

Book review by Ms. Myrna Narzo on *The Two Kingdoms* by Lim Kou

The kingdom of God/kingdom of heaven is the central theme in the synoptic gospels and in the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's been quite a while since I last heard substantial preaching on the kingdom of God, so it's good to read *The Two Kingdoms* by Singaporean lawyer-turned full time Christian worker Lim Kou. He handles the topic with clarity and with lawyer-like precision, and faithful to the biblical text.

Composed of eight messages that have been edited for print, *The Two Kingdoms* paints in broad strokes what the kingdom of God is like based on New Testament passages, how it contrasts with the kingdom of this world, and how Christians can live well in this fallen kingdom without surrendering to its pervasive spirit. The style is authoritative; and the text is engaging to read and to study.

The author highlights the kingdom of God as one that is not primarily "eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." He firmly points out that it is in essence, a moral and spiritual kingdom and its emphasis is on the spiritual, rather than on the material and visible realm.

Reflecting on this definition recalled to my mind a friend who felt a twinge of guilt because she longed to work outside her local church. "*Parang di na kingdom of God ang papasukan ko, eh,*" she said. And she heaved a sigh of relief later upon realizing that the kingdom of God is larger than the local church! It seems she was deeply influenced by her previous church's definition of the area of the kingdom of God as being coterminous with the frontiers of the church's power and authority.

The author gives a face and a name to the pervasive "spirit of the world" that he warns about. He alerts us to its manifestation in songs and music, apparel and fashion, in what we read and watch. It is present in the world of business, in the world of politics, in art, literature, movies as well as in human relationships and even in sports and games. Exercising vigilance is important.

One major question confronting us these days is this: how should Christians view doing well in career, achieving status and recognition in society and having material wealth? The author is wise to devote the latter half of the book to biblical reflection on the issue of success, ambition and accomplishment. One chapter is a well-thought out study on success from the biblical perspective – the way to attain it and its varied manifestations. And the last chapter considers the value of right motivation and faithfulness in service with Bible characters as models.

These varied and practical features make this book a good reference material for pastor-teachers. And given its very readable text, it could serve as adjunct reading material for Bible study and discussion groups for young adults/professionals, and as training material for church workers as well. My only regret is the absence of study or guide questions and/or thoughts-to-ponder box at the end of each chapter.

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