

Title: How might a culturally relevant interpretation of the kingdom message impact mission.

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Abstract:

Over twenty years ago I attended a conference led by John Wimber. He made a comment which intrigued me and planted a seed in my mind which has remained ever since. Wimber pointed out that Jesus preached the Kingdom. This sentiment is reflected in the words of the Lord's Prayer. Christians are directed to pray for 'your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven'. This reveals a dichotomy between the present and the future manifestation of the kingdom.

Due to the theme of the question posed the Biblical strand will predominate, concentrating on the kingdom discourse found in Matthew chapter thirteen. A thorough exegesis of same, shows that the kingdom message and the life, teachings and actions of Jesus are inextricably linked. Historical and Theological aspects will be examined to see how the scholarly concept of kingdom has evolved, which will provide a foundation for the existing contextual setting.

The Irish cultural and historic perspective is examined to observe the impact of this on the transmission of the kingdom message. The use of census data reveals some of the challenges the changing culture of the Church of Ireland faces. A more focussed survey in relation to the Mullingar union of parishes, using both quantitative and qualitative research enables one to better appreciate the perception of the church by its parishioners, and the challenges for the future posed by same.

I will view how the most effective use of sacred space and liturgy may be fully employed to reach the marginalised within the community of the church and transmit the kingdom message in the most sensitive and appropriate way. In conclusion it is the author's belief that as kingdom was at the heart of the entire mission of Jesus it should be the central focus of the church's mission today.