

SPIRIT, KINGDOM AND POSTMODERN CITY

The Kingdom of God is the highest good. The idea of God is the highest and most comprehensive conception in philosophy; the idea of the Kingdom of God is the highest and broadest idea in sociology and ethics

(Rauschenbusch, 1916:59)

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In this chapter, I propose a new evangelical understanding of the Kingdom of God as centre of a web of belief about transforming goals. This is a conversational response to themes of postmodernism in Chapter 7.

Kingdom, City, Spirit

The ultimate reign of God is integrally connected with the coming of the city of God in the final chapters of Revelations.

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband (Rev 21:2).

This bride, has been the hope of the saints, Abraham looked forward to “a city whose builder and maker is God” (Heb 11:10), a city prepared for his faithful people (11:16). “For here, we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come” (13:14). The church is the bride in preparation, the city being built. The city is preceded in verse 1 with the broader context of the universal Kingdom:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no longer any sea (Rev 21:2).

This quotation above by John, from Isaiah 65:17, is not of a creation *ex nihilo*, but a transformation. As in Genesis 1, so in this revelation of the eternal Kingdom, environmental

structure precedes life-forms. But it appears to be metamorphosis, for he goes on, in verse 5, “Behold I make all things new.” Paul, in Romans 8, tells us that “the whole creation groans, waiting our adoption as sons,” thus this metamorphosis is integrally related to our salvation. The Kingdom involves a renewal of creation, a transformation of world and universal orders. In reference, perhaps, to the waters of primeval chaos of Genesis 1, he then states, “there was no longer any sea,” and the transformation of chaos is complete.

Then is voiced a grand climax, for the crowning of the creator, his taking up his reign on earth, his Kingship, has to do with his presence with the created social creature,

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with humanity and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev 21:1-3).

“The dwelling of God, (or the tabernacle, or tent Gk: *skene*) is with humanity.”¹ This is an allusion to the Hebrew *shekinah*, God’s immanence both in the world and among people. It is an echo² of the new covenantal promise of Ezek 37:27, “My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people” (see Ezek 34:30; 36:28; Zech 2:11a; Lev 26:11-12). Paul links this dwelling of God among people to believers being the temple of the living God, the temple of the Spirit of God.³ The linkage of people to city is perhaps a reflection on Ps 46:4, where the phrase “city of God” parallels “dwelling place of the most high” (Aune, 1998:1122).

Kingdom as Centre of a Web of Belief

This framework of the Kingdom of God most recently has enabled breakthroughs for Evangelicals in their involvement in transformation.⁴ The theme of the city of God and framework of the Kingdom are considered here, firstly because they are both common integrative biblical themes, used by movements across history. Secondly, they are accessible, potentially popular and open up study of classic Christian theologies to Pentecostals, since they both include pneumatology. The work of the Spirit is integral to entrance, expansion and the nature of the Kingdom. The Kingdom includes the theme of the “people of God,” an existing strongly held foundational theme for a “Christ against Culture” movement.

Up to this point, while the *Kingdom of God* theme is now familiar and discussed among New Zealand Pentecostal leaders, it has failed to provide broad mobilisation of the Pentecostal movement, perhaps largely because the breadth of the theme has not been extensively taught among Pentecostals. I have examined other theologies of city, justice, liberation theologies, covenants and the cosmic Christ—but these can be subsumed under the Kingdom. They also lack a popular base within these movements.

1 This theme has been developed from the Pentateuch through the writings and prophets.

2 In the field of intertextuality, the concept of ‘allusion’ and ‘echo’ are most useful for study of passages in Revelation. There are few direct quotations of Old Testament passages in over 473 verses in Revelations that are directly related to Old Testament passages (Moyise, 1995).

3 Moltmann examines the relationship of the Holy Spirit and *Shekinah* in detail (1991: 47-51).

4 See various discussions on the Kingdom perspective of Glasser (particularly McQuilken) and their influence on Evangelicals in Van Engen (1986).

The theme appears in Genesis,⁵ though the terminology begins during the monarchy of David (Psa 45:6; 103:19; 145:11). It was the central theme in Jesus' teaching, beginning with Mark's use of it as a summary of his focus (Mark 1:15) (Beasley-Murray, 1986:71). Paul is last heard of in Rome, "preaching the Kingdom of God" (Acts 28:31). The end of the Scriptures is about the return of the King to bring his reign. It recurs uncannily in almost every generation.

This theme, in contrast to the dispensationalism of fundamentalist groups (hence breaking its interpretative power), assumes that the Scriptures are a unity.⁶ While there is differentiation as to God's activity at different phases of redemption history or expressed in different narratives, this does not mean that God changes in personality, style or fundamentals. God's interventions at every phase of redemption history are consistent. The discontinuities at the incarnation, the cross and the *parousia*, are subject to the continuities of his nature.

But a further step is needed beyond existing, culturally limited,⁷ evangelical theologies of the Kingdom of God, such as by Bright (1953), Ladd (1959) or sociologist Kraybill's more socially aware Anabaptist perspective (1978). We need to achieve a more comprehensive biblical understanding of the nature of the Kingdom as involving the socio-economic, spiritual and political.

Charles Van Engen (1998), reflects on missions theologian emeritus, Glasser's *The Good News of the Kingdom* (1993) (which in turn draws on Ladd (1959) and in turn Oscar Cullman's "Kingdom present and not yet" (1962)). He indicates four things the theme of the Kingdom has done or evangelical missiology:

- The Kingdom of God concept broadens missiological reflection beyond a predominantly individualised and vertical understanding of salvation to a holistic view of the interaction of the church and world.
- Glasser's Kingdom missiology breaks the impasse between evangelism and social action that has plagued Evangelicals.
- Kingdom-of-God missiology creates the possibility of new conversation among Evangelicals, representatives of the conciliar movement, Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Pentecostals and charismatic.
- Glasser's own personal pilgrimage made him deeply aware of the social and political implications of the Kingdom of God that challenges all governments, all forms of racism and all social structures that would seek to deify themselves.

Independently, Dyrness (1983/1991) working in Manila, and Bellingham in Bangladesh and India (1987), have grappled with relating the Kingdom to the social realities

5 Beasley-Murray, in *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, begins the theme by examining OT theophany (1986). He points out that while the terminology Kingdom occurs only nine times and King as it refers to the Lord only forty-one times, emphasis on the ruling activity of God occurs from the time of the patriarchs (18).

6 I follow Daniel Fuller's (1992) approach beyond the popular classifications of 7 dispensational periods to lay a foundation for unity within a canonical (evangelical) view of the Scriptures. This is logical, given Evangelical's high view of revelation..

7 Middle class, economically secure, politically stable, highly educated, white American.

of poverty and oppression. The most lucid evangelical statements I have read are in Howard Snyder's *A Kingdom Manifesto* (1997). Two decades of theological conferencing by Chris Sugden and Vinay Samuel and the Transformation network produced *Mission as Transformation* (1999), with several chapters on the Kingdom. This and Glasser's teaching at Fuller have influenced the Latin American Theological Fraternity and Petersen in Latin America (1996:209-224). Brian Hathaway developed a New Zealand church-based missiology of the Kingdom (1990) reflecting these influences.

Nevertheless, with the exception of the latter, the evangelical understandings lack the comprehensiveness of social gospel conceptualisations of the Kingdom by evangelists significant in the early World Council of Churches and liberal social gospel theology, such as Rauschenbusch (1907/1968); Kagawa of Japan in *Christ and Japan*, (1934); E. Stanley Jones in India with *The Unshakeable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person* (1972); or H. Richard Niebuhr of the US (1937/1988).

Continuity and Discontinuity of the Kingdom

OT Intervention; NT Invasion

In the Old Testament, the reign of God was acknowledged and frequently he intervened in situations, applying the social, economic and political principles of his Kingdom (first part of Fig. 14). Yet the presence of God was not with humankind, his Spirit did not dwell with men and women. Thus in the times of Samson and the judges, he exercised his rule as the Spirit came upon chosen individuals for the duration of each crisis.

Then Isaiah, in the Servant Psalms, prophesies of the Servant of the Lord who would exercise his ministry through the eternal anointing of the Spirit (Isa 42:1-14; 61:1-3). This is what differentiates the New Testament from the Old — the small baby in a little manger in an insignificant town, surrounded by a host of angels, shepherds and wise men. The King has come! The Kingdom of God has invaded the Kingdom of the ruler of this world. The Kingdom is now in the midst of us! First in the Christ and then in his body, the Spirit dwells among humanity!

In the Old Testament, the King *intervened* in the life of Israel. Now he has *invaded*! His strategy? Throughout the whole world he has set up small bands of men and women (churches) at warfare with Satan, the ruler of this age. In the narratives of these guerrilla units, the principles and values of the Kingdom are demonstrated (2nd part of Fig. 14).

The Holy Spirit as First Fruits of a Future Kingdom

These principles are manifested through the power of the Spirit in transformed believers. Stronstad (1984) indicates the centrality of the anointing of the Spirit on Christ, expanded into the outpouring of the Spirit on the charismatic first church, as the integrating centre of the Kingdom in the two volume Luke-Acts story.

But the Kingdom is also still to come. Half of the parables of the Kingdom are of a present Kingdom and half of a future Kingdom.⁸ Jesus came the first time, humbly,

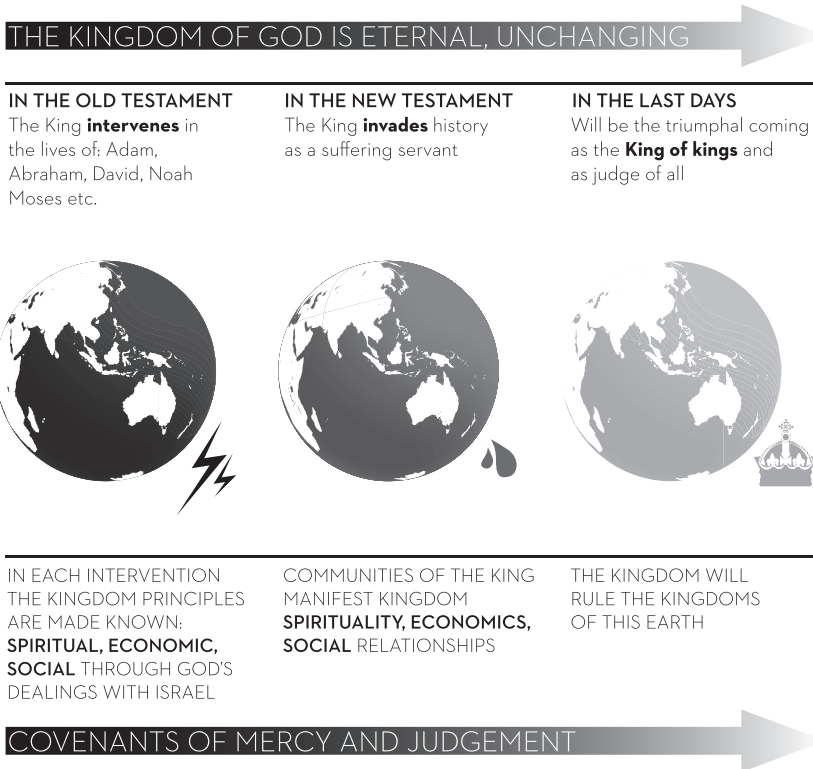
8 Beasley-Murray (1986) documents these extensively. This duality (developed from Oscar Cullman (1962)) is the central thesis of Ladd's Kingdom theology that has influenced many other evangelical theologians in their progressions from fundamentalism to a holistic gospel (1959; 1974)

quietly as foretold in the four Servant Psalms of Isaiah, not as judge but as servant. He brought his Kingdom into the world. One day he will return again, to break the Kingdoms of this world and establish the rule of his Kingdom forever ((Dan 2:31-35), third part of Fig. 14).

So we enjoy a taste of its blessings here. We “have tasted of the powers of the age to come” (Heb 6:5), through the Holy Spirit . That is a power and conflict-related experience:

But if I cast out spirits by the finger of God, then the Kingdom of God is come to you (Luke 11:20).

FIG. 14: THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS INTEGRATING BIBLICAL THEME



It Is A Kingdom Present...And Not Yet!

Fig.14 indicates eternal consistencies of the Kingdom (and the covenants) and its social, spiritual and economic principles. These are contrasted with the differences in the relationship of the Kingdom of God to humanity in the Old Testament, the New Testament and after the parousia. In the Old Testament he intervenes but does not dwell. The New Covenant is of an indwelling God, choosing to suffer as servant, creating communities that model social, spiritual and economic principles. After the judgment he will rule the earth.

Sometimes, the Spirit restores our bodies through healings, though usually we have to wait for his coming when we will receive new bodies (I Cor 15:50). He gives us power over the evil one by his Spirit, but “Satan is not yet cast into the place prepared for him.” At times we see clearly, as the Spirit of Truth guides us, but mostly we “see in a mirror, darkly.” “On that day we will see him as he is.” This imperfection means that much of what we do is incomplete, a *sign* of the fullness of the future Kingdom.⁹

Discipleship, Response to the Kingdom

Discipleship, *our human response to the Kingdom*, is a significant theme among Evangelicals, but has been disassociated from the Kingdom. It has become an extension of evangelistic motifs, popularised by the Navigators as methodologies for post-conversion sanctification, as they worked with Billy Graham in the 1950’s. Its reinterpretation, if we are to understand the fullness of the Kingdom, is one key to an evangelical theology of transformation. Fig. 15, in a new way, expands discipleship from classic evangelical holiness motifs to its fuller meaning spiritually, economically and socio-politically. Foundational aspects of each of these three arenas and their relationship to the work of the Spirit are examined next.

The starting point is the common evangelical understanding of discipleship as the human “spiritual” response to acknowledge the King, to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. Jesus left behind him the indwelling Holy Spirit in the believer, the incarnate presence of God as against his being wholly other. Indeed we cannot enter the Kingdom unless we are born again of the Spirit (John 3:1-16). Jesus did not leave us comfortless, but promised the Holy Spirit (John 14:1-7). Acts demonstrates the centrality of the work of the Holy Spirit in advancing the Kingdom.

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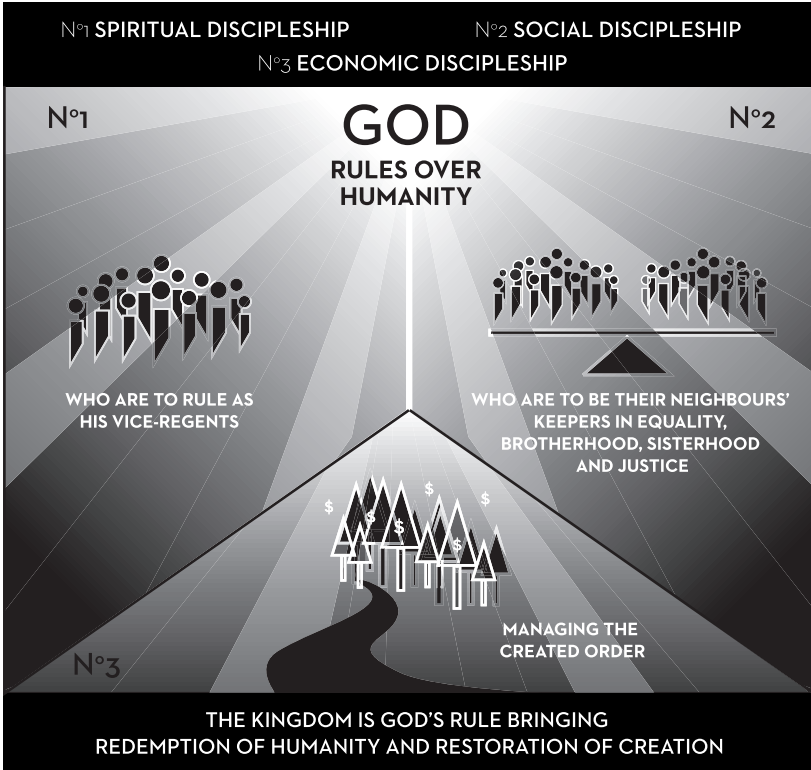
But that hope is defined in Isaiah much more broadly than the simple indwelling of the Spirit as companion and comforter. The hope is defined as “justice for the nations,” established through the anointing of the Spirit (Isa 42:1-4).¹⁰ Jesus tells us to seek his Kingdom and his justice above all else, as a first principle of discipleship.

Disciples, Kingdom people, as a result of the indwelling Spirit, are also expansively proclamative. Because the Word was God, the communication of his being in person, we become communicating people as we enter into his being — with both word and deed being part of that communication. Jesus preached through word, deed and power, ruling over creation, for as he preached he “went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.” This he did in the “power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14,18). Mark 3:14 tells us quite simply that the twelve were “to be with him and to be sent out to preach, with power to cast out demons.

9 A dialogue of international evangelical, charismatic and Pentecostal theologians was developed in three consultations in 1998, 1990 and 1994 concerning the relationship of evangelism, justice and the work of the Spirit. Key themes are summarised in Samuel and Sugden (1999).

10 For example, Waldron Scott (1980), general director of the Worldwide Evangelical Fellowship, clearly defined for Evangelicals the centrality of justice as goal based on exegeses of the Servant Psalms.

FIG. 15: DISCIPLESHIP RESPONSE TO A SPIRITUAL-ECONOMIC-SOCIO-POLITICAL KINGDOM



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Fig. 15 indicates three sets of relationships between King, people and created order within the Genesis account. Obedient human response to the King is known as discipleship. The first two relationships, God-human, God-human-land are primarily those of authority. The human-human relationships are primarily of equality. These define the primary arenas of “spiritual” discipleship, economic discipleship and socio-political discipleship. Holistic discipleship includes all three arenas.

Along with communication of the gospel by speech is the communication of character. The fruit of the Spirit makes men and women agents of transformation by their very being. They have presence because of the presence of the Spirit. Historically, the presence and character development have been related to the exercise of spiritual disciplines in “discipleship”.

- DISCIPLESHIP AS METHODOLOGY OR THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT? -

The Navigators developed from the American Evangelical centre represented by Billy Graham. Their theology builds off biblical texts to develop discipleship themes in individualistic terminology. As pietist descendants of Wesley, they have defined discipleship as the centrality of Christ, disciplines of quiet time, prayer, Bible Study, obedience and proclamation.

They began as a highly influential university movement and grew rapidly in New Zealand as a significant renewal movement that has sustained the faith of thousands in fundamentalist and evangelical churches, while largely operating outside of church structure.

As one indebted to this movement for the sustaining of these disciplines over 40 years, I would affirm these as a powerful basis for sustained spirituality, nevertheless they have limitations.

Holistic Discipleship

My first step beyond the rigidity of such disciplines to more comprehensive holistic discipleship was an understanding that Jesus defines the disciplines of the Christian life not by religious rituals, but as the character qualities in his manifesto in the Sermon in the Mount (meekness, poverty of spirit, purity of heart and so on) (Grigg, 1979; 1980). Paul, the apostle, devotes the majority of his teaching not to religious methods, but to character issues.

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The second step, was an understanding that these are the work of the Spirit. In the overwhelming presence of the Spirit in revival contexts, these characteristics begin to manifest. Yet they require all the above human disciplines to be sustained. However, the emphasis of the Scriptures is on these being the fruit of the Spirit, rather than the fruit of human endeavour.

Thirdly, in Luke 14:26-33, Jesus himself defines discipleship in economic (part 2 of Fig. 15) and social terms (part 3 of Fig. 15) (Scott, 1980). For discipleship, the response to the Kingdom, is not simply a spiritual relationship with God (part 1 of Fig. 15).

At a missiological level, the most powerful way I have found to move people to this understanding has been through action involving Kingdom incarnation. For Jesus' first step of discipleship, his incarnation, is a historically central socio-economic-political subversive act, not simply a spiritual act. Luke 2, in its descriptions of the incarnation, reflects the Jewish understanding of the prophets in their denunciation of social sins. The Magnificat tells us how the incarnation places the locus of economic theory at the point of uplift of the poor. The incarnation was a profoundly social act, making identification or solidarity with the poor central to social action and placing the locus of Christian mission among the poor. The incarnation was a profoundly political act, defining godly politics as politics that serve the least important of society (Grigg, 1992a; Kraybill, 1978).

It is logical that any person filled with the Holy Spirit will tend to emulate these preferences in theologies of justice, incarnation and transformation. This supernaturally happens in revivals. Jonathan Edwards, the revivalist in his post-Great Awakening

Religious Affections (Edwards, 1742/2005), asks the question, “Where does one look for true signs of revival?” His answer – “In those who seek to relieve the poor”. As indicated in the diachronic survey, historically this has subverted economic, social and power structures towards good.

Incarnation among the poor confronts the powers. The preached Word results in confrontation with the powers. These two elements of incarnational and confrontational discipleship become crucial to its expansion into socio-economic political dimensions.

Jesus not only preached the presence of the Kingdom, he demonstrated that Satan’s works were destroyed (Matt 12:28). When the disciples came back enthusiastic because even the demons were subject to them, he tells them “I saw Satan fall like lightning from Heaven” (Luke 10:18). Finally he “triumphed over Satan in death.” Satan was rendered inoperative (I Cor 15:26; Heb 2:14). Thus spiritual warfare themes are integrally related to our understanding of the nature of the Kingdom and the clash of this Kingdom with the Kingdoms of this world, their economic, social and political issues.

Transformational theology is thus an expansion of discipleship, Kingdom oriented, incarnational, justice and character focused, proclamative in its central thrust and involves ongoing power confrontation with the Kingdoms of this world (Samuel & Sugden, 1999:xvi).

Discipleship as Communal

Discipleship is also communal, not simply individualistic. A significant theological shift occurs when Evangelicals grasp that Jesus’ commission was “to disciple the nations,” not just individuals, but to bring the nations (*ta ethne* = peoples) under his authority.

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- CHANGING THE MINDSET OF A NATION -

Since the 1980’s, Youth With a Mission (YWAM), a Pentecostal short term youth training mission, has become the biggest mission in New Zealand. It popularised Kuyper’s theology, as the ‘7 mind moulders’, looking at how to affect the mindset of a nation or city. Kuyper, a Christian theologian who became the prime minister of Holland early last century, worked extensively on the ‘spheres’ of Christian influence, building off Calvin’s Kingdom theology (1998a; 1998b). He, in turn, built from an Augustinian framework. An underlying concept is that ‘discipling the nations’ involves bringing not just individuals but nations under the reign of the Kingdom. This pattern of thinking has resulted in former YWAMers in parliament, as business leaders and in educational reform.

The Kingdom and Postmodernism

Defining the Kingdom

Dyrness uses a simple definition of the Kingdom of God, *God’s active, interventive rule over humankind and the creation*.¹¹ This rule has always existed and always will (indicated by the arrow in Fig. 15), defining the personal nature at the centre of the universe. While Genesis does not use the phraseology of the Kingdom of God, it lays the foundation — “*In the beginning, God...*” To speak of God’s creation is to remember that God

11 Definition after Dyrness (1983/1991), as he seeks to relate the Kingdom to third world social issues. Intervention is a community development phrase.

created all things. He rules and reigns from before the beginning. He is King of Creation.

This is integrally connected to revival. God's Spirit was the creative breath that formed the universe. The Spirit's voice has not stopped speaking. The Spirit continues to create. The universe is thus infused with the voice and the breath and the being of a personal God. This view follows Philo and Augustine, in that God is not dependent on that universe, nor is the universe God, but matter is infused with his being, his personality, his breath.¹²

He does not depend on the process of nature and history for his existence, but he does have purposes that can only be realised in nature and history (Bennett, 1941:39).

The Personality of Matter

I suggest that economic discipleship, the Christian response to fundamental postmodern questioning of rationalist materialism, beyond the transformation of Newtonian physics and the death of materialism into chaos theory or relativity, is based on an understanding of matter as infused with personality, the personality of the Spirit of God, spirit not of chaos, but of structured creativity - what the Scriptures call righteousness, wholeness, holiness. *Matter is not only, as Einstein derived, energy. Personhood is the source of the energy. Matter has an infusive personality. The universe at its heart has a personality.* Colossians 1:15-20, the grand song of the apostle about the great sovereignty of his Lord, speaks first of our Lord's creation, then of an integrational role, then of his immanence, his infusion of all in all. That song is central to our conversations with the postmodern city and the star-trek generation.

And that central personality of the universe is community, within which, the source of power and authority is the Father; the exercise of power is by the Holy Spirit. This creates a conversational space connecting with the search for creative power so central to many postmodern media productions. Relationship to the Holy Spirit as the essential creative power of the universe is central to charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity. This could place Pentecostalism at the centre of postmodern conversation. But only if it extends the conversation into the fullness of a Christian ecology and environmentalism.

The breath of God is also by nature expansive, as science has discovered in its conclusions of an infinitely expanding universe. It is the Spirit who is continually hovering over and creating cities, giving a basis for Christian involvement in all things related to construction of good cities and entrepreneurial business. These themes enable structural conversations with the post-star-trek generation that understands an expanding universe.

The Morality of the Physical World

Humanity inherits the responsibility to manage, husband, care, rule over this creation,¹³ to guard over something so preciously created by God's own breath. Our relationship to creation raises a major theological question. Since the creator is moral, his creation

12 It is beyond the scope of these paragraphs to enter into the debate about pantheism, panentheism etc. Since such debates have not been fully reconciled historically, either theologically or philosophically, I doubt that I can do it either. Not that they are unimportant, for each perspective has logical outcomes in terms of lifestyle.

13 Darragh gives a theological analysis of the range of ways we can relate to the earth (2000:150).

must also be moral. What is the moral nature of the material? Is the world good or evil, godly or demonic?

There are opposing scriptural streams that must be held in tension. On the one hand, the Scriptures are world-affirming. God made all things good. Even in humanity's sin they remain good, though the land is cursed and work is hard. God not only created, he also loves the world and sent his Son into the world as an incarnate being in material form, affirming the importance of that material existence. These statements form the basis of conversation with society about good work, fruitful agriculture, expanding economies, etc.

On the other hand, the Scriptures are world-denying.¹⁴ We are not "of" the world and are to separate from the world, the flesh and the devil. This fallen "world" (Gk: *Aeon* or present age) is the value system of society hostile against God. Rather than creation, the Scriptures are talking here of the derived sinful human culture of the world and demonic intrusions.

This tension is central to the metamorphosis of Evangelicalism under consideration. In seeking as part of our discipleship to "not love the world," to "not be conformed to this present age," Evangelicals in the early part of last century concluded that they should not be involved in the social, political and governmental issues of the world. Yet, St. John, tells us that "if we see our brother (or sister) in need, yet close our heart against them, how does God's love abide in us?" (1 John 3:17). According to the Old Testament concept of righteousness, right relationships with our brother are a sign of our right relationship with God. Our calling is to be "in the world but not of it."

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It is as if Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism were locked into a truncated spirituality. They have focussed only on the first two steps of Matthew Fox's (1983) reiteration of paradigms of spirituality, the four paths of delight (*via positiva*), letting go (*via negativa*), creativity (*via creativa*), and compassion (i.e., celebration and peacemaking (*via transformativa*)). But socio-economic discipleship in a postmodern city requires the release of creativity in the freedom and gifts of the Spirit (*via creativa*) and must move into this *via transformativa*. Socio-economic discipleship must engage the created world, enter into it after the manner of Christ, but separate from the values of the world of fallen human culture.

Beyond Inanimate Materialism

It is the empty modernist theory of inanimate materialism that is dead — not God. The new physics has blown apart the centrality of materialist doctrine. Relativity exposed the clockwork universe as shifting and warping. Chaos theory has replaced Newton's determinative machine. Chance has replaced causality. Solid matter has dissolved into apparently empty space seething with quantum activity. In its place, chaos theory has opened a future of creativity. Collaborative particles drive new forces (Davies & Gribben, 1991).

14 Few theological studies can match Hengel's *Property and Riches in the Early Church* (1974) for an exegesis and theology of this tension.

These changes in the underlying perception of matter mirror changes in production and the market economy. The physical materials in a silicon chip are negligible yet the information and creativity released are far more productive than the iron of steam engines that drove the industrial revolution. Human imagination and creativity has now become a major dimension of formerly mechanistic production in what is becoming known as knowledge economies.

That discovery opens up the possibility of conversation between those who know him who is creator and the wisdom of the universe¹⁵ and the children of the Silicon Valley generation, the children of those who developed the internet, DVD and iPod.

Economic Values: Human Dignity vs. Technological Dehumanization

Again in the area of economics, one could ask, to what extent Evangelicals have enabled society to respect the dignity of the human being. Jane Kelsey, in *Reclaiming the Future: New Zealand and the Global Economy* (1999), documented the effects of overly rapid commitment to the positive benefits of free trade with concomitant loss of jobs in several sectors, including 21,000 in the textiles and clothing sector, the loss of sovereignty over many of our national assets leading to increasing foreign debt and increase in inequity and insecurity.

It is apparent, in returning to New Zealand after a decade, that governments, year by year, have increased the levels of pressure on New Zealanders to produce. This has included the increase of employment, deliberate policies to force women into the workforce in order to increase productivity (Knight & Laugeson, 2005), yearly increase of the tax take, as well as the destruction of the power of the trade unions (developed to protect the poorest workers) and collective bargaining processes and the creation of an indebted student population.

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The reassertion of *human dignity* against such policies, which are based on assumptions of man the machine, woman the equal machine, is crucial for the sustaining of a just and good society. While there is no evidence of Evangelicals bringing these principles into the national legislative process, the stories in Chapter 15 each contain the application into the workplace of values of *the worth, the creativity, the dignity of each individual*. However as the stories of managers, they show an emphasis by Evangelicals on three of several major, economic themes of the Scriptures: *work, production and creativity*. These are paralleled by ministries from many churches to sectors of poor in the community, including almost every church in Auckland reaching out to migrants. These represent the search to apply two other biblical principles of *equity and redistribution*.¹⁶

The Biblical Critique of the Consumer Society

In a context of increasing differentials between rich and poor and expansion of indebtedness via credit card, postmodern discipleship cannot be less than economic, if it is to be true to Jesus' words. For example, following Jesus' simple statement that, "the cares of the world, the delight in riches and the desire for other things enter in and choke the Word (Mark 4:19)," classic Christian discipleship has developed another princi-

15 Expanded in Darragh (2000:133).

16 Brian Hathaway modelled this, both in theology and practice at Te Atatu Bible Chapel (1990).

ple in its *rejection of greed*, the accumulation of wealth and consumerism. The great transition away from this standard perhaps occurred with the failure of the puritans after Calvin, to keep regimentation on “profitable industry.” As Britain led the world into the new consumer and technological age, Bishop William Temple (1881-1942) (1942:29-34) indicates that the church for 150 years failed to sustain a consistent public critique of these sins. While Christian socialism and the social gospel, spoke to the issue of *redistribution of wealth*, they did not deal with the popular value systems of ordinary Christians with a call to the principles of *co-operative economics and simplicity*, without greed, in the midst of increasingly competitive systems.

This directly contrasts with earlier Calvinism, with its understanding of the *just use of resources for the common good, frugality, diligence* and their relationship to the emergence of capitalism.¹⁷ While we are enjoying *the expansion of wealth, the abolition of poverty and the freedom* of the middle class, we pay a price in the violation of other biblical principles of *stewardship, remaining debt-free and wealth for work* (vs. creation of paper money). One of those costs is the increasing debt burden of New Zealanders. What is a Kingdom response?

- LIBERTY TRUST: A VISION OF ESCAPING ECONOMIC BONDAGE -

One model that breaks the power of debt in New Zealand is Liberty Trust — a cooperative venture enabling people to place their money for housing into a common pool, then making no-interest loans from that pool to others, until all in the pool have received sufficient to escape bondage to bank interest. It was born in a vision received by nurse and then discussed with Bruce MacDonald, a New Life pastor, during the renewal and has operated since 1985, setting free 220 families from the banks.

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A Kingdom of Dignity: Redefining Humanness

A second response of the Kingdom to postmodernity is in the redefinition of humanness. Genesis indicates that not only does the created world reflect a good creator, so too the creature is a reflection, a mirror of his goodness. Jesus discusses the infinite worth of a person when he queries the cost of a sparrow and the size of the hairs of our heads and tells us that our Heavenly Father cares for each of us more than these details.

Initially humanity was created in all the glory of God’s image. The image is replaced by a fallen and damaged image, like the grotesque shapes of the poverty-stricken faces of the slums. Yet humanness is restored to that image by the presence of his glory upon us. This comes from the transforming Holy Spirit (II Cor 3:18). This is the end goal of discipleship.

These Kingdom presuppositions are the basis of Christian engagement in the major debates of biotechnology and psychology. Two stories illustrate this:

17 These are summarised in *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Rise of Capitalism* (Weber, 1980).