



CHAPTER 12

The Community

As disciples of Christ, believers are to wield kingdom influence and authority as kingdom citizens in our communities. Kingdom citizens are visible, verbal followers as well as official representatives of Jesus Christ. They are to consistently apply the principles of heaven to the concerns and needs of the culture. They are, in fact, kingdom disciples on earth, anticipating the coming kingdom of Christ on earth.

Jesus points out the role of kingdom disciples clearly during His Sermon on the Mount when He tells His disciples to be salt of the earth and light of the world (Matt. 5:13–16). As salt of the earth, kingdom disciples can use their influence to slow down the expansion of decay engulfing society due to sin. They are to do this in the same way salt was used in biblical days as a preservative to keep bacteria from decaying meat. If our communities are decaying around us, it is because believers are not functioning as the kingdom disciples He has called them to be in order to benefit the world around them.

As light, kingdom disciples are to be visible, verbal followers of Jesus Christ, dispelling the darkness around us.

Kingdom disciples are not allowed to be secret-agent Christians and spiritual CIA representatives. If accused of being a Christian, there should clearly be enough evidence to convict us because of our influence and impact upon the world.

As duly authorized representatives of the kingdom, equipped by the church, we are to represent the King as we fulfill our assignments with our Lord's presence and power. Remember, He is Lord over all things through the church (Eph. 1:22-23).

This means that we believers are to think of ourselves as kingdom disciples while we are working as teachers, administrators, engineers, janitors, secretaries, lawyers, and coaches. Whatever our career, we are to "proclaim the excellencies of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

KINGDOM DISCIPLES, GOOD WORKS, AND THE COMMUNITY

The primary way Jesus says that we are to influence and impact the communities in which we live is through our good works, both individually and corporately. Good works consist of more than doing good things. You don't have to be a Christian to do good things. The unsaved can build orphanages, houses, give money, and visit the sick. Good works, on the other hand, are divinely authorized activities that benefit others, for which God gets the glory. This means that the spiritual is directly connected with the social.

A doctor who represents Christ, then, is not just a doctor, but rather God's representative in the medical field so those in the medical field see what God looks like when He helps hurt-

ing people. It means a lawyer is not just a lawyer. Rather he or she is God's representative in the bar association so those in the bar association see what God looks like when He tries a case. It means a schoolteacher is more than a schoolteacher—she or he is God's representative in the classroom demonstrating what God looks like when He impacts knowledge. In other words, kingdom disciples are cleverly disguised as a myriad of things as they use their gifts, skills, and occupations in their community involvement, political engagement, and social responsibility to improve the lives of people and advance the cause of Christ and His kingdom.

Whether it is praying for and with struggling coworkers, feeding or housing the poor, coaching a Little League team, protesting injustice, or a myriad of other beneficial acts, kingdom disciples help improve the lives of people who are under their influence. They do this not merely by what they say but also by what they do that improves the lives of people in the name of their King and His kingdom.

One of the things we have challenged each of our church members in Dallas to do is to ask God to show them a person who is hurting for whom they may feel compassion, and then to seek to meet that person's need. When they give the help, they are to give the person a card that says "you have just experienced a random

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act of kindness; if you need hope, visit our church website," and then we give them our church information.

They offer to pray with the person for any need they express and then look for an opportunity to share the gospel. As thousands of our members do this, the presence and impact of our church is felt in the community in a positive way by His kingdom disciples. It is the primary responsibility for a kingdom church to develop kingdom citizens who make a positive difference in the society through their good works. When this is not done, we experience the rampant spread of evil throughout our land.

For example, hate crimes, as church burnings across our nation are nothing new and reveal the underlying racial temperament of our communities. They began as a way of terrorizing local black congregations by those who did not want them around. They still take place today, along with the addition of an increase in community uprisings, protests, and revolts.

KINGDOM DISCIPLES, COMPASSION, AND RACIAL INJUSTICE

I've been speaking and writing on racial issues for five decades now and it seems that this hobbed of division in our nation, despite significant progress toward unity in a number of ways, continues to burn hotter than ever. Police brutality, injustice, inequitable living, and educational institutions feed this flame. The forms may have changed but the anger and hate (on both sides of this racial coin) remain.

Church burnings were taking place not too far from where I lived in Dallas in the mid-1990s. At that time, one particular community in Greenville, Texas, was being targeted, and a number

of churches were burned to the ground. In response, city officials, church leaders, and community volunteers rallied together across racial lines in an effort to unify a community that had divided.

I was invited to come and speak at the town gathering held at the local high school football stadium. More than five thousand members of Greenville's population filled the stadium seats. Represented were individuals from both the black and the white communities. As I drove to Greenville that day, knowing the uphill battle this community faced toward reconciliation, I hoped to cast a vision of reunification through a long-range plan centered on the philosophy of the kingdom agenda.

Then-Governor George W. Bush, later to serve as the forty-third US president, had also been asked to deliver a message that afternoon to a town torn by racial strife and hatred. I had not met Governor Bush prior to then, but a kindred spirit was birthed in that football stadium on that day out of a shared desire to see communities restored.

This kindred spirit resonated so deeply that in his own words, President Bush said that day influenced national public policy:

I first met Tony fourteen years ago at a rally in Greenville, TX. . . . Tony's words not only helped calm fears in Greenville, they inspired me to begin the faith-based initiative. My first executive order as President established in the White House office was the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives which leveled the playing field for faith-based groups to apply for federal and social service funds. By the time I left office, more than 5,000 faith-based organizations—mostly small grassroots charities—had received federal grants.¹

I am both humbled and honored to be a part of God using what had been meant for evil, the church burnings in Greenville, and turning it into good for our nation at large through the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Since 2001, an increased number of people's lives were positively affected due to this unique partnership of providing social services through the church.

The comprehensive nature of this initiative allowed it to be endorsed across political lines.

Greenville spawned a nationwide approach to meeting social needs through these faith-based initiatives some twenty years ago; however, it was simply the replication of a strategy that had been carried out for years before that. For me, Greenville was just another in a long line of communities faced with racial tension and disunity.

I have frequently been asked to address communities and cities on the issue of disunity over the last three decades—at times in small congregations in local churches and at other times in football stadiums filled with twenty thousand people from the community.

Whatever the size—the plan is scalable and I am convinced that we share a vision across our racial divide. What we lack, however, is the implementation of an organized and cohesive strategy on how to bring about the fulfillment of that vision. When less than 10 percent of the population can affect public policy and the cultural climate as we saw in the legalization of same-sex marriage, it makes me wonder why the church—comprising far greater numbers—is having such little impact.

One of the main reasons we are not is because we do not unite around a common goal or goals. Rarely do we go outside

of our own church walls and join collective arms to bring about a lasting impact. Yet that is essential if we want to change our culture and impact our communities as kingdom disciples for the good of others and the glory of God. As disciples of Christ we are to be salt and light through our good works. We are to be kingdom citizens who are to impact and influence our communities (Matt 5:13–16). A kingdom citizen is a visible, verbal follower of Jesus Christ who consistently applies the principles of heaven to the concerns of the culture.

The centerpiece of God's plan for humanity has always been kingdom disciples influencing society. When He told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:26–28), God was not merely speaking of replenishing the human race, but to replicate His image through the expansion of the human race in history. This image was to be even replicated on a national scale based on bringing people under the rule of God, and transferring it to other nations (Deut. 4:5–8). So the Great Commission is simply the continuation of this kingdom agenda to the world through the church and the disciples the church reproduces.

KINGDOM IMPACT IN THE CULTURE

Now of course, impacting the community involves more than the issue of racial disunity. I use this only as an opening illustration for the subject at large. How God uses you and your church to influence your community as a kingdom disciple could involve racial injustice and much more, including poverty, oppression, homelessness, illness, crime, inadequate education. We are to seek the welfare of the communities in which we are living to improve the conditions of those around us (Jer. 29:7). We are to promote righteousness and justice in society

while simultaneously sharing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To understand the potential impact of the church and kingdom disciples in a community, let's consider what the Bible says about the cause of social upheaval in the life of a community or nation.

During the reign of King Asa, the nation of Judah found itself in the midst of widespread social chaos. Nation rose up against nation in international conflict. City rose up against city in urban conflict. "There was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in" (2 Chron. 15:5). High crime and safety concerns disturbed everyone. Upon initial reflection, one might think that Satan was behind this turmoil. However, God was shown to be responsible for the chaos in society (v. 6).

The thesis is simple. If God causes the problems in society, only God is the solution. It matters not who is elected into office or what legislation is passed. It does not even matter what new economic initiatives or educational opportunities are put in place. The president and the legislators may have good ideas, but if God is the one orchestrating the chaos—until one has dealt with Him, one has not dealt with the root cause of societal ills.

Much like the culture written about at the time of 2 Chronicles, we are experiencing chaos in our society today. We have international conflict (nation against nation), urban conflict (city against city), and individual conflict (no peace).

Why did God allow such chaos in society? The writer of the Chronicles reveals: "Israel was without the true God" (v. 3). This does not mean there was no religion, worship, Bible reading, or programs at the temple. What it means is that the culture did not recognize the one true God because there were no teaching

priests to point them in that direction. Judah had many priests, yet they were not communicating truth about God. The temple had lost its impact. The result was that there was no law, so the people had no true representation of God's rule or governance over mankind. There was no accountability system to enforce or encourage correct and healthy behavior, and so turmoil ensued.

If the visible, physical realm of social chaos and upheaval is to be corrected, the invisible, spiritual realm has to be addressed: God's Word must be proclaimed and applied. Otherwise, the spiritual causes of the chaos will be allowed to take place indefinitely. This is why the solution to the culture's decline was for God's people to return to Him (2 Chron. 7:14; 15:4). The absence of kingdom disciples in the culture inevitably leads to social decay and disintegration (Gen. 18:20–33).

Making an impact in our culture is not something that will come easily, though. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable.

... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals."

Since the church alone has been given the keys to the kingdom (Matt. 16:18–19), it is the primary means by which God is extending His kingdom rule in this world through His kingdom disciples. Kingdom-minded local churches must be willing to work together in order to have a comprehensive program that

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connects both the spiritual and the social. Churches must work together to extend their influence beyond their individual walls in order to impact the broader communities that they serve.

The principle is clear: The more the church brings God's influence into the culture, the more orderly that culture will be. Often we are content to meet in our local churches or local groups for fellowship and study, but real impact will require unity—unity in the body of Christ.

Here are four questions that will help us measure our impact in our nation. Have we, in our nation, gathered as groups to work together toward comprehensive community impact? Have we ever done this collectively and comprehensively with unity from our nation's spiritual leaders? To these first two questions, the answer is no. Have we ever made such an impact in order to carry out God's command of love? Not that I'm aware of.

Finally, have we truly experienced God's hand of national impact on a large scale in the last century? I would also argue we have not. If we are, as His people, to have a collective impact as kingdom disciples, we will need to set aside personal agendas, organizations, denominations, structures, and the like and come together (i.e., without compromising any of the essentials of the faith) as the body of disciples whom Christ died to procure, and work together in the name of our great God and King.

Have you ever noticed how "special interest groups" in our country carry far more weight in influencing our land (policies, opinions, etc.) even though their numbers are but a small fraction of the number of evangelical believers in America? The reason they carry so much weight and influence is because they unite. We may have the numbers in our favor as an overall body of believers, but we have rarely, if ever, truly united.

A CALL FOR ACTION

It is time to set our preferences and egos aside and impact our communities as one body of kingdom disciples. It is also time for more than an evening event or weekend project. It is time for a comprehensive season of impact and influence in our great land.

During the past few years, I have put together and sought to implement a three-point plan for invoking a national kingdom impact by the church. This plan involves:

1. A national and localized solemn assembly among churches
2. Community-based good works done collectively for a greater impact
3. Churches speaking publicly with one unified voice on the significant cultural issues of our day

The problem in our society is that too many people are looking to force God's hand and will into the box of elected officials. They want a kingdom they can schedule, program, and understand, thus putting their hope in the political realm. But God warns us what happens when we put our confidence in kings (1 Sam. 8:9–18). There is no such thing as salvation by government (Judg. 8:22–23).

Even so, the Democrats are looking for a Democratic savior, the Republicans are looking for a Republican savior, and the Independents are looking for an Independent savior. However, God alone sits as the potentate

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of the universe, saying, as He did through the prophet in Isaiah 43, "I am the only Savior in town."

Therefore, what we need in our nation and our communities today is for His kingdom disciples to make a radical, comprehensive covenantal return to the God of the Bible. We must integrate and influence our culture through all media possible. True community transformation will require the collective cooperation of the masses to leave a lasting impact for good.

One way of getting a jump-start on this collective impact is by identifying the Christian agencies and individuals that already have intellectual affinity and integration within the spheres of typical American society: education, health care, entertainment, news media, literary, government, business, research, family issues, law, national security, economics, community organizations, and social activism. The primary goal of such identification is to take advantage of opportunities of cross-pollinating efforts while also sharing research on cultural trends and indicators. In doing so, we provide a more synergistic approach to shaping the moral framework of our land.

Some of the goals of this partner platform might include:

- Awakening and initiating the desire for national revival, personal responsibility, spiritual integration, and progressive reformation.
- Developing a national strategy of social impact, scalable and implementable across cultural, geographical, and class lines.
- Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the mobilization and management of American Christian resources for national kingdom impact.

- Developing a national ongoing prayer movement to support the initiatives.
- Building and promoting collaboration among churches, nonprofits, training institutions, and agencies.
- Facilitating research and discussion on national trends within the various media in order to stimulate strategic influence.
- Creating a forum for the sharing of strategies and techniques while providing responsible forecasting.
- Producing artistically excellent, compelling means of storytelling to encourage kingdom thinking and personal responsibility through mainstream distribution channels.
- Leveraging social media to transform thinking toward national renewal and kingdom values.
- Devising a corporate approach to deal with collective felt needs.
- Encouraging thinking about community and national impact as also a local church strategy rather than solely a parachurch strategy.
- Carrying out an annual National Solemn Assembly drawing together spiritual leaders and laity to seek God's face and invoke His hand in our land.

ONE COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY IMPACT STRATEGY

One of the ways we can collectively impact our communities is through church-school partnerships. Churches partnering with schools can seek to rebuild communities by comprehensively influencing the lives of youth and their families. This can be done by addressing the education, health, economic, and social needs of hurting people based on spiritual principles. In Dallas we have established such a model.

Churches have one significant advantage in being agents of impact for a community. They are located everywhere. There is an average of three to five churches for every public school in America. Here are three more advantages. Churches (1) are closer to the needs of the people since they are located in the heart of the community; (2) offer the largest volunteer force in the community; and (3) already have buildings to use for community-based programs. By providing a moral frame of reference for making wise choices, churches with their kingdom disciples can equip the community members for social transformation.

One avenue of broadening the churches' impact on their communities is to recognize that churches and schools represent the social, educational, familial, and potentially spiritual nucleus of the community. As people and businesses come and go, churches and schools remain and are ready to accommodate newcomers to their neighborhoods. If these two institutions—churches and their surrounding schools—share common ground as well as longevity, a strategic alliance between the two can precipitate, to a greater degree, positive outcomes for children, youth, and families living in the community.

I remember how this strategy got started organically when I was a young pastor in a predominantly urban community. A nearby high school was experiencing increased difficulties at the time, including delinquencies and low academic achievement. The school principal decided to reach out to me for help. Gang activity had broken out, affecting all areas of performance within the school. After I got the call, I decided to go over to the school with around twenty-five men from our church. The principal stopped all the classes and brought all the male stu-

dents into the gymnasium, and we shared what it was like to be a real man.

What's more, we did it in the name of God. In fact, I even used the name of Jesus Christ, and the school was fine with it because when things have broken down so much that you can't even conduct classes for your students, you don't get so picky about what you will allow or not allow in an effort to help. After our time together, and after some of the men from the church began hanging out in the hallways—offering help and hope to those in need, plus accountability for those who wanted to cause trouble—the gang activity shut down. Student grades went up, delinquency went down, and the school acknowledged that the church connection was good for producing a more productive learning environment.

In fact, the principal later got promoted. He became the superintendent of the district of eighteen schools, and requested our church's involvement in all eighteen schools. We then organized ourselves and adopted all the schools, expanding our support services to each through mentoring, tutoring, counseling, offering skills training and wraparound family support services. When the word got out to neighboring school districts, the eighteen schools soon became thirty-six, and eventually increased upwards of fifty schools at this time.

In addition, I initiated monthly meetings with the principals and administrators for prayer and spiritual encouragement. Today these meetings occur at the beginning and end of each school year, and periodically during each semester.

One interesting discovery we made in this process was that in helping the students in the schools, we also gained access to the parents. Many of the problems students had in school were

an extension of brokenness in the homes. When we adopted the school, we also connected with the families, which in turn allowed us to connect at a deeper level with the entire community.

As our church positioned itself to be the major social service delivery system to the schools, the church provided an avenue to community transformation. We have one of the largest functioning African American pregnancy centers in the land, providing not only prenatal care but also classes for both fathers and mothers. We help people receive an education and acquire job skills through our technology institute, then help them find jobs and get homes. We have a thrift store to help sustain and expand the economic growth in the community, as well as a credit union. We develop businesses and provide medical assistance on a regular basis free of charge to the community.

Why do we do this? Because the church has been uniquely called to impact our society for good. Churches around the country are to set the agenda for effecting positive values and beliefs. One way this can be done is by partnering with public schools across racial, cultural, and class lines and reaching into their community to develop a high quality of life in their area. When churches can set the agenda for the community, positive returns are compounded.

The church and school partnership initiative strengthens communities, and our nation, through seeking to correct improper responses to God's Word, which is the root cause for the dilemmas in society. This successful model has become a national effort through The Urban Alternative's National Church Adopt-a-School Initiative where we seek to train kingdom disciples across the country on how to implement the scalable model in their community. The church and school partnership model

exists as a blueprint on how to apply the principles of the kingdom of God while meeting the needs of hurting people through caring interventions underlined with the message of hope.

One of the most exciting aspects of this community outreach strategy is that it is scalable. The program works whether you have a church of sixty members or six thousand. Our church serves more than fifty public schools because we have enough members to sustain that level of involvement. However, smaller churches can still make a significant impact in their communities by adopting just one public school (elementary, middle, or high school) or by partnering with another church to adopt the same school.

Additionally, the program is cost-effective because the basics of what you need are already in place at both the church and the public school. The actual program cost is contingent on the scope of services your church wants to offer and your capacity to deliver those services.

Whenever I go into a community to speak, I seek to rally the pastors and community leaders around a shared vision for a unified community-wide impact through the adoption of schools. My vision is to have ministerial associations, church denominations, or a group of churches in a local area band together to adopt all of the public schools in their community. I also encourage them to plan an annual time of celebration where they can get together to share what God has done through the various outreach ministries as well as to strategize for the upcoming year.

The ultimate goal of this vision, however, is not the school but the manifestation of God's glory through the power of His body working together to bring about comprehensive change. (It also gives church mentors a practical outlet through which

to use their members' gifts, skills, and occupations to make a kingdom difference for the benefit of their communities. If every community adopted such a strategy, then over time the whole nation would be impacted through this bottom-up approach to community transformation.

This strategy enables us to be the salt and the light in our communities that Christ has called us to be as His kingdom disciples. One interesting fact about light is that it is not as it appears. It is not one color. A prism reveals the true nature of light: when the prism refracts the light, it reveals a spectrum of colors. Likewise, the light we shine for God through good works is not a removal of our color, culture, or uniqueness, but an embracing of ourselves personally as well as each other in such a way so as to create something we could have never created on our own. As we combine strength with strength across racial lines, we form something stronger than what would have been formed alone.

When kingdom disciples operate properly under the kingdom agenda, progress and transformation naturally occur as the spiritual and social aspects of life work in a coordinated way, positively affecting individuals, families, schools, and communities. The benefits derived from church and public school partnerships are innumerable. It will give a visible demonstration of God's kingdom representatives executing kingdom authority from His kingdom institution (the church) through His kingdom disciples.

BECOMING PART OF THE COMMUNITY IMPACT STRATEGY

Dear reader, you can coordinate a church-school partnership training in your area. (The contact information for the National

Church Adopt-A-School Initiative is in Appendix B.) Next, invite area church and community leaders across racial and denominational lines to this training. Then, follow the steps outlined in the training for implementing the strategy in your local community.

For those churches that may not want to adopt this specific ministry model, I encourage you to implement some form of unified good works in your community that benefits the broader society and gives an opportunity to share the gospel.

The philosophy behind kingdom community outreach works. I am living proof. The disconnect ended in my own life and family when my father discovered the life-giving power of faith in Jesus Christ and began operating differently because of it. Our home became different from most of the other homes in my neighborhood because the connection had been made between the spiritual and the social. I am also a product of positive male and female role models from various ethnicities who took the time to mentor and encourage me in such a way so as to propel me further ahead in my life than I may have gone on my own.

This community impact strategy started because I never forgot the transformation that occurred in my own life and family when a spiritual system of belief became the foundation for my decisions. It was then that I saw the link between faith in God and good works for the improvement of my life and the lives of others. In addition, I know the application of this philosophy works because of the thousands of lives that have been transformed through both our local outreach in Dallas and the National Church Adopt-A-School Initiative around the nation.

ONE VOICE

In the Christian church today, however, we come across to our culture as if we are not even speaking the same language when it comes to various issues facing our land. Part of the cause of this is because we have neglected to work across denominational, class, and racial boundaries in order to pursue a synergistic strategy toward cultural impact.

When national times of racial crisis erupt, as they did in Dallas in 2016, in Baltimore and Charleston in 2015, or even Ferguson (Missouri) in 2014, the church should have a greater collective voice in addressing responses to the chaos. Protests take place and anger is often displaced, and yet we need more than a protest—we need a plan. The best way to position ourselves to create and carry out a national plan of restoration involves this three-step strategy—a community-wide solemn assembly, unified community impact, and a shared public voice.

When this is in place, we can speak in unison, calming the anger and hostilities and offering several productive and strategic options for restoration and justice. Several special-interest groups have been successful in influencing culture because they have managed to unify their collective voice among those in government, education, the media, and entertainment. It is time to set our platforms and personal agendas aside when it comes to the matters of national importance so that we can effectively speak into and address the concerns of our day.

IT MATTERS

A story is told about a grandfather and his grandson walking on the beach. The beach was littered with starfish that had been

washed up earlier that morning. Thousands of starfish lay helpless in the sand underneath the scorching sun.

While they were walking, the grandfather reached down and picked up a solitary starfish. He looked at it and then gently tossed it back into the water. Taking a step farther, he picked up another one and did the same. The grandson saw the enormous number of starfish littered on the beach and sighed. He questioned his grandfather. "Papa," he said, "you can't pick them all up. Why even try? It doesn't matter anyhow."

The grandfather, hearing the hopelessness in his grandson's voice, reached down to grab another starfish and gently placed it in his grandson's hand.

"Throw it in the water," he said, smiling. "Go ahead, toss it in."

The grandson did.

"You see," the grandfather continued. "You are wrong. It does matter. It matters to that one."

I have reached great-grandfatherhood at this stage in my life. So far I have a bevy of grandchildren and one great-grandchild. I cherish my grandchildren greatly. I want them to know and value their heritage, culture, and future. But beyond that, I also want them—as I want each of us—to understand and embrace our call to service in the body of Christ as His kingdom disciples.

Living full on as a kingdom disciple is essential to God's divine plan of bringing about lasting transformation in a world tainted by sin and its effects. There is power in reflecting and representing Christ in all we do because Christ is the image and replication of God Himself. Through Him, we not only enter into a deeper level of intimacy with God and each other, but we also reflect His glory, something we have been created and called to do (2 Cor. 3:18).

It is true, we may not be able to save everyone.
But it matters, to every *one* who is saved, that we tried.

NOTE

1. President George W. Bush, "Dallas Life Legends of Service," Dallas Awards Banquet, May 2010, video (producer).

Conclusion

Like December 7, 1941, when Japan launched a surprise attack on naval ships and their crews at Pearl Harbor, September 11, 2001, is also a day that lives in infamy in the history of America.

That day nineteen terrorists who had infiltrated our country commandeered aircraft to perpetrate the horrific acts of bringing down the Twin Towers in New York, crashing into the Pentagon, and plunging US citizens to the ground in rural Pennsylvania during a thwarted attack on Washington, D.C. Like the events of Pearl Harbor, those attacks were suicide missions of death and destruction.

On that day the most powerful nation in the world was brought low by a small group of men who in the name of their god and their religious ideology were willing to give their very lives and destroy the lives of others for the sake of their evil, illegitimate mission.

Sadly, those misguided terrorists from halfway around the world, in the name of their faith, would forever change how we function as a nation. As disciples of this counterfeit kingdom agenda (a caliphate), they brought death and destruction, not life and peace. They did so for the wrong reasons, without care for the lives that would perish. Now imagine if followers

of Christ, the Redeemer from sin and death, could help save lives in America and abroad. That is what fully committed disciples of Jesus Christ could accomplish as they represent the supernatural presence of the kingdom of God in the midst of the kingdoms of this world.

As kingdom disciples we can bring life, hope, righteousness, and justice in the name of the one true God. As kingdom disciples we have been duly authorized to represent heaven on earth so that this world gets to see God at work in its midst. Our assignment is to advance God's kingdom agenda, which is the visible manifestation of the comprehensive rule of God over every area of life.

This does not mean there will be no problems, pain, or evil operating in the world. It does mean, however, that this world will see what heaven looks like when Christ's kingdom disciples are exercising His kingdom authority as His kingdom representatives.

Movie theatres give their audience previews of coming attractions. These previews include the "hot clips" of the upcoming films. The goal of these previews is to entice viewers to return to see the whole show.

One day a big show is coming to town. God is the producer, the Holy Spirit is the director, Jesus Christ is the superstar, and it will be a worldwide production. In the meantime kingdom disciples are to be like those hot clips of this upcoming show. When we reflect the values of heaven on earth we will motivate those around us to consider becoming a part of the coming worldwide reign of Jesus Christ. And if they ask us where they can buy a ticket, that's when we can tell them they don't have

to purchase a ticket. Because of the cross, the price has already been paid. We can share the gospel of peace and life eternal, that His kingdom will receive glory, even as we await Christ's coming return.