

partners

THE CHURCH PLANTING NEWSLETTER OF THE EC CHURCH

What does Kingdom-driven ministry look like?

How can we, as believers, pray for the advancement of God's kingdom?

By Kolleen Long

Sometimes, we get caught up in the day-to-day activities of living. This is true in our work lives, in our family lives and, yes, even in our church lives. We get so used to doing things - including good things - that we don't think about why we do them.

But it's important as believers to consider exactly that. Why do we do the things

we do in the local church, and what part does that play in the universal church?. This kind of thinking can be termed **kingdom-thinking**.

In this edition of Partners, we've asked three men to share their thoughts on how the Kingdom and the Church fit together. What does Kingdom-driven ministry look like? And how can we, as believers, pray

for the advancement of God's kingdom?

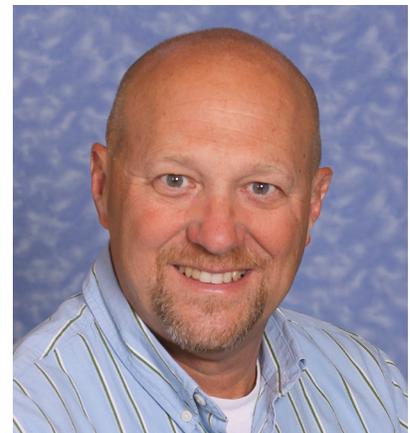
It's good to remember that Jesus told us to consider kingdom-minded things when he reminded us to focus on doing God's will instead of focusing on the daily worries of life: ***"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*** (MATTHEW 6:33). ■



REV. TIM KING is the pastor of Christ House Church in Lancaster, Pa.



REV. MATT HILL is the Pastor of Missional Ministries of Community Evangelical Church in Sinking Springs, Pa.



REV. BRUCE HILL is the bishop of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

Rev. Bruce Hill: Embrace the Kingdom Mindset

Rev. Hill is the bishop of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

Matthew tells us “**Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom.**” (Matthew 4:23 NLT)

During the recent Leadership Forum at Evangelical Seminary, Dr. Reggie McNeal stated he feels like we are living at a “hinge moment” in history. We have spent the last 500 years since the reformation trying to “fix” the church. That hasn’t worked out too well. What is needed is a shift from a church-centric worldview to a Kingdom-centric worldview. Yes, the church, groups of churches like districts and the denomination are still important; but our focus must be on

the Father’s Kingdom. We need a new scorecard that measures more than how busy we are. That’s what we’re trying to do as we transition from the Church Planting Commission to the soon-to-be Kingdom Extension Community. The Kingdom of God is here! He is at work in this world and we must align ourselves with Him as He extends His Kingdom.

As Jesus announced the Kingdom, he taught his disciples how to pray encouraging them to say to the Father “May your Kingdom come soon. May your will

be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10 NLT) My prayer is that every follower of Jesus, every member of every Evangelical Congregational Church, will pray for God’s will and do His will as we walk with Him each day. If we commit to do that individually and corporately I believe we will see His Kingdom break out in new and amazing ways! ■

Interested in learning more about taking a Kingdom Approach to church life?

Rev. Hill recommends these resources:

***The Tangible Kingdom, Creating Incarnational Community* by Hugh Halter & Matt Smay**

***Kingdom Come* by Reggie McNeal**

Rev. Matt Hill: Connecting the Church with Kingdom Outreach

Rev. Hill is the Pastor of Missional Ministries of Community Evangelical Church in Sinking Springs, Pa.

“So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.” —**JOHN 1:14**

In the paraphrase *The Message*, John 1:14 tells us that “the Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” As flesh and blood, Jesus the Messiah lived among the people he came to save. Jesus saw a need to worship at

the synagogue for personal encouragement and worship, but he also understood the great need to serve, love, and care for those who wouldn’t be in a synagogue. To this point, we as disciples and members of the Church are called to do likewise. The wonder-

ful news is that the Church and those working out in the community are to work together toward the same goal of knowing Christ and making Him known to those who most desperately need the Gospel.

As a member of the Central Pennsylvania Pioneering Community of Fresh Expressions, Community Evangelical Church is learning how this model of supporting and starting new ventures works. For those out blazing

new trails and interacting with the community in an effort to start something new, this relationship is essential for accountability, support through prayer and finances, and personal growth. In this way, the local church or congregation and the new venture never separate. Rather, the church and new venture feed one another, push one another, and grow together. Fresh Expressions explains this idea in their analogy of the floating dock. The floating dock is the new venture that is tethered to the stationary dock or the church. The tether allows the church and the new venture to stay connected, but also allows the new venture to travel out and start something new where the lost actually are.

Because of this, ministry is defined simply as meeting people where they are and journeying with them to where God desire us to be. In our context here at Community that looks very different depending on whom you talk to. For one group this includes spending time with their dogs while hiking near Blue Marsh Lake and meeting new friends, for another group it means holding a Bible study at a local art gallery in Lititz, and for another it means shooting guns and hanging out at a local gun range while making new friends and sharing the stories of life. Through these new ventures, it is our belief that like Jesus we are going to the people who need the Gospel rather than expecting them to come to us and meet us where we are comfortable.

Our prayer is that through these new ventures the Gospel would be shared and the Kingdom would grow. As you take time to pray, please ask God for wisdom as we discern new areas of ministry and identify new volunteers to help keep the work moving. Pray for the individuals with whom we will meet and interact – that God would do something for the glory of His name! ■

PRAYING FOR CHURCH PLANTING

Day of Prayer for Church Planting, the first Sunday of each month

Praise God for the exciting new things he is doing:

- Christ House in Lancaster, PA – Tim King
- Next Step in York, PA – Carlos Kelly & Tim King
- LAUNCH in Sinking Spring, PA – Matt Hill

Please pray for these new ministries.

Please pray for our church planters, their families and ministries. Pray for them by name (see the current list of planters). Ask God to:

- Speak into each planter's life for spiritual health.
- Meet the needs of each planting family.
- Help each planting team develop connections with their neighbors.
- Lead each planter away from unhealthy distractions.
- Pour into each ministry the resources necessary for success.
- Protect the growing unity among the planting team members.

Currently, we are supporting and/or encouraging . . .

8 Planters and 9 Plants

- Ephrata, PA . . . House of Blessings (Abe Montanez)
- Harrisburg area, PA . . . Restore Community (Brian Parker)
- Lancaster, PA . . . Christ House Church (Tim King)
- Lehigh Valley, PA . . . Horizon (Bud Daneker)
- Philadelphia, PA . . . Comunidad Biblica (Rolando Diaz)
 - ✧ Allentown, PA location
- Pottstown area, PA . . . Journey53 (Rick Christman)
- York, PA . . . Iglesia Cristiana (Carlos Kelly)
- York PA . . . The Next Step (Carlos Kelly & Tim King))

2 Restarts / Revitalizations

- Slatington, PA . . . Trinity (Brian Kern)
- Tallmadge, OH . . . New Direction (Tim Ream)

2 Informal Partnerships* / 5 Missional Works / 0 Potential Adoptions

- Lancaster, PA . . . Iglesia De Dios Ven A El (Luis Ramirez)
- Millersville, PA . . . The Gathering (Juan Carlos Morales)
- Palmerton, PA . . . Gaming Grotto (Chris Bronico)
- Reedsville, PA . . . LifeTree Café (Jeff Byerly)
- Sinking Spring, PA . . . Fresh Expression LAUNCHES (Matt Hill)
- Sinking Spring & Mohn's Hill, PA . . . Two Lifetree Cafés (Jerry Artz, Mohn's Hill & Mike Snedeker, Sinking Spring)
 - ✧ "Off the Avenue" and "Canal Street"



Rev. Tim King: Building the Kingdom, Building the Church

Rev. Tim King is the pastor of Christ House Church in Lancaster, Pa.

If we were living in the days of David and Solomon, “Kingdom of God” would have been a pretty simple and literal concept. The problem is we don’t live there or then. The promise to Abraham was a global one (Rom. 4:13) but that vision was only seen in part through national Israel. They were a picture of the reign and presence of God on earth; a re-statement of Eden.

God’s presence and reign emanates to His people from their meeting with Him. When Jesus said at the end of Matthew, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given unto me, go therefore and make disciples of all nations,” He was expounding that the kingdom consists in disciples (see Rom. 4:16) and that this kingdom was going global. In Jesus, God has returned to the throne of the world and is drawing all peoples to Himself (John 12:32).

Kingdom and church, then, fit much like the temple and Israel did in the Old Testament. This defines

“It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.”

—ROMANS 4:13

church as a meeting place for our community and God where His ordering of the world begins to take root on earth as it is in heaven. In our context, that means orienting our gatherings around prayer – not prayers (plural) but the idea that we gather to enter into a corporate dialogue with God.

A conversation like that requires back and forth communication and should result in us leaving

with a practical vision for engaging our world. We do that with question-and-answer sessions after the sermon and

small group discussions incorporated into the main service. We believe that God’s people, gathered around God’s Word, in prayerful supplication should be able to leave with concrete steps for their life in the community and the life of the church. Every group is encouraged to translate the scripture we’ve discussed into something they can do together outside of our gathering place.

It’s a daunting task, far easier written here than done. Pray for us to have the boldness and grace to let our meetings be a wellspring of life to our community as God’s presence overflows through our witness and service into our little corner of Lancaster City. ■

HUNGRY FOR MORE? Check out these kingdom-minded resources:

CHURCH WEBSITES:

christhouse.church and thenextstep.church (especially the sermon sections)

BLOG:

disciplingculture.com/blog and vergenetwork.org/category/disciplemaking

BOOKS:

Simply Good News by NT Wright, ***How to Pray*** by John Wesley, ***Introducing Covenant Theology*** by Michael Horton, ***Creating a Discipling Culture*** by Mike Breen and ***The Orthodox Way*** by Kallistos Ware.