

The Expansion of Christ the King in us for the Reality of the Kingdom of the Heavens

God's intention in His economy is to have a corporate reproduction, enlargement, and expansion of Christ that would be in all respects like Christ Himself except in the Godhead. Of course, we must be very clear that Christ in Himself neither can nor does expand, for Christ is the infinite and eternal God. However, in God's economy Christ can and must increase and expand within us. Hence, when we speak of the expansion of Christ the King, we mean Christ the King as the life-giving Spirit entering into us through regeneration and spreading throughout our entire being. Christ expands further when we as these regenerated ones preach the gospel of the kingdom throughout the entire inhabited earth that many Gentiles would receive the King with the kingdom and join us in being the expansion of Christ as the heavenly King.

By expansion, we mean something that is inward, spiritual, organic, intrinsic, and experiential. It is possible to have the propagation of Christ without having much expansion of Christ as the heavenly King. There needs to be a prevailing outward work of gospel preaching and church establishing. But even if there were one hundred thousand local churches on the earth, yet they were all mirror images of the church in Corinth, that would hardly be the expansion of Christ, the heavenly King. Hence, we need to be careful. It is wonderful that through the propagation, many people are being saved and baptized and many churches are being raised up. Without this, there would be no way for Christ to expand within us. However, even if there were two or three billion believers in tens of thousands of local churches, we would still need to question how much organic expansion of Christ as the King there really is. Are all those people living under the heavenly rule? Are they experiencing the all-inclusive Christ? Are they allowing the Lord to reign in their being? Although we must without question have the outward work of saving people and establishing churches, we are misguided if we think that the sheer increase in the number of churches will bring the Lord back. The Lord will not come back for numbers; He will come back only for the reality. The Lord will come back only for an actual organic expansion of Himself within the church people, the believers.

The reality of the kingdom of the heavens is Christ as the life-giving Spirit ruling within us (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17a; 1 Cor. 6:17; Matt. 5:3). This can be illustrated in the following way.

Perhaps there is a practical need in the church in your place. When the brothers ask the saints if someone can take care of this need, there may be reluctance on your part and on the part of all the saints to help. However, hopefully the life-giving Spirit who indwells you would prompt you to take care of that service. When we obey that prompting, although we may lose some time, we would gain the kingdom in reality. This is what it means that the reality of the kingdom of the heavens is Christ as the life-giving Spirit ruling within us. *(Crystallization Study of Mathew, Message 5, Ron Kangas)*