



What We Seek

A Kingdom Manifesto

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For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
Romans 14.17

But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.
Matthew 6.33

I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.
Psalm 27.13

An invitation

Jesus intends His followers to seek His Kingdom and to pray for its coming as our first priority in life. But we must have some sense of *what* that Kingdom will look like as it comes among us.

This *Manifesto* offers a vision of what is possible as God's people grasp a clear and compelling vision of the Kingdom of God and then begin to live it in our personal spheres of influence. As you read through this *Manifesto* meditate on the glimpses it provides to revived believers serving in renewed churches for the greater awakening of their neighbors, our culture, and society to the reality of the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God is Jesus Christ, breaking into human experience, by His Word and Spirit, through His Church.¹ It is a spiritual domain, which King Jesus is advancing by His Word and Spirit, in and through the people of God, by and for the glory of God.² Where the Kingdom of God is increasing, the goodness of the Lord – His righteousness, peace, and joy – are evident in a multitude of ways.³

The Kingdom of God comes among people and nations through the preaching of the Good News.⁴ It then manifests in an ever-expanding process of revival, renewal, and awakening, as the Light of God's new day drives back the darkness of sin and unbelief in lives, communities, cultures, and nations.⁵

The progress of the Kingdom has been more or less visible in different places and times, depending on the extent to which God's people are faithful in their calling to follow Christ and seek His Kingdom as their highest priority. In our day, in our country, among the followers of Jesus Christ, the presence of the Kingdom is increasingly marginalized, as churches proclaim a weak and truncated gospel of "near Christianity" rather than the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the Gospel proclaimed by Jesus and the Apostles.⁶ Satan, the father of lies, seeks to stall the progress of the Kingdom by promoting The Lie that we are our own masters and that God is not the loving, all-powerful, redeeming, and sovereign King of all

What we seek, and what we call others to join us in seeking through the resources, networks, and opportunities God has provided to us all, by all the means of His grace, is visible progress of the Kingdom unto increasing revival, renewal, and awakening in our generation and beyond.

Revival

Where Jesus is advancing His Kingdom, individual believers experience the grace and truth of God leading to daily revival of soul and body for **growth in the Lord**,⁷ the **manifestation of His glory**,⁸ and the **proclamation of His truth**.⁹

In the Kingdom of God, among those who are being revived, **worship in Spirit and in truth** is the prevailing attitude.¹⁰ They **delight in God's Word** issuing in **joyous obedience** unto righteousness, goodness, and truth.¹¹ **Love for God and neighbor** become their commanding virtues¹² and **holiness** is their ongoing pursuit.¹³

Jesus works in the citizens of His Kingdom to nurture lives of **self-denial, sacrificial sharing and service, and mutual edification**.¹⁴ Through **faithful use of the disciplines of grace**, believers are daily revived, filled with God's Spirit, and empowered for service.¹⁵

As revived individuals join together in prayer and service, families, churches, and communities begin to know the renewing power of God's Kingdom in transforming ways.

The father of lies seeks to hinder Christ's work of revival by casting doubt on the reliability of God's Word, diverting Christ's people to a religion of mere self-interest, and threatening them by the spirit of the age to pursue a narrow rather than a comprehensive Christian worldview.¹⁶ We are determined to resist The Lie and to encourage all believers to seek daily revival as their proper calling, right, and heritage in the Lord.

Renewal

In homes where men and women experience daily revival, **families** become forges of selflessness, charity, responsibility, industry, creativity, and civility.¹⁷ Such families, and others like them, begin to impact their churches for renewal in every aspect of ecclesiastical life and ministry.

Renewed churches find their **worship services** increasingly enriched by the sense of God's presence and power.¹⁸ Renewed churches worship according to a pattern grounded in fear, gratitude, sincerity, and faithful obedience.¹⁹ They take seriously the mandate to **make disciples**,²⁰ and work by every means to equip and encourage church members unto revival and for lives of love and good works.²¹ As church members become equipped for ministry,²² the Spirit of God pours out gifts for service,²³ enabling local churches to grow in **unity and maturity**,²⁴ **bonding together**²⁵ to stand as beacons of joy, beauty, hope, and truth in their communities.²⁶

The father of lies works to put obstacles in the way of real renewal in local churches and, by preventing churches from working together, in communities all over the land. We are resolved to expose The Lie that

divides us and to call churches and ministries to work hard to establish and maintain unity in the Spirit of God as the salt of the earth and the light of the world.²⁷ For only through renewal together will we have power to serve as agents of awakening to the surrounding culture and society.²⁸

Awakening

As King Jesus advances His reign through and from revived individuals and renewed churches, it begins to impact every aspect of life in community, culture, and society. The potential for turning the world upside-down for righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit becomes a reality.²⁹

Neighborhoods bask in the safety and shalom of the Spirit of God.³⁰ **Communities** flourish in mutual care and concern.³¹ The **poor, the imprisoned, and those who suffer** know the care and nurture of Jesus as the members of His Body incarnate His resurrection life among them.³² Communities and societies begin to know the growing presence of God's Kingdom and are increasingly held together by **bonds of justice and cords of righteousness and love**.³³ Where Jesus rules in a community, churches work together to **preserve the dignity, provide for the needs, and promote the welfare** of all the members of the community.³⁴

The **Gospel of the Kingdom is proclaimed** to every person, with reverence and respect.³⁵ Jesus empowers and leads His people to create new forms of culture, so that homes, neighborhoods, and communities begin to abound with artifacts, institutions, and conventions which **ennoble and enrich human life**.³⁶

The **creation** itself rejoices in the renewing and reconciling work of the citizens of God's Kingdom.³⁷

Where the Kingdom of God is extending its reach, **workers serve with industry and excellence**, enjoying the satisfaction and just rewards of a job well-done, knowing that their labors in the Lord are not in vain and that they contribute, if only indirectly, to the wellbeing and edification of their neighbors.³⁸

Citizens of the Kingdom strive to nurture and maintain **workplaces** that are safe, wholesome, fair, and fruitful, and businesses that consider the needs of customers, clients, consumers, and communities as their highest aim.

Citizens of the Kingdom who serve in **civil government** work to achieve a government that is good, just, wise, efficient, and friendly to the Gospel of the Kingdom, and that promotes the enjoyment of life and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, for all its citizens.³⁹ Such government recognizes the primacy of **fixed law** and the **limits of human government**, and seeks to encourage, rather than to obstruct, the work of **mediating structures and institutions** in addressing the needs of people at all levels of society.

Where Jesus reigns in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit, participants in the **political process** work for honesty, transparency, fairness, truth, and the common weal.

In the arts, **sciences, and education**, Kingdom citizens promote discovery, creativity, individual flourishing, wide learning, innovation, and the edification and beautification of individuals, communities, and the times in which we live.

Kingdom citizens seek **open, forthright, and respectful dialog** with people from other worldviews with respect to all matters of human life and interest, in order to demonstrate the power of the Kingdom for making all things new in every area of life.

In the **public square** Kingdom citizens, filled with the Spirit and operating with the mind of Christ,⁴⁰ work to persuade others of the viability and power for goodness of the Christian worldview, at the same time recognizing the right of others to disagree.

Where the Kingdom of God is thus enjoyed, pursued, lived, and proclaimed, we expect that even **unbelievers will recognize the benefits** to be realized through the Christian worldview; and, while they may not profess the faith for themselves, yet they will acquiesce in its benefits and make room for its flourishing, realizing that such is in their own best interests.⁴¹

The father of lies daily seeks to discourage the followers of Christ from thinking that the world can ever be anything other than increasingly dark and doomed. But we deny The Lie and believe that Jesus is sowing the world with wholesome fruit, which, in spite of struggle and opposition, He calls us to cultivate unto His glory in every area of human life and every legitimate human endeavor.⁴²

The Lie

Standing in opposition to the progress of this good Kingdom is The Lie – the **presumed autonomy of human reason** – in all its various forms.⁴³

Citizens of the Kingdom work to understand The Lie; and, by the power of righteous and good lives, and prayerful proclamation of The Truth, they seek to **free those who are prisoners** of The Lie so that they also may enter the Kingdom by grace through faith.⁴⁴

The Lie has become established in the systems, protocols, and institutions of the world, preventing them from fulfilling the best promise of benefiting people in every walk of life. As Jesus turned over the tables in the Temple and made the crooked stand upright, so we intend to confront The Lie in its every manifestation, whether personal or institutional, and to shine the light of truth and love into the darkness of deceit and despair.⁴⁵

What we seek

It is thus the **highest calling** and **overarching mandate** of the citizens of the Kingdom of God to pray for and seek the coming and progress of that Kingdom in every aspect of their lives, all their relationships, roles, and responsibilities.⁴⁶

We do not expect fully to realize this glorious realm within the corridors of human history; the full flourishing of the Kingdom of God awaits the coming of the **New Heavens and New Earth**.⁴⁷ Still, we seek **revival, renewal, and awakening** by every means, for every person, in every situation, and for all of life, to the fullest extent of God's promised blessings, and for the praise of the glory of His grace. We have determined to fix our gaze on our exalted King and to give Him no rest through our prayers and supplications until He begins to bless us once again.⁴⁸

We understand that our efforts in seeking this Kingdom will not be universally applauded or received; indeed, we expect **opposition, persecution, and trials** of various sorts must confront us in our labors for this joyous outcome.⁴⁹ We believe that this Kingdom cannot come in any way other than by the **proclamation of Christ's redeeming work**, through the **power of the Holy Spirit** and diligence in the task of **making disciples and building-up the Church**, which is the Body of Christ and agent of the Kingdom of God.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, knowing the transforming, reconciling, and renewing power of the Gospel, and acknowledging the sovereign goodness and might of our reigning Savior and King, we seek His Kingdom, praying and working faithfully that it might indeed come on earth as it is in heaven, increasingly and with greater fullness, so that the knowledge of the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea and the praise of our God and King may extend through all generations, world without end.⁵¹

Many thanks to the staff of The Colson Center and to my wife, Susie, for their excellent help in putting together this manifesto of objectives for our ministry – TMM.

For reflection or discussion

1. What do you understand by “The Kingdom of God”? The writer of Hebrews says we have “received” this Kingdom (Heb. 12:28). What are the implications of this for your life?
2. In what sense can we say that the Kingdom of God has come, is coming, and is yet to come? How does this perspective on the Kingdom lead us to think about our own purpose in life?
3. Meditate on Matthew 6:33 and Romans 14:17, 18. What does it mean to seek the Kingdom of God?
4. Revival, Renewal, Awakening: How does this *Manifesto* define these? How can you see that each of these is greatly needed in our day?
5. Review the various objectives outlined in the “Revival” section of this *Manifesto*. Which of these seem most pertinent to your own life? Why?
6. Review the various objectives outlined in the “Renewal” section of this *Manifesto*. What do you think are the greatest obstacles keeping us from realizing real renewal in the churches of our land?
7. Review the various objectives outlined in the “Renewal” section of this *Manifesto*. How can churches begin to target such objectives more conscientiously and consistently? How would doing so affect the various training programs offered by the churches? The preaching they hear? Their worship?
8. What do we mean by “The Lie”? Why is it so important that Christian be able to recognize The Lie and know how to deal with it?
9. Summarize, in a few words or phrases, the primary message of this *Manifesto*. In what ways does this message challenge your own life as a Christian?
10. Suggest some ways you plan to begin adopting and applying the message of this *Manifesto* in your own life. Then, make copies of this *Manifesto* and give it to several of your friends, inviting them to join you for a discussion of its contents.

End Notes

- ¹ Daniel 2.44, 45; Psalm 110; Isaiah 9.6,7; Matthew 12.22-29
- ² Matthew 6.10, 33; 1 Corinthians 4.20; 1 Corinthians 10.31
- ³ Romans 14.17-19; Daniel 2.44, 45; Matthew 13.36-43
- ⁴ Matthew 4.17
- ⁵ Proverbs 4.18; 1 John 2.8
- ⁶ Matthew 4.17; Acts 20.25
- ⁷ 2 Peter 3.18
- ⁸ 2 Corinthians 3.12-18; 1 Corinthians 10.31
- ⁹ Acts 1.8
- ¹⁰ Psalm 27.4; John 4.24
- ¹¹ Psalm 119.97; Romans 7.12
- ¹² Matthew 22.34-40; John 13.1-15; Galatians 6.1-10
- ¹³ 2 Corinthians 7.1
- ¹⁴ Matthew 16.24, 25; Philippians 2.5-11
- ¹⁵ Ephesians 5.18-21; Galatians 5.22, 23; 1 Corinthians 4.20; 1 Corinthians 12.7-11
- ¹⁶ Genesis 3.1-6; Matthew 4.1-11; Ephesians 5.15-17
- ¹⁷ Ephesians 6.1-4; Proverbs 21.10-31
- ¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 14.1-25
- ¹⁹ Psalm 50
- ²⁰ Matthew 28.18-20
- ²¹ Hebrews 10.24
- ²² Ephesians 4.11, 12
- ²³ 1 Corinthians 12.7-11
- ²⁴ Ephesians 4.13-16
- ²⁵ Ephesians 4.3
- ²⁶ Psalm 48, Micah 4.1-5
- ²⁷ Ephesians 4.3; Matthew 5.13-16
- ²⁸ John 17.21
- ²⁹ Acts 17.1-9
- ³⁰ Deuteronomy 6.4-9; Ephesians 6.1-4
- ³¹ Psalm 33.10-12
- ³² Matthew 25.31-40
- ³³ Jeremiah 29.4-14
- ³⁴ Galatians 6.1-10; Titus 3.1, 2, 8, 14
- ³⁵ Mark 13.10; 1 Peter 3.15
- ³⁶ Psalms 149, 150; 2 Corinthians 10.3-5
- ³⁷ Romans 8.18-25
- ³⁸ 2 Thessalonians 3.10; Ephesians 4.28; 1 Corinthians 10.31; 1 Corinthians 15.58
- ³⁹ Romans 13.1-7; 1 Timothy 2.1-8; Deuteronomy 17.18-20
- ⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians 2.16
- ⁴¹ Psalms 66.3; 81.15 (see especially in the NASB)
- ⁴² Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43; 1 Corinthians 10.31; 2 Corinthians 10.3-5
- ⁴³ Romans 1.18-32
- ⁴⁴ 1 Chronicles 12.32; Hebrews 2.15; John 8.32

⁴⁵ John 2.13-22; Luke 13.10-13; 2 Corinthians 10.3-5; 1 John 2.8, 15-17

⁴⁶ Matthew 6.10, 33

⁴⁷ Revelation 21, 22

⁴⁸ Colossians 3.1-3; Isaiah 62.6, 7

⁴⁹ Daniel 7.18-27; 2 Timothy 3.12

⁵⁰ Acts 1.1-8; Matthew 28.18-20; Matthew 16.18; Ephesians 4.11-16

⁵¹ Habakkuk 2.14; Psalm 45.17