

# 20 Contrasts Between the Box Church and the Kingdom-Centered Church

Ever since the fourth century when the Roman Emperor Constantine made Christianity legal, the church progressively went from a decentralized “saints movement” to a temple-centered, “clergy-dependent” movement.

We went from focusing on marketplace presence to building elaborate cathedrals with clergy-led rituals. We went from people “being the church” to people “going to church.” I call the latter mentality “the box church.”

This clergy/laity divide and emphasis with a ritual-centered approach in a building was not only a challenge in the past but also in the present (even though our evangelical rituals now have more pizzazz). Consequently, the leaders of the church held a monopoly upon things sacred—which kept the “holy elite” in power and in wealth. The sad thing is, similar concepts are still prevalent in the church today.

The following are some of the contrasts between the “box church” and “kingdom-centered” church:

**1. The box church Christians go to church. The kingdom-centered believers are the church.** Whenever we say, “We are going to church,” it shows we are still trapped within the mindset that the church is primarily a building we go to.

**2. The box church focuses most of their energy into the Sunday experience in a building. The kingdom-centered church equips believers for Monday to Friday.** The kingdom-centered church not only has a good Sunday experience but also equips the saints for the work of the ministry related to their primary vocation from Monday to Friday.

**3. In the box church, only the professional clergy are ministers. In the kingdom-centered church all believers are equipped to minister for God.**

**4. In the box church, only the clergy can understand the Word. The kingdom-centered church equips all believers to interpret and apply the Word.** In the box church, people are taught to be dependent upon the “man of God” to feed them the Word. In the kingdom-centered church, the focus is to teach all believers to interpret the Word and feed themselves.

**5. In the box church potential leaders are equipped to preach in a building. The kingdom-centered church equips people to lead in the marketplace.** In the box church a small percentage of people with potential are trained to become full-time clergy and preach the Word. In the kingdom-centered church the focus is on equipping one hundred percent of the people to influence culture through their vocation.

**6. In the box church, only Sunday is celebrated and sacred. In the kingdom-centered church every day is celebrated and sacred.** In kingdom-centered churches every day is viewed as a sacred opportunity to demonstrate the love, wisdom and power of God in all of life.

**7. In the box church the real mission is Sunday. In the kingdom-centered church the real mission is Monday to Friday.** In the box church the people are trained to try to make it to Sunday to get encouraged and filled. In the kingdom-centered church the Sunday service equips the believer to bring the lordship of Christ to every facet of society.

**8. In the box church wealth creators are only used for their tithe to support programs in a building. In the kingdom-centered church wealth creators use their business to advance the kingdom in culture.**

**9. In the box church the temple is the sanctuary. In the**

**kingdom-centered church the earth is His sanctuary.** The Scriptures say that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof (Ps. 24). Hence, we should experience the activity of God as much in city hall as we do the fellowship hall inside a church building.

**10. The box church depends upon a building to function. The kingdom-centered church depends upon believers to function.** In the box church ministry is limited or expanded by the capacity of their building. In the kingdom-centered church the ministry is limited or expanded by the capacity of the disciples they are equipping and sending.

**11. In the box church Jesus is only the savior of the sheep. In the kingdom-centered church Jesus is also the King of kings over nations.** In the kingdom-centered church saved people view Jesus as the President of all presidents, the CEO of all CEOs and the Judge of all lawyers and judges of the earth (Rev. 19:16). Hence, they speak truth to power as God's representatives.

**12. In the box church the Bible is a book about escaping the earth. In the kingdom-centered church the Bible is about stewarding the earth.** The Bible is the most practical book ever written about how to live upon the earth. Hence, the biblical focus is for believers to experience inner transformation so they can transform their surrounding culture (internal transformation without external goals of engagement result in narcissism and passivity).

**13. The box church focuses on bringing the community into a building. The kingdom-centered church focuses on sending the saints to serve their city.**

**14. In the box church the gifts of the Spirit operate on Sunday. In the kingdom-centered church the gifts of the Spirit operate every day.**

**15. In the box church our purpose began when we were born again. In the kingdom-centered church our purpose was evident immediately after physical birth.** God's purpose for us was in motion even before we were saved since He anoints and sanctifies our God-given natural gifts, talents and past worldly experience to advance His kingdom.

**16. In the box church people come to be entertained. In the kingdom-centered church people come to be equipped.**

**17. In the box church the lead pastor is called to shepherd a congregation. In the kingdom-centered church the lead pastor is called to shepherd a community.**

**18. The box church is mystical. The kingdom-centered church is spiritual.** The biblical use of the word "spiritual" does not necessarily mean thinking of spiritual things—but it has to do with having power over your flesh to be a witness of Christ on the earth. Hence, mysticism and biblical spirituality imply two different things; mysticism implies spirituality with no practical application to the earth while true spirituality empowers us to deal with earthly realities.

**19. In the box church believers come to escape their problems. In the kingdom-centered church they learn how to become problem solvers**

**20. In the box church people passively wait to be caught up into heaven. In the kingdom-centered church, we bring heaven down to the earth.** Jesus told us to pray for His kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). He prayed that we would not be taken out of the world (John 17:15). He told us to occupy or engage in business until He comes (Luke 19:13).

**Joseph Mattera** *is overseeing bishop of Resurrection Church and Christ Covenant Coalition in Brooklyn, N.Y. Visit him at .*