

Equipping

January 2011

Inside this issue:

Kingdom Counseling Center	2
Event Calendar	3
Prayer & Needs	3
Praise & Thanks	3
In Their Own Words	3
A Happy New Year	4

Essential Ingredients

The thing about ice cream is that no matter what flavor combinations you dream up, there are still some basic ingredients that are essential. From a biblical perspective, this is also true for individual churches, denominations and ministries. Milk, sugar, and eggs are essential to any flavor of ice cream. There are essential ingredients to the church and its ministry as well. Whatever form it takes—a local church gathering, a short-term mission trip, a homeless shelter, a Sunday school class, a ministry to addicts, or a rodeo-clown for Jesus—the essentials of Jesus' commission remain the same: **proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God, healing the sick, and casting out demons.**

There are more varieties of church and ministry than there are flavors of ice cream, but are the essential ingredients there in these numerous settings? Is the transforming message of God's in-breaking Kingdom and its expression in various forms of healing and freedom from the demonic clearly evident in each of these ministry activities offered in the name of Christ?

The Kingdom Message

When Jesus sent out His disciples, He gave them power and authority to carry out the instructions he gave them. These were His instructions: "Preach this message: 'The Kingdom of heaven (God) is near [1]. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.'" And that is what they did. The instructions are pretty clear and specific; and apparently they understood it because when they returned they said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name" (Lk. 10). **Jesus rejoiced with them, affirming their obedience in carrying out his instructions with the power He had given them. He assured them that the kingdom of Satan was being defeated through their proclamation of the Kingdom of God,** with a message that incorporated the practical ministry of healing and the casting out of demons. The same was true for the early believers who continued Jesus' ministry as the church grew.

After His resurrection, Jesus universalized this commission for all believers to "make disciples of all nations." With

this commission, **He promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, who will provide the empowerment to continue the same ministry through all believers throughout the world.** After receiving the Great Commission and the promise of Jesus' Spirit, who filled them and empowered them to carry it out, it is clear that these new believers then did the very same things that The Twelve and The Seventy-two Others (Lk. 10) had been doing when Jesus was among them here on earth. These new believers began proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God and the message of Jesus, healing sick people, and casting out demons (Acts 8:12).

Stephen and Philip were not apostles, yet each carried out this commission by preaching and testifying to the message of the Kingdom, with miracles that confirmed it (Acts 6:8; 8:5-8). Paul, to whom Christ appeared after His ascension to heaven, was also commissioned "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:17-18). He also preached the message of the Kingdom of God, healed the sick and cast out demons (Acts 19:8; 28:23; 14:9; 16:18). Jesus' first commission to The Twelve was carried out with consistency by The Seventy-two Others, and later in the continuation of the Apostle's ministry, and among those who were not apostles as well.

What may be less obvious but of equal importance, is that we do not observe any of these believers engaging in another kind of ministry or variation of this commission. Whether they were gathered as the church, on the road, in prison, facing shipwreck, visiting homes, engaging in some form of public ministry, on their way to church (the temple), in the marketplace or involved in missionary work, they continued to maintain the essential ingredients of Christ's original commission to "Preach this message: 'The Kingdom of heaven is near [2]. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.'"

The church continued to understand and carry out this commission in the 400 hundred years that followed.



—Continued on page 2



—Continued from front page

This was why Christianity not only survived but thrived and multiplied despite the antagonistic religious and political environment and persecution from both Roman and Jewish establishments. Sick people were healed and set free from demonic influence (the power of their false gods). They were compelled to turn from their way of living and enter a new life under the Lordship of Christ as part of God’s family [3]. **They converted to Christianity because they experienced the reality of this new life they were being told about.**

It is clear that the first disciples of Christ obeyed His commission exactly, doing just what He said to do. Where did we ever get the idea that to carry out Christ’s commission involved anything else? We have more flavors of church and ministry than Baskin-Robbins’ and Ben & Jerry’s ice cream flavors combined, yet do those essential ingredients make up the essence of whatever we express or promote in Christ’s name?

Last month, a missionary to Africa contacted me regarding some suspected spiritual activity affecting their mission. In his opinion, there is little to distinguish what they are doing, in the Name of Christ, from what UNICEF and other government organizations are doing there. What a contrast to how Paul characterized his ministry: “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s

power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power” (1 Cor. 2:4,5).

Here at home, there are numerous programs The Church offers to minister to those in The Body as well as to those in the community. While ministry should be encouraged, shouldn’t we examine programs for evidence that they contain those essential ingredients of Jesus’ ministry? More importantly, do these ministry programs result in the same kind of fruit that consistently characterized the ministry and commission of Jesus? For example, do programs that offer help to those with various addictions include the ministry of healing and deliverance that results in real freedom? If we are honest, aren’t most of these, despite their Christian veneer, essentially the same kind of management and accountability strategies found in secular gatherings?

Biblical freedom is not management. For the addict who has experienced the reality of Jesus’ ministry, the result is freedom from the compulsion to keep using. Healing is a process that comes once the root issues that lead a person to use are revealed and resolved.

The ministry of Jesus acknowledges and relies upon the Holy Spirit, who empowers and leads all people into truth. He is The Counselor who reveals what is hidden and what is yet to come. He leads us out of captivity into the

freedom that is necessary for us to fulfill the purpose for which we were created in Christ Jesus. Only then will relational accountability and programs be of real assistance. Otherwise, they will continue to lack the power of God that results in biblical and experiential transformation. Programs and ministries come in a variety of flavors, but to be real and effective they must contain the essential ingredients of our Kingdom commission.

We’re Here to Help

If you are interested in more information or experiencing a setting where you and others can learn and be equipped to understand Jesus’ message of the Kingdom of God and how to proclaim it in your church, ministry, program, or group, you can contact us the following ways:

E-mail:
kingdommail@kingdomministriesintl.org
Facebook Fanpage:
Kingdom Ministries & Counseling Center
Mailing address:
245 W Shaw Ave, Fresno, CA 93704
Phone: (559) 226-2750

—Keith Martens, M.Div.,
Executive Director

[1] The terms “Kingdom of Heaven” and “Kingdom of God” are interchangeable and carry the same meaning in the New Testament. For more on this you can read a number of sources by George E. Ladd and others.
[2] Ibid
[3] Mac Mullen, Ramsay. Christianizing the Roman Empire: A.D. 100-400

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Joan Martens, M.A.,
L.M.F.T., Director

Kingdom Counseling Center

What is unique about our counseling center? We not only provide the tools and insight provided by behavioral science, but also utilize the counsel of the Holy Spirit to expose and resolve the roots of emotional and behavioral issues.

Our goal is to provide professional counseling in an environment where we also allow the Spirit of God to

reveal His truth to people directly.

If you or a friend would like to pursue freedom and healing, please call us: 559.226.2750

Carrie Wood, M.S.,
Intern Counselor



Event Calendar

February 8–10: TREK Discipleship School, Abbotsford, BC

May 23–27: YWAM Discipleship Training in Honolulu, HI

*If your church or group would like to host a Kingdom Ministries Seminar, please contact us: (559) 226-2750
www.kingdomministriesintl.org*

Prayer & Needs

Please pray for an increase in our donor base to enable us to consistently meet our monthly expenses.

We are in need of funds for window coverings for our counseling offices.



Praise & Thanks

Praise Jesus for His provision through the faithfulness and generosity of those who gave in December, allowing us to meet our 2010 expenses!

Praise Jesus for the man who has volunteered his time and gifts to build a custom front door for our office!



In Their Own Words

God has been so good to our family! Thanks to the teachings of Kingdom Ministries, we have learned to pray powerfully against the schemes of the enemy and have seen such fruit. God worked a miracle in the life of our daughter several years ago. Today, thanks to God's mercy and grace, she is a healthy 27 year old woman.

For the past several months, we found our family facing a crisis with our seven year old grandson. He was suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome due to repeated exposure to domestic violence in the home of his birth mother.

As he had begun to traumatically act out with unfathomable fits of rage, he was initially diagnosed bi-polar and placed on medication. After watching his struggle for what I realize now was too long, we changed our prayers to employ more of what we had learned in our

"Equipping the Saints" training.

My husband and I prayed aloud over him, forcefully claiming the power so freely given to us by Jesus Christ to order away the schemes and attacks of Satan and to assert the victory and Lordship of Jesus. We claimed our grandson as a child of Christ and ordered the evil one to take his plans to the feet of Jesus for Judgment.

I then gathered with a group of women at our son's home and prayed throughout the house, including in our grandson's bedroom, commanding Satan away. We cleansed the environment as we had been taught.

God was merciful and has answered our prayers beyond what we could have ever hoped or asked.

We have seen a dramatic improvement in our grandson over just a few short months. Since the very day that we prayed with such

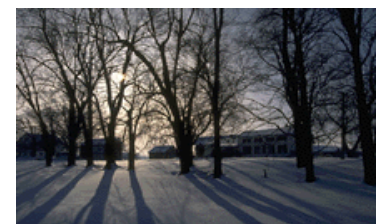
power and conviction, there have been no more episodes of the behavior that I can only describe as frightening.

As his healing has continued, we again see our happy, loving boy (including, thankfully, the occasional disagreement that one would expect from any seven-year-old).

We thank you for your ministry, Keith, and for the work of Kingdom Ministries, but we are especially grateful and give thanks for the hand that our Lord and Savior has in our lives. He is so faithful.

(Name withheld by request)

"Since the very day that we prayed with such power and conviction, there have been no more episodes of the behavior that I can only describe as frightening."



A Happy New Year!

We are indeed happy, grateful, and full of thanksgiving to God and to those of you who



prayed for and supported us in 2010! We are truly blessed and amazed at how God continues to provide through you, even in times of financial uncertainty and difficulty. We praise God for those of you who responded and for how **the Lord provided enough income through you to meet all of our expenses and payroll for 2010!** Hallelujah! A vehicle donation along with several large gifts made a significant difference in the last

weeks of December.

We invite you to rejoice with us and give praise to God. We are incredibly thankful, yet this does bring into light **the need to increase our base of monthly supporters this year.** As we begin a New Year, we kindly ask that you pray and seek the Lord about your partnership with us through prayer and financial support in 2011. Thank you!



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Kingdom Ministries & Counseling Center