



# The Center for Community Change

The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary  
at Andrews University

**A KINGDOM MANIFESTO FOR COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**

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# Introduction

- **Adventism's Mission:** Adventism is an apocalyptic movement focused on warning the nations about the imminent day of judgment when Christ will hold everyone accountable (Matt 16:27; Rom 2:5-11).
- **Challenge:** This urgent focus can lead to dismissing community engagement, either because time seems too short for long-term efforts or because everything will soon be destroyed.
- **Objective:** The review of five key kingdom propositions from the synoptic gospels will demonstrate the importance of sincere community



# Proposition 1: Jesus is King!

- **Jesus as the Davidic Messiah:** Jesus is the royal Son of David, fulfilling Old Testament prophecies (e.g., Matt 1:1; 9:27; 16:16).
- **King of the Jews:** Jesus was born and crucified as the king of the Jews, a public title with political and communal implications (Matt 2:2; 27:11, 29, 37; Mark 15:2, 9, 26; Luke 23:3, 38).
- **Son of Man:** Jesus is the danielic Son of Man, given everlasting dominion over nations (Dan 7:13-14, 26-27; Matt 28:18; Mark 13:24-27).

## CE Proclaims the Sovereignty of King Jesus:

- The *euaggelion* (“gospel”), is not just a roadmap for salvation but a public proclamation of Jesus's kingship.
- This message is essential for all communities, especially in cities where political and cultural leaders reside.

## CE Addresses the Impact of Tyrannical or Self-Serving Power:

- Jesus's kingship is distinct from the oppressive rule of Gentile leaders.
- CE should address the consequences of unjust rulers.
- Servant-like Model, non-oppressive power of Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served.



# Proposition 2: Kings have kingdoms

**“A king without a kingdom is not truly a king, just in name”**

**Synoptic gospels emphasize:** The importance of the kingdom of God.

## **Community Engagement Models the Kingdom**

- Urban cultures often promote isolated lifestyles, causing Christians to overlook the need to be part of and spread the kingdom.
- The gospels stress that one cannot be a follower of the king without being part of His kingdom (cf. Matt 13:31-32).
- David's journey to kingship was gradual, progressing from anointment to ruling all Israel.
- Similarly, the establishment of Jesus's kingdom will unfold over time, in distinct phases.

# Awareness of Kingdom Establishment

- The Jewish revolt led by Mattathias took years to capture Jerusalem and break Seleucid control, demonstrating that kingdoms take time and effort to establish.
- Kingdoms are like mustard seeds, slowly growing to provide safety for all nations (Matt 13:31-32; cf. Ezek 17:22-24; 31:3-9; Dan 4:10-12).
- Community engagement is a critical stage in the gradual establishment of the kingdom.





# Proposition 3: Kings rule their kingdoms through their laws

**A king without laws being followed does not have a kingdom, and without a kingdom, he is not truly a king.**

- Law-keeping within kingdom theology is an expression of devotion and love by the citizens for their king.
- Without law, lawlessness rises, love grows cold, and the kingdom loses its distinctive nature (Matt 24:12).



# CE Models the Delicate Interplay Between Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness

- There has been a generational shift in understanding Jesus's attitude toward the Mosaic law.
- Earlier scholarship, dominated by German Lutheran scholars, suggested that Jesus aimed to replace Jewish legalism with reliance on grace, separating law from the kingdom.
- Recent readings acknowledge that Jesus consistently promoted the moral purity code while criticizing the Pharisees for replacing God's law with human traditions (Matt 15:2-6).

# Community Engagement Promotes Kingdom Values



- In Matt 23:23, Jesus highlights the "weightier matters of the law" – justice, mercy, and faithfulness – as central to the kingdom.
- CE seeks to balance justice with mercy and faithfulness, unlike many modern Social Justice movements.
- On judgment day, the king will treat us as we have treated others (Matt 16:27; 18:23-35; 7:2).
- CE aims to restore and develop trusting and faithful relationships by combining justice with mercy.

**“IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF FAITHFULNESS AND  
TRUST, INJUSTICE FADES, AND MERCY CAN REST”**

**Cedric Vine**



## **Proposition 4: Kings save, laws don't!**

**“LAWS, WHETHER WRITTEN ON PAPYRUS, PARCHMENT, PAPER, OR EVEN ON HEARTS, CANNOT SAVE IN TIMES OF TROUBLE; ONLY A POWERFUL KING OR HIS AGENTS CAN INTERVENE PHYSICALLY”**

**Cedric Vine**

# CE Embodies the Saving Presence of the King in the Community

- King Jesus directly intervened to save those who demonstrated kingdom values through faith or by seeking His mercy (e.g., Matt 9:27-28; Mark 10:46-52).
- When the king is not physically present, His followers embody His saving presence through proclamation, teaching, and healing (Matt 10:5-8, 10:40).

# CE Saves Those in Idolatry from Its Influence and Effects

- The core problem in Israel was idolatry, not just legalism, with many being part of an "evil and adulterous generation" (e.g., Matt 12:39; 16:4).
- Old Testament Principle: People become like what they worship, and idols are lifeless, leading their worshippers to become spiritually crippled, mute, deaf, and blind (Psalms 115:3-8; 135:15-18).

# CE Saves Those in Idolatry from Its Influence and Effects

- Jesus's healings often involved freeing people from demonic forces, symbolizing the effects of idolatry (e.g., Matt 9:32; Luke 11:14).
- His healing was not just healthcare; it was a saving act against idolatry and its demonic influences.



# CE Confronts Idolatry in Modern Cities

- Many in cities today are involved in idolatry, attributing undue importance to things other than King Jesus.
- These idolatrous systems cause suffering, and community engagement works to reverse these effects.
- It offers freedom and liberation by leading individuals and communities to accept the sovereignty of King Jesus (Gal 4:9).



## **Proposition 5: Kingdoms clash**

**KING JESUS IS ASSERTING HIS SOVEREIGNTY OVER  
ALL KINGDOMS, INCLUDING SATAN'S, LEADING TO  
INEVITABLE CONFLICT.**

# CE Challenges Vested Interests

- Jesus was seen as a threat by the urban elite of Jerusalem, leading to His crucifixion (Mark 15:10).
- The elite may support community engagement if it only alleviates suffering and maintains the status quo, but they resist when it pushes for systemic change.
- Jesus's ministry in Galilee focused on the lost sheep of Israel, and in Jerusalem, He confronted the neglectful elite, leading to their conspiracy to kill Him (Matt 10:6; Ps 2:1-2; Acts 4:25-26).

# CE Shapes the Final Judgment

- Deep community engagement often leads to conflict with the elite, challenging them to accept Jesus's sovereignty.
- This conflict can result in bloodshed, described in the gospels as the shedding of innocent blood, which precipitates the final judgment (Matt 23:34-35; Luke 11:49-51).

- In the final judgment, King Jesus will apply pure justice, treating the kingdoms of this world as they have treated His followers (Matt 25:31-46).
- Those who bless His followers will be blessed, fulfilling Yahweh's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:3).
- Thus, deep community engagement, combined with proclaiming Jesus's kingship, hastens the day of the Lord.

# ? Reflection Questions

Which of the five propositions have you emphasized the most or the least in your ministry?

How might you reorientate your missional activities around a narrative of liberating individuals and communities from idolatry and its effects?

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# Thank you!

