

WHO CLAIMS THE CITY?

The terrorist acts in New York, Bali, Madrid, London and Egypt were terrible attempts to abuse freedom for evil purposes, without regard to the value of human life or dignity.

The values and freedom we hold dear are a product of our Judeo-Christian heritage. However these values are under greater threat from a post-modern philosophy that doesn't honour God than it is from terrorists. Why? Because this philosophy transfers authority and safety away from God.

How does this transfer happen?

In the temptation of Christ the devil led Jesus up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours." (Luke 4:5-7).

Just whose authority was the devil offering to Jesus? Where did the devil get this authority that he in turn offered to Jesus?

The authority that Jesus honoured is succinctly expressed in Psalm 24:1

*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
for he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the waters.*

The authority the devil obtained by deceit was in fact the authority given to man:

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Gen 1:28).

The hostile takeover of this authority was at the heart of the deception of Adam and Eve. It is through rejection of God that men and women place themselves in a position where the authority given to them is lost to the devil. It was then the temerity of the devil to take this stolen authority and offer it back to Jesus - the one who gave the authority in the first place. If Jesus had accepted this proposition the devil would have corrupted the authority of heaven itself. The stakes were huge!

The reality is that we are all an Adam or an Eve. We are all presented with the same test: 'to do it our way', or do it God's way? If we reject God we will inevitably lose control of the authority invested in us and join the ranks of those who effectively empower evil. This is the nasty reality of sin.

Well, does God claim cities and kingdoms back to himself?

You bet he does. From cover to cover the Bible relates the story of God's relationship with the nation of Israel. In Colossians 1:16-18 we r

ead that all thrones, powers rulers and authorities were made by Jesus and for Jesus. In Revelation the final vision is of the arrival of the Holy City, the new Jerusalem.

In Daniel we read the story of how one of the mightiest Kings of history, from modern day Iraq, came under the overriding authority of God. Nebuchadnezzar was in turn given a vision that operates through to our day. In this vision there were five Kingdoms: the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman (taking us up to today) and the fifth Kingdom described as follows: *In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure for ever* (Daniel 2:44).

This is the everlasting Kingdom of God that was the subject of so much of Jesus teaching (see Acts 1:3). As we respond to Christ today we in turn find ourselves caught up in His purposes of building the Kingdom of God on earth (Matt 6:10). This kingdom cannot be contained in Church buildings or limited to Sundays. In John 17:18 Jesus prayed: "As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world". This then is our mission, to contribute to building the Kingdom of God in our daily occupations in the world. In other words to influence our daily sphere of influence for the kingdom of God. If we don't do this then evil forces will lay claim to our cities in the vacuum created by vacating Christian influence. Reclaiming the territory won't be easy and cannot be tackled independently.

The devil will resist the extended church moving into areas of his authority. But we are part of a fresh move of God in the marketplace on a global basis. We are on the winning side of the Cross and God has called us to sign up in his army in the marketplace (Eph 6:10-18).

The starting point is to join a microchurch in your daily occupation. A microchurch consists of two or three or more coming together so that Jesus can be with them in their workplace (Matt 18-19-20).

Refer to "new groups" for further guidance on how to get started.

Your job is the frontier - lay claim to your city - join up today! Your Vocation is Your Mission

Source: "On Watch" - Australian Marketplace Connections
www.marketplaceconnections.com