

God's Strategy for Christchurch

Strategy

God has a strategy for fulfilling his plans for Christchurch.

Strategy is determined by objectives. God designed his strategy for Christchurch that will fulfil his purposes for the city, so to understand his strategy, we need to know what he has planned for it.

God's intends Christchurch to be a city where the fulfilment of his Kingdom is demonstrated to the nations of the world. Christchurch will be a model to the nations of a city living under the government of God.

The kingdom of man is rising to a climax throughout the world, but it is also running out of steam. It will eventually collapse under its own weight, spreading destruction and trouble all over the world. However, God's light shines strongest in the darkness, so he has a plan for this time for releasing his Kingdom during this time of distress. He wants Christchurch to be a light shining in the darkness that is coming.

Christchurch has a special role in God's plan. The Kingdom of God will emerge in a unique way in this city and be exported all over the world. The city will be a model of the kingdom that can be copied in other nations when they have turned back to God and are seeking his kingdom. The model that emerges in Christchurch will be copied all over the world. God wants to establish his Kingdom in Christchurch as a model for the nations. This has always been his objective for the city.

Canterbury Association

The city of Christchurch was established by the Canterbury Association. The aspiration of members of the association was to create in New Zealand a society based on faith and obedience to God, where Christian civilisation could be preserved from the forces destroying society in the old world. Their goal was to establish the Kingdom of God in Christchurch, at a time when darkness was sweeping the rest of the world. Austin Leigh described the vision in a meeting of the Association at Reading.

The Canterbury Settlement appears likely to further the efforts already made to extend the blessed influence of the *Redeemer's kingdom*, not only throughout New Zealand, but also in the surrounding islands of the Pacific Ocean.

This was a prophetic vision.

Robert Godley believed their calling was to establish the Kingdom of God in Christchurch.

He saw the Canterbury Settlement as a little leaven that would leaven the whole mass of the earth with the light and glory of the gospel of Jesus (Canterbury Association Papers, 1850-1852).

The Kingdom of God has always been central to God's purpose for Christchurch. Every Christian who is called to live in Christchurch should have an understanding of the Kingdom of God, or they will not fully understand what God is doing.

The Canterbury Association did not achieve its goal. Their project was troubled and corrupted by the pride and superiority that effects most of what happens in Christchurch. However, the calling they heard, but could not fulfil, has not been revoked.

David Pawson

In 1982, the UK evangelist David Pawson was invited to speak in New Zealand by Youth for Christ. He delivered a burden that God had given him for our nation in Wellington:

God wants New Zealand back.
He wants New Zealand back as
a nation that will be a model to the nations
of a people who are living under the government of God.
God intends New Zealand to be one of those nations
where he demonstrates his Kingdom.
God wants New Zealand back.
He is wanting his people to reign with him.
Don't wait for eternity to begin to reign with him
He is looking for a queen to reign with him now,
because New Zealand has a king and his name is King Jesus.
This country needs a change of government.
New Zealand is a nation that could be brought
under the government of God
and be a light to the nations.

This burden was not understood at the time, but there are three main points.

- God will establish his kingdom in New Zealand.
- This will be a model that other nations can follow.
- A great revival will advance the kingdom of God rapidly.

God wants to demonstrate his Kingdom in New Zealand. The first manifestation of the fulness of his kingdom will come in Christchurch. Dunedin will be a base from which the gospel goes out to the Asia and the Pacific. From, Christchurch the fullness of the Kingdom of God will spread out across the nation and into the world.

God wants to establish his Kingdom in Christchurch, as a model that the world can copy. The people of the world will come to Christchurch to see how the Kingdom of God should be done.

Spiritual Resistance

The Kingdom of God has faced strong spiritual resistance in Christchurch. The city is dominated by a strong controlling spirit. A corporate spiritual stronghold gets control of a city when the business, religious and political leaders all participate in a common sin enhance their leadership. This corporate sin allows the evil spiritual power behind it to gain control of the city.

Christchurch is dominated by a strong corporate spiritual stronghold that was given a place by the early religious and civic leaders. Its authority has not been withdrawn by current political, business and religious authorities, so it is as powerful as ever. This spiritual power does not want the Kingdom of God to emerge in the city, so it has attacked the city with a vengeance, using its spiritual power to constrain the church. This stronghold has even used an earthquake in an attempt to destroy the city.

Before God can bring the Kingdom of God to fullness in Christchurch, the spiritual stronghold controlling the city will have to be defeated. The broad base of this spirit's authority makes it hard to beat, so this will be a tough battle. We will not defeat this spiritual stronghold by tackling it head on, because it was given its place of power by the political, religious and business leaders that control the city. However, it can be undermined on the edges of the city in places where it is vulnerable because its authority is weaker.

God has a strategy to defeat the spiritual stronghold that controls Christchurch, but his people will have to obey his instructions to win victory.

Territory is Important

Territory is critical to God strategy because victory comes through holding territory. Kings needs territory. A king without territory is not a real king. If another ruler gains control of his territory, he is just a pretender.

The spiritual powers of evil understand the importance of territory. The powerful ones have become “principalities and powers” controlling nations and kingdoms by dominating the kings and political leaders with authority over them. Lesser spirits control smaller areas where they have been given authority.

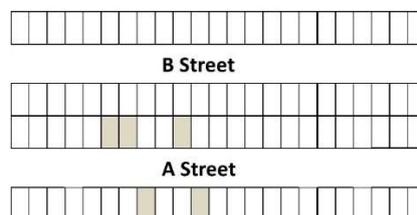
In the last couple of centuries, the church has lost interest in territory. Jesus now has many followers in the world, but very little territory where he has authority. There are very few places where he is king. Instead, his followers are scattered throughout territory that is controlled by the enemy. Because they live and work in enemy territory, they are often battered, beaten and robbed.

If there are no areas on earth that are evil-spirit free, then Jesus does not have a kingdom on earth. He just has people who have given allegiance to him living as outlaws in enemy territory. This should disturb us. Jesus needs followers who understand the importance of territory. To establish the Kingdom of God in Christchurch, God needs a church that can take spiritual control of territory for him and push the spiritual powers of evil out of it.

No matter how strong and army, it can rarely seize control of a big area of territory in one attack, because it will become over-extended. A better approach is to attack small pocket of territory, clear out all the opposition and establish strong defences, before pushing out from that stronghold to take more territory, and repeat the process of establishing control over it.

Establishing Spiritual Strongholds

Territory is critical to the Kingdom of God. He has given humans authority on earth, so he needs places where people have given him permission to work. To defeat the spiritual powers of evil, he needs places where his people have given the Holy Spirit full freedom to operate. A single house or a church building does not give him much scope. The Holy Spirit will be more effective, if his followers establish a stronghold in a group of dwellings close to each other (the shaded dwellings).



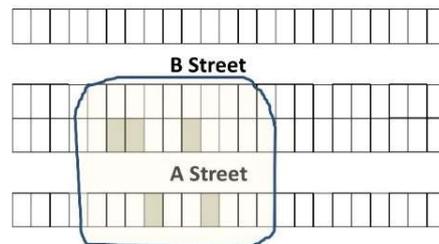
The advance of the kingdom of God needs followers of Jesus to establish spiritual strongholds where his authority is accepted. The best way to take territory for Jesus is a group of his followers living close together in one place. Two or three families living in close vicinity to each other in an area will have spiritual control over their homes. They can unite in spiritual warfare to force all evil spirits out of the surrounding houses. They can establish a small territory that is evil-spirit free.

They must not try to try to get control over the people living in this territory. Rather they should love them and serve them while driving all evil spirits out the area.

Jesus has promised that where two or three of his followers come together in one place, he is there in the midst of them.

Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them (Matt 18:18-20).

The word “gather” is “sunago”. It requires more than coming together for a prayer meeting. Living in love and unity in the same place expands their spiritual authority, because Jesus promises to be there with them.

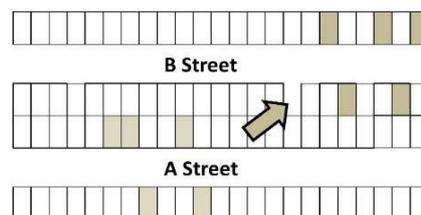


Those who live near each other and love one another will have greater spiritual authority because Jesus has promised that they will be able to defeat the spiritual powers of evil in the surrounding territory. They will be able to pray for the sick and cast out demons because they are united in Jesus. They can establish an evil-spirit-free zone where the Holy Spirit is free to work (the shaded area).

Establishing a beachhead in a strategic locality and then expanding outward is the most effective way to expand the territory of a king. An army takes a city street by street and neighbourhood by neighbourhood.

Expanding Territory

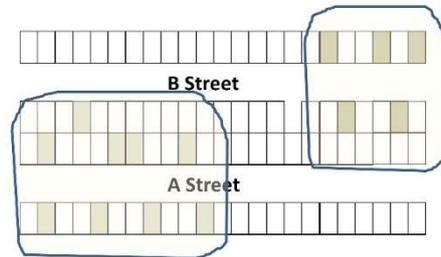
When some more people in the neighbourhood have chosen to follow Jesus, and once they have cleared out all evil spirits, and established strong spiritual protection over the territory, they can send out two or three of their number out to a new piece of territory close by and repeat the process to establish another spiritual stronghold.



If three or four families who are united by their love of Jesus and empowered by the Spirit move to a new place, they can establish another Kingdom Community. By living in a cluster of dwellings, they can drive out the spiritual powers of evil that control that vicinity. They can stand together against the attacks of the enemy and establish another place where Jesus has authority. If one family had moved there on its own, they would struggle, because the powers of evil could concentrate to pick them off.

When a group of people who are united in love and empowered by the Spirit live in the same place, they can expand the territory that belongs to Jesus. A few different groups of believers living close together in the same area, united by love and submitted to Jesus can resist the spiritual powers of evil and force them to flee.

The spiritual powers of evil always take the easy option, so they withdraw from areas where the Holy Spirit is strong. When followers of Jesus have established territory that belongs to Jesus, the gospel advance gets easier, because the opposition gets weaker. As more and more people choose to follow Jesus the territory that belongs to him gets larger. The evil-spirit-free zone gets bigger too.



No Territory

The Modern Church Model cannot take spiritual control of territory, because church members live in homes scattered across a wide area in the enemy's territory. Even the pastor-leader is isolated in the suburbs of their city and vulnerable to spiritual attack. Christians who live in isolation from other members of their church will struggle to spiritually defend their homes because they are standing alone and the spiritual powers of evil can concentrate to attack them. They are incapable of seizing spiritual control of territory beyond their home because they have insufficient spiritual resources.

People driving to a church meeting once a week cannot establish territory where Jesus has authority. The best that they can achieve is gaining spiritual control over a church building. The spiritual powers of evil do not care about that, so they can dominate the surrounding territory because the building is empty most for most of the week. Jesus has authority in the church building where the church gathers, but once the meeting is over the Christians are scattered throughout enemy territory. A gathered church has no ability to seize spiritual control of territory.

When Jesus had seventy strong disciples, he did not start a big meeting. He sent them out in pairs to take territory in the villages and towns of Israel (Luke 10:1-12).

The Modern Church Model has been prevalent in Christchurch for at least the last thirty years, but it has failed to advance God's kingdom because it has no ability to take spiritual control of territory. With no territory under his authority, Jesus He is left as a king without territory. Unfortunately, most leaders of these churches are focussed on numbers of people, so they do not even see territory as important. The Modern Church Model cannot take spiritual control of territory, so it cannot receive the Kingdom of God, despite all the talk about it.

Because the Modern Church Model cannot receive the Kingdom, some pastor-leaders are tempted to collaborate with political leaders in an effort to use political power to establish God's will. Their strategy will not work, because it strengthens the human kingdom that the enemy uses to fight against God's Kingdom. Political power relies on Imposed Authority, but God will not use it to establish his kingdom. He wants people to submit to Jesus and obey his Spirit because they love him. He will not force people to do his will.

A wise general establishes a beachhead in a strategic locality and pushes outward house-to-house street and neighbourhood by neighbourhood to take territory for his king. The most effective force for this task will be small, highly-trained and committed guerrilla/commando units that can establish a safe stronghold in a

strategic locality and then push out to enlarge it. God's strategy for Christchurch is to use small groups of people bound together by love to expand out street by street to seize spiritual control of the city for Jesus.

Getting Started

To establish his Kingdom in Christchurch, God needs to establish spiritual control over territory. He needs numerous small groups of followers of Jesus that can move into the world under the radar and live close together in places where the Holy Spirit is working. They will draw in new people and transform them where they live.

These small apostolic teams will go into various parts of the city to establish an alternative society/culture/ in the places where people live that will be a demonstration of the Kingdom of God. The best way to start is for some followers of Jesus who are committed to loving each other and have learned to serve him together to move to a new place and form a small Kingdom Community.

- The Holy Spirit likes to work with three or four people/families who have learned to trust each deciding to do something new and better in a new place. They should have giftings that complement each other. One will be passionate about sharing the gospel, while another might be more visionary. Several will have that heart of a shepherd. Despite their differences, they will have learned to serve Jesus in unity.
- The friends will move to a neighbourhood where the Holy Spirit is working. Ideally, they will know a person living in the neighbourhood who is open to the gospel. This is the person of peace described by Jesus (Luke 10:6).
- The apostolic team will find a way to live in the same place. One might buy a house. Another could find a place to rent. One might need to live in a caravan. Getting a group of people living close to each other in a place where the Holy Spirit is moving is essential. If the people called are committed to the leading of the Holy Spirit, he will sort out the housing issues, but they will need to stop seeking capital gains and focus on kingdom gains.
- When selecting a place to go, the followers of Jesus will choose areas where needy people live. Wealthy people do not know their neighbours, whereas poor and needy do. Because they are moving with others that they trust, the apostolic team will be confident to go into less desirable suburbs. To avoid conflict and unnecessary confusion, they should choose a street where others churches are not active.
- The friends will express their love for Jesus and each other by sharing what they own. They will share with needy people living around them and care for them when they are in trouble. Their love for one another will be evident to those who live around them.
- Where two or three people are gathered in Jesus' name, he is present with them through his Holy Spirit, so great things can happen. If the Holy Spirit is moving, the sick will be healed. This will draw other people to Jesus. If someone is healed, some of the neighbours will choose to follow Jesus, too.
- Each new believer will be taught to do Jesus' will by listening to the Holy Spirit. Before long, they will be sharing the gospel in the power of the Spirit with their neighbours and friends.
- The followers of Jesus living will submit to each other and pray in unity to establish an evil-spirit-free zone in the place where they live. Once a spiritual

stronghold has been established, the Holy Spirit will be able to move freely. When the friends share their faith, the Holy Spirit will confirm their words with gifts of healing. Everyone will see what is happening and some will choose to follow Jesus.

- As more people choose to follow Jesus, the spiritual stronghold will expand in the neighbourhood and the intensity of the Holy Spirit's presence will increase. Healings will be more frequent and the gospel will be more effective. The territory under Jesus' authority where the Holy Spirit is free to work will expand.

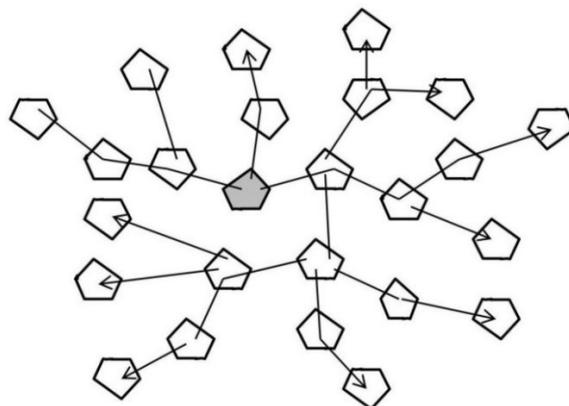
Jesus needs thirty or forty teams of followers who understand the importance of territory. More would be better because there is plenty of room on the edge of the city. By living close together, they can cooperate with the Holy Spirit to drive the spiritual powers of evil out of the area where they live. When residents of the surrounding houses choose to follow Jesus, they can join with their believing neighbours to squeeze the spiritual powers of evil out of the area where they live.

Starting Over Again

When a Kingdom Community has grown to about forty adults and their families, the best leaders will be sent out to start again in a new place. They will go to a place where they can see the Holy Spirit is working. For example, some there might have chosen to follow Jesus.

The following principles should apply to an apostolic team.

- The best people must be sent out to start the new work, because starting a new group is tougher than keeping an existing one going. The apostolic team will include some of the leaders that started the original group because they understand the process.
- The leaders will have identified people with potential and spent time with them teaching them how to lead. They will be ready to step up in the place those who are sent out.
- The apostolic team should not go very far, because they will want to maintain relationships with the community they are leaving.
- The apostolic team should go and live in the new place, so their commitment to it is visible.
- The apostolic team will pray for their neighbours and see them healed in the places where they go about their lives. The Holy Spirit will draw more people into the community as they see the love and power of Jesus.
- If the Holy Spirit is leading the apostolic team, their number will grow quickly. In a very short time, they will have grown into a new body of believers.



- As the number of small communities increases, the territory where Jesus has authority will expand.

This apostolic approach can be applied and repeated anywhere. If the Holy Spirit is moving powerfully, most small communities will quickly get to a point where they can send out an apostolic team to start again in a new locality. After several years, some apostolic teams will have moved on three or four times and established new communities in several places.

Keys to the Kingdom

To establish in his kingdom in Christchurch, God needs his church to implement a different strategy. Establishing a beachhead in a strategic locality and then expanding outward is a very effective way to take control of territory. As small bodies of believers expand and multiply, the territory where Jesus is acknowledged as king will expand.

- ***Start in the right place***

The spiritual pressure in a city is not evenly distributed, so the battle is tougher close to political power at the centre. The spiritual powers of evil concentrate on powerful people at the centre of the culture, so they can leverage their power. They neglect those at the edges because there are often distressed and broken. However, people in more distressed places will be more open to the gospel, because they know they are needy.

Christians are tempted to expand their influence by gathering at the centre of the city, but this is the toughest place to work. The best place to start will be on the margins of the city where the spiritual opposition is weakest. Establishing small strongholds at the edge of the city and advancing out will be more successful.

Christchurch is controlled by a powerful spiritual stronghold. This spirit is strongest at the centre, where it manipulates political, business and religious authorities to maintain control. God will begin this work at the edges of the city where the power of this spirit is weaker.

- ***Invisible army***

Up until now, the spiritual powers of evil have been able to kill off every big move of the Holy Spirit in Christchurch. God's strategy is to begin small in many places so that his work will go unnoticed. He will use small groups of people bound together by love, who are invisible to the spiritual powers of evil. Because they are on the edges of the city and seem small and unimportant, the evil powers will ignore them. By the time they realise that there is a huge number of these small groups, it will be too late for them to do anything because by then, they will have become a powerful movement.

God's plan is to establish Kingdom Communities on the fringe of society, where they will not attract attention and opposition. When the power at the centre folds and fails, his Kingdom will expand inwards from the edges.

- ***The Kingdom is local***

The people participating in Kingdom Communities must live within walking distance of each other, so they can share their resources and serve each other together. They will not be the only people in the locality, but will leave room for others to live amongst them and watch how they live.

The world creates a big organisation at the centre and pushes its power out as far as it can. God does not work that way. He works through groups of people

expressing their love for him and each other by giving and sharing, caring and serving each other. That is only practical in a group that is small enough for people to know each well.

- ***Rapid Multiplication of leadership***

When the time is right, God will move fast so that the spiritual powers of evil will be caught off guard. He will not have time to raise up leaders mature enough to lead to lead communities of hundreds or thousands of people. Instead, he will raise up hundreds and thousands of leaders who can disciple a dozen people to maturity, just as Jesus did. This is a much simpler task, so many people will be able to do it.

The body of Jesus in Christchurch will need the capability to disciple hundreds or thousands of people in a few short years. Rapid multiplication of leaders/elders will provide this capability. Each of the leaders of a body of believers will have strong relationships with a dozen followers of Jesus. If they teach them to do Jesus' will by listening to the Holy Spirit, they will grow to maturity quickly. The prophet will release vision and ensure that issues are sorted out keep. The leaders with a shepherd's heart will solve problems and encourage people into their callings.

The leaders will replicate their ministries in those that they are discipling. The evangelist will teach them how to share the gospel and heal the sick by going with them, as Jesus did. The prophet will encourage other prophetic people to discover their calling. The shepherds will encourage others into a shepherding ministry. Most new believers should expect to become a leader in a Kingdom Community within two or three years of choosing to follow Jesus.

- ***Free Authority***

Kingdom Communities will be led by several people who love each other and freely submit to each other. No one person will be in charge. They will strive for consensus on important issues. Their unity will provide strong spiritual protection for them, and for those that they serve. Each Kingdom Community will be a network of relationships between people living close together and watched over by a team of leaders who are united in love for Jesus.

Their leaders will be committed to unity. When making a decision that could affect the advance of the gospel, they will always check with each other, before taking any significant action. If division comes into the body, they will act quickly to restore peace and unity.

The leaders will be committed to loving and serving everyone in their neighbourhood. They will be welcome everywhere, because they do good to those in need, but do not impose their standards on those they bless. Unlike human kings, God will not expand his territory using force to gain control of people (He will only use force against the spiritual powers of evil). His influence increases as his people:

- force the spiritual powers of evil out of the surrounding neighbourhood.
- love and serve the people they live amongst.
- share the good news of Jesus and his new government.
- teach those who accept the good news to listen to the Holy Spirit and follow Jesus.

Authority in a community will come from the bottom up, as people freely submit to the leaders who love and serve them. They will avoid every hint of control.

- **Balanced giftings**

The leaders of these small communities will have gifts that complement each other. At least one will have a shepherds heart. Another will be more black and white. A third may have a zeal for telling people about Jesus and rescuing them from the troubles of their lives. They will be united by love for Jesus and each other. They will disciple those who have chosen to follow Jesus and build relationships between them.

God wants to push the fivefold gifts back down into the body of Jesus, so it may grow up fully into Jesus. A team of leaders with balanced giftings who have submitted to each can join and knit together the body is in unity with every part doing its share. One elder will be a prophet, another will be an evangelist, and several will be pastors. Working together in unity, they can help the body to grow by edifying itself in love.

When people in the neighbourhood choose to follow Jesus, they will recognise the first people who moved into the street as their leaders. These people will teach people how to follow Jesus by listening to the Holy Spirit. One leader will watch over each follower of Jesus in the neighbourhood. They will not be heavy-handed, but will mostly just pray for them. They will ensure that everyone in the community is growing and learning they can best serve Jesus. The leaders will replicate their ministries in those they are discipling.

- **Follow the Spirit**

When people gather in two or threes in the same place, the Holy Spirit will be there to heal. Their neighbours will see, and be drawn into what God is doing. The Holy Spirit loves to work out in the world. He is not shy, so he likes to do God's work in places where other people can observe his activity.

The Holy Spirit likes to strengthen the body of Jesus by giving gifts to different people. Rather than working through a few big names, he will work with groups of people, giving one the word of knowledge, another the gift of faith and a third the gift of healing. This way of working strengthens the body.

- **Spiritual Stronghold**

Jesus wants his followers in Christchurch to establish numerous small enclaves all over the city where he has authority, and evil spirits have been forced out. A small community of Christians living in three or four houses close together can stand in unity against the attacks of the enemy and push them out, so Jesus has authority in that place. As the number of believers increases around them, the area where Jesus has authority will expand.

When people are led by the Spirit to live close together, they can stand together against the spiritual powers of evil and take spiritual control of territory for Jesus.

- By submitting to each other and resisting the spiritual powers in unity, they create an evil-spirit free zone.
- By obeying the leading of the Spirit, they establish a place where Jesus has authority.

If followers of Jesus and stand together against the spiritual powers of evil, they can establish an evil-spirit-free zone where the Holy Spirit is free to work.

We cannot receive the Kingdom of God by driving to a church meeting once a week. God is calling his people to establish small communities that can win back territory. He needs a body of believers living close together in the same location, loving one another and serving Jesus in the power of the Spirit.

Kingdom Communities

Growth in the number of people following Jesus is good but not the goal. God wants to establish his Kingdom in Christchurch. Each small community that has emerged on the fringe of the city will consist of a group of forty or fifty adults following Jesus together in the same location. It is not enough for the number of these groups to grow rapidly. For the Kingdom of God to come, these small communities must be transformed into Kingdom Communities that can reshape their neighbourhood.

- The Kingdom of God is a society. It is not a group of people that meet once a week. A Kingdom Community is a group of people living in the same place doing everything that a society does.
- In the Kingdom of God Jesus is king. All authority is surrendered to him.
- The Kingdom of God has a unique culture that reflects the character of its king. Kingdom Communities will live out that culture by loving each other as Jesus loved us.
- The Kingdom of God is a government. Kingdom Communities will provide the people in their neighbourhood with every service that human governments claim to provide, but more effectively.

Modern societies are controlled from the centre by human government. They have become fragmented and incoherent. Kingdom Communities will be shaped by love of Jesus and the leading of the Holy Spirit. God will use them to rebuild and restore society from the bottom up.

Small communities of people following Jesus can do everything that human governments try to do, but without force or coercion. When the followers of Jesus are providing for their neighbourhood everything that a strong society needs, they have become a Kingdom Community.

Followers of Jesus will already have been providing financial support and physical protection for each other within their community. Leaders will have been resolving disputes between the people they are watching over. A body of believers becomes a Kingdom Community when all these services are offered to the rest of the community, but without using Imposed Authority.

Modern human governments have three main roles: social support, justice and protection. They do none of these well. Followers of Jesus can do these tasks better, but in a totally different way.

- **Social Welfare** – The followers of Jesus in each place will live simply, so they will have spare resources for giving and sharing with each other. They will commit to serving everyone in their neighbourhood facing financial difficulty. This is a reason for concentrating in a small area. If the neighbourhood is too large and the Christians are spread too thin, the burden will be too great. The Kingdom Community will provide [financial support](#) to everyone in need, even those who have rejected Jesus. Providing support for people who were hostile to their message will be a tremendous witness to the love of God.
- **Justice** – People in poorer communities often have difficulty obtaining justice. Theft and violence hurt people and undermine the cohesiveness of society. [Local judges](#) applying [God's laws](#) against theft and violence are the best solution. This form of justice will emerge in a Kingdom Community as people take their disputes to their leaders. If one demonstrates a gift of wisdom, the other leaders will refer difficult cases to them. When reports of the elder's wisdom spread, they will gain

credibility beyond their community, and more people will bring disputes to them. This wise elder will be recognised as a judge when people discover their wisdom and bring disputes for resolution.

Leaders in a Kingdom Community can only offer [voluntary justice](#) because they do not have the legal authority to enforce their decisions. Their authority comes from the respect that they have in their neighbourhood.

- **Protection** – Followers of Jesus will take responsibility for keeping the people of their neighbourhood safe by [protecting them from attack](#). They will provide protection for everyone, including those who have rejected the gospel. If dangerous people come into the neighbourhood, some will gather to pray. Others will talk with the intruders and offer them help. When the intruders see the unity of the people, they will usually go off to look for easier pickings (see also [Temporary Military Leaders](#)).

A Kingdom Community will provide financial support, justice and protection for everyone living in their community. They will also take up other tasks that are currently seen as the responsibility of the government, including education, sanitation, rubbish collection, etc. Some of these roles will be done by new businesses that emerge in the community. Others will be freely provided by members of the community serving each other.

The Kingdom Community will endeavour to meet all the needs that emerge into their neighbourhood. Meeting the needs of so many people will be costly, but giving for the service of others is normal for the followers of Jesus. It is another way of taking up the cross to follow Jesus.

As the Kingdom Community freely provides more and more of the services that were previously provided by the human government, everyone in the neighbourhood will be influenced. The leadership of the elders organising these services will be recognised by everyone in their neighbourhood. People who have rejected the gospel will acknowledge their wisdom because they are dedicated to serving their community. People who have not accepted the gospel will accept their authority because they recognise their love and integrity.

Citizens and Residents

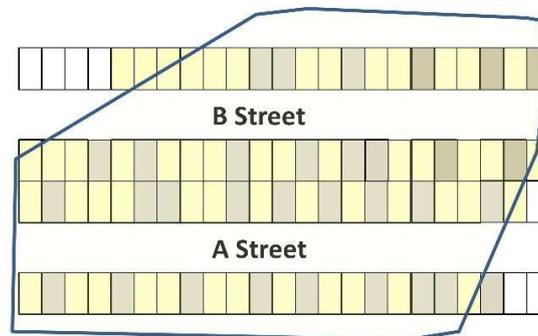
A kingdom is a territory where a king exercises authority. Two categories of people live within the territory of a kingdom.

- **Citizens** are loyal to their king and will fight for him when he calls for their help. They have pledged their allegiance to the king and are keen to obey his decrees.
- **Residents** live within the kingdom (temporally or permanently), but they are not loyal to the king. To keep out of trouble, they will grudgingly accept the king's authority, because he is the dominant power in the territory. Residents will not fight for the king if they can avoid it. If they get a chance, they might even undermine him. Most will keep their heads down so they can go about their lives without being caught up in the power struggles of kings.

In the same way, two categories of people live within a Kingdom Community.

- **Citizens of a Kingdom Community** have freely submitted to Jesus by listening to the Holy Spirit and obeying his word.
- **Residents of a Kingdom Community** live within the neighbourhood, but they have not accepted the gospel or chosen to follow Jesus. They may want to receive the blessings that flow from participation in the Kingdom Community, but they are not full citizens, because they have chosen not to surrender to Jesus.

Citizens will support the work of the Spirit by loving and sharing with the residents of their neighbourhood. They will provide justice, support and protection for anyone in need, free of charge and control. However, residents will have to acknowledge the authority of the leaders of the community to receive these benefits. (The yellow dwellings are residents, and the brown dwellings are citizens.)



Participation in the activities of a Kingdom Community will always be voluntary. However, when residents freely submit to the leaders to obtain the benefits provided, they will be submitting to the authority of Jesus, even if they have not acknowledged him as their Lord.

Jesus' Territory

A Kingdom Community will be territory where most of the people freely submit to the authority of Jesus, either as citizens or residents.

- Followers of Jesus will be united against the spiritual powers of evil and push them out of the neighbourhood.
- A Kingdom Community will expand its influence by serving everyone in the vicinity.
- Most people in the neighbourhood will rely on the justice, protection and financial support provided by the Kingdom Community, even if they have rejected the gospel.
- Residents of the Kingdom Community will have to acknowledge the authority of the elders who are serving their needs.
- The leaders of the Kingdom Community will not seize control, but serve their community, so most people freely recognise their leadership.
- The leaders will exercise Free Authority, received when people freely submit to their wisdom, but this submission can be withdrawn at any time.
- No one will be forced to submit to the authority of the leaders. There is no room for Imposed Authority in a Kingdom Community.
- Most of the authority in the neighbourhood will disappear or be submitted to Jesus.
- As respect for Jesus spreads through the community, more and more of the authority that shapes society will be submitted to him.

The territory that belongs to Jesus will expand as the authority situation in the neighbourhood changes.

- Citizens of the Kingdom Community will freely submit to the authority of their leaders, to each other, and to God.
- The leaders of the community will have submitted to Jesus, and to each other.

- Residents of the neighbourhood will submit to God's authority most of the time to benefit from the activities of the Kingdom Community.
- The number of people refusing to submit to the leading of the Spirit will steadily decrease as the gospel spreads, and the benefits of the good news are realised.

Taken together, this means that many of the people in the neighbourhood will be submitted to God's will most of the time, and most for much of the time. The Government of God will have come because his will is being done within the territory covered by the Kingdom Community.

Winning the City

A wise king seizes control of a piece of territory and consolidates his authority there, before advancing to take the next piece. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God undertook to drive out their enemy "little by little" (Deut 7:22). The Kingdom of God advances in the same way. We must take back territory for Jesus, house by house and neighbourhood by neighbourhood, moving slowly from the fringes to the centre.

When followers of Jesus are led by the Spirit to live close together, they can stand against the attacks of the enemy and establish places where Jesus has authority. When a group of people who are united in love and empowered by the spirit live in the same place and serve those living around them, the Kingdom of God can come.

The Kingdom will come in Christchurch through a network of small groups of people listening to the voice of the Spirit, sharing with their brothers and sisters, suffering in the face of persecution and serving the people of the city. As the Holy Spirit is given freedom to do his work in evil-spirit-free territory, the kingdom will flow out and be welcome everywhere.

The Kingdom of God expands as Jesus' followers push the spiritual powers of evil out of territory and bring it under his authority. As the number of Kingdom Communities increases, the territory where Jesus has authority will expand and grow too. Once a piece of territory is safe, we can push out into the neighbouring territory, resisting the enemy powers as we go.

When the Kingdom of God has been consolidated on the edges of the city, apostles will begin moving towards the centre of the city. The Kingdom of God will creep out slowly behind them. The centre of the city is the place where political and religious power and the powers of evil collude together to leverage their control. When their base of power collapses, God will build his kingdom into the centre from the places on the edge where it is strong.

Invisible Army

God is calling together an invisible spiritual army on the margins of the city that will take Christchurch back for him. When the religious, political and business powers entwined together with the spiritual powers of evil at the centre of the city will fade away, God will raise up his invisible army to build his kingdom from the outside in.

When David was preparing to become king, people who were in distress, or in debt or disaffected gathered with him in the Cave of Adullam (1 Sam 22:1-2). These people went unnoticed because they seemed irrelevant to the kingdom, but they grew into a mighty army that took the land for David. In the same way, many of the people that God is calling are currently discouraged and disaffected, but he can use them provided they are hungry for his Spirit.

God is calling people to participate in his invisible army. He can use ordinary people, provide if they meet the following requirements.

- They must be distressed about the state of God's Kingdom and the church's failure to advance the gospel.
- They will be so disillusioned with the priest/temple paradigm that they will not be tempted to replicate it on a smaller scale.
- They will be free of bad attitudes that could prevent them from working in unity with other people, especially those with different giftings and ministries.
- They will be hostile to manipulation and control and all forms of imposed authority.
- They must be committed to loving others as Jesus loved us.
- They will have their lives sorted out (as much as any of us do), so they are not always seeking help, but are prepared to serve and help others.
- They will be motivated by love for Jesus and zeal for his kingdom.
- They will have learned to live simply, trusting God for what they need and sharing what they have with those around them.
- They will have an apostolic heart that is willing to leave the familiar and press into something new and uncertain.
- They will be confident with the gifts of the Spirit.
- They will know how to hear the voice of the Spirit and obey his leading.

Prepare

People who are called to participate in the invisible army must not stand around grumbling and moaning, but should get together with others who balance their giftings and share the same vision. They should:

- learn to love one another
- ask the Holy Spirit to show them the place where he wants them to begin.
- buy or rent a house in that place.

The entire church does not need to change. God just needs a remnant. A couple of hundred people who are sold out for Jesus, and willing to follow the Holy Spirit wherever he leads, could get things started.

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