherent in God's people which now means that filling the earth with His presence and glory will continue until the end of the age.¹⁸⁷ God's presence no longer resides with a single nation, but across the Jewish-Gentile divide that Jesus has eliminated through His mission, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Goldsworthy affirms this in his comment relating to the continued work of the Church after Christ ascended, according to the instruction Jesus gave in Acts 1v8. Goldsworthy states that Jesus told His disciples that the kingdom would come, in the time that they received the Holy Spirit, which took place at Pentecost, and that this constituted the coming of the kingdom.¹⁸⁸ He furthermore suggests that the kingdom would come through the preaching of the gospel, empowered, and influenced by the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁹ Goldsworthy states that by virtue of the Spirit taking God's presence to all the world, the nations now become a part of His temple.¹⁹⁰ He sums it up by stating that, "[W]herever the Holy Spirit takes the word of

¹⁸⁵ Beale and Kim, *God Dwells Among Us*, 129.

¹⁸⁶ Beale and Kim, *God Dwells Among Us*, 129.

¹⁸⁷ Beale and Kim, *God Dwells Among Us*, 107.

¹⁸⁸ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 212.

¹⁸⁹ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 212.

¹⁹⁰ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 212. "Now Jesus, the true Israel and the new temple, is telling his disciples that the Holy Spirit takes his presence into the entire world through the preaching of the gospel. In this way the nations will be gathered to Christ, who takes the place of the old Israel and Jerusalem."

Christ and gathers people to the Savior, there is the new temple.”¹⁹¹ It is this preaching of the word of God that is key to the Church’s growth as a temple.¹⁹²

Beale and Kim remind all followers of Christ that according to 1 Peter 2v5, the outcome of being continually exposed to God’s word results in the “living stones... being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, [offering] spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”¹⁹³ Returning to what I addressed earlier, and in conclusion to this chapter, God’s original plan for humanity has ultimately never changed. What seems clear from scripture, the surface of which I have only just begun to scratch, and the work done by numerous academics, is that the Church is ultimately called to carry on the work begun by Christ in His inauguration of the kingdom through His completed ministry. This was a fulfilment of what Israel had failed to accomplish, and which is now to be undertaken by the Church worldwide as it takes the gospel to all corners of the globe. The growth of the Church, as Beale and Kim have stated, is understood to be the growth and expansion of God’s temple, where Spirit-filled men and women model Jesus and declare His word in spaces previously ‘unoccupied’ by the Lord.¹⁹⁴ It is to those ‘unoccupied’ realms - the marketplace - that I now turn in the following chapter.

¹⁹¹ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 212.

¹⁹² Beale and Kim, *God Dwells Among Us*, 106.

¹⁹³ Beale and Kim, *God Dwells Among Us*, 106.

¹⁹⁴ Beale and Kim, *God Dwells Among Us*, 106.

Chapter 9

An Evaluation and Synthesis of Kingdom Theology and Work

Historically, it appears that when the Church has interrogated its approach to Kingdom theology, and whether the activity it is engaged in can be referred to as ‘kingdom work,’ the conclusions that have arisen fall into one of two categories. As McKnight points out, a holistic understanding of the ‘kingdom story’ will lead Christians to a kingdom mission that is beyond simply evangelism or social justice and activism.¹⁹⁵ These two categories of evangelism and social activism, described by McKnight, create a siloed approach to how the Church can effectively take the gospel into society. One over-emphasizes the need for the individual to come to faith in Christ, as if that is *all* there is to the story, whereas the other over-emphasizes the role the Church needs to play in making the world a better place in which to live.¹⁹⁶ I agree with McKnight’s assessment, especially when he states that the question the Church should be asking in this regard, is not an ‘either-or’ question pertaining to these two categories, but to allow the “story that makes sense of Jesus,” to inform one’s approach to mission, in whatever capacity it is outworked.¹⁹⁷ McKnight states that the gospel message is primarily about Jesus, not the salvation of the individual, and this must inform the way the Church looks at scripture in order to correctly interpret Christ’s message about, and inauguration of, the Kingdom of God.¹⁹⁸ Using what McKnight proposes to help one understand the complete story of the Kingdom of God, I will introduce and analyze what other theologians, authors, and academics have to say on this theme, and how it can be applied to the marketplace in terms of the Church’s effectiveness for mission out in the world.

¹⁹⁵ Scot McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church* (Michigan: Brazos Press, 2014), chap. 3, Kindle.

¹⁹⁶ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

¹⁹⁷ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

¹⁹⁸ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

The first of McKnight's propositions, in his three-pronged approach to understanding Kingdom theology, is to acknowledge the singular major thread that runs from the story of Adam through to Abraham. This is characterised by four major themes, which are that firstly, God alone is King; secondly, that humans, from Adam and Eve, to Abraham, are to rule under God; thirdly, humans usurp God's rule; and lastly, God forgives the usurpers and forms a covenant with Abraham.¹⁹⁹ God was wanting to rule the world through His elected people, but He was always the one true King.²⁰⁰ The relevance of this to the global marketplace is illustrated in work by Greenleaf when he speaks about servant leadership within business. Greenleaf's contention is that what characterizes most business environments is the drive to maximize profits and not deliver in terms of 'making the world a better place.'²⁰¹ In other words, humans working toward their own self-enrichment and prestige. I propose that believers are to engage in their places of work as servants to the marketplace, and to humankind at large. Echoes of the original creation mandate return to the fore, here, in that Greenleaf calls for business institutions to become "greater social assets," enhancing the communities in which they are based and not simply exploiting these communities' spending power.²⁰² This appears to be an invitation for the follower of Christ to meaningfully synthesize his or her kingdom perspective into their field of work. Profits *are* important in business; however, my contention is that they should be viewed as tools within business for the good of society, rather than simply the ends of business.

For God's kingdom to be established, and effective ministry enacted through the priesthood of all believers, the paradigms held within the marketplace need to shift towards a more socially aware perspective, if the Church's message about Jesus is to be taken seriously.

¹⁹⁹ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²⁰⁰ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²⁰¹ Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1977), chap. 4, Kindle.

²⁰² Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, chap. 4.

Human flourishing across all sectors of society, and which impacts multiple cultures, opens the hearts of these ‘nations on our doorstep’ to the kingdom message. Christian business owners and employees can help to drive this through the effective communication of God’s heart for humanity, which encapsulates the gospel message of Christ’s Kingship. This is something that can be done both within, and outside of, one’s business or company.

In his assessment of the Quaker movement under George Fox, Greenleaf states that what made the Quaker tradition so effective and durable was its assumed, and impressive, “level of responsibility for their society and its institutions.”²⁰³ He goes on to say that, “by the effort of those whom Fox inspired, the quality of some contemporary institutions, *notably commerce*, was markedly improved. [emphasis added]”²⁰⁴ This, I believe, runs concurrently with Townsend’s thoughts on new creation when he states that, “[N]ew creation, then, is the response by God’s people to the redemption by God through Jesus Christ and aligning ourselves to the expectations of that new creation.”²⁰⁵ Put another way, it suggests that every believer is called to live out and exemplify something of the new creation - or kingdom to come – reality that Christ paid for and inaugurated. As Kuypers states, “[W]hat was begun in the Garden of Eden over time is working towards the ultimate redemption and flourishing we read about in Revelation of the new heaven and new earth.”²⁰⁶ Quoting Messenger and Preece, Kuypers further suggests that the redemptive work of Jesus not only encompasses evangelism, but humanity working in harmony with creation, production, and sustenance.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, Kuypers also quotes Frost and Hirsch when she argues that not only do humans partner with God in His redemptive work in the world, but that in doing so, humanity takes it

²⁰³ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, chap. 7.

²⁰⁴ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, chap. 7.

²⁰⁵ Townsend, “New Creation: An Organizational Development Model for the Christian Organization.”
Lecture notes.

²⁰⁶ Heather Mearl Kuypers, “Integrating Faith and Work: A South African Business Leadership Case Study in Human Flourishing” (Master’s thesis, Trinity Bible College and Graduate School, 2020), 7.

²⁰⁷ Kuypers, “Integrating Faith and Work,” 7.

beyond theology or spirituality by reorienting missiology as well.²⁰⁸ This provides God's people with a "divine connection to daily actions,"²⁰⁹ where, I might add, the King instructs, guides and initiates effective ministry across all spheres of society, including one's work. There is, therefore, no room in a believer's worldview for Jesus to be King over all, and then for one's behaviour as an employee or business owner to not reflect that reality.

McKnight's second proposition, in terms of the kingdom narrative provided in scripture, and which forms part of his three-pronged approach to outlining one's understanding of Kingdom theology is that in the biblical account, "Israel doesn't want to rule for God in this world but wants to be like the world and rule like God."²¹⁰ He goes on to explain that "[F]rom Adam and Abraham to Samuel, God is King,"²¹¹ however, from the events explained in 1 Samuel 8v6-9²¹² and extending through verses 10-18, a human king begins to rule, which is "Plan B in God's eyes."²¹³ The point I want to draw from this is that humankind has inherently not deviated from this inclination, certainly even in the two thousand years after Christ's life, death and resurrection. The age-old problem of people wanting to relate and engage with society, and the earth at large, *on their terms*, is what continues to take place. This has produced the outcome in most marketplace environments where the world system of operating is in perpetual opposition to what God has instructed in scripture. What I want to direct the Church's attention to is what McKnight illustrates in his assessment that 'Plan B'

²⁰⁸ Kuypers, "Integrating Faith and Work," 7-8.

²⁰⁹ Kuypers, "Integrating Faith and Work," 8.

²¹⁰ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²¹¹ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²¹² 1 Samuel 6: 6-9 (New International Version) ⁶ But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. ⁷ And the Lord told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. ⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹ Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights."

²¹³ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

essentially becomes the story about David,²¹⁴ which is important when one looks at Christ's life and what scripture points to prophetically about the Messiah in the Old Testament.

Unlike his predecessor Saul, I see in David, a good king; however, his successors, including Solomon, illustrate a progressively worsening state of the monarchy in Israel.²¹⁵ It is only when Jesus is born into this world, and announced as the King Israel has been waiting for, that the fulfilment of the promise made to David in 1 Chronicles 17:14 is fulfilled.²¹⁶

Morphew presents a foreshadowing of Christ when he states that, "David's just rule will extend to all nations as the salvation of God reaches to the ends of the earth."²¹⁷ Morphew makes further allusions to this when he states the following about the Davidic monarchy:

The kingdom is now mediated through an anointed/messianic Davidic ruler who executes God's kingdom on earth on his behalf. The covenant is elevated through the promise of an unbroken, eternal monarchy... The covenant benefits are manifest in the golden age of the monarchy under David and Solomon.²¹⁸

What I am essentially highlighting in this point is that Israel received what it wanted, a human king like the nations around them; yet, God was still at work establishing His rule and reign through a king - David - who, although not without fault, would lead Israel according to God's own heart.²¹⁹

What I perceive is God ultimately ruling through the human king He would establish, as the prototype for the messianic King to come. Israel enjoyed this reality under what Morphew terms the "golden age of the monarchy under David and Solomon."²²⁰ The nation experiencing what can only be described as a blessed existence. This does not, of course,

²¹⁴ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²¹⁵ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²¹⁶ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3. See also 1 Chronicles 17:14 (New International Version) "I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever."

²¹⁷ Morphew, *Breakthrough*, chap. 3.

²¹⁸ Morphew, *Breakthrough*, chap. 4.

²¹⁹ 1 Samuel 13: 14 and Acts 13: 22 (New International Version)

²²⁰ Morphew, *Breakthrough*, chap. 4.

include the years under Solomon's reign where things began to degrade in terms of his character and pursuit of God. However, as 1 Kings 4 alludes to, Israel enjoyed the closest thing to the *shalom* of God, which is "the totality of the good life that results when Yahweh rules a nation,"²²¹ under Solomon's reign. This is a foreshadowing of Christ who would take it a step further in that as God, come in human form, He rules and reigns in and through His Church, which has been mandated with taking His message to the nations and bringing the *shalom* of God to communities, businesses, and regions into which it ministers. Ultimately, in concluding this point, what McKnight is illustrating is that things do go horribly wrong when God is not held in highest esteem and allowed to rule and reign in and through His people. Morphew's summation of the 'golden era' under David and Solomon is a message for the Church to learn from, and hopefully inspire believers to take the message of God's Kingdom into their spheres of influence so that the *shalom* of God might be experienced by those 'nations on our doorstep,' people with whom one shares office space.

In view of this, and before I present McKnight's third proposition, I would like to briefly sum up what this chapter has outlined to this point. God's initial plan, 'Plan A' in terms of the kingdom narrative, was for Him to rule through Israel. There would be no human king involved. This is what the Old Testament presents from Adam to Abraham and through to Samuel. Secondly, as McKnight puts it, "Plan B was ideally David and then also an Israelite king ruling (and usually not very well because humans don't "do" God right)."²²² This brings me to McKnight's third proposition which is that in Jesus, "God returns to Plan A because in Jesus God now rules once again."²²³ As McKnight further states, "this is the kingdom of God as it was before Samuel's fateful request [to institute a human king] and God's

²²¹ Morphew, *Breakthrough*, chap. 4.

²²² McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²²³ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

accommodation to Israel.”²²⁴ However, in Christ, God’s divine rule is once more established, and it is also modelled on David. The enacted, inaugurated eschatology that Morphew defines as Jesus’ primary message and mission²²⁵ begins, in my understanding, with McKnight’s statement about Christ’s announcement. This was that in Him, “God’s rule is invading the land and challenging the corrupted rule of human kings.”²²⁶ In Jesus, the ideal Davidic king alluded to in the Old Testament prophets, has now arrived; and, furthermore, the mandate that was on Israel to reach the nations has been fulfilled in Him, since He is “all of Israel’s major leaders and more.”²²⁷ Before I turn to an evaluation of the implications of God’s Kingdom for the marketplace, I will briefly summarize McKnight’s emphasis on the major elements pertaining to Christ’s rule and reign. These are that firstly, God alone is King; secondly, God is now ruling in King Jesus; thirdly, Israel and the Church now live under the rule of King Jesus; fourthly, forgiveness is granted through King Jesus, the Saviour and; lastly, the rule of Christ will be complete in the final kingdom.²²⁸

In his description of a critical turning point in the trajectory of his business, one which saved his company from bankruptcy, van Niekerk outlines in his book, *Doing Business with Purpose*, the moment when it became clear to him that inviting God into his own ‘business story’ took the control out of his hands. He says, “[L]ittle did I realise that my previous corporate authority had been stripped away to be replaced in time by a new-found Power. A power way beyond my own expectations. A power not my own, but accessible to me in my weakness.”²²⁹ The ‘golden era’ Morphew alludes to under David and Solomon’s rule in 1 Kings 4,²³⁰ where the entire nation of Israel enjoyed prosperity, could be superimposed onto

²²⁴ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²²⁵ Morphew, *The Kingdom Reformation*, 408.

²²⁶ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²²⁷ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²²⁸ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, chap. 3.

²²⁹ Francois van Niekerk, *Doing Business with Purpose... Beyond Success to Significance* (Cape Town: Shumani Mills Communications, 2019), 35.

²³⁰ 1 Kings 4: 20-34 (New International Version)

what van Niekerk states later in his book. He says, “I hope to see global progress towards a vastly improved and more equitable upliftment of the destitute... For this to be realised, each business corporation will have to promote a balanced form of co-operation between itself and society.”²³¹ There is a servant-heartedness in van Niekerk’s approach, and expressed by Osmer when he states that in Jesus, the “embodiment of God’s royal rule” is expressed in the form of a servant.²³² Christ, in His humanity, redefined the nature of power and authority by taking the form of a servant and teaching His disciples that this is “fundamental to the mission of the community [He established].”²³³ The business foundation that van Niekerk began currently has God as the majority shareholder.²³⁴ In my understanding, van Niekerk is one example of a successful businessman, ‘a king *like* David or Solomon in the marketplace,’ allowing God to use him powerfully for the advancement of His kingdom globally, and due to him adopting the position of a servant, as Jesus did.

This contrasts with the ultimate outworking of David and Solomon’s reign, where the allure of power inevitably caused pain and suffering under their rule. Profits, according to van Niekerk, are for distribution according to what God instructs, and not for the enrichment or self-promotion of the people involved, but instead for their stewardship.²³⁵ It is an approach to business that embraces philanthropy, social upliftment, and overall stewardship of the environment. In van Niekerk, I perceive an individual who has submitted himself to the supreme lordship of Jesus, and like David and Solomon to a point, allowed God to effectively rule and reign not just in his ‘realm’ of business, but in his life altogether. This is essentially the premise upon which this thesis rests.

²³¹ Van Niekerk, *Doing Business with Purpose*, 137.

²³² Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), chap. 4, Kindle.

²³³ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, chap. 4.

²³⁴ Van Niekerk, *Doing Business with Purpose*, 69.

²³⁵ Van Niekerk, *Doing Business with Purpose*, 126.

The Missional Implications of Kingdom Theology for the Marketplace

In his book, *Doing Spirituality*, Venter states that for the Christian “only one thing in life is needed,” and that is, “to be conformed to the likeness of God’s Son, Jesus Christ.”²³⁶ Venter further makes the comment that, “[T]o be a theologian meant *interactive knowledge* of God through relationship - to ‘pray truly’ – as lived and taught by Jesus and his apostles.”²³⁷ Harking back to what I mentioned in this paper, that the Church is to engage with society as an empowered people joining God on His mission, I am now going to evaluate the missional implications of Kingdom theology for the marketplace, based on four categories outlined by Venter. He states that firstly, the kingdom always comes through *power encounter*, where “[T]he Spirit’s power defeats Satan’s power, bringing the new Exodus of salvation, healing, deliverance, and new creation.”²³⁸ This is to happen through the local church, as it is empowered by the Spirit of God, in all spheres of life. The relevance of this for the marketplace, in terms of the church’s missional mandate, is to acknowledge that Jesus taught approximately 87% of His parables, and performed 93% of His miracles within the marketplace context; and, furthermore, 100% of the twelve men he selected to lead after Him were ‘marketplace people.’²³⁹ Every problem and test within the marketplace environment becomes an opportunity for God to “show his power and grace – creating testimonies out of trials,” as Power and Forster state.²⁴⁰ Power encounters need not, therefore, remain within the context of the local church meeting alone.

²³⁶ Alexander F. Venter, *Doing Spirituality: The Journey of Character Formation to Christlikeness* (South Africa: Kingdom Treasures, 2019), 8.

²³⁷ Venter, *Doing Spirituality*, 95.

²³⁸ Venter, *Doing Spirituality*, 95.

²³⁹ Graham Power and Dion Forster, *Transform Your Work Life: Turn Your Ordinary Day into an Extraordinary Calling* (South Africa: Unashamedly Ethical, 2019), chap. 12, Kindle.

²⁴⁰ Power and Forster, *Transform Your Work Life*, chap. 2.

The second category that Venter addresses is that true kingdom mission carries with it an element of *personal transformation*.²⁴¹ He states that “the missional purpose of the Church is to be God’s community of kingdom formation and spirituality,” that emphasizes the need for character transformation in order to rule and reign with Christ in this age and the age to come.²⁴² Whetstone addresses this when he states that a Christian’s “spiritual-mindedness gives purpose and meaning to life and all of life’s spheres, including the workplace.”²⁴³ Personal transformation for the believer, as outlined by Venter, will create what Whetstone describes as “a spiritual foundation” upon which the Christian can meaningfully engage in the workplace and impact employees and colleagues for Christ.²⁴⁴

This leads to Venter’s third category which is *social transformation*, highlighting the kingdom’s power to impact and reconcile people.²⁴⁵ Venter states that, “[P]eople are reconciled to God and one another – as in racial, cultural, political, economic, gender and generational reconciliation.”²⁴⁶ Whetstone also argues for this when he says that according to Micah 6v8, “[the believer’s] ethic is to seek to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with [his/her] God,” as well as to walk in “a moral concern for community, social justice, and environmental stewardship.”²⁴⁷ Siemens comments on this when she describes the potential effectiveness of many Christians in the marketplace by stating that, “[T]hey move naturally in their own professional circles, understanding the dominant jargon and worldview,” thereby placing them in the perfect position to effect meaningful change and kingdom

²⁴¹ Venter, *Doing Spirituality*, 110.

²⁴² Venter, *Doing Spirituality*, 110-111.

²⁴³ J. Thomas Whetstone, *Leadership Ethics and Spirituality: A Christian Perspective* (Indiana: WestBow Press, 2013) chap. 8, Kindle.

²⁴⁴ Whetstone, *Leadership Ethics and Spirituality*, chap. 8.

²⁴⁵ Venter, *Doing Spirituality*, 111.

²⁴⁶ Venter, *Doing Spirituality*, 111.

²⁴⁷ Whetstone, *Leadership Ethics and Spirituality*, chap. 8.

advancement.²⁴⁸ In other words, a believer's expertise and familiarity with a specific industry positions them for effective ministry into that environment.

Sherman outlines a definition of what it means to live righteously when she discusses the Hebrew meaning of the phrase 'the righteous.' She goes on to explain that the word is *tsaddiqim*, which essentially defines the follower of God as someone who's general orientation in life is to live "Godward... always giving God his rightful place."²⁴⁹ Keller defines the *tsaddiqim* as someone "who conducts all relationships in family and society with fairness, generosity, and equity."²⁵⁰ I propose that based on these interpretations of what it means to live righteously, social transformation, as Venter has defined it, is not to be solely the realm of the non-profit organization, government entity or organized local church, but the 'priesthood of all believers' outlined by the Apostle Peter in his epistle.²⁵¹ This is a necessary part of the worldview the Church needs to adopt in terms of its influence within the marketplace.

Venter's fourth category is *world mission* which is the goal of "kingdom advancement through evangelism and church planting, and Christian missions of all kinds, to all nations, till Christ returns."²⁵² World mission, across all sectors, creates the opportunity for power encounter. Power encounter results in the personal transformation of the believer, and new converts, through said power encounter. This then produces within the growing body of Christ the desire to see social transformation and restoration in the world, which subsequently

²⁴⁸ Ruth E. Siemens, "Tentmakers Needed for World Evangelization," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (California: William Carey Library, 1992), D-249. "Many Christians do effective evangelism in the secular world, but cannot see themselves as formal missionaries. God has called them to be his ministers in the financial, commercial, industrial and scientific worlds, in secular education, health care, athletics or fine arts, etc. They move naturally in their own professional circles, understanding the jargon and world view. Their modelling of the Christian life in the workplace may be the most important reason for tentmaking, because it can transform individuals and churches."

²⁴⁹ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 2.

²⁵⁰ Keller, *Generous Justice*, chap. 1.

²⁵¹ 1 Peter 2: 1-25 (New International Version)

²⁵² Venter, *Doing Spirituality*, 111.

‘loops’ back to the need for world mission on all levels, and within all spheres of society.²⁵³ I believe that once the Church understands its authority and mandate under Christ, it will no longer leave the majority of the missional work to be done in the hands of the few ‘paid professional pastors’ who are already heavily burdened with the responsibility to disciple their congregations. In closing, I would like to remind the reader once more of what Kingdom theology entails. Morphew states that in Jesus’ teaching, the kingdom was illustrated as being near, present, delayed and, in the future. Furthermore, in Christ, “the power of the future age broke through... into the present,” and that “[B]efore this age has finally ended, the future age has already begun” in Christ.²⁵⁴ This means that for the church to carry on the ministry of Christ, and live as a ‘kingdom now but not yet’ people, which was evident throughout His life, it too must pick up His mantle and witness in the world. The Church must confront human injustice and work towards realising the positive social implications of the gospel,²⁵⁵ which I assert cannot exclude bringing one’s faith in Christ to the marketplace.

²⁵³ Venter, *Doing Spirituality*, 111-112.

²⁵⁴ Morphew, *The Kingdom Reformation*, 409.

²⁵⁵ Morphew, *The Kingdom Reformation*, 409-410.

Conclusion

What I have endeavoured to undertake in this paper, is to create a framework, against which further work can be done, to assist the Church in achieving its mandate to make disciples of all nations. I have drawn on the depth of work done in the varying spheres of theology concerned with mission, creation, God's temple, and the workplace, to ground the thinking around Kingdom theology's value to advancing God's mission for humanity and the earth. To draw from the work conducted by Sherman once again, and which has been commented on already in this work, "the prevalence of an individualistic understanding of the gospel," is the number one reason why so many believers fail to take their faith into their spheres of influence.²⁵⁶ What I have endeavoured to achieve, in my presentation of these themes, is to eliminate the 'sacred/secular' divide that has dominated much of the Church's thinking and approach to ministry, especially in the Western context. As Sherman puts it, the gospel message has predominantly been "too narrow,"²⁵⁷ and it is for this reason that I undertook to broadly paint a picture of the breadth of scriptural understanding for why the Church should cease from maintaining an insular culture, and embrace its design as a 'going' people. As Sisodia, Sheth and Wolfe state, in their quotation of Pink, "'In turbulent times,' he says, 'people get serious about finding meaning.'"²⁵⁸ My approach in this paper has been to stimulate the thinking of Christians in terms of where their role in such turbulent times can best be expressed in service to Jesus Christ.

What Sisodia, Sheth and Wolfe go on to confirm is that companies are increasingly being held accountable for humanistic as well as economic performance, and that as the "ultimate value creators," companies should seek to "create emotional, spiritual, social, cultural,

²⁵⁶ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 3.

²⁵⁷ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chap. 3.

²⁵⁸ Raj Sisodia, Jag Sheth and David Wolfe, *Firms of Endearment: How World-Class Companies Profit from Passion and Purpose* (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2014), chap. 1, Kindle.

intellectual, ecological, and, of course, financial value.”²⁵⁹ This is the reason why I adopted the approach to investigate the theologies relating to mission, creation, God’s temple and work, within the kingdom framework I’ve outlined. One’s theology concerning mission can exist almost in isolation to the other three, as it has been sufficiently defined over the centuries and encapsulates the full breadth of God’s heart for His Church. It has also been adequately outlined for the purposes of this paper. However, in terms of where the global marketplace’s accountability might lay, in terms of the kingdom narrative in scripture, companies cannot ignore the creation narrative - which addresses both societal and natural environments - in terms of God-honouring stewardship and responsibility. Furthermore, the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual component to humanity’s existence, in my opinion, cannot be addressed without a proper grasp of the concepts relating to God’s temple and the Spirit dwelling in and amongst His people. To link these two categories of thought, my position has been to show that God’s creation and His temple are inextricably intertwined, and therefore the Church’s engagement in the world must have this as its foundation for kingdom advancement and theological awareness. I am aware that much of what I have presented in this paper is an introduction into the much broader wealth of information pertaining to this topic. In my opinion, one cannot adequately unearth the richness of what Kingdom theology offers without an understanding of the associated theological disciplines I have presented.

An area of further study that I believe this paper might stimulate, and which is of personal interest, includes the need for the Church to revisit its understanding of the creation narrative, especially in terms of the perceived opposing positions of science and religion. I have not been able to adequately address this topic here; however, I believe it offers an opportunity to engage meaningfully with the academic community in a way that does not ostracize or promote a spirit of condemnation from either school of thinking in this regard. There is much

²⁵⁹ Sisodia, Sheth and Wolfe, *Firms of Endearment*, chap. 1.

that has been written about the creation narrative in scripture, although I have not personally come across much that explores its relevance to the marketplace and Kingdom theology.

Another potential area of study that warrants further investigation is the role that believers can play in contributing towards business ethics and stewardship. I propose that not enough has been discussed concerning the motives behind *why* the Church should engage in business, and *how* it can deliver meaningful economic and societal impact without potentially ostracizing those people it engages with who are not yet ready to receive the message about Christ. Followers of Christ have the means to humbly and lovingly work alongside, and minister to, their unbelieving neighbours and colleagues, as the Spirit leads them.

I conclude this paper with the notion that if secular authors are recognizing the need for businesses to adopt the principles of good corporate governance, human flourishing, and environmental stewardship – among many others - then the church is perfectly placed to influence and advance these marketplace environments by leading the way in its understanding of God's kingdom and the human flourishing that results from its implementation. I believe that it is the marketplace, influenced and impacted by the Church, that has the potential for the greatest good of a society and nation; and, that the follower of Christ, intent on living his or her life in radical obedience to God's word and the example set by Jesus, can meaningfully engage in the missional mandate on the Church from within these environments primarily. All of God's people are called to live all the time under His supreme rule and reign. This understanding of the Kingdom of God cannot but raise the effective engagement of the Church with the world it is trying to reach.

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