



From Our Vicar

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How Does God's Kingdom Become Present—on earth, as it is in heaven?

We frequently pray for things to change on earth to become aligned to the values and purposes of God's rule in heaven. A key means God uses to answer this prayer is the Church. This is God's people being present within society to bring change through their active participation in the various aspects, institutions and organisations of their communities and cities. Volunteerism, leadership in community groups, neighbourliness, thoughtful, faithful and compassionate engagement with others in constructive causes and activities, carried out with integrity, is how believers commend Christ to others. In this way the whole society benefits.

Many who may not claim to be believers also of course reflect these qualities. This is in many ways a legacy of the influence of Christian faith on our culture down the centuries, as well as evidence of the image of God that is imprinted and reflected in every human being.

Jesus described his disciples as salt and light in the world. One Christian writer entitled her book 'Out of the Saltshaker' encouraging Christians to engage in groups and activities that give them opportunity to rub shoulders with and make friends of people who may not share their faith presuppositions or values. This is where our faith is road tested. As people share their lives, pains and hopes, and we have opportunity to share in friendship with kindness, honesty and compassion. At times we may have the chance to share a word or act of kindness to encourage the possibility of faith, as we also share our lives with others.

This is what 'Leading your Church into Growth' (LYCIG) means by the second of the 4 'P's—'Presence'. For as we are truly present to others in shared activity and developing friendship, so Jesus who promised to never leave us or forsake becomes present to others through us. This is an amazing privilege and miracle of grace. God has made us to be 'ministers of reconciliation' within the world.

This is a calling to humility and servanthood – recognising that when we serve others, we are serving Christ. And just as we are present in all our various activities as the 'church scattered', so we are to be present as the 'church gathered' – making ourselves accessible and accepting of those who would come.

May God the Holy Spirit who brings God's presence within and among us, likewise, lead us to be truly present to our community.

God bless you,
Wayne

