

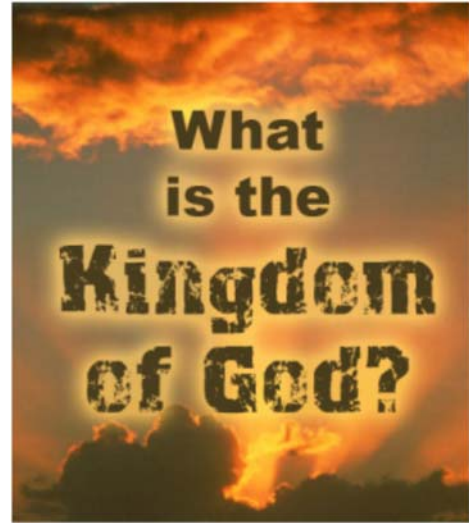
# CGGC eNews: Recalibrating to a Kingdom Focus—Part 4

June 17, 2016

*Misconceptions about the kingdom of God - the kingdom is not just an ecumenical attitude or activity.*

In order to recalibrate our focus on the kingdom of God, we have to get a clearer understanding of what the kingdom of God is and what it is not. The idea of the kingdom is not foreign to us as we talk about the kingdom a good bit. My concern is that we have ideas or understandings about the kingdom that are only partially accurate at best.

Many times, when we talk about the kingdom of God or being kingdom-minded, we're actually talking about being ecumenical (note: I'm using ecumenical in the sense of bringing about cooperation and unity of all believers in Christ, drawing from Jesus' prayer in John 17:21: "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."). Certainly, the kingdom of God is bigger than any one congregation or any particular denomination, and I believe that this is one of those "partially accurate" ways in which we understand the kingdom of God.



For example, from the very beginning of the Missional Leadership Initiative, we've had several participants who were not from CGGC congregations. When I'm asked "do you have to be a part of the CGGC to take part in the Missional Leadership Initiative", my answer has always been "no, we're very kingdom-minded with this." In saying that we're kingdom minded, I believe that God is not only at work in and through the CGGC, but in and through the United Brethren in Christ Church, the Nazarene Church, and a host of other denominational bodies as well. God's kingdom isn't defined by geography or denominational boundaries or loyalties.

I think it's a good thing when local congregations come to understand that we are not in competition with the Baptist church across the street or the Methodist church in our town or even (I know this is never an issue) the other CGGC congregation in our community or area! I even believe it's a significant step toward understanding the kingdom of God when His people begin to embrace the truth of Ephesians 6:12 "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." We're not in a battle against the Baptists, Lutherans or Brethren – they're not the enemy. Surprisingly, we're not even in a battle with those who don't embrace our faith – non-Christians, Muslims, Hindus and a long list of others – they're not the enemy either. Rather, we're in battle with Satan and his forces of evil – the kingdom of darkness.

In our time and culture that is growing increasingly post-Christian, I believe it will become more and more important to link arms and efforts with our fellow Jesus followers from whatever denominational banner they carry in order to carry out His mission in the world. That being said, if we think we're being "kingdom-minded" because our Methodist friends come to our ice cream social, I think we've missed what Jesus was praying for in John 17. The kingdom is much more than Baptists just learning to get along with Churches of God folk and vice versa. Let's seek His kingdom together.

What are some of the ways you sense we've misunderstood the kingdom of God?