
Church in Campbell Weekly News

March 8, 2026 Issue 26-10

The Church and the Kingdom

The church and the kingdom are among the greatest subjects in the Bible. If we read the New Testament carefully and properly, we shall see the importance of the church and the kingdom.

In Matthew 3, very near the beginning of the New Testament, we have a word concerning the kingdom. John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near" (Matt. 3:2). John the Baptist's preaching was the initiation of God's New Testament economy. Repentance in the preaching of John the Baptist, as the opening of God's New Testament economy, was to have a turn for the kingdom of the heavens. This indicates that God's New Testament economy is focused on His kingdom.

The foundation of the church

In Matthew 16 the Lord Jesus brought His disciples into the district of Caesarea Philippi and there asked them, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" (Matt. 16:13). After they responded, the Lord went on to ask, "But you, who do you say that I am?" (v. 15). Receiving a revelation from the Father, Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16).

According to Eph. 5:32, there is a great mystery of two parts, Christ and the church. Because the Father's revelation concerning Christ is only the first half of this great mystery, the Lord went on to speak concerning the church: "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church" (v. 18). This indicates strongly that the church must be something of Christ and for Christ. First, Christ was recognized, known, and even possessed. Then the Lord said that on "this rock" He would build His church. This rock refers not only to Christ, but also to the revelation of Christ, which Peter received from the Father. The church is built on this revelation concerning Christ. Hence, the "rock" here is not merely Christ Himself; it is also the realization, knowledge, experience, and possession of Christ.

Today many claim to recognize that Christ is the foundation of the church. However, they have not seen that the real foundation for the building of the church is the realization of Christ. If we do not realize Christ in our experience, we shall not have the foundation for the building of the church. Therefore, we must know Christ. Then our knowing, experiencing, enjoying, and possessing of Christ will be the foundation upon which He will build the church.

The keys of the kingdom

In Matthew 16:19, immediately after speaking concerning the church, the Lord goes on to speak concerning the kingdom: "I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall be what has been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall be what has been loosed in the heavens." Here "the kingdom of the heavens" is used interchangeably for "church" in the previous verse. I would not say that these terms are synonymous; however, in verses 18 and 19 they are used interchangeably. This is strong proof that the

genuine church is the kingdom in this age. This is confirmed by Romans 14:17, a verse that refers to the proper church life.

The Lord's word to Peter in Matthew 16:19 regarding the keys of the kingdom of the heavens was fulfilled in the book of Acts. We have the first aspect of this fulfillment in Acts 2 and the second aspect in Acts 10. In these two instances Peter used two keys. In Matthew 16:19 the Lord spoke of keys, not of one key. On the day of Pentecost, as recorded in chapter two of Acts, Peter used one of the keys to open the door for the Jewish people to come into the kingdom. Then in the house of Cornelius, as recorded in chapter ten of Acts, Peter used the second key to open the door for the Gentiles to come in. This is the reason that in Ephesians 2 we see that both Jews and Gentiles are built up together into the one church: "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow-citizens of the saints and members of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone" (vv. 19-20).

We need to be impressed with the fact that in Matthew 16:18 we have the church and then in the following verse we have the kingdom. This indicates that when the church is first mentioned in the New Testament, it is mentioned in relation to the kingdom. Furthermore, as we have seen, in these verses the church and the kingdom are interchangeable terms.

The reality of the kingdom in the church

Although the church is clearly mentioned in Matthew 16, nothing is said concerning the church in the Gospel of Mark. In chapter four, in particular, the Lord speaks concerning the kingdom of God. In 4:26-29 we have the parable of the seed. "And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed on the earth" (v. 26). This parable reveals that the kingdom is a matter of life, which sprouts, grows, bears fruit, matures, and produces a harvest. In verses 27 and 28 we see the spontaneous growth of the seed. Then in verse 29 we have the harvest. This parable is a brief illustration of the kingdom.

Is the church included in any way in this parable of the seed? Of course, the church is not mentioned directly. Nevertheless, the church must be included here in some way. In this parable we have the sower, the seed sown, the field, the development of the seed, and the harvest. This is a full picture of the kingdom. But where in this picture do we have the church? This matter deserves our consideration.

As a help in answering the question concerning where the church is in 4:26-29, we may consider Paul's word about God's farm. In 1 Corinthians 3:9b, a word addressed to the church in Corinth, Paul says, "You are God's farm." Literally, the Greek word translated "farm" means cultivated land. The church is God's farm, His field, His cultivated land. If we consider Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 3:9 along with the parable of the seed in Mark 4:26-29, we shall see that Paul's word helps us understand the relationship between the church and the kingdom.

We may use gardening as an illustration of the relationship between the church and the kingdom. In the yard of my home there

is a little garden that we may call a kingdom — the kingdom of plants. This kingdom of plants illustrates the kingdom that was sown as a seed in the Gospels. In the Epistles this seed grows and develops, and, eventually, in the book of Revelation, there will be a harvest. Revelation 14 speaks of the firstfruit (v. 4) and then of the reaping of the harvest (vv. 14-16). That harvest will be the full development of the kingdom, and, according to 1 Corinthians 3:9, the field in which the harvest is growing is the church. Hence, using the illustration of my garden, we may say that the garden itself portrays the church, and the plants growing in the garden portray the kingdom. This illustration helps us to see how the kingdom is in the church. The Gospel of Matthew especially reveals that in the church today we have the reality of the kingdom.

Suppose in my yard there was only the bare ground, the soil, without any plants growing. Would that bare ground be a garden? No, instead of being a garden, it would simply be a yard with soil. How, then, could such a yard become a garden? It becomes a garden only by having plants growing in it. The more plants grow in the yard, the more the yard becomes a garden. In a similar way, the more the seed of the kingdom grows in the tilled ground, the farm, of the church, the more the church is the reality of the kingdom.

In the church life today, many “plants” are growing. If we had not been regenerated but were merely worldly people, we would simply be a yard of bare ground. But because we have been regenerated, we all are plants growing on God’s farm. Hence, we are God’s field, His garden. Then what is the kingdom? The kingdom is actually the reality of the many plants growing on God’s farm. The more we grow in life, the more the reality of the kingdom is present with us.

The New Testament speaks of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the heavens. This does not mean, however, that there are two kingdoms. There is only one kingdom, the unique kingdom of God, and the kingdom of the heavens is part of this unique kingdom.

We need to consider how much reality there is among us in the church life. The amount of reality depends on the amount of the growth in life. If you visit my garden and see healthy, beautiful plants and trees, you may exclaim, “What a lovely garden!” You would behold a garden full of reality. This is an illustration of what we mean by the reality of the kingdom in the church.

Absolutely a matter of life

The church is a garden, and the kingdom is the growing of the saints as the plants in this garden. When the saints, the plants, reach maturity, they will be qualified to be kings with Christ in the kingdom of God. When the Lord comes back, all those who have grown to maturity will be qualified to be kings with Him in the manifestation of the kingdom during the millennium. As the chart indicates, the manifestation of the kingdom will be in the coming age.

The book of 1 Corinthians indicates that the kingdom of God is a matter of the life of God. In 1 Corinthians 1:2 we have the church, for this Epistle is addressed to “the church of God which is in Corinth.” In this Epistle Paul refers again and again to the church or to the churches (4:17; 6:4; 7:17; 10:32; 11:16, 18, 22; 12:28; 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 33, 34, 35; 15:9; 16:1, 19).

We have emphasized the fact that in 1 Corinthians 3:9 we see that the church is God’s farm. In chapter six, verses 9 through 11,

Paul goes on to speak concerning the kingdom of God, pointing out that sinful believers will not be qualified to inherit the kingdom of God. Therefore, in chapter one we have the church; in chapter three, the farm; and in chapter six, the kingdom. In chapter fifteen of 1 Corinthians Paul again speaks regarding the kingdom of God (vv. 24, 50).

In the New Testament we have the thought that the kingdom is absolutely a matter of life. The seed of this life is the all-inclusive Christ. This One has been sown into us as a seed, and this seed is now growing and developing in us until it reaches maturity. As this seed grows within us, Christ replaces us with Himself. When we reach maturity, we shall have Christ as our full replacement, and He will be everything to us. That will also be the time of the harvest and the time when we shall be qualified to rule with Christ. In this age we have the reality of the growing of the divine life, and in the next age we shall have the manifestation of the kingdom when Christ and the co-kings rule over the entire world.

We all need to see that the kingdom is a matter of life. The kingdom of God has been initiated by the sowing of the seed of life into us. This seed is the all-inclusive Christ as the essence of life to grow in us, develop in us, and mature in us. In relation to this seed, we have Christ, the church, and the kingdom. Christ is the seed, the church is the farm or garden, and the kingdom is the reality.

(Excerpts from Life- Studies of Mark Message #16)

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Burdens for Church Prayer

1. 2026 Targets, # of baptized:22; # of prayer meeting attendance:35; average Lord’s Day and small group attendance:10% increase
2. Spread the kingdom of God by preaching the gospel on the WVC campus and in the community.
3. Multiply the number of small groups for the increase and building up of the Body of Christ
4. Perfect young working saints with shepherding families as containers for the next generation.
5. Practice PSRP, BNPB, and vital small groups.
6. Blending in the Body, by participating in conferences and trainings
7. Establish and strengthen the church services, including children, YP, ushering, etc.
8. Establish a prayer life individually and corporately
9. Pursuing the truth and growth in life to live in the reality of the kingdom.

Announcements

1. Life-study of Mark MSG 15, 16
2. HWMR: 2025 Thanksgiving Conference, Week 1
3. 2/10 (Tue) 7:45pm, Prayer meeting at meeting hall
4. 3/14, 10am. Lessons on small groups with br Minoru on Zoom.
5. 4/3-5 NorCal Spring YP conference held at FSCC
6. 4/10-11 FSCC. NorCal Chinese speaking saints blending conference.
7. 7/29-8/2 FSCC. North America Chinese speaking perfecting training, west coast session.
8. 9/4-6 NorCal Labor Day Conference held at Burlingame Hyatt
9. Financial Giving:
 - PayPal/Zelle: churchincampbell@gmail.com
 - Venmo @Churchin-Campbell
 - Church in Campbell bookroom account (PayPal/Zelle)
 - churchincampbellbooks@gmail.com