

How Does the Set Free Movement Seek the Kingdom of God?



The first time the Kingdom of God is used in scripture occurs during the triumphant song of Moses and Miriam (Exodus 15). It happens within the context of God's freeing of people from oppression. We see that the release of the captives is not just about political freedom¹; the liberation, journey, and the giving of the law were aimed at the **formation of community.**²

This new covenant community is characterized by the sanctity of human life and justice through their social and legal structures.³ Not just manumission, but liberation. Liberation is freedom with rights and responsibilities, full social and economic opportunities. This liberation and the surety of being under the leadership of God Almighty moved the people from a state of oppression and anxiety to a place of abundance and hope in a new community.

In freedom the people could organize social power and social goods for the common benefit of the community.⁴ The Exodus provides the primary model of God's act of redemption, not just in the first testament, but also in the person and work of Jesus.⁵

Set Free seeks to live out these concepts. Our leaders and teams follow Jesus into the brokenness with acts of compassion. When reviewing our impact reports, you can see that we are seeking to be the hands and voice of Jesus. **We are both serving on the margins and challenging systems of oppression.** We are protecting the innocent while also being a people of hope.

Our aims are not just concerned with WHAT we do, but also HOW we engage. Believing that human trafficking is a symptom of brokenness, we seek community first and foremost. The theological paragraph above

¹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God*, (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 284.

² Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 17.

³ Wright, 269.

⁴ Brueggemann, *The Journey to the Common Good*, (Louisville: Westminster Press, 2010), p. 23.

⁵ Wright, 263.

references the fact that God does not just liberate us to do things, but the aim is to **create a community**. In the same way, Jesus called a community into being. From that relational foundation, action happened. The work of the community was a result of the character formation of the Holy Spirit.

We seek to do the same. We sincerely desire vibrant partnerships and unity with all as we journey towards shalom. We strongly believe in the words of E. Stanley Jones, who writes:

“The Kingdom of God is God’s total order, expressed as realm and reign, in the individual and in society; and which is to replace the present unworkable world order with God’s order in the individual and in society; and while the nature of the Kingdom is social the entrance into it is by a personal new birth now; the character of that kingdom is seen in the character of Jesus - the Kingdom is Christlikeness universalized; while it comes on earth in the time process it is eternal and is the same rule which is in heaven and because it is Christlikeness this makes it heaven - there and here; and while it is a total order demanding a total obedience, it brings total freedom.”⁶

Like shalom, **the Kingdom of God is about re-creating community** - the people of

God living in the Kingdom under King Jesus and being the presence of God in the world.⁷ The advent of the Kingdom of God is an ongoing, dynamic process whereby the Holy Spirit manifests the reign of God in people’s lives and in the world at large.⁸

The presence of God, the redeemed of the King, doesn’t have a mission, but is the mission of God.⁹ The Kingdom of God is Jesus, through the church, reconciling the world to God.¹⁰ When Jesus prays for the Kingdom to come he is not asking for the Kingdom to come into existence. Jesus is praying for the Kingdom to take over all the personal, social, economic, political realms with the values and hope of God.¹¹ Scot McKnight writes:

“The kingdom is the people who are redeemed and ruled by King Jesus in such a way that they live as a fellowship under King Jesus. That is, there is a king (Jesus), a rule (by Jesus as Lord), a people (the church), a land (wherever Jesus’ kingdom people are present), and a law (following Jesus through the power of the Spirit. . .). Kingdom mission is about creating and sustaining that kingdom community, the church.”¹²

The Set Free Movement seeks to live these things out in thought, word, and deed - not only in what we do, but how we do it.

⁶ Jones, *The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 75.

⁷ Scot McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2014), 100.

⁸ Dave Andrews, *Integral Mission, Relief and Development*, *Micah Network*, http://www.micahnetwork.org/sites/default/files/doc/library/integral_mission_relief_and_development_0.pdf (Accessed June 24, 2014).

⁹ Howard Snyder and Joel Scandrett, *Salvation Means Creation Healed: The Ecology of Sin and Grace: Overcoming the Divorce Between Earth and Heaven*. (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011), 7.

¹⁰ Howard Snyder, *The Community of the King*, (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2nd edition, 2004), 17.

¹¹ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 26.

¹² S. McKnight, 99.