

ADVANCING GOD'S KINGDOM!

HFC VISION - 2006

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” - Matthew 11:12 (KJV)

“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.” - Matthew 11:12 (NIV)

Introduction:

-“A Kingdom is defined as a sphere of influence in which a king rules. Therefore, wherever God rules we find an expression of the Kingdom of God.” –Dale Stoll, Good News That Transforms, Restoration Press, Bristol, Indiana

-God's Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom. It is a Kingdom of unconditional and sacrificial love; righteousness, peace, and joy; mercy and forgiveness; grace and endurance; supernatural power and victorious living.

-It's time to cast out “cultural” Christianity with all of its religion, passivity, self-centeredness, unholy compromise, status-quo living, indifference, and any other characteristic that grieves the heart of God. It time to ADVANCE GOD'S KINGDOM! We must exercise a “holy violence” (Matthew Henry commentary) over self rule and self will and be part of the “forceful advancement” of God's Kingdom.

-As believers in Jesus Christ, we are grateful that God *has “rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and brought into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”* Col. 1:13-14. The Message translation of the same verses says; *“God rescued us from dead-end alleys and dark dungeons. He's set us up in the kingdom of the Son he loves so much, [14] the Son who got us out of the pit we were in, got rid of the sins we were doomed to keep repeating.”* We begin our walk with Jesus from a place of victory and we must ADVANCE HIS KINGDOM WITH VICTORY! We are called to be warriors, not wimps!

-In these days of prevalent and advancing evil, terrorism, war, economic uncertainty, moral decline, family breakdown, and fear, it is time for the KINGDOM OF GOD TO ADVANCE! It must advance in our personal lives, marriages, homes, the market place, schools, media, government institutions, our cities, our communities ...and every facet of society! For every true believer in Jesus Christ, this is not a time to retreat. THIS IS THE HOUR TO ADVANCE GOD'S KINGDOM! Every test and trial we face is an opportunity for training for reigning! Rev. 3:21 -*To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

-The teaching of the Kingdom was a priority in the ministry of Jesus. He not only taught the Kingdom. He demonstrated the Kingdom. We are called to no less of a mission.

-Jesus began his ministry with a call for repentance - Matthew 4:17 - *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

-Jesus commanded us to seek His Kingdom first - Matthew 6:33 - *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

-Jesus commanded us to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to the whole world before He will come back: Matthew 24:14 - *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.* Over half of the world's population has yet to hear of Jesus. It's time to ADVANCE THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM TO THE WHOLE WORLD!

-Jesus last teaching to his disciples was about the Kingdom: Acts 1:3
After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

-The apostles proclaimed the Kingdom. Acts 19:8 - *Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.*
Acts 28:30-31 - *For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. [31] Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.*

-There is a conflict of Kingdoms in this present age. However, a time is coming when Satan's Kingdom will be cast down and Christ's Kingdom will be established forever!
Rev. 11:15 - *The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."*

-This gives us reason to hope and persevere in the task of advancing God's Kingdom now! We know we are on the winning side!

-There are many important ingredients if God's Kingdom will be advanced. In this message, I would like to suggest three. Three key ingredients for advancing God's Kingdom include our ATTITUDES, ASPIRATIONS (vision); and ACTIONS!

A. ATTITUDES

There are many important attitudes. Listed below is what I view as three key attitudes for advancing God's Kingdom.

1. Humility

-Required for entrance into the Kingdom - Matthew 18:1-5- *At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" [2] He called a little child and had him stand among them. [3] And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. [4] Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. [5] "And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.*

-We become participants in God's Kingdom purely by God's grace, not because we have earned it. We have nothing to boast. – Ephes. 2:8 -*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--*

-Having a spirit of humility will always be demonstrated by exalting Christ more and more, not our ministry, our work, or our service. John the Baptist had the right attitude: John 3:30 - *He must become greater; I must become less.*

-Paul, with all of his achievements and heritage, recognized in a spirit of humility that all of that was far inferior to knowing Christ - Philip. 3:7-8

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. [8] What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

Practical application:

- a. I will constantly submit my life and ministry to God's reign or rule.
- b. I will be quick to repent when I realize that I'm seeking self promotion or attention to what I'm doing.
- c. I will seek to exalt Jesus in every aspect of my life and ministry.
- d. I will open my life to being taught, corrected, and exhorted, by my fellow sincere laborers in Christ.

2. Submission

-Jesus is the ultimate example of submission. When he faced the cross, he prayed, "Not my will but yours be done." Kingdom advancement will not take place apart from surrendering our whole will and life in complete allegiance to Jesus! He's the commander-in-chief, the one who leads us into battle to advance His Kingdom!

-The attitude of submission also implies complete obedience. Lack of obedience, even in the small areas of life, upset the plan and purposes of God. We see that in the life of King Saul who fell from God's favor because of disobedience (1 Samuel 15:19-24). On the other hand, full obedience always brings blessing, peace, and fruitfulness. Abraham is an example: Hebrews 11:8 - *By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.*

-Submission also implies a willingness to enter into an intimate relationship with the Father. Only as we abide in His presence and love, will we receive the wisdom, grace, power, strength, and every resource necessary to advance the Kingdom in His strength and not our own self effort. John 15:4-8 - *"Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me. [5] "I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing. [6] Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. [7] But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. [8] This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.*

Practical application:

- a. Daily, I will submit my total life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ
- b. I will take time to hear God's voice and respond in obedience to what He wants me to do. Absolute and complete obedience will be my goal.
- c. I will take time in my life to develop a growing and deepening intimacy with the Father.
- d. I will be quick to repent when a rebellious attitude takes any kind of root in my life rather than a submissive attitude.

3. Aggressiveness

-Being aggressive in one's own natural life may be good for getting ahead in life. However, an aggressive attitude in a person's life can also be used to manipulate or dominate others.

-Being aggressive for the Kingdom means that I will surrender my will, fears, personal rights, selfishness, and give all my energy, in every aspect of my life to Kingdom advancement. I don't separate my personal life or church life into separate compartments. All of life is Kingdom life and I will be in step with God in pursuing his Kingdom work with all diligence!

Matthew 11:12 *From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. Matthew 11:12 (KJV) - And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

-I will resist the temptation to be passive. Passivity is a spiritual condition that reduces one's spiritual effectiveness in the Kingdom. A passive spirit allows Satan to gain access into the King's domain. We must be aggressive in our will to be disciplined citizens of God's Kingdom. 1 Cor. 9:24-27 - *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. [25] Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. [26] Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. [27] No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.*

-"Salvation is achieved by faith. Destiny is achieved by discipline." – Paul Johansson

-Once again, an aggressive spirit is not for the purpose of domineering others. It comes because we have surrendered our will to be dominated by the Holy Spirit so that we can fulfill God's destiny for our life. Paul serves as an example to us: 2 Tim. 4:5-8 - *But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. [6] For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. [7] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. [8] Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

-Being aggressive implies: enthusiasm; accepting a challenge; live and walk by faith; perseverance; looking forward and not backward; not easily overcome by doubt, discouragement, and fear; committed....

Practical application:

- a. I will resist the spirit of fear and intimidation that Satan may try to place on my life which causes me to fall into doubt, discouragement, and defeat.
- b. I will surrender my will to the Holy Spirit for him to give me an "aggressive spirit" so that my "aggressiveness" is not self promoting.
- c. I will pursue Kingdom work and ministry with all diligence and resist the urge to give up.
- d. I will repent of laziness, passivity, and spiritual indifference when it enters my life.

Summary: For God's Kingdom to be advanced, it is important that I have proper attitudes. Three important attitudes include: Humility, Submission; and Aggressiveness. Jesus manifested all three of these attitudes in his life and we are called, as his followers, to have the mind of Christ. By doing so, my life will bring Glory to God!

B. ASPIRATIONS – (Vision – what we view by faith in the future)

There are three main categories with several sub categories that I will list as to what I view as important aspirations for the advancement of God's Kingdom currently in the context of HFC. In viewing these aspirations, we should see them as a challenge and motivation and not allow Satan to bring condemnation.

1. **Growth** – Anything that is not growing or reproducing will ultimately lead to death. Growth should always be a major concern and passion if we want to see God's Kingdom advance. Another principle for growth is that it must be preceded by death or pruning. John 12:24 - *I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.* John 15:1-2 - *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. [2] He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.* What needs to "die" or be "pruned" in our lives and ministry in order to see God's Kingdom advance?

-There are three specific areas of growth that God is calling us to:

i) Spiritual growth and maturity

-Unfortunately, there are too many long-term believers who are still acting like infants. This is manifest by being easily offended; frequent discouragement; often lacking the ability to overcome temptation; lack of commitment; lack of accountability and loyalty to leaders, dependence on leaders for ministry rather than doing ministry; not knowing or using spiritual gifts; not developing spiritual disciplines; etc.

-Spiritual growth of members requires personal choices such as the desire, will, and commitment to grow, no matter what the cost. It also requires creative effort and anointing of the Holy Spirit on the part of leaders, at all levels, to challenge people to growth. 2 Peter 3:18 - *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.* Ephesians 4:11-16.

-True spiritual growth will never take place without an intimate relationship with the Father. It's in our relationship with him that we find the grace to overcome the pressures and temptations that want to ensnare our lives. Philip. 3:10 (Message) - *I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself.*

ii) New believers and reclaimed "lost sheep."

-As existing believers take seriously their own spiritual growth and leaders motivate and disciple for spiritual growth, it will lead to growth in the

number of new believers and reclamation of “lost sheep” in every congregation.

-Every congregation, including individuals, must look for creative ways and be open to Holy Spirit leading to seek and save the lost.

Acts 8:4-8 - Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. [5] Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. [6] When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. [7] With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. [8] So there was great joy in that city.

iii) Giving

-God is a God of abundance! Barely surviving is not God’s will. Kingdom giving is vital for Kingdom advancement! Without this spirit, the Kingdom suffers and leaders and members live in frustration.

-Giving of our time, talents, resources, and all that we have is a natural result of being full of the Holy Spirit. God is a giving God. It is His nature. It should also be the nature of every true Kingdom believer. Our first interest is the Kingdom, not ourselves. Note the example of the Macedonian church in II Corinthians 8:1-9. The key to their Kingdom mentality resulting in rich generosity was the fact that “*they first gave themselves to the Lord* (II Cor. 8:5).”

Practical application: - faith vision statements

We view every member and every congregation...

- a. Taking specific and practical steps toward personal and corporate spiritual maturity, repenting of “cultural Christianity” mentality and embracing a “Kingdom mentality.” This will require an act of our will and accountability to others for steps we are called to take.
- b. Taking creative steps to reach the lost with an expectation for growth, at least by 20% in each congregation. Each new believer will be disciplined and equipped to be a mature believer. (God desires fruit to remain. John 15:16 - *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.*
- c. Embracing a Kingdom giving mentality. There will be a freedom for leaders to teach on giving and a release by every member to give their selves first to the Lord, thus embracing the giving heart of the Father. The result will be abundance in the “house”, spiritual and physical prosperity for every member, and adequate resources, even surplus, for Kingdom work! 2 Chron. 31:10 - *and Azariah the chief priest, from the family of Zadok, answered, "Since the people began to bring their contributions to the temple of the Lord, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare, because the Lord has blessed his people, and this great amount is left over."*
Congregational giving will increase by 20%!
- d. Making a holy and faith filled declaration through prayer on the part of every leader and currently mature believer to see this vision come to pass!

2. **Expansion** – Growth will automatically lead to Kingdom expansion. Our physical body will die if multiplication of cells does not take place. When multiplication of believers and leaders in the church does not take place, it ultimately leads to death. Satan’s work is death! The work of Jesus and His Kingdom is life, growth, expansion, multiplication, increase, ABUNDANCE! I see expansion taking place in three areas:

i) Multiplication of leaders

-Everyone was born to lead. “Being made in the image and likeness of the Creator means having the Creator’s nature, which is the spirit of leadership.” –Dr. Myles Munroe – The Spirit of Leadership

-Multiplication of leaders is a result of spiritual growth and is vitally necessary for Kingdom expansion. Acts 14:23 - *Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.*

-Leadership, in the broadest sense, begins with how one takes authority over their own personal life. Dynamic Kingdom leadership is often lacking because people don’t have a conviction about being faithful in the “small” things of their own personal life. Effective leadership involves daily personal choices.

Practical application:

- a. Every member will understand that they have leadership gifting and will be encouraged and nurtured to develop it and use their gifting for the advancement of God’s Kingdom including their personal life, home, church, work, or wherever God calls them!
- b. Pastoral and primary leaders will do everything possible to multiply leadership and will renounce all insecurities that may arise when they view others excelling beyond their own leadership. Our identity as leaders will be purely seen in Jesus, not in our leadership position.
- c. Leadership principles will be taught that will enhance every person’s confidence in taking leadership.
- d. Every congregation will see a 30% increase in leadership placement in the coming year!

ii) New congregations and regions of ministry

-Spiritual growth and multiplication of leaders will result in healthy congregations which will lead to multiplication of new congregations. Acts 16:4-5 - *As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. [5] So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.*

-Church planting is one of the most effective methods of church growth. Every congregation should seriously consider planting another congregation or be involved in assisting another congregation in planting a church.

-A congregation with a Kingdom advancement mentality will always be thinking about multiplication of leaders and congregations and seeking God's direction for launching into new areas of ministry.

Practical application:

- a. Each primary leadership team and congregation will seek the Lord with diligence concerning what God is saying about Church multiplication/church planting.
- b. HFC as an organization, as well as each congregation, will not place limitations on where God will lead to plant a new church, whether in the U.S.A. or the World.
- c. Two to three new congregations will become part of HFC by the end of 2006. This can include new church plants or existing congregations that want to be a part of HFC

3. Holy Spirit Anointing

Seeking to advance the Kingdom of God without the anointing of the Holy Spirit leads to frustration and futility. The apostle Paul was fully aware of this in his life as we see in 1 Cor. 2:1-5 - *When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. [2] For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. [3] I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. [4] My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, [5] so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.* There are at two areas that I envision the anointing of the Holy Spirit to be manifest in ever increasing ways.

i) Use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit

-The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not for us. They are for the advancement of God's Kingdom. 1 Cor. 12:1 - *Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. [7] - Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

-It is truly a tragedy in the Kingdom for a believer to not know their spiritual gift[s] and not use their spiritual gift[s]. Satan, remember comes to "steal, rob, and destroy." If he can keep a believer from knowing or using their gift, Christ's Kingdom will not advance.

ii) Demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power

-Jesus, through numerous miracles, deliverances, and teaching with authority demonstrated the power of the Kingdom and delegated that authority to His followers. Luke 9:1-2 *When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, [2] and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.*

-Kingdom authority will lead to a radical change of lifestyle as seen by the power of the Gospel in Ephesus. Acts 18:19-20 - *They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. [20] When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined.*

-The demonstration of Kingdom power is NEVER for man's glory but for the glory of God!

Practical application:

- a. Each congregation will make a special effort to assist members to discern their spiritual gifts and seek ways for them to practice their gifts.
- b. We will open our hearts fully for the anointing of the Holy Spirit to be demonstrated in our lives in whatever way He chooses for the Glory of God and the advancement of the Kingdom.

C. ACTION

Each of the above categories has called for action. While some of the "action" items have been mentioned above, we want to look at the following points more specifically. Kingdom advancement never happens by only having a vision. There must be a passion to move from vision to action!

1. Prayer

-Kingdom people will always see prayer as foundational and basic to everything they do. Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, saw prayer as basic to his ministry. Mark 1:35 - *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.* This is but one illustration in the Gospels of Jesus placing value in prayer. Prayer for Jesus was intense and powerful. Hebrews 5:7 - *During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.*

-The book of Acts reveals many illustrations how prayer was important for the early church. After facing threats because of their witness they found fresh boldness and power through prayer. Acts 4:29-31 - *Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. [30] Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." [31] After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.* This kind of faith filled prayer is Kingdom praying.

-Kingdom warfare, ministry, and living require constant vigilance and intercession. For the grace and mercy we need for moment to moment living, we can rejoice in the gracious invitation God gives to us.

Hebrew 4:14-16 - *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. [15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. [16] Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

-Jesus taught us how to pray. It is only through prayer that His Kingdom purposes will be carried out on earth as it is in heaven. Prayer enforces his will on earth! Matthew 6:9-10 - *"This, then, is how you should pray:" 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,[10] your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

-KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT WILL NEVER TAKE PLACE IN ANY EFFECTIVE WAY APART FROM PRAYER & SPIRITUAL WARFARE!

Practical application:

- a. Pastoral leaders and leadership teams will seriously evaluate their ministry of prayer in each congregation.
- b. The sin of prayerlessness, individually and corporately, will be repented of.
- c. Pastoral leaders will seek ways to stimulate and encourage members to consistent prayer, both privately and corporately.
- d. HFC Overseer will be available to provide resourcing for prayer and seek ways to stimulate leaders and congregations to greater prayer participation and effectiveness.

2. Evaluation

-From time to time, we need to step back and observe what is happening in our personal lives or ministry. This is called evaluation. Evaluation is never for the purpose of self-condemnation. Satan likes to use it for that purpose because his mission is to “steal, rob, and destroy.” However, God’s heart desire is that we fulfill our destiny or the purpose for which we were created. This doesn’t happen automatically. It requires reflection, soul searching, and the removal of any hindrance that stands in the way of fulfilling our destiny. David prayed a prayer of evaluation. Psalm 139:23-24 - *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. [24] See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

-Evaluation always looks at both the positive as well as what needs to be changed or eliminated. Paul did this as he exhorted the churches. Note I Corinthians 1:4-9 where he speaks about the positive things in the church. Then, beginning in verse 10, he challenges them where they are in error. In the book of Revelation, chapter 2 & 3, there is a serious evaluation of the churches, looking at both the positive and the negative.

Practical application:

- a. Recommend that each congregation have an evaluation of what the positive things are that enhance congregational life as well as asking the Lord to reveal those things that are hindering congregational life or growth.
- b. Like David, ask the Lord to reveal anything that keeps the congregation from growing in the way God wants it to grow.
- c. Be open for any outside assistance, including HFC Overseer, for the evaluation process.

3. Strategic planning

-Strategic planning is necessary to move from vision to action. We see this happening throughout the Bible. Examples include Moses and the tabernacle in the book of Exodus; Nehemiah and the restoration of the walls in Jerusalem;

Jesus and the appointment of his disciples; the apostles in the book of Acts. God is a God of order and design. While we need to be flexible to the move of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit also works through order.

-Strategic planning, led by the Holy Spirit, enables us to move from vision to steps of action. It also motivates us to fulfill a vision. This teaching is my personal effort to assist the HFC Network to think and act strategically. However, the network is individuals and congregations. Each one doing their part will enable HFC to fulfill her mandate to see thousands come to know Jesus and be part of life-giving and growing congregations.

Practical application:

- a. Every pastoral leader prayerfully read this paper. What is God speaking to you concerning any of the points or what are additional items that need to be listed?
- b. 2005 was the year to be evaluating our foundations. That work must continue if we are to “set the house in order” for “advancing God’s Kingdom.” What foundations still need to be worked on?
- c. I recommend that a strategic team be developed, along with the HFC Overseer, to assist congregations, where needed, to take steps forward in advancing God’s Kingdom.
- d. That every leader, and every mature member, cry out to God for his wisdom and grace in establishing Godly principles that will enhance the advancement of God’s Kingdom in our lives and congregations.
- e. That information and tools be made available to understand more fully the present aspect of God’s Kingdom and its implication for the church today. The HFC Overseer will assist in this but others may contribute their ideas and understandings.

4. Faithfulness

-For the Kingdom to advance, faithfulness is a key required action. We must be faithful in our attitudes, faithful in fulfilling our vision, and faithful in all that God calls us to be and to do.

-Entrance into the Kingdom requires faithfulness, even in the midst of trials. Acts 14:22 – (Paul & Barnabas) *...strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.*

-We are called to be faithful to that which has been entrusted to us. There are consequences if we are not faithful. Matthew 25:21-28 (The Parable of the Talents).

-Faithfulness in God’s Kingdom is necessary for carrying out service for ministry leaders - Col. 1:7-8 - *You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, [8] and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.* Col. 4:7-8 - *Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. [8] I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.*

-Faithfulness in God's Kingdom is further characterized by: loyalty; perseverance in face of trials; commitment to the local church; submission to Godly leaders and authority; forgiving spirit and not easily offended; taking care of necessary personal details such as finances and all household duties; correct marital and family priorities; personal spiritual disciplines;

Practical Application:

- a. I will seek to be faithful in the "small things" in my life and allow God to entrust me with larger things in his timing.
- b. I will seek God's grace in times of testing in place of giving up or allow discouragement to enter my life.
- c. I will evaluate areas in my life where I could grow in faithfulness.
- d. I will repent when the Holy Spirit reveals specific areas of unfaithfulness in my life.

Conclusion:

-This document seeks to set a vision for the year 2006. It's a working document in that others may feel free to challenge it or add to it.

-We live in a world that is dying. Millions are going to hell every day. We have a message of hope and life! I personally sense an urgency for all of us to understand the power and purpose of the Kingdom of God in today's world. We must resist every effort of Satan to discourage, intimidate us, put fear in our hearts, or any other effort he uses to stop Kingdom advancement. THIS IS THE HOUR TO ARISE AND ADVANCE GOD'S KINGDOM FOR HIS GLORY AND HONOR!

-It's God's will that we advance His Kingdom in our lives, homes, marriages, schools, work place, cities, rural areas, business, media, government...everywhere so that Christ in His true power and glory will be seen and manifest.

-The messages to the churches in Revelation 2 & 3 are important messages to us today. We must repent of losing our "first love," and being "lukewarm." It is "time to "wake up."

-Let's prayerfully come before God to see how each of us as individuals, as leaders, and congregations, can effectively advance God's Kingdom so that multitudes will find a personal relationship with Christ and become part of active, dynamic, and growing and expanding congregations. To God be the glory!

Henry Buckwalter, HFC Bishop/Overseer - (First draft – August, 2005, Revisions – November, 2005)