

**THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST IN ABRAHAM KUYPER'S THEOLOGY AND ITS  
RELEVANCE TO CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF NIGERIA (CRCN)**

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## APPROVAL SHEET

This research work has been read and approved as meeting the requirements of the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN), Bukuru/University of Jos.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research work to the Almighty God, the maker of Heaven and Earth, and to my elder brother Samaila Irimiya. You are more than just a brother; you are my role model you inspire me to be the best I can ever be for the glory of God and for the blessing of humanity.

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## **ABSTRACT**

With secularism on the march in every sphere of life and taking more territory every passing day, the modern Christians (members of Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria) are asking, is the kingship of Christ over all of life still tenable? Majority of Christians answer “Yes” with their lips but along with the secularists, answer “No” by their actions (day to day business of living). By default, dualism has become the norm. Life is now divided into sacred and secular, spiritual and physical. Christ is king over things spiritual and sacred while man or something else is king over things physical and secular. But how can this be? How can it be said that the one who has double right to rule as creator and redeemer of all creations in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible cannot be king over both the spiritual and the physical but only the spiritual? This research seeks to explain to the modern Christian through the Kingship of Christ over all of life in Abraham Kuyper’s theology that, the kingship of Christ is not just over the so-called spiritual things only but over all of life. The kingship of Christ demands that all of life be lived before the throne of Christ.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children” (Hosea 4:6, NIV)

“... but through knowledge the righteous will be delivered” (Proverbs 11:96, NKJV).

“To the Jews who had believed in him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’”. (John 8:31-32, NIV).

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘all authority in heaven and on earth have been given to me therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’”. (Matthew 28:18-20, NIV).

The four scriptures above have formed the core of my meditation over the years. I have come to conclude based on these four scriptures that the biggest problem and the greatest challenge of mankind is ignorance or lack of knowledge. The late Arch. Bishop Benson Idahosa once said "where the true God is not known anything can become god". Only ignorance can make a god out of wood or rock; where true and accurate knowledge is absent, people live in assumptions and act in presumptions. The consequence of living in assumptions and acting on presumptions is chaos and confusion. One would not have to look far, wide and hard to see that the world is in chaos and full of confusion. Every sphere of human existence is now built on the foundation of assumptions, with the blocks of presumptions. As a house whose foundation is laid on the clay cannot stand nor survive the violence of a storm, so also, the various spheres of human existence built on the foundation of

assumptions with the block of presumptions are falling apart in the face of challenging storms of modern life. If these chaos and confusion are only the testimonies of unbelievers, who denied the Lordship and the Kingship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, one would be tempted to conclude that, that is natural and normal, since by denying the Lordship and the kingship of Jesus Christ, they have no access to the truth and without alternative, have to live in assumptions and act on presumptions. But I have to admit, though with great sadness in my heart, the church of God too is not exempted from the testimonies of chaos and confusions. Millions and possibly billions of believers nowadays all over the world are living out these chaos and confusions in almost every aspect of their lives every day of their lives.

How can this be? How can the church who believes in the Lordship and Kingship of Christ, who have the truth in all its fullness, be living in chaos and confusions? I wish that someone would tell me that it is not true. I wish that someone would wake me up and tell me that I was just having a nightmare. However, in as much as I hate to admit it, it is not a nightmare but the reality. Some large members of the believers in the Lordship and Kingship of Jesus Christ, all over the world are living in chaos and confusions. The Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) whose cardinal doctrine is, "The kingship of Christ over all of life" (Palmer, *The Reformed*,7) is not exonerated from this life of chaos and confusions as well.

It is no longer news to say that, the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria is now over one hundred years in Nigeria. Yes, it is a fact that she has grown from a few white missionaries and a few African converts to hundreds of African indigenous pastors and thousands of African indigenous members. She has moved from thatched church buildings to some fascinating modern church facilities. She has a theological seminary (though begging for survival) where the majority of her pastors are trained. But when all is said and done, the fact must be equally admitted that CRCN is struggling. Her cardinal doctrine which is the

kingship of Christ over all of life is not yet manifested in the lives of her members, society and the nation.

Nigeria, her hosting nation is corrupt, impoverished and underdeveloped. Though, it is well known fact all over the world that Nigeria is immensely endowed with abundant natural and human resources. More so, Taraba State, where CRCN is one of the most dominant churches, is probably one of the most corrupt, impoverished and underdeveloped states in Nigeria. The dawning of every new day seems to escalate the problem more and more. The nation, the states and even the church seems confused, and are at a lost concerning what to do.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM**

With so much corruption in our politics, extreme intellectual prostitution in our educational system and gross moral decadence in our societies, the gap between the sacred and the secular keeps increasing daily. Looking at the society, one quickly noticed that church life and everyday life in the society are worlds apart. From the individuals to the families, from the church to the society and from the states to the nation, lawlessness, disorderliness and chaos prevail. Corruption in our government, insurgencies and insecurities in our society. Lack of due process and accountability in our corporate organizations and government agencies, so much examination malpractices in our educational institutions and armed robbery everywhere, Ladies are raped daily around the nation. Daily children are abused by people who should protect them. Human rights abuse has become so common that it no longer draw our ire anymore. It seems every individual is now a law to himself. The Biblical writer of the book of Judges in decrying the Israelites' situation in premonarchical times captured the chaotic situation by saying, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6 NKJV).

But are we without king? Absolutely not! Most of our key government officials profess the Lordship and Kingship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Most of the lecturers and students in our schools believe in the Lordship and Kingship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Most people in our societies and nation claim that Christ is their Lord and King. Since it is conspicuously clear that we are not without king, then why are the government officials, the lecturers and students, the corporate bodies and government agencies, the individuals and families living without the laws of the king? why are the people living according to the dictates of their hearts?

The scriptures emphatically declare that, Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords (see 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16) as well as the sovereign over all (see Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:10-11) This eternal truth of the Kingship and Sovereignty of Christ over all, put forth by the scriptures, is believed by Christians all over the world through all the ages. This belief place a weighty responsibility on the Christians that is far reaching in its implication. It demands the Christian to be an enthusiastic disciple and faithful servant of Christ at all times, in all places and in all situations. This means, the follower of Christ cannot cease to be a Christian either in thoughts, words and or actions for even a moment.

But can it be said with all sincerity and clear conscience that just as this truth is in the beliefs of the Christians so also it is in their practices? The day to day life of the modern day Christians leaves us in no doubt as what should be the answer to the above question. The majority of modern day Christians believes the Kingship of Christ over all of life in theory but in practice they believe the Kingship of Christ is spiritual and is limited to things spiritual and ecclesiastical. (This practice is further re-enforced by anti-Christ forces emerging in every sphere of society). Only a few minorities of Christians believe that the Kingship of Christ over all of life has a practical dimension that reaches into every sphere of human existence in particular and creation in general.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

It is quite disheartening to watch believers in the Kingship of Christ wallow in chaos and confusion day in and day out without an end in sight, as if they have no king. It is heart-breaking to watch believers in the Kingship of Christ grope as though they are walking in darkness stumbling their ways through life without any certainty or guidance. When faced with the decision about which career to choose, whom to marry, how to raise their children, how to manage their resources, how to invest, which political party to work with, which candidate to vote for, which policy they should endorse, etc, most believers in the Kingship of Christ act as if they don't have a king. Instead of turning to Christ their king for clear instruction and guidance; they went about in assumptions that are presumptuous. Worst still some of them turned to the secularist and or traditionalists for instructions and guidance in the issues of life.

Why would these believers not turn to Christ for instructions and guidance? It is either plain ignorance or misunderstanding of the Kingship of Christ or both. Some honestly believe that, though Christ is a king, he is the king of angels and spiritual beings and not of human beings. Others honestly believe that Christ is the king of Jews and not of Gentiles. Also there are believers who sincerely and faithfully believe that Christ's Kingship over human beings is purely spiritual and has nothing to do with our mundane day to day living. Still others ignorantly but dangerously believe that Christ is king but he is not reigning yet. He will begin to reign when this heaven and earth passed away and God creates a new heaven and new earth. Beginning there and then, Christ would reign forever and ever.

### **1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The primary purpose of this research is to investigate what the Kingship of Christ is in the theology of Abraham Kuyper, and its relevance to for the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN).

Secondly, the researcher has personal interest in the works and person of Abraham Kuyper, the man of many abilities. The man who did not just agree with the truth, accepts the truth, believes the truth, and confesses the truth but instead went a step further to practice the truth he believed. His life is a demonstration of a believer who understood the nature and the implication of the Kingship of Christ in the life of a believer.

Thirdly, Abraham Kuyper is well known to the Reformed Churches in Holland, Canada and the United States of America (USA) but to the Reformed churches in Africa and more precisely, Nigeria, he is not well known. Therefore it is the researcher's intention to acquaint the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) with the person, theology, life and works of Abraham Kuyper, with the intent that they would learn from him how to be subjects, servants and ambassadors of Christ in their day to day living in their families, vocations and every other aspects of their life.

Finally, the researcher intends through this research work to contribute to the ongoing quest of the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) and other Christian denominations, to recapture, reconstruct and possibly reform a comprehensive Christian worldview, anchored on the Kingship of Christ over all of life, that will govern, control and guide Christians in all their thoughts, beliefs, and activities in every spheres of society and every aspects of life, with the goal and hope to bring transformation in the society that will eventually lead to the entire society acknowledging, accepting and obeying the kingship of Christ in every tiny little detail of her constitution and activities.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

Perhaps due to sheer ignorance or plain misconception, the majority of Christians who believe in the Kingship of Christ through the years, sincerely but erroneously believe that it is the pastors, missionaries and the evangelists that are the servants of God, doing the work of

God. Thus concluding that theirs (pastors, missionaries, evangelists) is a sacred work that should not be done haphazardly or anyhow, rather, it should be sincerely, diligently, devotedly and faithfully done in submission to the will, rule and standard of Christ. Meanwhile, these other Christians never saw themselves as the servants of God doing the sacred work of God. They believe that, theirs is a mundane, common, natural and ordinary work that does not appeal to the interest of Christ to the extent that he would have a set standard for them on how to do their works. In fact, they conceive of their works as secular, meaning that which is far removed from the jurisdiction or domain of Christ. With this sincere but wrong presupposition at the back of their minds, they plunge into their works depending on this dangerous assumption that are presumptuous to guide them on how to do their works. This explains the incessant chaos and confusions that has, is and continue to plague various spheres of our existence.

It is right here that the significance of this research shines forth like the effulgence of the glorious ray of the rising sun shining forth after a long night of pitch black darkness. The significance of this research is that it clears every doubt and shatters every misunderstanding of the nature and implications of the Kingship of Christ in the minds and lives of the Christians. It goes on to show the believers that the entirety of their lives are lived before the throne of Christ's Kingship over all of life and must be lived for him in every place, in every situation and at all times. Abraham Kuyper captured this truth more elegantly when he wrote:

The Son is not be excluded from anything. You cannot point to any natural realm or star or comet or even descended into the depth of the earth, but is related to Christ, not in some unimportant tangential way, but directly. There is no force in nature, no law that controls those forces that do not have their origin in the eternal word. For this reason it is totally false to restrict Christ to spiritual affairs and to assert that there is no point of contact between him and natural sciences rather every deeper penetration into nature must lead to greater glory of the majesty of the eternal word (Kuyper , You Can..., 74).

He went on to add, under the influence of this great revelation when he excitedly proclaimed "Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the



rest, and there is no square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ who is sovereign over all does not cry: 'Mine'" (Kuyper, Sphere..., 488). The above statements by Abraham Kuyper have completely removed the wall of partition and totally destroyed the false dichotomy created between the so called sacred and secular domains of life. To the believer in the Kingship of Christ, all of life is sacred. Every believer is a servant of Christ and every work he does is the work of God. Imagine the gravity and dept of transformation we would experience if every individual sees himself as the servant of Christ. What will happen if husbands and wives begin to see their responsibilities to each other as working for the king, Jesus Christ? What will happen if parents begin to see their responsibilities to their children as working for their king, Jesus Christ? What will happen if teachers and lecturers see their responsibilities to their students as working for the king, Jesus Christ? What will happen if the civil servants see their responsibilities to their employers as working for the king, Jesus Christ? What will happen if the president, the governors, the senators and all other elected officials see their responsibilities to the electorate as working for the king, Jesus Christ? Oh! What will happen, if everybody in the family, church, society, states, and nation sees themselves as subjects and servants of the great king, Jesus Christ, working for him? What will happen? The answers to these questions underscore the significance of this research.

A quick scan through the scriptures reveals that this is what the Kingship of Christ over all of life entails. For instance Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit in his letter to the Ephesians said:

Slaves obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is a slave or free" (Ephesians 6:5-8, NIV).

This research is so significant, relevant, and vital to the individual, the family, the church, the society and the nation at large. This is because the research seeks to help the believers to see themselves as subjects, servants and ambassadors of the Great King, Jesus Christ. And to demonstrate that whatever vocation they are engaged in or will be engaged in is sacred unto the Lord and they must do it sincerely, diligently, faithfully and devotedly in submission to the will standards and requirements of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF STUDY**

Abraham Kuyper was a man of many abilities and multiple talents. He was an erudite scholar, a journalist, a theologian, a pastor, a politician, a prime minister, an educator, a university founder and a seminal thinker in the history of modern Calvinism. He wrote about or over 223 published works thousands of devotionals, articles and unpublished works that covers the various spheres of human existence (Vanden Berg, 281) However, this research would neither involve all of his works nor all his theological thoughts. Rather, this research would mainly focus on his theological conception of the Kingship of Christ over all of life and its practical implication in life. At the end of the findings of this research, it would be applied to the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN).

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research by its title is historical. Therefore, the researcher will use the historical method in carrying out this research. This research is organized in six sections. It proceeds from section one which is the general introduction to the thesis. Section two looks at the Kingship of God and Jesus in the scripture. Section three covers the background to Abraham Kuyper's theology of the Kingship of Christ. Section four zoomed in on the Kingship of

Christ in Abraham Kuyper's theology. Section five focuses on the relevance of the Kingship of Christ in Abraham Kuyper's theology to Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) while the final section will be the conclusion. Given the topic and the historical nature of this research, the research will adhere strictly to the library method of research. The researcher will use many books as are available on the topic, dictionaries and as well as books and articles written by Abraham Kuyper himself to draw his conclusions.

## **1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature to be reviewed here is both theoretical and empirical. Frank Vanden Berg in his book titled *Abraham Kuyper* (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1960), portrayed almost all aspects of Abraham Kuyper's life chronologically from birth to death. With much facility and awesome dexterity, he presented the wide range of Abraham Kuyper's interests and activities ranging from journalism to education, and from ecclesiology to politics. He submitted that Kuyper was propelled by the conviction that, "... the sacred scriptures not only disclosed the way to the bliss of heaven but also shed a radiant light on every area of life with all its problems" (Vanden Berg, 74) He went on to add that, "He (Abraham Kuyper) stood on the mountain top. His eyes already have the sweep of eagles. He saw all the sectors of life as so many provinces which, largely secularized had to be won, redeemed, and made to prosper to the glory of the triune God and in conformity with his revealed will and ordinances" (Vanden Berg, 77) He went further to show with clarity and precision, how Abraham Kuyper with almost super human power, wisdom and unflinching determination strove to achieve his set goal through preaching, lectures, journalism, political party (anti Revolutionary party) and parliament. This work is a master piece. As a biography, this book achieved its aim by giving us a panoramic view of Abraham Kuyper's life. It introduces the reader to the person and works of Abraham Kuyper. However, like any book or writing that attempts to cover so much

material in such a little space, the book did not penetrate deeper into his thought and theology.

Peter S. Heslam in his book titled, *Creating a Christian worldview: Abraham Kuyper's lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). presents a brief biography of Abraham Kuyper, before launching into discussing and analyzing Abraham Kuyper's ideas in their context by providing a historical and scholarly commentary on the book in which they received their most significant and eloquent expression, *Lectures on Calvinism: a series of six lectures that Kuyper delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1898*. (Heslam, 62-63) He began his masterly exposition and skillful analysis by unveiling Kuyper's importance in the history of ideas and why the lectures on Calvinism is still of peculiar interest. In the main body of the book, Heslam provides a probing analysis of the six lectures in turn. Central to Heslam's analysis is a discussion of Kuyper's motivation of Kuyper's thought: why did he maintain the stand point he did and what did he hope to achieve by doing so? In answering this question, Heslam explores Kuyper's position relative to others of his time and in connection with the events of his career. In this book Heslam gives a clear summary and penetrating analysis of the content of the stone lectures and provides an information survey of their theological, philosophical, sociopolitical background and their historical-cultural background. This book is an outstanding scholarly work of immense importance for any study on Abraham Kuyper. However, with that said, it must be admitted that the book focused too much on who influenced Kuyper, which sources he drew his inspirations from, why and how his thoughts developed that it failed to put the nail at the head as to the primal or foundational idea or believe behind the motivation in Kuyper's life and work.

Next is the book titled, *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*. edited by James D. Bratt. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). It is a compilation of Abraham Kuyper's key writings

covering the wide spectra of human existence and activities, categorized under broad headings such as: Church and theology, politics and society, culture and education. In this book, are Kuyper's definitive statements on politics, education, culture and the religious currents and social problems of his time. Included also is the personal narrative of his conversion, his critique of modernism and of Holiness theology, his proposal on common grace and Calvinistic politics, his reflection on culture, pantheism and evolution, and his classical address on sphere sovereignty. It also contains a brief overview of Abraham Kuyper's life, explanatory roles, pictures and cartoons of Kuyper. These writings surely are Kuyper's definitive statements on various topics and issues but that is all they are. They are his diagnosis, criticisms and proposal on the various topics and issues covered in these writing. However, neither Kuyper himself nor the editor tries to intimate the reader about the primal thought, belief and or theology that constitutes the foundation for these writings. But then, in these writings he has left us enough clues and tools with which we can dig and pry our way to the very foundation on which stands his super structure of theology and works.

Also Prof. James Edward McGoldrick in his book titled, *Abraham Kuyper: God's Renaissance Man* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2000) gave prominence to his theological thoughts about God, sin, salvation, the church, the antithesis and common grace. (McGoldrick, 98-166). Next he turned his focus on Abraham Kuyper's reformation or transformational works through journalism, education and political actions. McGodrick went ahead to show how Kuyper, firing all cylinders, battled secular humanism and modernism in the church, education and politics. Kuyper would not rest contentedly nor be satisfied with anything less than the Lordship of God and of his Christ over all of life, and that not just in confession but also in practice. This passion and sentiment is demonstrated by Kuyper's declaration that, "There is not one part of our world of thought that can be hermetically separate from the other parts, an there is not an inch in an entire area of our human life of

which Christ, who is sovereign over all does not cry, 'Mine'" (McGoldrick, 62) To this end Abraham Kuyper studied, preached, taught, wrote, organized, worked and conducted his entire life. This book did much by taking its reader very close to the primal or foundational thoughts or beliefs on which Kuyper built his theology and conducted his entire life and work. Yet like the other earlier literatures reviewed, it failed to hit the bull's eye.

Last but not the least in the literature review is the book by James D. Bratt titled, *Abraham Kuyper: modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat* (Gran Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013). This book as a biography, tells the story of Abraham Kuyper without malice or favor; it neither idolized nor vilified him. In this book Bratt simply but masterfully, tell the story of Abraham Kuyper's life with all its attendant beautiful virtues as well as with all its attendant ugly vices: He present the life of Abraham Kuyper from birth to death with such uncanny ability to paint a vivid picture that the reader find himself drawn into the life of Kuyper and his home land of Holland as well as his multiple interests and works. He presents Kuyper both as the saintly church man as well as the aggressive social crusader. The pastor or shepherd who tends and cares for his flocks with great sensitivity and utmost tenderness as well as the no nonsense self-assured politician who relentlessly attacks his enemies perceived or real with vehemence and neither wastes time nor hesitates in crushing his enemies when necessary. He presents Kuyper as that thoughtful, organized and calculative person as well as that person who was driven by instinct and relished greatly in spontaneity. He presents Kuyper as the person who tried to steer the middle course of two diametrically opposing ideas but every now and then found himself giving in too much to either the one or the other side. This creates a constant tension in his life that borders on contradiction.

"This book is a biography, it does not aim to systematically treat any one piece of Kuyper's thought or action, as many valuable studies have done" (Bratt, 21) yet it was written with some set of assumptions or allusions into some of Kuyper's theories, most noticeably

among them is sphere sovereignty. This theory seemed to be the under-guiding idea that runs through the entire gamut of the book, giving meaning to the various nuances contained in the book without which they could not be understood. This book is surely a classic in the study of Abraham Kuyper and his works.

However, in all the literature reviewed none deliberately, purposefully and systematically treated the theme of the Kingship of Christ over all life in Abraham Kuyper's theology. Secondly, all this literatures was written by people in Europe and America. Thirdly, they were written primarily for European and American audience. None was written by a Nigerian or for the Nigerian audience. In other words, though there are copious literatures on the theology and life of Abraham Kuyper, yet, there is no contextualized study of the Kingship of Christ over all of life in Abraham Kuyper's theology for the Nigerian situation. This therefore, justified the need for a thesis on this topic.

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The same words may have different meaning to different people in different context. Therefore, it is important to define words and show how they are used in a given context. Ludwig Wittgenstein, suggests that words must be understood in terms of contemporary or normal usage. He believes that words are part of people's custom. Consequently, as the people change the words also change their meaning (cited by Sproul , 20). Therefore, to achieve mutual understanding in every conversation or discussion, especially academic discussion, then, words must be defined. With this in mind, we now move to the definition of terms.

### **1.9.1. Kingship**

Kingship means the state, office or dignity of a king (Chambers, 886) However, in the context of this research Kingship will mean the rule or reign of a king.

### **1.9.2 Kingdom**

The Aramaic word for kingdom, *Malkut*, means royal power, dominion, royal, dignity and kingdom. While the Hebrew word for kingdom, *Mamlakah*, means kingdom, dominion, king (Vangeroren, 956). On the other hand, the Greek word use to translate the Aramaic and or Hebrew word for kingdom, *Basileia*, means kingship, Kingly rule and kingdom. (Brown, 372).

The original meaning of the word *basileia*, is the fact of being a king, the position or power of a king and it is best translated, office of the king or kingly rule. Besides this meaning, there is a second meaning which emphasizes the geographical aspect of *basileia*; for the status of a king is shown by the area over which he reigns. *Basileia* assume therefore, the meaning kingdom, signifying the state or area over which a king reigns (Brown, 373).

The obvious fact that forces itself upon our understanding now, is the fact that, a kingdom is made up of two components, the sovereign reign or rule of a king and the territory of a king. Simply put, king and domain make up a kingdom. Therefore, by definition a "kingdom is the governing influence of a king over his territory or his domain. Impacting it with his will, purpose and intent, and that is manifested in the culture, lifestyle and quality of his citizen" (Munroe, 95). Better still, "a kingdom is the governing influence of a king over his territory impacting it with his personal will, purpose, and intends, producing a culture, values, morals, and lifestyle that reflects the kings desires and nature for his citizens" (Munroe, 31). Therefore, in the course of this research, the words kingship and kingdom may be used interchangeably because of how closely related they are in meaning and concept.

### **1.9.3 Theology**

Theology is derived from the Greek word *theologia*, compounded of two words, meaning basically an account of, or discuss about, gods or God (Ferguson, 680). *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, says, "Theology is a reflection about God, even the science



of God" (Hastings, 700). For Luis Berkhof, "theology is the systematized knowledge of God" (Berkhof, 19). *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defined theology as the "study of religion and religious ideas and beliefs [Also] a particular system of religious beliefs and ideas" (Longman, 1719). Gyang D. Pam in his submission, posits that, "Theology has to do, then, with God's self disclosure of himself to mankind through the power of the Holy Spirit as seen in his word (Pam, 1) The legendary St. Anselm of Canterbury defined theology as, "Faith seeking understanding" (cited by McBrien, 25).

All these are wonderful definitions theology in and of themselves. However, for the purpose of clarity and simplicity to aid understanding in this research, we will adopt Richard P. McBrien's definition of theology as stated below:

Theology is that process by which we bring our knowledge and understanding of God to the level of expression. Theology is the articulation in a more or less systematic manner of the experience of God within human experience. Theology in the broad sense of the word, may emerge in many forms: a painting, a piece of music, a dance, a cathedral, a bodily posture, or in its most recognizable form, in spoken or written word. These forms, of course, never do justice to the perception which they hope to express (McBrien, 26).

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE KINGSHIP OF GOD AND JESUS IN SCRIPTURE**

### **2.1 PREAMBLE**

Earlier on we suggested that in the course of this research the terms Kingship and kingdom will be used interchangeably. With this in mind, we shall proceed to shed light on the kingship or kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is God's kingly rule (Ladd, 58). The kingdom of God is the reign of God- the exercise of his sovereignty (Ladd, 59). In late Judaism the kingdom or kingship of God means God's rule or sovereignty (Ladd, 60). Ladd citing C.H. Dodd said the kingdom or kingship of God is, "the transcendental order beyond time and space that has broken into history in the mission of Jesus" (Ladd,59). Therefore by definition the kingdom or kingship of God is the governing influence of God over His creation impacting it with His will, purpose, and intents, producing a culture, values, morals and lifestyle that reflects God's nature and desires for his creations (Munroe, 31).

In the same vein, God and Jesus shall be used interchangeably in the course of this research. This is because we believe that the three persons of the Trinity are one. We hold this belief because the scripture says, "In the beginning was the Word and word was with God, and the word was God" (John 1:1 NIV). The scripture went on to say this same Word that was God "...became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 NIV). Of course it goes without saying that this one and only Son from the Father full of grace and truth is Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, Jesus Christ himself testifies of his oneness with God when he said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30 NIV). However, in our survey of the Old Testament, the Kingship of God will mostly be used, while in the New Testament survey, the Kingship of Christ will be mostly used. But they will both mean one and the same thing and refers to one and the same concept.

## 2.2 THE KINGSHIP OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Any student of the Bible, would likely look in vain for the phrase, "the kingdom of God", in the Old Testament because it is not there. However, the absence of the phrase is not synonymous with the absence of the kingdom of God as a concept. Prof Timothy Palmer in his book titled, *A Theology of the Old Testament* puts it more succinctly and quite elegantly when he wrote saying, "The entire Old Testament presupposes the kingship of God. Yahweh, not Marduk, is the great king. The kingship of Yahweh is the central theme of the Old Testament, or perhaps the main idea in the Hebrew scriptures" (Palmer, *A Theology...*, 14) also citing j. Stek's, "Introduction to Psalms" in NIV study Bible, he wrote the following:

What is said of the Psalms is true of the whole Old Testament: "The gravitational centre of life but also of history and of the whole creation is God. He is the great king over all, the one to whom all things are subject... as the great king on whom all creatures depend, he opposes the 'proud'... As the great king over all the earth, the Lord has chosen Israel to be his servant people" (Palmer , *A Theology...*, 14).

The fact remains that you will not have to look very hard to find God's rule in the Old Testament. Even a casual glance through the Old Testament would bring you face to face with God's glory, power, majesty, sovereignty and dominion. Every book of the Old Testament is a testimony to his sovereignty, dominion, kingdom or kingship.

By definition a king must have a realm or domain and subjects, if he is to have any legitimate claim to the title. In the Old Testament view, God the great king reigns over the heavens and the earth, a dominion populated by the heavenly hosts and the earthly inhabitants created to praise him and serve him world without end. (Merill, 278).

The story of the Kingship of God begins with the first sentence of the Bible "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1 NIV). By this simple but majestic affirmation both king and realm or domain are introduced; and in the six days that follows, the citizens or subjects of the great king, animate and inanimate, appear in the course of time until mankind, the crowning glory of the creator, takes centre stage. The sequence of

the subjects of creation demonstrate a line of progress that leads unmistakably to a structure of hierarchy in which the higher order dominates the lower order, mankind itself resting on the apex (Merill, 278-279).

As far as the Old Testament scripture is concerned the kingdom of God is contrasted to all human political structure and can be established only by divine initiative. Human can only acknowledge it and submit to it by taking upon themselves the yoke of the kingship of God (Wam, 453). In other words, the Kingship of God could not, cannot and shall never be established by man.

### **2.3 THE KINGSHIP OF GOD OVER ISRAEL HIS COVENANT PEOPLE**

Along with this general and eternal Kingship of God, the Old Testament also presents God as the king over his covenant people Israel, in a particular, exclusive sense not true of any other nation, he is Jacob's king (Isaiah 41:21). Accordingly, Israel is the only nation that is a kingdom of priests, Exodus 19:6 (Gaffin, 367). Scriptural accounts reveals that in the early days of her existence, Israel was ruled by God. That is she was under the system of theocracy, a word which means "a rule of God" (Palmer, A Theology..., 106). At that time Israel did not have human king, God was literally the king of Israel. In this regard, Israel was outstanding among other nations. God first ruled his people through Moses and Joshua, after Joshua, God raised up judges to govern the people as his vice-regent from time to time (Palmer, ATheology..., 106).

Thus God has committed himself to personally provide judicial, legislative, executive and military leadership that his people needed. But God was invisible while the enemies that surrounded Israel were all too visible. So there came a time when Israel openly and clearly rejected God direct reign over them. They opted to be ruled by human king. They demanded for the ruler they could see. They wanted to be like other nations around them (1 Samuel 8:1-5). They preferred to rely on human king rather than God (Richards, 377). Even while

Samuel gave them a sound and serious warning of the consequence of their actions, they insisted and stuck with their choice for a human king over and against the direct kingship of God.

When finally Israel received a human king, they were told that this kingship was not absolute. The human king was to carry out his kingship functions under the rule of God. This again marks a difference between Israel and other nations (Palmer, *A Theology...*, 107). "Elsewhere, the king was god; in Israel it was God who was a king" (Berr cited by Edmond Jacob, 238). Right from this time onward however, things were no longer the same in Israel as human factor ensued. And biblical history, records recurrent tragedies, with evil and inept human kings leading Israel into apostasy (Richards, 377). The prophets, many of whom lived during the monarchy called Israel back to its original vision of God as her creator, king and redeemer (Isaiah 43:15) He has to be recognized, acknowledged and served as the great king (Richard, 377).

#### **2.4 THE NATURE OF THE KINGSHIP OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

In discussing the Kingship of God in the Old Testament, The first problem or question that forces itself upon our consciousness is a very challenging one, most especially, to our modern mind. The question is, how can God who is transcendental and spiritual, whose kingship is also transcendental and spiritual, be appropriated in time and space or human society? Or better still, what is the nature of the Kingship of God in regards to time and space or human society?

The kingship of God is both spiritual and physical. It is transcendental and eternal as well as temporal, bound in time and space impacting human society and culture. The Old Testament people did not struggle with these two realities that seem to be worlds apart and irreconcilable to the modern mind. They could not just see the rationale behind the idea that this God that is transcendental and spiritual being, created the world and all that are in them

but then on the other hand, turned right around and deny that this same God that is both transcendental and spiritual being who created the world cannot reign over the physical world because he is a transcendental and a spiritual being.

The Old Testament believes that God is king and he exercises his kingship over all creation visible and invisible, animate and inanimate by the virtue of his right as the creator of the world and all that are in it.

In the Psalms of Yahweh's dominion, then, the horizon expands from the praise of "our God"- the God revealed in Israel's historical experience, to an ecumenical vision of God's world-wide sovereignty, which is not bounded by cultic or geography... first, this psalms moves in the spacious horizon of creation, not just creation in primordial past (as in Genesis 1) but the whole creation that is radically dependent on the creator for its order and permanence (Anderson,211).

Also the kingship of God is over all creation because as the creator of all things visible and invisible that makes him the owner of all things. In other words, he is the Lord of all. Thus Anderson captures this momentous revelation when he wrote saying:

The earth belongs to Yahweh who made it, founding it securely on the waters of chaos(Ps 29:10) creation not just an event of the remote past but also includes the present cosmic order that the creator sustains against continuing disruptions of powers of chaos. In this creation theology, the whole... (earth) not narrowly... (The land of Israel), belongs to the Lord (Yahweh) who made it, founding it on waters of chaos (Ps. 24:1) hence worship becomes ecumenical. All people are invited to join Israel in worshipping the God who is creator and king (Anderson,212).

To the Old Testament people, the kingship of God is not a remote and abstract idea but a practical concept that guides the reality of their day to day activities. God is a present king who is involved and engaged in every detail of their life to all ramifications.

How is the Kingship of God mediated to this world of time and space? Generally speaking the Kingship of God or the rule of God over all creation was delegated to man right from the beginning of time (Genesis 1:26-28). God gave man the dominion or kingdom mandate by commanding him to rule and have dominion over all creation. However, later in the life of Israel as a nation, we saw that the Kingship of God or rule of God was mediated

through various channels but paramount among them all is the institution of the priesthood and the monarchy.

The Old Testament taught that God is the one and only true king who sits in the highest heaven and yet rules in the affairs of man. He appoints both the priest and king as his vice-regent to administer his kingly rule or government in the nation of Israel. And even the other nations of the world, "God alone was the supreme king, and every government had to function under his authority" (Kaiser, 147). Therefore "The people were not to appoint anyone who was not chosen by God, and the king was not to do his own will and pleasure; he was to rule according to the law of God. Thus Israel still had a theocracy of sorts where the king merely reigned as a viceroy of Yahweh, the heavenly sovereign (Kaiser, 147). The divine choice is reflected in adoption. The chosen human king is placed at God's side by adoption. He is elevated to the position of the representative of God's sovereignty and heir to his power (Psalm 2:1-9). Thus, in the Old Testament, the Human king was not the 'son of God' by nature nor did he by his ascending the throne necessarily enter into the sphere of divine, but by the decision of Israel's God, he was declared to be son at his entry into the office of the king (Kraus,113).

The Old Testament went a step further to asserts that, not only Israel's human king was reigning as God's viceroy but the kings of the other nations as well, were in some sense ruling as God's viceroys. For instance Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4: Cyrus in Isaiah 45:1-4; and Sennacherib in Isaiah 37:21-29 just to mention few. Therefore, it goes without saying that the kingship of God is both spiritual and physical.

Also in the Old Testament the Kingship of God is both a present reality and futuristic. "Although the Psalms actualize the reign of God liturgically in different way from the prophets, both testimonies pointed beyond the historical institution of kingship to an eschatological reality" (Childs, 120). Reading through the Old Testament two ideas of the

Kingship of God begins to emerge. First, is the idea of the Kingship of God that is already in existence and will continue to a perfect state where it would come into fullness of its glory. The rule of God would be complete, absolute, effective and evil will be exterminated from God's creation under God's reign. The second idea is that, there would be a violent termination of history and all creation, in the meantime, God will create all things anew. In that new creation there will be no evil and God would reign supreme. This idea presupposes the destruction of the Old creation brought about by God using some extremely cataclysmic event of great proportion that will bring the present history and creation to an end. (Dyrness, 227-230). Thus embedded in the Old Testament is the idea that God is king and God shall be king.

The future reign of God will be brought about absolutely by God's decision. It will be totally for the sake of God and completely brought about by God. The future pure Kingship of God would be something totally new, because the old creation with its attendant evils as well as all satanic opposition and human rebellion would be destroyed. There will be a mediator, sometimes identified as the remnants. This idea runs through the entire gamut of Old Testament, culminating in the messianic figures which was to come from the Davidic dynasty. Of course this idea found its eventual and ultimate fulfillment in our Lord and Savior as well as king eternal, Jesus Christ (Dyrness, 230-234).

To sum it up, in the Old Testament Yahweh is the sovereign king whose dominion is over all creatures by right of creation, ownership, sustenance and redemption. His kingship is both spiritual and physical. It is both present and is yet to come. The administration of his kingship in the Old Testament is mediated principally by the Hebrew monarchy or kings until its eventual fulfillment in the person of the messiah, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



## **2.5 THE KINGSHIP OF GOD AND CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

It is important to note that every discussion in the New Testament involving the kingdom of God, presupposes the Kingship of God and or Christ. A careful observation of the New Testament reveals that most of Jesus' discussion on the kingdom of God focuses on the reign or Kingship of God rather than the personality of the king or the dominion of the king. Therefore, the fact that Jesus Christ is the king is categorically and clearly stated by the New Testament without mincing word. For instance the wise men from the east came to Jerusalem searching for the king whose star they saw in the east (see Matt 2:1-2). During his trial before he was crucified, Pilate asked Jesus are you the king of the Jew? Jesus affirmed his kingship by saying "it is as you say" (Matt. 27:11). However, Jesus Christ being God as well as the king did not talk much about himself either as God or as the great king instead he focused all his talks and teachings on his kingship, kingdom, reign or dominion. Thus every one of his teaching on the kingdom of God is standing on the firm foundation of his kingship.

It is true that the entire Old Testament is replete with the fact that God is king yet the phrase kingdom of God was not mentioned even for once. However, it is presupposed in the kingship of God. But unlike the Old Testament, as soon as one turned the pages of the New Testament, the phrase, the kingdom of God and its synonym the kingdom of heaven, forces themselves to the consciousness of the synoptic gospel reader. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ, the great king, who was to announce and introduce the great king to the world, came in Matthew 3:2 saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near".

Then came Jesus Christ, the great king himself, after his baptism, his first public statement according to Matthew 4:17 is "repent for the kingdom of heaven is near". While Mark in Mark 1:15 records it as, "the time has come, the kingdom of God is near." Both statements, essentially means one and the same thing. It is now generally agreed that the phrase, the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, means not so much, a domain as a

reign, not so much an area over which the king reigns as the activity of the reigning, so that when both John and Jesus began their ministries with the announcement of the kingdom of God, they must have meant the manifestation of God's sovereign or kingly activity among men (Guthrie, 409). Implying that, the profound Old Testament sense of the sovereignty or Kingship of God is thus transferred in the New Testament to the person of Christ who exercises the rule of God at the Father's right hand through the Holy Spirit (Milne, 311).

New Testament scholars have reached a consensus that, the main theme of Jesus' teaching and preaching is the kingdom of God (Ladd, 56). Thus, Jesus preached about the Kingship of God, he taught about the Kingship of God, He told parables about the reign of God and he demonstrated the sovereign power of the Kingship of God throughout his earthly ministry. Definitely, in Jesus Christ the kingdom, kingship or reign of God has broken into time and space in a very recognizable demonstration of the power of the Kingship of God that it could not and cannot be mistaken for anything else.

With Jesus' message of the kingdom of God or the Kingship of God and the demonstration of its practical power in the physical through his miracles of exorcism, the kingship of God has broken into history. However, Jesus looked forward to the imminent eschatological consummation of the kingdom that would involve his own resurrection and second coming (Ladd, 57). John Gray offers an interesting insight in this regard:

The significance of the reign of God in the faith of ancient Israel is emphasized by its persistence through later prophetic eschatology and in apocalyptic until the time of Jesus and by the place it occupies in his message. According to Mark 1:15 it was his manifesto; when he sent his disciples out on the first Christian mission (Mt.10:7,Lk 9:2). He charged them with the same proclamation "the reign of God is imminent..." "thy kingdom come" was included in the prayer, He taught the disciples (Mat 6:20, Lk. 11:2): His healing miracles are claimed as a token that the reign of God so eagerly awaited was now effective, had 'arrive'... (Mt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20) it was the theme of many of his parables (Gray, 317).

However, just like the Old Testament scholars who accept that the doctrine of the reign or Kingship of God is taught in the Old Testament could not agree on the nature of the reign of the Kingship of God, so also, the New Testament scholars could not reach a

consensus on the nature of the reign or Kingship of God. Some of them opined that the reign or kingship of God is yet to come while some of them assert that the reign or Kingship of God has come. However, majority of New Testament scholars have reached a consensus that the reign or Kingship of God is in some real sense both present and future (Ladd, 56).

The truth remains that, as long as we live in this world tainted by sin and corrupted by evil, there is a lot about the reign or Kingship of God that we will not understand. However, there are some things about the reign or Kingship of God that we can understand, but this understanding will not come about when we depend heavily on reason or scholarly materials but rather, by prayerful and faithful study of scripture itself.

The New Testament taught so much about the reign or Kingship of God as it reveals quite a lot about the kingdom of God. The New Testament suggests that, the reign or Kingship of God is spiritual. While, Jesus was talking to Pilate, he said, “my kingdom is not from this world” (John 18:36). He went on to say, "my kingdom does not have its origin here”, or as (NIV) puts it, "my kingdom is from another place". This suggests that the reign or Kingship of God is spiritual. However, we must not quickly rush to the conclusion that, because the reign or Kingship of God is spiritual and is from another place outside this world, it means the reign or Kingship of God has no physical dimension and is not in this world. In fact, by the sheer fact of the statement made by Jesus in John 18:36, suggests that the reign or Kingship of God has come into this world. The facts of the physical or present reign of God, is substantiated by many other scriptures of the New Testament.

The New Testament has not left us in doubt concerning the present reality of the reign or Kingship of God. One time, Jesus casted out demon and the Pharisees accused him of casting out demons by the power of the prince of demons. In his response, Jesus said to them, "If I cast demons by the finger of God then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28). What a revelation! He did not say the kingdom of God will come upon you;

rather, He says "the kingdom of God has come upon you". In other words, the reign or Kingship of God is with you, right here, right now. Of course, Jesus meant what he said, he was not joking and he was not under duress. Therefore, if we are serious about helping ourselves, we better let go of whatever reason we are holding on to and believe him.

The New Testament has also made it abundantly clear that, the kingdom or Kingship of God has future dimension. One day, about two millennia ago, Jesus was teaching and he said:

When the son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered to him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, "come, you who are blessed by my father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world... then he will say to those on his left, depart from me, you who are cursed, into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:31-34, 41 NIV)

In this teaching, Jesus talked about a time in the future when every opposition to the reign of God will be dealt with, every form of evil terminated and the Kingship of God will be established in all its fullness of glory manifested in his righteous reign over his righteous people who are fully submitted to his kingship in spirit, soul and body.

However, before that future time that, the kingdom or Kingship of God would be the only dominion and reign, in the present, the kingdom or Kingship of God must reign concurrently with the rebelling or opposing kingdom of Satan. In this regard, Jesus told a parable of the weeds. The disciples seeking to understand what the parable meant, asked him to explain the meaning to them.

He answered, "the one who sowed the good seed is the son of man, the field is the world, and the good seeds stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil the harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

As the weeds are pulled up and burned on the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The son of man will sent out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. He who has ears, let him hear (Matt 13:37-43 NIV).

All these goes to show that while the Kingship of God is already here and reigning, it is not doing so in all its fullness of glory yet. There is still a future demission where the kingship of God will be unveiled in all its glory, majesty and splendor. At that time, evil will be completely terminated.

To sum it up, the doctrine of the kingdom or the Kingship of God is taught in the New Testament. The kingdom or Kingship of God is central to the mission, preaching and teaching of our great king, Jesus Christ. The Kingship of God is spiritual, with a physical dimension. It is already here and it is yet to come.

## **2.6 BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE KINGSHIP OF GOD AND JESUS**

Earlier on we have observed that the phrase, "the kingdom of God" and its synonym, "the kingdom of heaven" does not appear in the Old Testament. Having said that, we must now state unequivocally that, the concept of the kingdom or Kingship of God does not emerge only in the New Testament, the idea or the fact of the reign or the rule of God, run through the entire gamut of scriptures from the Old Testament through the New Testament.

The scripture affirms that God is king. The entire creations, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate are his domain. He exercise kingship, dominion or reign over all. Every other authority is subject to his kingship. Thus, the scripture refers to him as the King of kings and the Lord of lords (see Rev. 17:14; 19:16; 1 tim. 1:17; 6:15). This truth is affirmed by the Old Testament and substantiated by the New Testament.

The Old Testament and the New Testament agree on the fact that the kingdom or Kingship of God is spiritual and physical as well as present and futuristic. The Old Testament emphasizes the spiritual and future dimension of the kingdom or Kingship of God more than the physical and present dimension. On the other hand, the New Testament emphasizes the

physical and present dimension of the kingdom or kingship of God just as it does the spiritual and future dimension.

However, it suffices to say that, the biblical understanding of the kingdom or Kingship of God, is the rule of God in action which is and is yet to come and it is both spiritual and physical- if you wish, produce physical effects. This profound sense of the sovereignty or Kingship of God is transferred to the person of Christ who exercises the kingship or rule of God. Thus, the scripture expressly declared that:

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation. For in him all things were created: Things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities: all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his bloodshed on the cross (Col. 1:15-20NIV).

This scripture, clearly upheld the Kingship of Christ for all and sundry to see by specifically pointing out the fundamental criteria that qualifies him as the great king over all. Earlier on in the Old Testament, we saw that the Kingship of God was ratified by the foundational truth that God is the creator, of all, lord of all, sustainer of all and the redeemer of all. So also, this scripture, points out that Jesus Christ is the head or king over all because he is the creator of all, Lord of all, sustainer of all and the redeemer of all. Furthermore, it shows that the Kingship of Christ over all is based on the fact of the original or old creation and his specific headship or Kingship over the church is by the fact of the new creation.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **BACKGROUND TO KUYPER'S THEOLOGY OF THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST**

#### **3.1 PREAMBLE**

Abraham Kuyper was not a character in a play or a hero in a legend or fiction. Kuyper did not live and conducted his life's works in a vacuum; rather, the fact is that Kuyper was a real person who lived in space and time, precisely, in the Netherlands, astride two centuries—the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He was born and brought up just like any other child. He grew from childhood to adulthood just like any other person. He went to school and had to learn like any other person. He had faults, frailties and fears just like any other normal person. He had his moments of doubts, depressions and dismays just like every other human being then and now. He had his fair shares of struggles; strains and stress just like any other person that ever and or will ever live on the planet earth. Yet, he took his chances, faced his challenges and made his choices.

Therefore, in our quest to understand his theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life, we may need to pry and peep into his social, spiritual and intellectual environment for a glimpse that may help us understand the spiritual, social, cultural and intellectual background over and or against which he developed his theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life. However, this investigation into the background of Kuyper's theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life will not be exhaustive. Of course, it goes without saying that, to do a thoroughly exhaustive study of the background to Kuyper's theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life, will take at least a book of many pages. As a result, our quest will be focused on the most pertinent and prevalent idea and or principles that formed the background against and for which he developed his theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life.

### **3.2 NATURE-GRACE DUALISM**

Nature-grace dualism is a simple yet complex concept that permeates every aspect of life in all ramifications with profound effects which is producing some mind bugging consequences. Its history, reaches back to as far as the Greek philosophers, many centuries before the incarnation or birth of our Lord and King Jesus Christ. This concept of nature-grace dualism has undergone so many modifications and transformations in nomenclature. That, if one does not keep a close tab on it, he may likely lost track of it. The following are examples of some of the nomenclatures used to describe the nature-grace dualism as a concept: sacred-secular, higher-lower, spiritual-material, theology-philosophy, the church-the world, the temporal-the eternal etc (Boer, Missions, 132). However, we should bear in mind that sometimes, any of these nomenclatures may be used without reference to its philosophical concept of nature-grace dualism. Therefore, we should not rush to a conclusion based on assumption that is presumptuous that, whenever and wherever any of these nomenclatures are used they mean nothing else but nature-grace dualism. But for the purpose of this research, whenever any of these nomenclatures are used, they will be used in reference to the concept of nature-grace dualism.

The concept of nature-grace dualism goes back to Greek philosophy. The Greeks thought that nature was an eternal being with the ability to renew itself continuously. They reasoned that, the heavenly bodies are visible or manifest gods “whose task it was to form the bodies of men and animals, while their souls were created by the highest God himself. That, the highest God should create mortal or physical beings was unthinkable” (Boer, Science, 81). The highest God was considered too pure to be involved with matter or anything physical because there is a tacit disapproval of matter as evil. Meanwhile, they could not deny the existence of matter or their own bodies. Therefore, to resolve this dilemma, they created the hierarchy of God’s with the highest God at the apex. In this way, they deified



nature as the creator of evil matter and thereby protect the integrity and purity of the highest God (Boer, Science, 1993, 81).

This led to a sharp divide between what is spiritual and what is material. In their thought, the highest God is good and nothing that smirk of evil can be associated or traced to him. The deified nature may not be evil in itself but then, it created matter which is evil. The highest God, rule over the spiritual realm while deified nature rule over the mundane or physical realm. This means, the spiritual realm and the material or natural realm run on parallel paths with no meeting point. In the mean time, this spiritual –material dualism in thought was carried into the daily lives of the people. They developed hierarchy of life's occupation, with meditation or thinking at the apex and manual labor at the lowest end (Gamble, 128). This spiritual-material dualism became the main stay of Greek culture on which everything religions, political, social, economical, etc stands or falls.

Many years later, this spiritual-material dualism was introduced into Christianity in her early formative years by Gnosticism with some added slant and or twist. But with the help of God, the early Christians were quick to identify it and with concerted effort over many years of intense struggle, were able to kick it out. Gnosticism took the thought of Greek philosophy in regard to spiritual-material dualism and pushed it to the extreme, to the point of hostility to the world (Brown, 81). They taught that, the spiritual is good and the material is evil. They believed that, the good soul or spirit of man is trapped in the body of man that is evil. The soul or spirit of man that is good, seeks to escape the prison of its evil body. Therefore, the Gnostics had no respect or value for the body. Since, the body has no value; some of them took to ascetic life in hatred of the body in order to starve it to death. In the meantime, some of them took to libertinism, believing that whatever they did with their bodies does not matter, since, the body is condemned and destined for destruction, so that, the soul or spirit may escape to its home in the spirit realm (Ferguson, 310). However, the

common denominator between the Gnostic-libertines and the Gnostic-ascetic is that their behaviors, whether ascetic or licentious was meant to aid their soul or spirit escape the prison of their evil bodies.

This spiritual-material dualism traveled through many centuries and modifications to eventually found for itself, a comfortable and spacious home in Christian theology and even Christian practice through the works of Thomas Aquinas (Leithart, 156-160). In his “attempt to synthesize Christian teachings with Greek philosophy, particularly Aristotelianism”(Boer, *Missionary*, 449), Aquinas, separated life or creation into two separate realms. The spiritual realm he named grace and the material world he named nature. He went on and developed logical theological arguments to support his nature-grace dualism.

But before we look at his argument, it is important to note that, Thomas Aquinas did not just woke up one morning and decided to synthesize Christian theology with Greek philosophy. No, that was not the case, rather, Aquinas, after a thorough reading of Greek philosophy, especially those of Aristotle, he could not with all good conscience deny the truths contained in those philosophies. More so, he was surrounded by the virtues and practical goods of the heathens. How could he account or explain this phenomenon? No doubt, these people were pagans. They did not worship the God of heaven, and they had no access to his special revelation: yet, they know some truth and were doing well, in fact, sometimes surpassing the Christian who knows God and had access to His special revelation through the power of the Holy Spirit and the scripture.

To resolve this dilemma, Thomas Aquinas developed a logical and theological argument that lead to a nature-grace dualism. Abraham Kuyper summarized this argument so wonderfully that made it precise and plain for all to understand. The following is Kuyper’s summary, of Aquinas argument:

[Aquinas] taught that there existed two spheres of life, the earthly or the merely human here below, and the heavenly, higher than the human as such; the latter offering celestial enjoyments in the vision of God. Now, Adam, according to this theory, was well prepared by God for both spheres, for the common sphere of life by the nature He gave him, and for the extra-common by granting him the supra-natural gift of original righteousness. In this wise Adam was doubly furnished for the natural as well as the celestial life. By the fall he lost the latter, not the former. His natural equipment for this earthly life remained almost unimpaired. It is true, human nature is weakened, but as a whole it remained in its integrity. Adam's natural endowments remained his possession after the fall. This explain [then] why it is that fallen man often excels in the natural order of life, which is in fact merely human (Kuyper, lectures, 22).

By this argument, Aquinas rejects the radical corruptive nature of sin. He argued that, “Human nature is not so entirely corrupted by sin, however, as to be deprived of natural good altogether. Consequently, even in the state of corrupt nature a man can do some particular good by the power of his own nature” (Aquinas, 140). Thus, with some level of modification of the Greek's and Gnostic's concept of spiritual-material dualism, Aquinas, baptized and christened it as nature and grace which we now referred to as nature-grace dualism. In the scheme of Aquinas' nature-grace dualism, he taught that, nature is essentially good because “that which is natural is not sinful, but it is that which constitutionally does not attain the supernatural” (Boer, Missionary, 450). Meaning, man's sense of reasoning, judgment and ability to comprehend natural reality remained intact, unimpaired by sin. Man still retained his ability to choose good and do good without any supernatural help. After all, the natural realm was created for man to access, apprehend and appreciate without any supernatural impute or help, other than, the basic fact that God created him with those abilities (Aquinas, 1380-140). The only time, man really need any supernatural help, is when he wants to comprehend and apprehend spiritual reality that is beyond the natural realm. This goes to mean that, since, sin did not actually and really affects the natural realm, so also, the redemptive work of Christ does not really affect the natural realm. Thus, to this system of nature-grace dualism, grace is only soteriological and nothing more. In this realm of grace, Christ is both Lord and King, whose word of grace must be received by faith and obeyed in

order to gain salvation. The natural man cannot by his natural ability apprehend, appreciate and access the supernatural world of grace because it is above his natural senses and abilities. Therefore, he needs supernatural revelation of the word of grace which he must receive by faith in order to gain entrance into the supernatural world of grace where Christ is both Lord and king (Aquinas, 142-150). However, in the natural realm, all men are the same. There is no difference between Christian and non-Christian, because in the natural realm, man does not need God's revelation or grace for anything. In this realm of nature, both the Christian and non-Christian submit to the rule or kingship of reason and or conscience.

Perhaps, Aquinas was too preoccupied by the good he saw in the heathens all around him and maybe he was too consumed with the desire to find a logically acceptable explanation for it that, he had not read Genesis chapter one to three very closely. Genesis chapters one and two, made it abundantly clear that, God created man perfect. Man's perfection was demonstrated in his right knowledge of God and perfect knowledge of nature, he fellowshiped with God without been taught how to. Without any prepared lists of names, he could tell what name fits a particular animal by just looking at it-though, he had never met them before. On the other hand, the radical nature of sin is revealed in Genesis chapter three by how the same man, lost the right knowledge of God as well as his perfect knowledge of nature. The ability of sin to corrupt totally is demonstrated in how the man lost his right knowledge of God, by thinking he could hide from God. At the same time, he lost his perfect knowledge of nature, when he thought; the fig leaves could actually hide him from God. Sin did not just affect man's knowledge of God but also affects man's knowledge of nature. Sin actually permeates and radically affects every aspect of man's existence in all ramifications. Consequently, Aquinas's nature-grace dualism is not tenable in light of scriptural portrayal of the radical nature of sin and its ability to corrupt totally. When all is said and done, it

remained a fact that, Aquinas' doctrine of nature-grace dualism became the official doctrine of the church up on till the time of Martin Luther.

Luther had an intense struggle with the leadership as well as some of the doctrines of the Roman Church that eventually led to his radical break with the Roman Church. "He insisted on the radical nature of sin" (Boer, *Missionary*, 451). However, he still believed that nature and grace are separate realms and should be kept separate. He submitted that, Christ is king over the kingdom of grace and man's reason is king over the kingdom of nature. He taught that, in the kingdom of grace where Christ rules, faith alone is all that matters and reason should never be invited to share this realm with faith. Meanwhile, in the kingdom of nature, he taught that man's intellect or reason is the sole ruler, though counseled, instructed and directed by love and natural law. Though, Luther highly esteemed service in the state, yet, it placed second to service in the church. As a result, he said to the Christians, "you have the kingdom of heaven; therefore, you should leave the kingdom of earth to anyone who wants to take it" (Luther, 298). In spite of the fact that, Luther, had a radial break with the Roman church, that not withstanding, he preserved the doctrine of nature-grace dualism, howbeit, in a modified form.

### **3.3 CALVIN'S VIEW OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

Following in the footsteps of Martin Luther and many other great Reformers before him, Calvin insisted on the radical nature of sin and its ability to corrupt totally, which is known in reformed theological parlance, as "total depravity". Calvin insist that the effects of sin is total. He taught that, all of nature is permeated by sin, and the effect of this sin reaches far and wide into every aspect of nature. Sin did not just affect the spirit of man or the entire being of man, more than that; he taught that sin affects the entirety of creation. Consequently, Calvin insists that man is saved by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone (Calvin, 90). But after all is said and done, the truth must be acknowledged and spoken, Calvin, was truly the

child of his time, just like Luther, Calvin did not fully break free in his thinking from the nature-grace dualism that was prevailing at his time. Though, he did not positively state that, Christ is not ruling over the whole world, neither did he positively state that, Christ is ruling over the entire world. In other words, he did not categorically assert the Kingship of Christ over all nature. In regards to the kingdom or Kingship of Christ over all life, his statements are sometimes ambiguous and are liable to be interpreted this way and or that way. The vestige of nature-grace dualism in his thinking can be seen or discerned from his writings. For instance, concerning the kingdom of Christ he wrote"... he who knows to distinguish between the body and the soul, between the present fleeting life and that which is future and eternal, will have no difficulty in understanding that the spiritual kingdom of Christ and civil government are things very widely separated"(Calvin, 651). Here is the ambiguity, he did not say the kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom for if he had said so, then, that statement would have excluded the kingdom of Christ from being anything else but spiritual. Instead, he said, "the spiritual kingdom of Christ". Right there is a whole world of ambiguity. In saying, the spiritual kingdom of Christ, is he tacitly suggesting that there is a physical kingdom of Christ? Well if there is, he never directly mentioned or talked about it. Yes it is true that he said, "The spiritual kingdom of God and civil government are things very widely separated" (Calvin, 651), yet, he did not say, they are different or antithetical to each other. He went on to add another ambiguous statement on the previous one by saying, "seeing, therefore, it is a Jewish vanity to seek and include the kingdom of Christ under the elements of this world..." (Calvin, 651). Obviously, he is very clear and precise on the fact that, the kingdom of Christ should not be fitted into or placed under any elements of this world, and that is absolutely right because the kingdom of Christ is bigger and better than any of the elements of this world or even all the elements of this world put together. For instance, in the true sense of the word, the church is not the kingdom of Christ but is in the kingdom of Christ. So also, civil

government is not the kingdom of Christ but it is in the kingdom of Christ. Therefore, the fact that, the kingdom of Christ should not be fitted into or placed under neither the church nor the civil government does not in anyway mean or suggests that both or either the church or civil government should not be placed under the kingdom of Christ. Then next, comes the ambiguous part of the statement "... let us, considering, as scripture clearly teaches, that the blessings which we derived from Christ are spiritual, remember to confine the liberty which is promised and offered to us within its proper limit" (Calvin, 651) Absolutely, the blessings which we derive from Christ are spiritual but does that mean, Calvin is in anyway, suggesting that these spiritual blessings have no bearing on the physical? Is he in anyway saying, our spirituality doesn't affect and influence our physicality? No, he never said that, neither did he say otherwise.

However, as he moves from thinking to doing and from theory to practice whatever line of dualism was in his thought, seemed blurred, obscured and or obliterated completely in his practice. In this regard he taught that, "...the distinction does not go so far as to justify us in supposing that the whole scheme of civil government is matter of pollution, with which Christian men have nothing to do" (Calvin, 652). Here, Calvin made it categorically clear, that, civil government is not something sinful, corrupt or a pollution that Christians who are true servants of Jesus Christ, should eschew and shun. Thus in practice, unlike Luther, Calvin did not divide life into two regions or realms of nature and grace, with the realm of nature under man and the realm of grace under Christ. Herein Calvin, continued by saying;

But as we lately taught, that kind of government is distinct from the spiritual and internal kingdom of Christ, so we ought to know that they are not adverse to each other. The former, in some measure, begins the heavenly kingdom in us, even now upon earth, and in this mortal and evanescent life communes immortal and incorruptible blessedness, while to the latter it is assigned, so long as we lived among men, to foster and maintain the external worship of God, to defend sound doctrine and the condition of the church, to adapt our conduct to human society, to form our manner to civil justice, to conciliate us to each other, to cherish common peace and tranquility (Calvin, 652).

Though, Calvin, might have falling short of out rightly declaring the Kingship of Christ over all of life or more precisely, over civil government but then, he left us enough clues and nuances that seemed to suggest that civil government is an arm or sphere in the kingdom of Christ. For instance he argued that the magistrate (civil government) is ordained by God for us and honored by God, this is shown by the titles he gives to it.

The magistrates are called “gods” (Ex. 22:8, vg; Ps 82:1,6). This signifies that, they have a mandate from God, have been invested with divine authority, and wholly God’s representative, in a manner acting as his vice-regents... God has entrusted to them the business of serving him in their office (as Moses and Jehoshaphat said to the judges who they appointed in every city of Judah) of exercising judgment not for man but for God... the purpose is that kings should reign, and counselors should decree what is just, that princes should exercise dominion, and all benevolent judges of the earth (Calvin, 1489).

This goes to show that, civil government is a product of God’s divine providence and a holy ordinance. “The Lord has declared his approval of their offices. Accordingly, no one ought to doubt that civil authority is a calling, not only holy and lawful before God, but also the most sacred and by far the most honorable of all callings in the whole life of mortal men” (Calvin, 1489). It is interesting to note that, Calvin seemed to deliberately refuse to place the civil government under the direct Kingship of Christ because he wants to make the distinction between the old and new creation. Civil government came into existence in the old creation and the church came into existence by the fact of the new creation. So he placed the church under the direct Kingship of Christ, but then, he went on to place both the church and civil government under the Kingship of God. Calvin taught the absolute, sovereignty, kingdom, or Kingship of God and his providential care in all creation and for all creation. He came to this conclusion because “he focused intensely on studying the Bible, not primarily as history or literature but as the true word of God that instructs its readers [on] how to think about God and how to live” (Amos, 227). Central to Calvin’s doctrine of the kingdom or Kingship of God, is the concept of divine or special revelation. He insisted that revelation is the basis of clear knowledge of God, ourselves and all of nature or creation (Calvin 1960, 87). He went



on further to say that, God is king or sovereign over all creation; first, because he is the creator of all and secondly because he is the redeemer (Calvin, 40). This means, God is the creator; Lord and king over all creations and his providence bring his rule or kingship to bear in all of creation.

However, in Calvin's view of the kingdom or Kingship of God, there is no place for dissenters and unbelievers, they had to leave town or face the consequences. There was no religious freedom or freedom of conscience (Palmer, Reformed, 13). Also, it is important to reiterate the fact that though, Calvin, managed to break free from most of the nature-grace dualism that dominated his day, yet, it is no longer secret that Calvin was the child of his time. In a way, Calvin, taught two-kingdom doctrine. But it must quickly be added that, this is only at the level of doctrine but when it comes to application or practice the gap is closed, and all we see is one kingdom, ruled by one king, God in Jesus Christ.

### **3.4 DUALISM IN THE NETHERLANDS IN KUYPER'S TIME**

In the course of this research, we have observed that, the concept of dualism can be traced to the Greeks. We have equally observed that, the concept had traveled through many centuries, to arrive at its official theological and philosophical acceptability among Christians in the works of Thomas Aquinas who successfully, howbeit, wrongfully split reason and faith apart, assigning to reason the realm of nature and assigning to faith the realm of grace. This doctrine of nature-grace dualism became the official doctrine of the Roman Church. Though, the reformation led by Luther, had a radical break with the Roman church, yet, it could not effectively and completely extricated itself from the stranglehold of the doctrine of nature-grace dualism. Yes, Luther tried, he made a very bold and courageous attempt to break free from this stultifying doctrine of nature-grace dualism but his bold and best effort ended up producing the two kingdom doctrine which at worst is a recasting of the doctrine of nature-grace dualism, and at best, it is an improved and modified version of the doctrine of nature-

grace dualism. However, the one thing, Luther, got absolutely right was his insistence on the radical nature of sin. He got the diagnosis, accurately well but got the prognosis wrong. The second generation reformer, John Calvin, with some hesitation here and vacillation there, eventually made the bold move that erased the dividing line of dualism and unite both nature and grace as one reality under the kingdom or Kingship of God. However, there are some ambiguities in the statement of the kingdom or Kingship of God that could be appealed to by the various variant parties, centuries later, even by those in the Netherlands in Kuyper's time. But, before looking at the various variant factions all claiming to be true spiritual heirs and doctrinal descendants of John Calvin. We will first take a look, howbeit, brief at the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Anabaptist churches.

The Roman Catholics in Netherland during Kuyper's time, like Roman Catholics everywhere in the world, believed in the doctrine of nature-grace dualism. They believed that, man was created primarily for the natural realm but them was given spiritual abilities to apprehend, access and appreciate the spiritual realm. When he sinned, sin only affected his spiritual ability. Therefore, he lost the ability to access the spiritual realm. However, his natural ability to apprehend, access and appreciate the natural realm remained intact. This means, the natural man does not need any spiritual help to handle the issues in the natural world. The only time, he would need spiritual help or grace is when he wants to access the spiritual world that is beyond the natural world. The problem of this doctrine is that it does not take the radical nature of sin and its ability to corrupt totally into serious account (Kuyper, Lecture, 122). They got the diagnosis wrong; therefore, they unavoidably got the prognosis wrong. Thereby giving rise to the wrong doctrine of nature-grace dualism. Remember, these Roman Catholics, with their doctrine of nature-grace dualism, were in the Netherlands in Kuyper's time, doing everything possible to spread their doctrine.

Consequently, they went about their daily routine confining Christ to the realm of grace or matters ecclesiastical alone and making man master over natural matters.

The next group with the doctrine of dualism in the Netherlands at the time of Abraham Kuyper, were the Lutherans, who were the doctrinal descendants of the great reformer, Martin Luther. They believed in the radical nature of sin but being the spiritual heir of Luther, they inherit his two kingdom doctrine which divides life into sacred and secular. The sacred, comprised of the church which is neatly placed under the Kingship of Christ and the secular, comprised of all of life which is firmly placed under the Kingship of man. Though, their diagnosis of the human situation was a shoulder and head above that of Roman Catholic, yet, their prognosis on how man is to live, left much to be desired because like the catholic, they divided life into two realms, with one, the church, neatly packed under the Kingship of Christ and the other, comprising of the rest of life, firmly placed under the Kingship of man. Therefore, passively, they preserved and perpetuated dualism in the Netherlands (McGoldrick, 35).

Another group with a strong and uncompromising doctrine of dualism in the Netherlands at the time of Abraham Kuyper, were the Mennonites and the Anabaptists. They believed and taught, total separation, with no involvement or engagement with the world. Thus, article four of their schleitheim confession reads in part:

A separation shall be made from the evil and from the wickedness which the devil planted in the world; in this manner, simply that we shall not have fellowship with them [the wicked] and not run with them in the multitude of their abomination. Every thing which is not united with our God and Christ cannot be other than an abomination which we should shun and flee from. By this is mean all popish and antipopish works and church services, meetings and church attendance, drinking houses and civic affairs, the commitment [made in] unbelief and other things of that kind, which are... carried out in flat contradiction to the command of God (Schleitheim confession, article four, 285-6).

For then, there is a fine line that runs through the middle of the world dividing it into two unequal halves, them and the rest of the world, with the believe that, they belonged to the kingdom of Christ and the rest of the world belonging to Satan. Where as, both in Lutheran

and Catholic dualism, one can be both the citizen of the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of man, it is not so with the Mennonite's and the Anabaptist's dualism, for them, you can only be citizen of one, either the kingdom of God or the kingdom of man which invariably belong to Satan because they conceded the rest of the world to Satan. They were in the Netherlands at the time of Abraham Kuyper and were aggressively pushing their own brand of radical doctrine of dualism.

We now turn our focus on the Dutch Reformed church which was the state church of the Netherlands and who were the spiritual heirs and the doctrinal descendants of the Reformed, John Calvin. Earlier on, we have observed and noted that Calvin's statement of the doctrine of the kingdom or Kingship of God is punctuated by and or with some ambiguities which could be interpreted this or that way. The Dutch Reformed state church can be broadly divided into two halves, with the orthodox one side and liberals on the opposite side. In the meantime, the liberals can be divided into three schools of thoughts; these were the Groningers, the Ethicals and the Moderns. They were different from each other in many ways but for the purpose of this research, our focus shall be on the things that unite them against orthodoxy. They unanimously denied the radical nature of sin and its ability to corrupt totally. They denied the absolute authority and inerrancy of the bible. They rejected the doctrine of election and argued for universal salvation which, they say, God has predestined for all humanity. They rejected the supernatural for the natural based on evolution. They elevated reason above revelation and faith. They denied the Trinity and the deity of Christ as well as his substitutionary atonement. They taught that, Christ is not God but a perfect man who has come to lead humanity to God. They got into this grave error because they tried to make Christianity agreeable with evolution and acceptable to the scholars and the political elite (McGoldrick, 39-45). Consequently, they lost it all because the truth is that, all authority belongs to Jesus and Jesus cannot be brought under any authority.

These liberals were great scholars, who dominated the universities with their wrong doctrines, churning out liberal pastors, who were mounting the pulpits of the Dutch Reformed churches all over the Netherlands. They rationalized everything, leaving no room for the supernatural. Both in their theology and politics, God had no place or room to operate. These liberals were the key figures in church polity as well as state politics. They were great intellectuals and politically powerful. Combining their intellectual and political might they ran their opponents, the orthodox into the ground (McGoldrick, 34).

The orthodox were the underdogs, they had neither intellectual nor political might, all they had, were the might of truth and faith. Though bullied from all angles by the liberals, they held unto the truth in faith. When they couldn't take it anymore, their survival instinct kicked in. They withdrew from the Dutch Reformed Church, from society and from every form of cultural involvement or engagement. In the face of a growing liberalism within the national church, some orthodox Christians found an anti-cultural pietism attractive "... although this reactionary movement was loyal to its Calvinistic heritage it encourages withdrawal from society rather than vigorous defense of the faith. Its very character rendered it ineffective to stem the tide of skepticism" (McGoldrick, 23). Though, the type of dualism found among the spiritual heirs of Calvin is different from those of the Roman Catholics, Lutherans and the Anabaptists, yet, it is dualism all the same. The liberals by their wrong doctrines shut God out of the everyday life of the society. While the orthodox, in their bid to preserve their faith, withdrew and isolate themselves from the society, thereby took God out of everyday life of the society. Against this background of various types and shades of dualism, Kuyper lived and did all his work. It was against this background of dualism that, Kuyper, developed his doctrine of the Kingship of Christ over all of life.

### 3.5 LIFE AND WORK OF KUYPER

Abraham Kuyper was born on the 29 October, 1837, in *Maasluis*, Holland to the family of Reverend J.F. Kuyper; and his wife Henriette Huber. On Sunday afternoon, December 3rd, he was baptized (Bratt, Dutch,11). ‘Bram’ as he was fondly called by his parent and sometimes ridiculed by other children because of his unusually large head, had his first experience of life and the world in *Maasluis* (McGoldrick, 15).

Abraham Kuyper, never attended primary school; his parent gave him his early schooling. “His mother was a former school mistress and quite proficient in French language, while his father knew the English language and both knew their own Holland well, both had received a good education and possessed excellent teaching talents” (Vanden Berg, 12-13). As soon as the boy “Bram” knew how to read, he became an avid reader of newspapers. Though, his father censured this hobby of his, yet “Bram” often stole away with a copy of *De Opregte Haarlemmer* to the attic, perch himself on a parking case until he read the whole paper (Vanden Berg, 13).

In 1849 his father, the Reverend J.F. Kuyper, accepted an invitation to the *Leiden* church (Vanden Berg, 14). “When the family settled in their new city, the boy Bram enjoyed a novel experience, his parent sent him to school. This school, the first that he attended, was the *gymnasium*, which prepared its students for university... on September 6, 1855, the school graduated him” (Vanden Berg, 14-15). That same year, Kuyper entered *Leiden* university, to study letter and theology (Bratt, Introduction , 7). He approached his study with keen devotion and strong commitment. He did everything with strict regularity. He took brisk walks regularly to keep fit. He studied from 10:00pm to 2:00am the next morning everyday (Vanden Berg, 17). On September 20, 1862, *Leiden* University conferred on Kuyper the Doctor of Theology Degree, slightly more than a month before his twenty-fifth birthday (Bratt, Abraham, 38).

Abraham Kuyper was a gifted, talented and an extremely intelligent young man. He valued knowledge very highly and he would pursue it to any length. That made him vulnerable to the authorities of his day, who were mostly exponents of liberalism. Kuyper entered *Leiden* as a sound orthodox believer but under the influence of his liberal lecturers, he began to drift from the safe haven of his orthodox root towards the turbulent sea of liberalism (Vanden Berg, 23). In that direction, he went, until he was so far from the shores of orthodoxy that, his spiritual and theological voyage from liberalism back to orthodoxy took time, efforts and strategic interventions from God.

His voyage to orthodoxy began, when Kuyper, urged by his lecturer, entered into an essay competition, sponsored by the *Groningen* University's theological faculty. The topic was, *A Comparative Study of John Calvin's and Johannes a Lasco's Views of the Church*. Kuyper, soon had good collections of Calvin's works in his room. But after a frantic and intense search in Holland's and Europe's best libraries, nothing sizeable could be found on a Lasco's work. Kuyper wanted to quit but was encouraged by his lecturer, De Vries, to visit his Father a minister in *Haarlem*. Perhaps, he might find something or be directed to someone who could give them to him. After his first visit, the old man asked him to come back in a week's time while he searched his library. On his second visit, Kuyper was shocked and his heart was overwhelmed with praise for God, when the Old *Haarlem* minister showed him to a stack of volumes of a Lasco's work. Kuyper, saw it as a miracle from God (Kuyper, confidential, 47-50). This experience started a paradigm shift from liberalism to orthodoxy in the life of Abraham Kuyper.

The second experience was a gift he received from his fiancée. It was a novel written by Miss Yonge, titled, *The Heir of Redclyffe*. This book, profoundly impacted Kuyper's life and did much good in restoring him to orthodoxy, and also set the cause he would take for the

rest of his life. The book convicted him of his sinfulness, reduced him to tears, called him to repentance and stirred him to prayer (Heslam, 31-32).

The third incidence in his spiritual revival, occurred in the year 1961, Kuyper's third in divinity school. Three years earlier, Dr. Scholten, one of Kuyper's most revered and admired lecturers, argued cogently and convincingly in defense of John's authorship of his gospel, but in 1861, he totally denied John's authorship of the gospel that bears his name. To Kuyper, that complete reversal was the end of the authority of the higher criticism or liberalism (Kuyper, confidential, 32).

The final incidence that brought Kuyper's conversion to fullness was when he became the pastor of the *Beesd* church. There, he met a peasant woman of deep reformed conviction by the name *pretronella Baltus*.

For a long time she spoke to him about the soul's deep need for time and eternity. She told about her own assured hope for eternal future and admonished him that he must have that same hope if he would not be lost forever. Kuyper returned often to talk with her. He came ever more under her Reformed influence. It was especially this woman among his reformed parishioners at *Beesd* who brought the change in Kuyper's religious and theological conviction to its culmination (Vanden Berg, 37-38).

His inner spiritual struggles of those days were fiercely intense and great. But eventually, he surrendered. Kuyper surrendered completely, unequivocally, not to men or to a movement or to a tradition, but to the Triune God. In that hour of surrender there came to him a peace that passeth knowledge, out of the stress and storm of an intense soul conflict he emerged fully orthodox, essentially reformed. He broke completely with modernism [Liberalism]. He unreservedly accepted the Reformed Faith [Calvinism]. He had enrolled beneath the Reformed banner. He had caught a vision and to that vision he was not disobedient (Vanden Berg, 38).

Figuratively speaking Abraham Kuyper was, "primarily and essentially a builder in the major areas of religion and the church, education and universities, politics and government but he had to fight it out on all front. Dr. Kuyper was indeed a controversial figure in Holland, at once most devotedly loved and the most violently hated man of his day.



Yet, out of the monumental labours and the bitter conflicts of fifty years, he emerged, a national figure of commanding stature” (Vanden Berg, 7).

Abraham Kuyper was a man of many abilities, multiple talents and an erudite scholar. He was a theologian, a pastor, a journalist, a politician, a prime minister, a political party leader, an educator, a university founder and a seminal thinker in the history of modern Calvinism (Noll, ix). He lived for exactly 83 years and 10 days (Vanden Berg, 304). He wrote about or over 223 published works, thousands of devotionals, articles and unpublished works (Bratt, Dutch, 5).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST OVER ALL OF LIFE IN KUYPER'S THEOLOGY

#### 4.1 THE LOGIC OF KUYPER'S THEOLOGY OF THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

Calvinism is well known for its insistence that we are saved by grace alone, and that God "elects" those who are to be recipients of this saving grace. This perspective focuses on human sinfulness and divine sovereignty. Many think that is all they need to know about Calvinism. But Kuyper was not content to leave it there. When God saves us, he insisted, He incorporates us into a community, the people of God. And this community, in turn, is called to serve God's goals in the larger world. In the life of the church, we worship a sovereign God, but that God then, commands us to be active witnesses in our daily lives to His sovereign rule over all things. This sovereign God is incarnate in his son, Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Thus, Kuyper's theology is built on the foundation of Christ's sovereignty. This is evidenced by his declaration, "Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine'"(Vanden Berg, 38). In Kuyper's theology, the Christian who believes and confesses the Lordship and Kingship of Christ over his life should not for any reason whatsoever do anything apart from Christ. Rather, he should live and do everything at all times, in all places and in all situations, as a dutiful servant of Christ, the sovereign king. In this regard, he admonished the believers, saying "in his word [Christ] absolutely forbids every inclination and every effort to break up your life into two parts, one part for yourself and the other part for Him" (Kuyper, Sphere, 488).

His next statement does not leave us guessing concerning the basis of his theology, instead, it clears the coast of any perceived confusion and made the basis and the extent of Christ's kingship over all of life, crystal clear for all to see.

Christ is the eternal word. Through that eternal word all things, including the kingdoms of plants and animals, have been created. The eternal thoughts of God that have found their embodiment in all of creation - and thus also in the kingdoms of plants and animals- have come to their embodiment only through the eternal word. There is not a single flower or chirping bird that does not represent something of this eternal word that has its mark placed upon all creatures. The scriptures do not lock Christ up in the kingdom of grace or even the world of mankind. The scripture show that the entire creation, the visible as well as the invisible, depend directly on Christ (McGoldrick, 245).

In Kuyper's thinking, Chris is king over all creatures-visible and invisible- by right of creation and king over the church by right of recreation (New creation) or redemption. And his reign, is over both things spiritual and things physical because they all came from him and depends on him. Therefore, Kuyper contended that;

The son is not to be excluded from anything. You cannot point to any natural realm or star or comet or even descend into the depth of the earth, but it is related to Christ, not in some unimportant tangential way, but directly. There is no force in nature, no law that controls those forces that do not have their origin in that eternal word. For to this reason, it is totally false to restrict Christ to the spiritual affairs and to assert that there is no point *of* contact between him and the natural sciences. Rather, every deeper penetration into nature must lead to the greater glory of the majesty of the eternal word (Kuyper, You Can...,74) .

Therefore, in Kuyper's theology, the kingship of Christ is a consistent, compelling and even a persuasive reality that demands a practical response in everyday living in every sphere of life.

For Kuyper, Christ is king over all creation by the right of being the creator of all things visible and invisible. This means that Christ is also king in every sphere of human existence. Since sphere sovereignty comes from the order of creation. In his treatise on, "sphere sovereignty", Kuyper posits that, each cultural sphere has its own place in God's plan for the creation, and each is directly under the divine rule of Christ. This is the basic insight of his doctrine of sphere sovereignty (Kuyper, Sphere, 469).

Kuyper was never very precise, as to what counted as a creational or cultural "sphere". He offered various lists. So, if we are looking for precision in the exact numbers of spheres, we are not going to get much help from Kuyper. But that should not deter us from the big theme he is articulating. He is pointing us to some obvious patterns of cultural interaction—family life, business, art, the university, church, government—and he is saying that each of this is intended by God to do its own thing; each has a different role in God's design for his creation. Therefore, no sphere should rule over another sphere, however, all the spheres are directly under the rule of Christ (Kuyper, Sphere, 488).

After the fall of man, every creational sphere was permeated by the destructive force of sin. However, when you look around at creation, you can still see some goods. Furthermore, throughout human history, unbelievers have continued to produce some moral and cultural goods that cannot be simply ignored. Referring to these goods in creation and unbelievers, Calvin used the term common grace, rather tersely and not systematically to describe the source of those goods. However, it was to Kuyper that, the lot fell to systematically develop the doctrine of common grace (Berkhof, 434). The doctrine of common grace, seeks to explain the source of the good in the world, most especially those coming from unbelievers. Common grace is that,

... grace which is communal, does not pardon nor purify human nature and does not effect the salvation of sinners. It curbs the destructive power of sin, maintain in a measure the moral order of the universe, thus making an orderly life possible, distributes in varying degrees gifts and talents among men, promotes the development of science and art, and showers untold blessings upon the children of men (Berkhof, 43).

Common grace does to sin in the world, what a retroviral drug does to HIV virus in human body. The doctrine of common grace acknowledged the cosmic dimension of Christ's redemption (Kuyper , 434). Its ultimate purpose is to glorify God, by bringing the whole of creation to its fullness as God intended it to be. Thus, Kuyper wrote:

... common grace will thereby achieve a purpose of its own. It will not only serve to bring about the emergence of human race, to bring to birth the full number of the elect, and to arm us increasingly and more effectively against human suffering, but also independently to bring about in all its dimensions and in defiance of satanic opposition and human sin the full emergence of what God had in mind when he planted those *nuclei* of higher development in our race (Kuyper, Common Grace, 179).

Kuyper believes that, Christ has not abandoned the world to demonic powers (Kuyper, Common Grace, 192-3). Though, the world is broken, it still belongs to him and he reign over it, as the King of kings. Through common grace, he is working in all the spheres of creation, developing them towards their ultimate destiny. For the "divinely anointed king now sits at the right hand of God.[where he] controls the destiny of peoples and states from the throne of his majesty, and one day, at the end of history,[he] will come again to summon all nations and all humanity before his judgment seat"(Kuyper, Maranatha, 218). Consequently, Christians should consciously join this developmental work in all the spheres of life as dutiful servants of the great king, Jesus Christ, just as the non-Christians, are already doing so unconsciously (Kuyper, Common Grace, 192-3).

Kuyper believes that, through common grace, the Christian, is called by his king, Jesus Christ, to engage in the development of creation and culture. But, he must not do so, on the term of the normalists (unbelievers or secularists). Though, common grace creates room for cooperation, once in a while, between the normalists and the abnormalists (Christians) which is just the exception and not the rule. This is the central idea of his doctrine of the antithesis. According to Kuyper, there are two consciousnesses. First, is the normal consciousness whose first principle of departure is evolution. In this consciousness, there is no creation, fall (sin) or redemption. The world and everything in it, including humans are only going through the normal process of evolution from the lowest to the highest state. The second is the abnormal consciousness. This consciousness, conceive of reality from the first principle of departure which is the creation, the fall, occasioned by sin and the redemption.

These two consciousnesses are antithetical to each other. They are parallel line that never intersects. They are eternally at conflict because the first principles from which they each proceed were diametrically opposed to each other. The Christian, operate from the consciousness of the abnormalist. Therefore, if the Christian must be true to his conscience and faithful to his king, Jesus Christ, he must not live his life and engage the world on the terms or conceptions of secularist (Kuyper, Common Grace,192-3).

As a logical consequence of his doctrine of the antithesis, Kuyper contends that, there has to be a way of conceiving reality that is based on the abnormal or regenerated consciousness. That is a worldview that is peculiarly Christian and completely different from the secular worldview. All worldviews, proceeds from faith or first principle. This faith or first principle determines the questions we ask of objective realities and also determines the conclusions we shall arrived at concerning these objective realities.

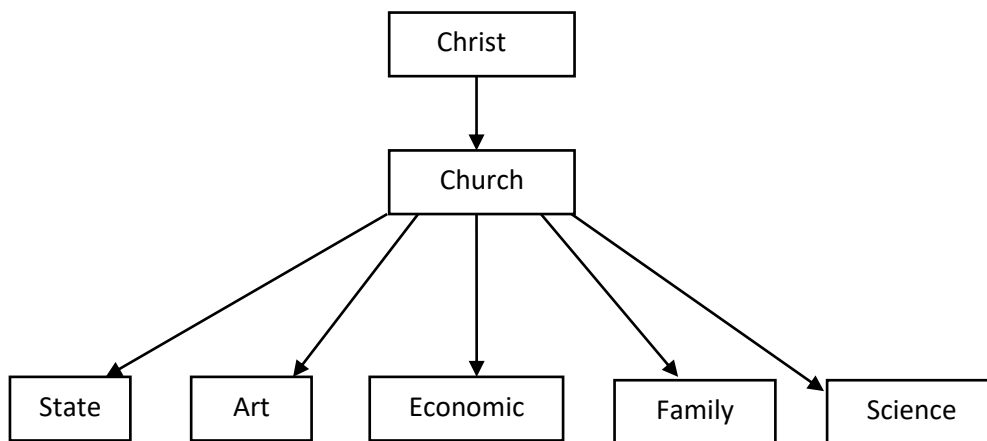
This Christian worldview is the worldview that sees Christ as the creator, redeemer and king of all creation, who rules in every sphere of creation. Consequently, his willing servants, the Christians, must seek to obey him in all spheres of life as king. For this to happen, then, secularism (liberalism) must be unmasked and recognized for what it is; a belief system, just like Christianity and Islam. It must not be seen as a universally neutral system. Thus Kuyper wrote:

We do not want the government to handover unbelief handcuffed and chained as though for a spiritual execution. We prefer that the power of the gospel overcome that demon in a free combat with comparable weapons. Only this we do not want: that the government arm unbelief to force us, half armed and handicapped by an assortment of laws, into an unequal struggle with so powerful an enemy. Yet that has happened and is happening still. It happens in all areas of popular education, on the higher as well as the lower levels, by means of the power of money, forced examinations and official hierarchy. For this reason we may never desist from our protest or resistance until the gospel recover its freedom to circulate, until his performance of Christian duty will again be possible for every Dutch citizen whether rich or poor(Kuyper, Maranatha, 224-5).

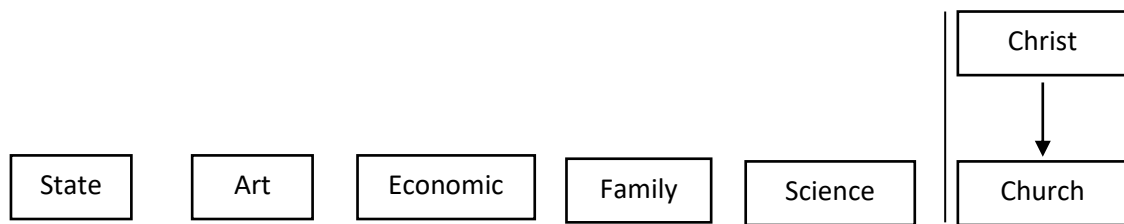
By this, Kuyper is asking for equality of all belief systems before the law. That is a pluralistic society where all systems of belief will have the equal right to organize their life base on their belief systems, instead of the liberal or secular hegemony (Cross, 1104).

Now we shall turn to see how Kuyper puts his theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life into practice. But before we do that please permit me to introduce to you the two dominant worldviews against which Kuyper introduces his own Christian worldview as alternative (Mouw, 4).

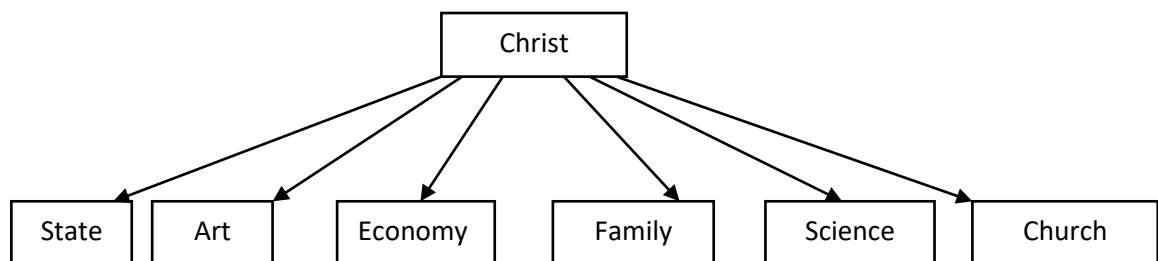
First is the medieval worldview. This worldview rightly saw that Christ rule must be acknowledged over all spheres of human activity. Its mistake is in investing the church with the power to mediate that rule. Here is the picture.



Second is the secularist's worldview. This worldview rightly wants to liberate these spheres from the church's control. But it is wrong in its insistence that, to do so, is to also take them from under the rule of Christ. The secularist seemed to have said, if there is a Christ, he can have the church-but we will liberate everything else from under his control. The following is the picture.



Kuyper's own worldview- his alternative to this other two worldviews- was nicely captured by his "not one square inch" declaration. In this worldview, Christ's sovereign rule extends over all our lives. All of the cultural spheres are before the face of Christ. Here is the picture.



In Kuyper's time, most of Europe, especially European scholarship rejected the medieval worldview as untenable and replaced it with the secularist's worldview. This made the conservatives (orthodox Christians) to abandon scholarship and cultural development to the liberals or secularists. They retreated to the church and to mysticism, much to the delight of the liberals or secularists, who continued to re-enforce this retreat by constantly brandishing the myth of science versus religion or faith versus reason before the conservatives (Kuyper, Lectures, 138-9).

Though, Kuyper, believed that, the various cultural spheres, should be liberated from church's control, yet, he refused to be intimidated by secularism, to retreat into the church and mysticism. Neither did he take the secularist's bait of science versus religion nor that of faith versus reason. Rather, Kuyper stood his ground and with the help of his king, Jesus Christ, placed the conflict where it belonged, between two diametrically opposed religions, reasons,



faiths and sciences. The conflict is between faith and unbelief, between Christianity and secularism (Kuyper, Lectures, 131-3).

By removing the conflict between science and religion, faith and reason, Kuyper, restores the right of Christians to pursue scholarship and engage in cultural development according to the principles of their faith or belief system. They must not seat back and leave scholarship and cultural development to be shaped by the secularist's belief system (Kuyper, Science, 458). This became Kuyper's motivation, drive and guiding vision: to shape scholarship and development in all cultural spheres according to the ordinances of his king, Jesus Christ. Thus he wrote:

For me, one desire rules my life  
One urge drives soul and will....  
It is to re-establish God's holy ordinances  
In church and home, in state and school,  
Regardless of the world's protestations,  
For the benefits of the nation.  
It is to engrave those divine ordinances,  
To which word and creation witness,  
So clearly on the nation  
That once again it bows its knee to God  
(Heslam, 54-5)

With this in mind, we now turn to Kuyper's theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life in practice. But space shall compel us to only look at few spheres, and that too, must be brief.

## **4.2 CHURCH**

For Kuyper, the church as a sphere is autonomous or sovereign like any other cultural or creational sphere. The state which is an autonomous sphere of its own must not lord it over the church or interfere in the operations of the church. Rather, the church should and must be allowed to develop according to its own constitution and ordinances under the sovereign rule of Christ.

With his doctrine of sphere sovereignty, a state church or a state religion to Kuyper is an anachronism. Therefore, Kuyper, set himself to reform the state church with the hope of freeing it from the state hegemony. After several efforts in the course of many years the state would not let the church go. As a result in 1887, Kuyper led about 170,000 members in approximately 200 congregations, out of the state church, to form a new church denomination that is autonomous and free from the state but is only bound by her loyalty to Christ her king (McGoldrick, 91-7).

### **4.3 EDUCATION**

For Kuyper, education is an autonomous sphere under the direct sovereign rule of Christ, free from the control of church and or state. Meanwhile, he taught that, within the one autonomous sphere of education, each belief system should be given the equal right to organize education for adherent, according to her own principle. This is because he believes that education is one of the most potent means, through which culture and belief is transmitted to the society and the generations to come. According to Kuyper;

The universities mark out the direction that the thinking of people of influence will take. From the universities it spreads out among the politicians, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and writers, and from this into the press, the primary and the secondary schools, the civil service. If university life and its broad influence remain exclusively in the hand of unbelievers, public opinion- also on moral and religious matters-will one day go wholesale in this direction and work to the great detriment of our Christian circles. There is only one way to parry this, and that is for Christian thinkers to found a university that will unfold another world of seeing and thinking; to transmit this among those who pursue higher education; and so to raise a circle of educated, influential people who can turn the public way of thinking (Kuyper, Sphere, 475).

And true to his belief, Kuyper, founded the Free University, to provide Christian scholarship in all fields of studies (Bratt, Dutch, 14).

### **4.4 POLITICS**

No sphere of human activity escapes Kuyper's doctrine of the antithesis and his comprehensive worldview, anchored on the kingship of Christ over all of life. In politics, just

like in every other sphere, the doctrine of antithesis placed again the conflict between the political system that proceeds from the un-regenerated consciousness or the secularist's political system and the political system that proceeds from the regenerated consciousness or Christian political system. The question for Kuyper, is not whether Christians should form political party or not but whether they would be faithful and dutiful servants of their great king in politics or betray him by acquiescing and submitting to the political principles and philosophy of the secularists. Thus Kuyper chided his fellow Christians in the Netherlands (as well as those in Nigeria) saying, "...democracy without you will triumph over you in an increasingly demonic form. Owing to your hesitation and hanging back, your lack of courage and resilience, the political development of the Netherlands will increasingly run along anti Christian lines" (Kuyper, Maranatha, 226).

Kuyper is not one who would seat back and watch political development run in increasingly anti-Christian lines. Therefore he founded the Anti-Revolutionary Party, based on Christian principles, as an alternative to the liberal political party that is based on the secularist's principles. In his keynote address to the party's delegates in May 1891, Kuyper encouraged them saying:

You may not accede to their counsel. You may not join them or connive with them. Nor may you abandon your country to them. Rather, all those who love Christ and await his return from heaven must heartily unite with all sincere believers in the land to resist their philosophy and to rescue the country from their pernicious influence. And this you must do - do you confess it with me? - not by might no by power but only in a lawful way driven by the spirit of the Lord alone.... Therefore, let everyone ambitions to gain honour or power for himself, to secure a high post or monetary advantage, pack his bags and leave us. The hand that reaches out for personal advantage cannot clasp the banner of the cross. You who would march as a hero in this conflict: your concern must be Christ and his future, and in light of that future, for salvation of your country. You must be driven by a quiet passion to throw up a dam against the rising influence of anti-Christian principle. All your energies must be devoted to strengthening the power of Christ that still resides in our people. What urges you on must be the passionate desire to prepare a people who, at Christ's return, will not strive against him but welcome him with Hallelujahs-here, on this nation's soil which is soaked with the blood of martyrs (Kuyper, Maranatha, 213).

Indeed, throw up a dam they did. With the Anti-Revolutionary Party's engagement in Netherlands politics, it was no longer business as usual for the liberal party. And the way politics was done in the Netherlands, was completely and totally changed (Bratt, Dutch, 25).

#### **4.5 MASS MEDIA**

Mass media may be mindless and neutral but the people who use it have minds filled with beliefs and or assumptions. Therefore, whatever you read in the newspapers are not neutral but were written from a perspective of a belief system, so Kuyper believed. Consequently, here too, the doctrine of antithesis and worldview demands that, Christians, set up their own mass media that would operate and report events based on their own belief system, so as to prevent secularist's beliefs from dominating public mind and opinion. For this purpose, Kuyper, along with other Christians, set up two papers: one daily, the other weekly. These are: *De Standaard* and *De Hervault* (Vanden Berg, 92). He worked as editor in chief for these two papers for almost fifty-two years.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RELEVANCE TO CRCN**

### **5.1 BACKGROUND TO CRCN**

The Christian Reformed church of Nigeria (CRCN) came into being as a result of the work of Sudan United Mission (SUM) in Nigeria as early as 1904 (Smith, 13) The headquarters of the church is in Takum, Taraba State. The church is mostly found in Taraba, Adamawa, Benue, Plateau, Borno, Zaria, Abuja and Lagos. The church also has worship centers in the republics of Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Sierra Leone.

On the invitation of C.L. Temple who was the British Government official in charge of Bauchi area, Dr. Kumn was to concentrate on the Plateau area for his proposed mission. (Boer, Missionary, 69) Dr. Kumn, D.J. A Bateman, Mr. Burr and Rev. J.L. Maxwell arrived Ibi (which was already a trading station of the Niger Company) on 3rd September, 1904 en route to Wase which was allocated to them by the British Administration (Bahago , 10).

In January, 1905, Mr Burr, crossed the Benue River at Ibi to Wukari where he met Aku Uka, Manu Agbumshu, who was very hospitable and invited him to come and stay in Wukari. Mr. Burr reported this back to his colleagues and in company of Maxwell, Burr went back to Wukari that same year for proper feasibility study, after which the council decided to start work among the Jukuns (Bahago ,11). Mr. Young and Maxwell became the first Missionaries to settle and work in Wukari, as the first station of what later became the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) (Bahago, 11).

In order to communicate effectively, Mr. Young learned Hausa while Maxwell learned Jukun. They preached to the people and also engaged in humanitarian services, e.g. medical care to the sick. Yet, the response to the gospel was poor. (Maxwell, 61). However, in the year 1906, a few Jukuns (indigenes) accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior (Bahago, 12).

In the mean time, Dr. Hoover, Dr. Derr and Rev. Guinters arrived from America on 28 November, 1906. Their coming encouraged Mr. Young and Maxwell, and work continued to grow. Towards the end of 1922, the church in Wukari was organized, and in 1923, the SUM held her first conference in Wukari (Bahago,17).

On January 19th 1907, Rev. Maxwell and few others left Wukari for Donga where they established a second station (Maxwell, 65). This led to an organized congregation in June 19th 1917, with twelve communicant members (Ashu ,51). In 1954, through community work, a church was built. In 1960, it was expanded to accommodate about one thousand worshippers. Rev. Bulus Adilnashi was ordained February 23rd, as the first indigenous pastor, he became the pastor of this congregation in 1959 (Ashu, 55).

The church continued to grow and expand, the indigenous converts became involved in evangelizing their fellow tribe men and women, thus the gospel spread to Takum. Later, Rev. Whiteman and Miss Veenstra (Both Missionaries) went over to Takum to take charge of affairs (Bahago, 19).

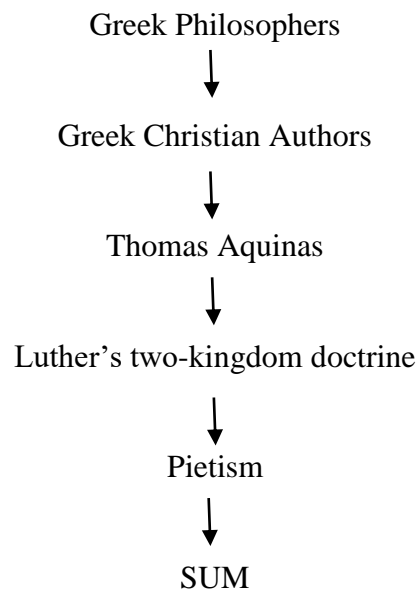
On the 1st of February 1954, the SUM celebrated her 50th anniversary in Langtang. In this meeting, the churches of the SUM were made indigenous with the name, Ekklesiyar Kristi a Sudan (EKAS), translated, church of Christ in Sudan. The Wukari federation of churches known as Benue classis became EKAS Lardin Benue. In 1976, the name was changed to Ekklesiyar Krista a Nigeria (EKAN) and later, Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria. The first chairman of the church was Daniel Ndeyantso. As of 2014, Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) has a total number of 16 Regional Church Councils (RCC).

Though CRCN as a church must not and should not worship the missionaries, yet, she is bound to thank God for the missionaries. She owed her existence to the many sacrifices of the missionaries. Some even died in the process, all so that we may have the gospel. God has

indeed accepted and honored their sacrifices; indigenes have accepted the gospel, grown in their faith and are now standing on their own two feet in regards to the leadership of the church.

However, all is not well, this is not meant to under-estimate the work of the missionaries nor Judge them. This is, just to trace the origin of the CRCN's unofficial but strong nature-grace dualism or secular- sacred dualism bias. With the aim, to show how Abraham Kuyper's theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life, can help CRCN to overcome the problem of nature-grace dualism or secular-sacred dualism.

At the turn of the 20th century in Europe and America, secularism which separates life into religious and non-religious, has become institutionalized in the culture and civilization (Miller, 24). This came as a result of nature-grace dualism which has plagued theology for quite a long time. This nature-grace dualism goes back to the Greek, before the birth of Christ. Greek dualism entered Christianity when the gospel was contextualized into the Greek authors (Boer, Missionaries, 449-54). Diagrammatically, the foregoing can be represented as follows:



The early missionaries who came to West Africa, Nigeria and the present day Taraba State, came from this culture or civilization which separate society into nature-grace dualism,

or divides it into the religious and non-religious areas, and or sacred and secular regions, with the unfounded presupposition that, everything religious is good and everything non-religious is bad. As a result, Christians were trained for life in the church and for heaven. In other words, they were trained for the region of grace. This dualistic worldview, based on the unbiblical doctrine of nature grace dualism, ignores politics or concedes it to others. Politics was considered a cesspool of sinful activities and Christians should not get mixed up in it. (McCain, 14).

Though, somehow miraculously, CRCN managed to retain and hold on to her confession of the Lordship and Kingship of Christ over all of life but that is mostly in theory and not in practice. Thus the operational worldview of CRCN can be summed up this way: Christ is Lord and king over all in theory, but in practice, Christ is Lord and king over the church, in the church, while someone or something else is the king over societal life. This is the worldview that is operational in CRCN, a kind of dualistic worldview that is based on nature-grace dualism, stated in its crude form it will read; Christ is Lord and king over the church while Satan is Lord and king over the rest of society and politics.

The consequences of this worldview that limits the Lordship and Kingship of Christ to the church and matters ecclesiastical are colossal and far reaching. It has wreaked untold havoc and has damaged countless numbers of lives. It has created a huge dichotomy between spiritual and physical life, between faith and practice. It has created an impassable chasm between the church and state. This leaves many Christians in a dilemma. They are both members of the church and the citizens of the state. They worship Christ in the church but must live in the society. They obey the laws of Christ in the church but obey at best the laws of man and at worst the laws of Satan in their jobs, vocations and businesses. And those who could not handle the tension in-between the process have spurned the laws of Christ



altogether and have given over themselves fully to the laws of the other lord-Satan or man. This ought not to be, because in the beginning it was not so.

It is true that, CRCN and Kuyper did not, do not and will not live in the same continent, country or century. But, it is equally true that, Nigeria's present civilization is a direct descendant of the European civilization which includes Holland - The stage where Kuyper, performed his most daring, breath taking and awe inspiring act in the divine drama unfolding in time and space. Moreso, CRCN is a part of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) Worldwide which holds unto the doctrine of the sovereignty, Lordship and Kingship of Christ over all of life, in which Kuyper was a pastor. And finally, the enthronement of secularism which is gradually, slowly but steadily taken place in Nigeria's public life, though it may not rival what was obtainable in Holland during Kuyper's life time and struggle, yet, it is a step leading to the same pinnacle and consummation.

Consequently, the Kingship of Christ in Abraham Kuyper's theology becomes so relevant to CRCN. In the same vein, he becomes a model for CRCN on what to do, how to do it and why she should do it. In his time, Kuyper, was like the Biblical "voice of one calling, in the desert prepare the way for the Lord: Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God every valley shall be raised (filled) up, every mountain and hill made low, the ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all mankind together shall see it" (Isaiah 40:3-5). But like the Biblical voice would say, "Who had believed our message...?" (Isaiah 50:1). Indeed, his country, continent and contemporaries did not believe his message. The high mountain of secularism is still erected in the government; the hill of modernism is still standing everywhere in the civilization and the valley of unbelief or evolution still runs deep in the educational system through out the continent. We must be warned by the attendant consequences that trailed their rejection of his message. Therefore, we should now joyfully heed his voice and enthusiastically respond to

his message. The Kingship of Christ in Abraham Kuyper's theology is so relevant to CRCN in two major ways. The first one is that it connects us to the root and foundation of all Reformed doctrines and practices which is the Kingship of Christ over all of life. And the second one is that, through his own life and works, Abraham Kuyper, presents us with clear, copious and compelling examples of how to practice the doctrine of the kingship of Christ over all of life.

## **5.2 THEOLOGY**

The strength of every Christian individual, family or church denomination, is predicated upon the soundness of their theology because sound theology begets sound psychology. History has testified and contemporary experience has proving beyond any reasonable doubt that right behavior is always the product of right believing. Right believing is always the product of right psychology. Right psychology is the product of right theology and right theology is the product of right revelation. Revelation is the foundation of every true and genuine theology. Yes, not experience, not reason, not tradition and not the so-called manifest reality but revelation.

Herein, the theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life in Abraham Kuyper's theology is extremely relevant to CRCN. Kuyper insists that, neither reason nor experience nor tradition does define the nature and extent of the Kingship of Christ. Instead, it is the Kingship of Christ, which should and does define reason, experience and tradition. In other words, it is not our manifest realities that determine revelation; rather, it is revelation that determines our reality. That means it is not reason, experience or tradition that sheds light on the word of God, contrary to that, it is the word of God that sheds light on our reason, experience and tradition. We should never seek to shape the word of God to fit into our reason, experience or tradition; rather, we should seek to shape our reason, experience and tradition to fit into the word of God. True and genuine theology does not seek to validate our

realities but seeks to bring the revelation of God to bear on our realities. To this end Kuyper wrote saying:

Though the lamp of the Christian religion only burns within that institute's walls, its light shines out through its windows to areas far beyond, illumining all the sectors and associations that appears across the wide range of human life and activity. Justice, law, the home and family, business vocation, public opinion, and literature, art and science, and so much more are all illuminated by that light, and that illumination will be stronger and more penetrating as the lamp of the gospel is allowed to shine more brightly and clearly in the church institute. (Kuyper, *Common grace*, 194).

To put it in plain prose, Kuyper is saying, when the church gets her theology right, the people will get their behaviors right in the society. And for Kuyper, the only sure way for the church to get her theology right is for her to stick to the revealed word of God. That means the church must learn to tell her reason, experience, tradition and reality to keep quiet, and enthusiastically listen to and obey whenever and wherever revelation speaks.

For CRCN, here is where the rubber meets the road. If the truth must be told at all, then this is the truth, most of CRCN's theology and doctrines are based on reason, experience, tradition and the so called manifest realities instead of revelation. For instance, CRCN's theology of the Kingship of Christ is based on the inherited dualistic world-view of the pioneers of SUM. This inherited but faulty theology of the Kingship of Christ forms our faulty psychology and this faulty psychology goes on to produce our schizophrenic behavior. Very often, we don't like our schizophrenic behavior, so, we tried our best every now and then to fix it but realized it just wouldn't be fixed. Then we wondered why it refused and out rightly rejected our spirited effort to fix it. Of course, we should not be surprise because the scripture told us so. The psalmist says, "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3 NIV). When the foundation is destroyed the building cannot stand, it will definitely collapse and collapse totally and there is nothing anybody can do about it. The foundation of theology is revelation and the foundation of practice is principle. Our foundations of the revelation and the principle of the Kingship of Christ are all faulty and

cracked, making our building of the theology and the practice of the Kingship of Christ untenable; we need help to lay a solid foundation for solid and inhabitable building. Thank be to God, here come Abraham Kuyper, with just the right help we need. He offers us help by directing us to lay the formulation of our theology on the solid rock of revelation. We must insist that our reasons, experiences, traditions and manifest realities must respectfully keep quiet, humbly submit and reverently obey the dictates and wisdom of revelation. And this revelation is about the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and even our Lord and king Jesus Christ. This revelation must lead to our acknowledging his Kingship over all of life. This revelation must lead to his glory; this revelation must lead to his worship. This revelation must lead us to serve him in everything, every time, everywhere and in all situations.

### **5.3 MINISTERS**

The called and trained minister or pastor is a great and influential ambassador of Christ. For a good majority of people, when the push comes to a shove on whether they will acknowledge, accept and serve Jesus Christ as their king over all their lives, it will be determined by the life, preaching and teaching of the minister of Christ. Both in Hosea and Malachi, God blamed the nation's apostasy on the priests. For instance, in Malachi 1:6, He says "it is you priests who show contempt to my name". And in Hosea 4:5-6, He says "you stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother - my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge, because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priest, because you have ignored the laws of your God, I also will ignore your children." Jesus held the teacher of the law and the Pharisees liable, for the people not entering the kingdom of God. The following are his words, "woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrite! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to" (Matt. 23:13). Luke puts it slightly different and thereby make the meaning more clearer-when he wrote,

“Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge, you yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering” (Luke 11:52 NIV).

From the above scriptures, we have seen that lack of knowledge or rejection of knowledge by the ministers constitutes a major problem, leading to the destruction of many. If lack of knowledge or rejection of knowledge among the ministers is the root of the problem, then, the first step to solving the problem will be for the ministers to pursue and embrace knowledge. That is the knowledge of God, his word, and his ways or did. The writer of proverbs thinks so when he wrote, “... but through knowledge the righteous will be delivered” (Prov. 11:9b NKJV). The author of Daniel concurred to this truth, when he wrote this immortal verse from which the believers through the ages have drawn strength, he wrote “with flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him” (Dan. 11:32 NIV). Our great king, Jesus Christ, confirms this truth when he said, “... if you hold to my teaching you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32). The apostle Paul adds his voice to the plea, by showing that the knowledge that form the foundation to the solution that mankind needs, is not gotten by accident, rather, it has to be purposefully, deliberately and aggressively sought for and pursued. Therefore, he wrote: saying, “study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needed not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15 KJV).

This knowledge and or truth, is that which comes through God’s self revelation of his nature, words and ways or deeds. This knowledge is the knowledge of the truth that, Jesus Christ is the creator, redeemer, sustainer, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. All creatures in heaven and on earth were created by him and were for his pleasure. This knowledge is the knowledge of the truth that, all authority in heaven and on earth has been

given to him (see Mark. 28:18) and at the mention of his name every knee in heaven, on earth and beneath the earth must bow and every tongue must confess that Jesus is Lord (see Phil. 2:10-11). The ministers must apprehend and be apprehended by the knowledge of this truth and they must be driven with the passion to communicate same to their members and if possible to the whole world, in order to bring about the spiritual and mental transformation that will lead to people acknowledging and submitting to the Kingship of Christ over all of life which will consequently lead to social transformation.

But this will not happen, if there are no schools or learning institutions which are committed to this divine self-revelation alone, instead of mixing it with human traditions and or philosophies. Therefore, Kuyper founded the Free University with a faculty of theology that was committed to teaching the divine self-revelation of God. To him theology was not man's word about God but God's word about himself to man. But more than that, Kuyper saw every other discipline as the study of God's nature, God's words and or God's deeds (Kuyper, *Common grace in science*, 444). As far as Kuyper was concerned, it was not just the pastors that were ministers of God. Yes, the pastor is a minister of God in his sphere which is the church. So also, is the teacher, a minister of God in his sphere which is the school or education. Likewise, every other person, in every other sphere, is a minister of God in their own sphere. Their primary duty is to seek out the principles ordained by God to govern their sphere. Their major responsibility is to seek out the ways God has designed their spheres to function and to teach same to their followers and students (Kuyper, *Guidance*, 67).

Here the relevance of the Kingship of Christ in Abraham Kuyper's theology shines forth like the rising sun at dawn. In his days, Kuyper traced the problem of his nation to the church, from there, he traced the problem of the church to the training of the ministers and in the meantime, he traced the problem with the training of the minister to the dualism in the theology of the time and finally, he traced the problem of dualism in the theology of the time

to the synthesis of God's revelation and the Greek pagan philosophy. To solve this problem, first, Kuyper developed a sound theology which is based solely on the revealed word of God: this theology is the theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life. Next, Kuyper, created many platforms to communicate this theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life to the masses. But more importantly, Kuyper founded the Free University to train pastors as well as ministers in other cultural spheres to take the truth of this theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life to their various cultural or social spheres and there teach and train their followers and students in the same (Kuyper, Sphere Sovereignty, 475).

With this insight and instance from Abraham Kuyper, it is a good place to start from. We can pick up Abraham Kuypers theology of the kingship of Christ over all of life, dust it and polish it. Then reorganized our seminary, restructure our curriculum and create other institutions of learning where pastor and ministers in other spheres of life will be taught and trained in the truth and principles of the Kingship of Christ over all of life.

#### **5.4 MEMBERS**

Paul, writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit, said to the church in Ephesus, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for work of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-15NIV). Kuyper, understood the life transforming nature of the truth contained in this passage. He knew that the members of the church were not his members but the members of Christ. They were the ears of Christ, they were the mouth of Christ, they were the eyes of Christ, they were the hands of Christ, and they were the feet of Christ. In fact, simply put, they were the body of Christ. They were the foot soldiers of Christ in the various spheres of life. They were to serve their king Jesus

Christ in their God given sphere of influence. His duty was not to bind them to himself but to bind them to their Lord and King Jesus Christ, for whom they were to live, work and die. This he did so well by encouraging, motivating and inspiring them on to service for their great king Jesus Christ. Charging the Reformed believers and all believers in the Netherlands in his time saying:

Men of the antirevolutionary cause, there in outline is the ideal that beckons you in the name of Christ. If you now sit still and do nothing, nothing will come of it... How irresponsible will be your spiritual inertia, then, how unpardonable your sin before God and country. If you let this God given moment pass by unused and do not diffuse into that social endeavor what you alone can mix into it: the moral power of a love that binds because it flows from God... therefore, in the struggle that has been unleashed in our day show that you are not devoid of the resilience of your fathers, nor estranged from their courage, nor bereft of their holy seriousness. Prove yourself to be not just their physical but also the spiritual offspring of those fathers. Keep your horizon wide, your conceptions broad, your energy indomitable. Do not go limping behind others but run ahead of the procession by the light of prophecy and the radiance of maranatha. In the future our people will bow either before the gods of this age or before our God, so I do not understand you if you have forgotten Da Coasta's saying: "they shall not have us". "better: I understand you well, you faithful, honest men who, from high estate or low, feel your heart tremble with joy when you hear once again the summons to work for the glory of your God and the banner of the cross beckons anew (Kuyper, Maranatha, 226-7).

In this and so many other ways, Kuyper taught and reminded the Reformed believers and every other believer in the Netherlands and beyond that, they were the member of Christ and the primary purpose of their existence is to glorify Christ, their king, by serving him with their entire mind and might in their various God-given spheres of influence. One of the most effective medium, Kuyper, used to carryout his assignment as the teacher and trainer of the Reformed believers in the service of their great king, Jesus Christ, was journalism. Here Kuyper carried out a massive reeducation, reorientation and retraining program for the entire reformed believers in all works of life, scattered all over the Netherlands. For Kuyper, journalism was not just a means to disseminate information and spread the news of what was or is; much more than that, he saw journalism as a medium, to bring to light what should be, a means to educate, guide, train and lead the body of believers in all works of life to acknowledge and glorified Jesus Christ as king over all of life. With the two papers-*De*



*Standard*, and *De Heraut* – as his pulpit and the entire Netherlands as his cathedral, Kuyper, powerfully and effectively propagated, expounded and defended the eternal truth of the Kingship of Christ over all of life. For one whole year, he ran an expository article, on the anti revolutionary party which was codified into a book titled, *Our Program* (Vanden Berg 97-98). Like a master weaver, through these articles, Kuyper whip out the reformed orthodox people who were disinterested, disenchanted and disengaged from the public life of the nation and weave them into a united force for the Kingship of Christ against the forces of liberals.

For another three long years, Kuyper, ran a devotional in *De Heraut* titled, *For The King*, which later appeared in book form in three volumes. With his ability to logically, lucidly and convincingly communicate his message, Kuyper, effectively and successfully placed the real issue at the heart of every issue. He was able to make all and sundry saw that, politics was not just politics, education was not just education, law was not just law and science was not just science. Every word, theory or action is based on belief that is *Christocentric* or anthropocentric (Palmer, the two-kingdom, 17) He helped the believers to realized the fact that, their words, decisions and actions where not ordinary. They have eternal consequences. They were either acknowledging and or glorifying Jesus Christ as king over all of life or they are enthroning and glorifying man as king over all of life. As far as Kuyper was concerned, there was, neither neutral ground, nor sitting on the fence. He made it clear to the believers that, there were only two sides on the war, and that they were, either for the Kingship of Christ over all of life or against the Kingship of Christ over all of life. Thus, Kuyper, whipped, weaved and welded the reformed believers into a strong united force with a burning desire to enforce the Kingship of Christ over all of life.

It is right here that, the theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life in Abraham Kuyper's theology is so relevant to CRCN. The vast majorities of our members live and conduct their lives, as if they have no king. As a result, we have a good numbers of believers

in Christ, spread across the various spheres of life, yet, without any tangible or visible impact. That is without the Kingship of Christ been acknowledged and honored in those spheres of life. However, with the lessons learned from Kuyper, if properly and diligently applied, we can turn the vast number of our members into a strong united force and virile body of Christ who will live, work and fight for the enforcement of the Kingship of Christ over all of life.

## **5.5 LIFE PRACTICES OR VOCATIONS**

For Abraham Kuyper, all of life is lived before the face of God, under the Kingship of Christ over all of life, with no any aspect of life too far or too removed beyond the reach or covering of the Kingship of Christ over all of life. Nothing and no sphere of life are too mundane that Christ is not actively interested and constructively involved. This conviction is perfectly and precisely captured in his statement, “O... there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ who is sovereign over all, does not cry; ‘Mine’” (Kuyper, *Sphere*, 488). “He saw all the sectors of life as so many provinces which, largely secularized, had to be won, redeemed, and made to prosper to the glory of the true God and inconformity with His revealed will and ordinances” (Vanden Berg, 77). He worked indefatigably, to extricate and liberate the various spheres of life, from the hegemony of humanistic secularism, his passion and purpose was to get all the different spheres of life to acknowledge and honor the Kingship of Christ, by obeying his creation ordinances. Kuyper, would neither stand the deliberate obliteration of divine ordinances in nature nor stomach their being replaced by human and mechanistic ordinances. (Kuyper, *The Blurring*, 383). For Kuyper, every word spoken and every action done in every sphere of life should be in the name of the great king and for the glory of the great king. In this regard, McGoldrick citing Kuyper, wrote saying, “It is time we broaden our spiritual horizon and recognize that Jesus as king has sovereignty over the totality of human culture. Once that is realized, it becomes

inevitable that both our spiritual development unto eternal life and our general cultural development unto such an amazing increase in our knowledge and control over nature are placed under his rule” (McGoldrik, 143). With this goal in mind, Kuyper, worked tirelessly, to restore to everyday life, in every sphere of life, the missing spirituality that can only be possible under the Kingship of Christ over all life. This led to what can be termed life’s spirituality.

Kuyper, broadly identified seven creational spheres that, are autonomous or sovereign in regard to the other spheres of life. These are areas that, Christ exercises his kingship or kingly rule. This is clearly and concisely presented by Palmer, that I felt cannot be surpassed, therefore, will adopt it here: (Palmer, two Kingdom Doctrine, 19-22).

In *pro Rege*, Kuyper lists seven representative areas of Christ’s kingly rule. The first area is the lives of individual believers. The heart of Christ’s kingdom is the individual believers. The believers are those who respond willingly to the reign of Christ. Using language from earthly kingdoms, Kuyper called the believers Christ’s “subject”. He enumerates various duties of these subjects: they are to confess their king, be witnesses to their king, take up their cross, be soldiers for their king and deny themselves for their king. It is Christ’s subject who will serve their king in the world.

These subjects form the mystical body of Christ. There is a bond of love that binds Christ to his subjects. Not only is there a master-servant relationship, but there is also a relationship of friendship. We are Christ’s friends.

Kuyper says that Christians are not “new people” who are newly created but rather people from the created world who are “renewed”. Christians are new people only in the sense that they are renewed. That is the meaning of “rebirth”. For Kuyper there is continuity between creation and redemption in the life of a believer.

The second area of Christ rule is the church. Although the mystical body of Christ is the invisible church, “Christ also desired and established here on earth an external, visible, perceptible manifestation of that body, and in this manifestation the body of Christ entered into the world as the church of Christ. This is what is often called the visible church.

This church was established by Christ when he called the apostles and gave them the keys of the kingdom. Christ established the structure of this church by ordering its sacraments, offices and discipline. The preaching of the word is a central part of this church.

Although Jesus’ kingdom is found in all of life, “the congregation (*Gemeente*)... forms the living center of that kingdom, through which Christ allows the power of the Spirit to go out among the children of men in all the world and in all of history. The congregation forms the essential key ingredient of his kingdom, and it is only in the congregation that his royal honor and majesty not only work but are also recognized and honored.

The third area of Christ rule is the family. A Christian family is one that is rooted in creation. It conforms to the creational norms. But sin interfered. Therefore, “Christ is redeemer also of the family life”. A Christian family will not lose its original ordinances but rather will be brought back to the purity of these original ordinances”. This is not the bringing in of something new but the restoration of the old which was spoiled”. There is thus no nature-grace dualism here. Christ is the creator and the redeemer of the family.

The Christian family is guided by creational norms. But how do we know what these norms are? Kuyper finds them in scripture. The fifth commandment of the Law of Moses tells children how to behave. Paul expands upon this commandment in Ephesians. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul explains the creational hierarchy thus there is no conflict between creational and scriptural norms. Both govern the Christian family; both came from Christ the creator and redeemer.

Finally, a Christian family will have a family altar. Kuyper says that, “a family is not Christian only because a family altar is established, but a Christian family is not conceivable where the family altar is absent”.

The fourth area of Christ rule is the society. Society is a separate sphere between the family and the state. Kuyper begins this section by describing the cosmic struggle between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world. The “spirit of the world restlessly renews its attack on the kingdom of Christ”. And “this will continue until the spirit of the world has exhausted its last strength”. In the end the power of Christ our king will defeat the spirit of the world: “But if this is the nature of Christ’s kingship, how is it possible for this kingship to be restricted to his church, the family and the state and not the society”. Kuyper reminds the reader that the statements of scripture about Christ’s kingship are all embracing: “to him is given all power on earth and in heaven. All things are subject to him. Nothing is excluded” so how can one neglect “this broad terrain of our social life”?

Many Christians feel the claim of Christ over their personal lives but not “over the broad terrain of our life where the scepter of Jesus’ kingship extends”. The result is “that the kingship of Christ does not live for them”. For them Christ is there exclusively for the salvation of their souls but not for the life outside of the church.

These pietistic Christians are like house sparrow: “the big society with its richly developed life does not exist for them. And even if they do read a newspaper, they are only attracted to the obituaries and advertisements. The rest does not interest them”. But even house sparrows fly around on occasion, while these people do not! Such provincial Christians are practical examples of the two kingdom doctrine. Societal life is grounded in creation. In the Garden of Eden, there was a social relation between Adam and Eve. Sin distorted this relationship, but Christ came to restore society and establish Christian society. “Christian” here “does not mean a new discovery and a new creation but a return to original creation.” In

the Christian society, the original creation ordinances are honored. Thus “the royal rule of Christ over societal life is bound to these ordinances”.

In Kuyper there is no conflict between creational ordinances and the word of God. Both express the will of God. Kuyper writes, “For on almost every part on the social question, God’s word gives us the most positive direction”. Kuyper lists the family, marriage, colonization, work, and state intervention as areas that God’s word addresses.

So how does Christ rule in society? Kuyper identified at least four means of Christ rule: the Christian church, the Christian school, the Christian organization and the Christian press (public opinion). Again Kuyper rejects the two kingdom doctrine. “The inaccurate and superficial idea that Christ is only our Savior and redeemer and not also our king and judge is completely rejected precisely through the Christian school.

The need for Christian organization is partly grounded in Paul’s complaint about Christians taking brothers to court before unbelievers. But the rationale is deeper. There is a danger when Christians participate in a mixed organization. For then, “unconsciously they will exchange the principle of the Christian life for the improve principle of the worldly society.” Therefore, Kuyper recommends separate Christian organizations.

The fifth area of Christ’s Kingship is the state or political arena. The state was not present in creation; instead, the state is a product of God’s common grace that was revealed in the history of mankind, especially after the flood and tower of Babel. Here too the reign of Christ extends.

Kuyper identifies three main ways in which Christ rule the state. First, Christ influences and directs political leaders, both pagan and Christian. Examples of the former are Joseph’s Pharaoh, Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar. But Christ also governs Christian rulers like Constantine, Charlemagne, and the house of Orange. Some of these rulers applied Christian principles in their kingdoms.

Christ also rules the state through the law. Kuyper speaks of a “mystical law”, which is valid for all people and all lands. The divine law can be found both in our conscience and in the scripture. There is no opposition between the two since both came from Christ the creator and redeemer. There is only one law of God. Of course, we cannot apply the Mosaic law directly to our contemporary life, but the Mosaic law like the New Testament, contains principles that are relevant for our contemporary nations. A Christian government should bring its laws into conformity with the principles of Christ.

Christ also rules the state through Christian political parties. In the Europe of Kuyper’s day, there were parties that were advocating anti-Christian principles. The Christian forces must fight against such principles. This is why Groen van Prinsterer advocated “the party of the living God” to combat such ideas. Christians who for many years have honored Christ as the Savior of his church must now begin to honor Christ as the king over the state. The sixth area of Christ’s reign is the realm of science or scholarship (*Wetenschap*). “Kingship is power”, says Kuyper, opening this section. When we talk of Jesus’ power, we are talking of Jesus as king. Scripture has at least ten references to the power of Christ over all things. But the church of Christ has often put his kingship in the shadow, despite the testimony of scripture” that all things, except God the father, have been given to him and placed under his feet. How then can science... be removed from the power of Christ” science too must be brought under the Lordship of Christ.

Jesus Christ is the truth. Thus, “true science, both of visible and invisible things, in the end boils down to a science of Christ, because in him are hidden all treasures of knowledge and wisdom. Christ’s majesty requires one to research visible things, to understand the science that is in Christ and “to bring the knowledge of the visible and the invisible things together in the harmony of one’s faith consciousness”. We cannot separate

the knowledge of the visible and invisible things. Nature is the greatest theater of God's glory.

The final area of Christ's kingship in this study is the area of art. Art (*Kunst*) is an ability (*kunnen*) from God. It is gift from God that can be used properly or misused. Art is both an instrument and inspiration. As instrument or means of influence, art is completely neutral, but the spirit of art determines whether the art is Christian or not. If the spirit of the art is godly, then the art will point us to God; but if the spirit of art is demonic, then the art too will point us away from God... For Kuyper, a "special relations exists between art and Christ". This is easily missed by those two kingdom people, who see Christ only as the Savior of the souls. The question must be asked "whether art itself lies within the government of the king of God's kingdom" the answer is positive since Christ's creation also belongs to his kingdom. There is continuity between his creation and redemption. The new earth of Revelation 21 will not be a newly created world, but a recreated one; it will not be a different world, but the same one.

Kuyper says, "Of course the Redeemer and Savior has significance for the world of beauty since sin and the curse brought disturbance, desecration and corruption also in this world of beauty". Sin is, 'a deviation from the original state of affairs, 'and thus the reconciliation (*Verzoening*) brings about nothing else than purification in the world of this distorted beauty.

Art belongs to both the world of creation and redemption: "Not only Christian art, but art in itself, no matter how misused and polluted, belongs to Christ's kingly territory ... the only proper appreciation of the world of beauty depends on a confession of divinity of Christ. Therefore, in regards to the many life practices or vocations in the various spheres of life, the Kingship of Christ in Abraham Kuyper's theology is extremely relevant to CRCN. As we have seen above in Palmer's presentation of how Kuyper developed the Kingship of Christ



across the various spheres of life. He shows CRCN how to develop social spirituality, legal spirituality, political spirituality etc (Langley, 3). Following in his step we can effectively affirm and asserts the Kingship of Christ over the various spheres of life by bringing the many life practices and vocations under the Kingship of Christ.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 SUMMARY**

This thesis examined the problem of dualism in Christian theology as well as in Christian practices. Especially, among the ministers and members of the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria, whose cardinal doctrine is the kingship of Christ over all of life. There is a huge gap between their belief and their behavior. They believed in the kingship of Christ over all of life but practice nature-grace dualism. They are always praying, studying, thinking and planning on how to ensure that the Kingship of Christ is recognized, acknowledged and honored in all matters ecclesiastical but the same cannot be said of the other spheres of life. In the other spheres of life outside the institutional Church anything goes. Some even opined that it is not right to drag Christ into these other spheres, since they deal with things that are mundane, temporal and secular.

However, in the course of this research, we discovered that the doctrine of dualism or more preferably, the doctrine of nature-grace dualism is alien to the doctrine of scripture and opposed to anything in our Christian faith. The doctrine of nature-grace dualism properly belongs to Greek philosophy. The first attempt to smuggle it into the Christian faith by the Gnostics failed. This Greek dualism eventually gained a tiny and subtle entrance into the Christian faith when the gospel was contextualized into Greek authors. Many years later, Thomas Aquinas, built a palace for this Greek dualism in the Christian faith when he wrongfully split up life into two domains, namely the domain of nature with reason as its sovereign and the domain of grace with faith as its sovereign. In other words, man is king over the domain of nature and Christ is king over the domain of grace.

Contrary to the doctrine of nature-grace dualism, we discovered that the scripture taught the doctrine of the Kingship of Christ over all of life. As a matter of fact, scripture emphatically declares and clearly insist that all creatures in heaven and on earth and beneath the earth must

serve the king, Jesus Christ (see Phil. 2:10-11). Scripture neither recognize nor taught the doctrine of nature-grace dualism. Instead, it recognized, acknowledged and taught the doctrine of the Kingship of Christ over all life, and insists that every Christian lives and conducts his or her life accordingly.

However, in the course of this research we have observed that to believe is one thing and to practice what one believes is entirely another thing. Ideally beliefs flow into behaviors. That is beliefs are supposed to naturally crystallize or materializes into action or practice. But that was not and is not the case with most Christians in Nigeria, more precisely, the members of Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria. Their beliefs and their behaviors are not integrated. They believe in the kingship of Christ over all of life but practice nature-grace dualism. But then, that was not supposed to be and it is not suppose to be so. Wherever and whenever there is a belief in the Kingship of Christ over all of life, it is a logical necessity that a commensurate behavior that is in tandem with the belief should ensue.

Consequently, to bridge the gap between the beliefs and the behaviors of the members of Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria, we had to find someone who believes in the Kingship of Christ over all of life and actually practiced the Kingship of Christ over all of life. In this regard, we found Abraham Kuyper and his theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life and how he put that theology into practice in every cultural sphere of human life and activity. He demonstrated through his life and his many endeavors, what it means to be a true, genuine and faithful servant of our great king, Jesus Christ, in thoughts, words and actions. Through his example, the Christians and more precisely the members of Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria can see and learn how to be true and faithful servants of our great king Jesus Christ in thoughts, words and actions. Actually, through the life of Abraham Kuyper, we did learned that the whole of our life should be lived before the throne of our great king, Jesus Christ, as his true and faithful servants but more than that, we did learned

how to live as the true and faithful servants of our great king Jesus Christ in every cultural sphere of life anywhere, anytime and in all situations. Simply put, through Abraham Kuyper, we discovered and learned that our lives should never be divided into two, with one half for ourselves and the second half for Christ. Instead, we should live our entire lives as one indivisible entity before the face of Christ fully surrendered, submitted and yielded to his Kingship over all of life.

## **6.2 APPLICATION**

Modern secularism did not usurp the throne of Christ in public life all by itself; it had and continues to have accomplices. However, the sad irony is that its greatest accomplice has been Christianity herself. For instance, Ruth Kelly, a devout Catholic cabinet minister in the United Kingdom, whose job was education secretary declared, "I have a private spiritual life and I have a faith. It is a private spiritual life and I don't think it is relevant to my job"(Boyd-Macmillan,214).

In 1977 and 1978, Nigeria was in a process of writing a new constitution. The most heated debate was on the nature and the place of religion in the new constitution. The Islamic spokes man, Ahmed Beita Yusuf, "argued that Islam is a wholistic religion embracing all of life. Any attempt to limit its application to so-called "spiritual" or "private" realms amount to suppressing Islam as a whole....All aspect of life-law, education, government, economics-are inseparable from Islam"(Boer,Missions,143). He went further to say,

Therefore, the positing of a neutral non-religious zone in life must result in oppression of its genius. Limiting the application of Islam and for that matter, of any religion is in effect to replace this religion with secularism and atheism. For the government to refuse to finance, for example, religious education, whether Muslim or Christian constitutes "the advancement of secularism". It is next to condemning religious propagation..., thus given undue preference to secularism and atheism (Boer,Missions,143).

On the other hand, the overwhelming Christian consensus was for secular constitution that would eliminate all religious influences (Boer,Missions,143).

Scores of more evidences or instances could be cited from most nations of the world. However, the two given above suffices to underscore the thesis that Christianity has been the greatest accomplice of secularism in usurping the throne of Christ in public square. But why on earth would she do that? Truly Christianity never sees her self as helping secularism to usurp the throne of Christ in the public square. Though that is exactly what she has been doing. But of course, it is obvious that she has not and would not consciously do that, she does that because she unconsciously bought into the doctrine of nature-grace dualism that could be traced to Greek philosophy which said matter is bad, spirit is good. Boer citing Rookmaker, aptly captured the Christianized version of this concept of nature-grace dualism in the following words;

This world is good, but yet has autonomy of its own. The world of faith, of grace, of religion is the higher one, a world for which we have need of God's revelation. This is where our aims and affections should be set. But the lower world, the world of men, the world of "nature", can be understood by reason, and here in fact reason reigns. It is as such non-religious, secular. Here there is no difference between Christian and the non-Christian, as both act according to the laws of thought and action (Boer, Missions, 132).

Boer adds, "This is the dualism that has led to popular mentality among Christians that would seek to divorce their religious obligations from their artistic, scientific, political and economic activities" (Boer, Missions, 132).

Therefore, the first step Christianity must take base on Kuyper's theology in responding to the challenge of modern secularism is to refuse to be part of the problem. She must refuse to help secularism by saying no to dualism in all spheres of human activities. Secondly she must not allow secularism to do her social and scientific thinking for her. She must refuse secularism's offer to help her think. She must say to secularism, do your own thinking and I will do mine.

Thirdly she must reject secularisms pretense of neutrality and her purported myth of neutral- zone where religion or faith does not exist. She must seek to unmask secularism so as to let all see it for what it is; a religion, a faith, and a belief system.

Fourthly, she must develop an integrated and a comprehensive Christian worldview that is anchored on the Kingship of Christ over all of life; worldview that will under-guide all her thoughts, her discourses and her actions.

Fifthly, she must refuse to neither live in secularism's world nor sleep in secularism's house but must return to her own world and to her own house. That means, she must not join secularism's political party, attend secularism school, adopt secularism's economic theory etc. She should organize her own political party, develop her own economic theory, build her own school (not just the physical structures but also the materials to be taught in the school), Create her own mass media etc.

These suggestions are in no ways exhaustive. However, they are meant to serve as stimulus that will stir us to prayer, study, thinking. sharing of ideas, planning and working to come up with more suggestions that will throw up a dam against the rising tide of secularism in the public domain of human activities. But much more than that, with God as our helper. beat back the forces of secularism and at their expense enforce the kingship of Christ over all of life,

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations here are not by any means conclusive or exhaustive, rather they are to be seen as a prompter to stimulate our imagination, creativity and faith. Having said that, let have some possible recommendations.

It is a fact, well proved beyond any reasonable doubt that people's behaviors are influenced by their beliefs, and their beliefs are influenced by their knowledge and their knowledge is the direct product of the revelation or information they have been exposed to.

To change ones behavior, attitude or worldview, then first, you must change his revelation or information. In other words, new revelation will lead to new knowledge, new knowledge will lead to new beliefs, new beliefs will lead to new behaviors and new behaviors will lead to new life.

In the church setting the pastor or the Evangelist is the means of revelation or information to the congregation or members. And the seminary is the channel of revelation and information to the Pastor or Evangelist. This is where we must begin our process of paradigm shift. To change the worldview of the congregation we must first change the worldview of the Pastors, Evangelists and the leaders. A Jukun Wanu adage says, "Keep your heart and head going in the right direction and you will not have to worry about your feet." This is equally true in this case. If the Pastors, Evangelists and leaders are having the right worldview we don't have to worry about the members, they will naturally follow suit.

In order to do this, we must be current to our societies, cultures, opinions, politics and government. We must be current to our world's developments and inventions. Whatever, we do, we must keep abreast with the world and above all we must be rooted and grounded in the scripture.

We must through the help of our God and the wisdom of our Lord and King Jesus Christ, prayerfully stand at the brink of eternity, look back at our present time and see what kind of action will lead to the kind of ending that will please our great King, Jesus Christ. Certainly, I felt our great King, will not be pleased, if we run away from the public life and thereby failed to established His sovereignty, Lordship and Kingship over all of life. The joy of our great King should be our strength. The joy of our great King should be the momentum in our energy and the enthusiasm in our heart, not monetary gain, not honor, not prestige, as we work feverishly and faithfully, day and night to review our Seminary Curriculum or

develop new Curriculum that will be born out of the comprehensive worldview which uphold and affirms the Kingship of Christ over all of life.

Over the years Christians have failed and failed woefully. They gave in to corruption in politics and political positions. They gave in to secular and Satan's vices in business but I dare say they did not give in because politics was bad or because money is evil. No, they did not give in because Satan was too powerful. I dare say they gave in because they were not prepared. History is replete with the fact that every now and then people fail because they were not prepared. When a man is not prepared to handle a huge sum of money but suddenly finds himself entrusted with so much money, he cannot help but mismanage it. Likewise a man, who is not prepared for high political position and responsibilities but suddenly wakes up one morning to find himself vested with so much authority and power, cannot help but abuse it. Yes, success in whatever areas of life is not the result of chance but of preparation. Therefore, we should build primary schools, secondary schools; higher institutions and register them with the states Boards of Education or Federal Ministry of Education. These schools should be the citadels of Christ's Lordship and Kingship over all of life. It should be a camp where children are groomed to go out into the society, to establish the sovereignty of Christ over all vocations, professions, businesses and politics.

Furthermore, we should humbly sit at the feet of our Lord and King, Jesus Christ, prayerfully, design programs; seminars, workshops and symposiums for our politicians, business people and the general public. These programs should be well grounded in Biblical truth, with:

- i. Greater focus on honesty and integrity. This will address the issues of corruption in society.
- ii. Greater focus on sexual purity. This will address the issue of sexually transmitted disease including HIV/AIDS.



- iii. Greater focus on business and economic principles. This will address the issues of poverty and unemployment.
- iv. Greater focus on living in a pluralistic society. This will address the issue of ethnic competition and religious violence
- v. Greater focus on governance. This will address the issue of expenditures for public projects and the overall direction of society (McCain, 12).

We must strive for excellence in our church organization, activities and facilities. In effect, it means we must put the right people in the right place. We must not put people arbitrarily in positions to carry out various assignments. Instead we should prayerfully confer with them, find out their areas of expertise, interest and aptitude. Let those who have the gift of administration carry out the function of administrators. Let those who have the gift of management, manage. Let those who have the gift of pastoring, pastor. Let those who have the gift of teaching, teach. Let those who have the gift of Evangelist, Evangelize. Let everyone do what they are good at to the glory of God and the nourishment of the church that she may shine brighter as the light of the world, sending out rays of light through her windows and crevices to the society, nation and the world over.

In order to make this work out, the salaries of the workers should be equalized without fear or favor, all and sundry should be accorded the same respect and honor. In so doing the Evangelists we remain an Evangelist and the pastor will remain a pastor otherwise as it is now, the Evangelist would rather become Reverends.

Finally, we must be the church that is constantly on her knees before, the throne of Christ, seeking his grace, will, direction, guidance and leadership without which it is, and will be impossible for us to do anything that will be accepted and approved by Him. We must always remember that, Christ's words, teachings and concepts without Christ's life cannot change a thing.

## 6.4 CONCLUSION

With his theology of the Kingship of Christ over all of life;

Kuyper urged Christians to recognize the body of Christ as a transnational community with responsibility to shape history and society in keeping with God's ordinances. Christianity is not...simply one institution among others but a testimony to the movement of God through history recovering all of creation and all nations through and for Jesus Christ. No state or empire or globalizing movement that opposes Christ kingship has a right to stand, Yet the allegiance to Christ's kingship should not fuel military crusades against infidels but instead should inspire Christian service in the cause of justice for all (Skillen, 372).

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a step. Long and winding is the road, weary and dreary will the journey be, but go we must. The arrival may be ten, thirty, fifty or even hundred years in the future if our Lord and King tarry. But the journey must begin now and here. There will be long nights of sacrifices and sufferings. Many days of unimaginable hardships, pains, difficulties, and even loss of lives but we must not falter in our faith nor fail in our fight for the Kingship of Christ over all of life. Until the banner of the sovereignty of our God and King, Jesus Christ, unfurls in the air of that bright and glorious morning, in which light will finally triumphs over darkness, justice over corruption, peace over violence, faith over unbelief, the Kingship of Christ over secularism and righteousness rolled down from heaven like a mighty stream (Irimiya, 117).

Until then, we should continue to pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

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