Conversation with AI (Bing Copilot) on the Kingdom of God, Gospel Coalition Confession, Post-Millenialism, Kuyperism

# Me:

What is the reformed definition of the "kingdom of God"?

## AI:

In Reformed Theology, the “Kingdom of God” refers to the reign of God in this world and especially in the hearts of men and women1. It’s a dynamic concept, not like a kingdom with physical boundaries1. More precisely, the Kingdom of God refers to the visible, universal submission to His reign2.

The story of Scripture is the story of God’s kingdom. While the Bible everywhere assumes that our Father is sovereign over the universe, this is not the concept the “Kingdom of God” has in mind2. The Kingdom of God is not limited to certain places or times, but is present wherever and whenever His reign is recognized openly and gladly3.

It’s important to note that the Kingdom of God was inaugurated during Jesus’ first advent (Mark 1:14–15) and it starts out small and is growing to be present in all things2. Christians, as the heralds of this kingdom, bear witness to the King, and through their obedience, the Father calls people to worship Him2. Thus, His kingdom increases in its visibility2.

# Me:

Is it true that Catholics teach that the Kingdom of God and the Church is nearly synonomous?

## AI

Yes, in Catholic theology, the Kingdom of God and the Church are closely related, but they are not exactly synonymous. The Kingdom of God is understood as the reign of God in our hearts, the principles that separate us from the kingdom of the world and the devil, and the benign sway of grace⁴.

The Church is seen as a divine institution through which we may make sure of attaining the spirit of Christ and so win that ultimate Kingdom of God⁴. It's also described as an eschatological community, meaning it exists for the sake of the Reign, or Kingdom, of God⁵.

However, the Kingdom of God is more than the Church. It is a divine, everlasting, universal, and spiritual kingdom². It was inaugurated during Jesus' first advent and starts out small, growing to be present in all things².

So, while the Church is a significant part of the Kingdom of God and a means through which it is realized, the Kingdom of God is broader and encompasses more than just the Church. It's a dynamic concept, not limited to certain places or times, but is present wherever and whenever His reign is recognized openly and gladly².

Source: Conversation with Copilot, 6/11/2024

(1) Kingdom of God | Catholic Answers Encyclopedia. https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/kingdom-of-god.

(2) Vatican II themes: The church as an eschatological community. https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/essays-theology/vatican-ii-themes-church-eschatological-community.

(3) The Kingdom of God | beginningCatholic.com. https://www.beginningcatholic.com/kingdom-of-god.

(4) What is the Kingdom of God? | Catholic Answers Magazine. https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/what-is-the-kingdom-of-god.

(5) Kingdom of God | Catholic Answers Encyclopedia. https://bing.com/search?q=Catholic+teaching+on+the+Kingdom+of+God+and+the+Church.

(6) CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: Kingdom of God - NEW ADVENT. https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08646a.htm.

(7) en.wikipedia.org. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom\_of\_God\_(Christian\_denominational\_variations).

# Me:

I agree. Catholics believe that the church is the means for winning the Kingdom. How do the Reformed see this?

## AI:

In Reformed Theology, the Church and the Kingdom of God are also closely related but are not synonymous. The Kingdom of God refers to the reign of God in this world and especially in the hearts of men and women². It's a dynamic concept, not like a kingdom with physical boundaries².

The Church is seen as an agent of the Kingdom². The gospel of Jesus Christ, which is central to the Church, is bringing in the Kingdom². The Kingdom creates the Church². These two things are related and inseparable, but they’re distinguishable². The Kingdom of God creates the people of the Kingdom, the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ².

However, for many in the Reformed tradition, especially those who follow in the footsteps of Abraham Kuyper, God’s sovereign rule extends over every aspect of life⁵. This means that the Kingdom of God is not limited to the Church⁵.

In fact, certain Reformed and Presbyterian theologians teach the Kingdom of God as mainly a worldwide earthly rule of all nations by the Church in the future before the second coming of Christ⁶. So, while the Church is a significant part of the Kingdom of God and a means through which it is realized, the Kingdom of God is broader and encompasses more than just the Church¹².

Source: Conversation with Copilot, 6/11/2024

(1) What Is the Kingdom of God Like? - Reformed Theological Seminary. https://rts.edu/resources/what-is-the-kingdom-of-god-like/.

(2) Kingdom Of God: Is It Bigger Than The Church? | Bob Robinson - Patheos. https://www.patheos.com/blogs/reintegrate/2015/09/18/kingdom-of-god-is-it-bigger-than-the-church/.

(3) The Kingdom of God - prca.org. https://www.prca.org/resources/publications/pamphlets/item/3943-the-kingdom-of-god.

(4) The Relationship between Church and Kingdom according ... - Reformed Forum. https://reformedforum.org/relationship-church-kingdom-according-geerhardus-vos/.

(5) Reformed Christianity - Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed\_Christianity.

(6) Two kingdoms doctrine - Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two\_kingdoms\_doctrine.

# Me:

Good. At my church, our elders hold to the London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689, but our public statement of faith is the same as the Gospel Coalition; lets say "Calvinistic", but not fully reformed. Also, our church is "Kuyperian", proclaiming God's rule over every aspect of life. So with this in mind, what would our view of the "Kingdom of God" be? Would it be the realm that God's rule is manifest, now currently at hand, or inaugurated since Christ, yet not fully realized until God's rule is manifest in all the cosmos?

## AI:

Given your church's alignment with the London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689, the Gospel Coalition's statement of faith, and its Kuyperian perspective, your understanding of the "Kingdom of God" would likely be nuanced and multifaceted.

1. \*\*Already Present\*\*: You would affirm that the Kingdom of God is already present in the world. This is seen in the transformative work of the Gospel in the lives of believers and the influence of Christian principles in various aspects of society.

2. \*\*Not Fully Realized\*\*: At the same time, you would hold that the Kingdom of God is not yet fully realized. This reflects the understanding that while God's rule is manifest in some ways now, it will not be completely evident until the end times.

3. \*\*Inaugurated with Christ\*\*: You would also likely agree that the Kingdom of God was inaugurated with the coming of Christ. His life, death, and resurrection marked the beginning of a new era in which God's rule is increasingly being established.

4. \*\*Cosmic Scope\*\*: Given the Kuyperian emphasis on God's rule over every aspect of life, you would likely see the Kingdom of God as having a cosmic scope. It is not limited to individual hearts or the institutional church, but extends to all of creation. The Kingdom of God is where His will is done, and this will ultimately encompass the entire cosmos.

So, in summary, your view of the Kingdom of God would likely be that it is the realm where God's rule is manifest, currently at hand since the time of Christ, but not fully realized until God's rule is manifest in all the cosmos. This perspective beautifully captures the "already but not yet" tension that characterizes the biblical teaching on the Kingdom of God.

# Me:

so you are saying that my statement is a good summary for our church then, right?

## AI:

Yes, your statement is indeed a good summary of your church's understanding of the "Kingdom of God". It captures the key aspects of the "already but not yet" tension, the inauguration of the Kingdom with Christ, and the cosmic scope of God's rule. This nuanced view reflects the teachings of the London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689, the Gospel Coalition, and the Kuyperian perspective. It's a comprehensive and biblically grounded understanding of the Kingdom of God.

# Me:

So when we say that the kingdom is present, but not fully realized, would that be the same as saying that it is "fulfilled", but not "consummated", or would the term "consumation" be reserved for the final judgment?

## AI:

Yes, in theological terms, saying that the Kingdom of God is "present, but not fully realized" is similar to saying it is "fulfilled, but not consummated".

"Fulfilled" refers to the inauguration of the Kingdom of God through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's the "already" aspect of the Kingdom that is present in the world now, transforming lives and influencing society.

"Consummated", on the other hand, refers to the future completion or full realization of the Kingdom of God. This is the "not yet" aspect of the Kingdom that awaits the return of Christ and the final judgment. The term "consummation" is often used to refer to the end times when God's rule will be fully established and His will perfectly done in all the cosmos.

So, in your church's understanding of the Kingdom of God, it would be accurate to say that the Kingdom is "fulfilled" in the sense that it has been inaugurated and is at work in the world now, but it is "not yet consummated" in the sense that its full realization awaits the return of Christ and the final judgment. This captures the tension of the "already but not yet" nature of the Kingdom of God.

# Me:

So what I am getting at is if "fully realized" is a "post-millenial" position; that is; that when the kingdom of fully realized is the same of what is talked about in the Book of Revelation; the Millennium or 1000 year reign?

## AI:

Yes, the concept of the Kingdom of God being "fully realized" is indeed associated with the "post-millennial" position in eschatology¹². Postmillennialism holds that the Kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the Gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals².

Postmillennialists believe that the world eventually is to be Christianized, and that the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the ‘Millennium’². This period is seen as a golden age of spiritual prosperity during this present dispensation, that is, during the Church age². It is an indefinitely long period of time, perhaps much longer than a literal one thousand years².

So, in the postmillennial view, the "fully realized" Kingdom of God aligns with the Millennium described in the Book of Revelation¹². However, it's important to note that interpretations can vary among different theological traditions and individual believers. The "fully realized" Kingdom of God in postmillennialism is not necessarily synonymous with a literal 1000-year reign, but rather a long period of righteousness and peace².

In your church's understanding, given its alignment with the London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689, the Gospel Coalition's statement of faith, and its Kuyperian perspective, the Kingdom of God would be seen as already present but not fully realized until God's rule is manifest in all the cosmos. This would align with the postmillennial view of the Kingdom of God being "fully realized" in the future².

Source: Conversation with Copilot, 6/11/2024

(1) Postmillennialism | Ligonier Ministries. https://www.ligonier.org/podcasts/simply-put/postmillennialism.

(2) The Postmillennial View of the Kingdom of God. https://www.samstorms.org/all-articles/post/the-postmillennial-view-of-the-kingdom-of-god.

(3) Postmillennialism: A Biblical Critique - The Gospel Coalition. https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/postmillennialism-a-biblical-critique/.

(4) postMill study guide - The Remnant Radio. https://theremnantradio.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/postMill-study-guide.pdf.

(5) What Is Postmillennialism? - Christianity. https://www.christianity.com/wiki/end-times/what-is-postmillennialism.html.

# Me:

OK, but is there a difference between "fully realized" manifesting as the Millennium the same as "consummated" or is "consummation something that happens at the end of the Millenium when there is final judgment, then the eternal state?

## AI:

Yes, there is a difference between the terms "fully realized" and "consummated" in eschatological context⁵.

"Fully realized" often refers to the belief that the Kingdom of God is already present in the world, though not in its complete form¹²³. This is sometimes associated with the concept of the Millennium, particularly in postmillennial views¹²³. In this context, the Millennium is seen as a period of time (not necessarily a literal 1000 years) during which the influence of God's Kingdom grows and becomes more evident in the world¹²³.

On the other hand, "consummated" refers to the completion or full realization of the Kingdom of God⁵. This is typically associated with the end times, including the final judgment and the ushering in of the eternal state⁵. In this sense, the "consummation" of the Kingdom of God is something that happens at the end of the Millennium when there is final judgment, then the eternal state⁵.

So, while both terms speak to the realization of God's Kingdom, "fully realized" often refers to its present and growing manifestation (sometimes associated with the Millennium), while "consummated" refers to its ultimate completion in the future⁵. This distinction helps to capture the "already but not yet" nature of the Kingdom of God. It's important to note that interpretations can vary among different theological traditions and individual believers. Your church's understanding may reflect a unique combination of these perspectives, given its alignment with the London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689, the Gospel Coalition's statement of faith, and its Kuyperian perspective.

Source: Conversation with Copilot, 6/11/2024

(1) 9. Eschatology: Consummation of All Things | Bible.org. https://bible.org/seriespage/9-eschatology-consummation-all-things.

(2) Realized eschatology - Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realized\_eschatology.

(3) Dislocating the Eschaton? Appraising Realized Eschatology. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11841-016-0534-0.

(4) Realized Eschatology | Bible.org. https://bible.org/article/realized-eschatology.

(5) Consistent or Realized Eschatology in Matthew - Preaching Source. https://preachingsource.com/journal/consistent-or-realized-eschatology-in-matthew/.

# Me:

So from a practical perspective, I am getting the sense that our church wants to engage the culture, but for sure not by the "sword" or even by coersion, but by witness, depending on the sovereignty of God to change hearts. Not only from the ground up by converting individuals, but by all of our members witnessing to the rule of the gospel in their various vocations, including civic duties, good works, voting, holding public office, and policy changing. However, I suspect that we want to do this in a non-coercive way as possibly, not just winning the numbers game, but with the heart of the Beatitudes, being in solidarity with the human condition, bring the promises of the gospel to the afflicted now, not some empty promise for a future "consummation". Another way to say this is that we are to remain based in our beliefs, and not concede to the world system or culture, yet love those with different beliefs by finding common ground. While we do not want to compromise and are ready to face persecution, we want to do it as peacemakers as much as possible and want to break the cycle of the nasty habit of anathemitizing and dehumanizing those who disagree, a ubiquitous practice in our polarized culture today. Are you hearing these sentiments in circles like ours?

## AI:

Yes, the sentiments you've expressed are indeed echoed in many Reformed and Kuyperian circles. The desire to engage with the culture in a non-coercive way, to witness to the rule of the gospel in all aspects of life, and to bring the promises of the gospel to the afflicted now, not just in the future, are all key aspects of this theological perspective.

The emphasis on maintaining firm beliefs while also loving those with different beliefs and finding common ground is a reflection of the commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). This approach seeks to break down barriers and foster understanding and respect among people with diverse views.

The commitment to being peacemakers and to avoiding the dehumanization of those who disagree is a powerful counter to the polarization that is often seen in today's culture. It reflects the teachings of Jesus in the Beatitudes, where He said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

So yes, the sentiments you've expressed are not only plausible but are also increasingly being advocated in many Christian circles that align with Reformed theology, the Gospel Coalition, and the Kuyperian perspective. It's a challenging but rewarding path that seeks to live out the values of the Kingdom of God in a complex and often divided world. Your church's commitment to these principles is a testament to its desire to faithfully represent the teachings of Christ in all aspects of life.