

Kingdom Report

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From Disneyworld to Dominionism: My Journey

The 1980's was my journey from End-Times Dispensationalism to seeking the Kingdom of God on earth. Disneyworld, actually EPCOT, played an interesting part in that journey. I hope it inspires your journey.

The recent mass riots and looting in South Africa recently have only confirmed to me that the turn I took in the 1980's for where the Lord is leading His Church was the right direction. So I want to share a short personal history of a critical moment in my journey to understanding the Kingdom of God hoping that it will encourage you to continue to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...".

The decade of the 1980's was my "30's" decade and also a time for new beginnings. That was because my "20's" of the 1970 decade was basically all spent on about 12 years of what we would call in those days 'full time ministry' ever since leaving High School. It was a crazy decade of my life. It was the "end times" and we were the terminal generation. I did everything imaginable that looked "spiritual". Off to YWAM instead of graduate school, pastoring a church at 23 and single (which by the way is not only absurd but unscriptural), missions, evangelistic crusades, teaching seminars on "end times" and Dispensationalism, joining different "prophetic communities", even trying out the beginnings of "seed-faith" prosperity preaching (which I found out did not work).

What I found out to my great disappointment by the time I hit my 30's was that I had no calling or anointing to be in the five-fold ministry of the church. This was especially disappointing as I had spent a number of years in some extreme ascetic spiritual exercises to develop hopefully a "prophetic anointing". Prophets were my heroes. The church needs the realm of the miraculous in our services. People need the manifest presence of God in their lives and I thought the prophetic was the best way to get this done.

Alas my realization that I was destined not to be either prophet or apostle or even pastor and as for teacher, most of what I had been teaching up to that time turned out to be wrong, was a blow. The Bible warns us not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. There is a time when you need to realize who you are not in order to find who you are. And for me that meant getting off a pulpit and getting on with life as shall I call it "an ordinary disciple" of Jesus. And just in retrospect a couple of points. In my defense I grew up in a Pentecostal holiness tradition where you can be anything you want to be in ministry if you are willing to pay the price. I discovered that not true...I discovered the sovereignty of God. The Spirit of God gives gifts to the Church as "He wills"....not as I will so that the glory is the Lord's doing and not our striving.

Second point....I could soon see a lot of wonderful folks who had same eagerness for the Kingdom of God as I did but in fact should not be in a pulpit ministry. There are just too many preaching for a paycheck. Many went....but how many were sent?

I had to find a new way for my future in my 30's. Which turned out to be very interesting. What does it look like for just a regular Jesus person to be "seeking first the Kingdom of God" in a secular world where we have to make a living and raise a family? I now found myself on the other side of the pulpit and in the pews and still seeking the Kingdom of God as to what is my place?

It was here that I discovered the trials and tribulations of the ordinary believer who must make a living, pay the bills and raise a family in a corrosive secular world where the ethos is take and not give, where the strong rule the weak, where societal structures reward iniquity and punish the righteous. And then you go to church only to hear it is the end-times, there is nothing that you can do to change the world until Jesus comes, that it will soon be all over, just hang in there and endure.

I just had to find a different gospel, a different message that would give ordinary people who love the Lord and want to see His will done in their lives....I wanted to find a message that tells them their lives and their work has meaning in this life, that they can make a difference for the Kingdom of God in their nation, that we can change the world and that change can be found in blueprints in scripture.

Which brings me to Disneyworld or more accurately EPCOT in Disneyworld. In the 1980's I had chosen as my new career to start an export promotion company helping South African companies into the American market. I knew America having been raised there as a youngster and going to college there and plus I loved travel. The other nice bonus was that in those years Delta Airlines in America had what they called the "Visit USA" ticket for foreign visitors with a foreign passport. You could fly unlimited anywhere in America for 30 days for \$299. Man that was a bargain and did I ever use that to crisscross America to trade shows and visit potential buyers for my South African clients. This proved to be a very successful time for me in business and made lots of export deals for clients.

However on weekends I had to fly somewhere to hole up. So invariably I would fly to Orlando Florida and check into a cheap motel outside Disneyworld for the weekend and get a weekend pass and just enjoy the whole atmosphere of this great resort. It was here that I discovered EPCOT and something was birthed in my spirit about the future of the Kingdom of God on earth and more pertinently, the possible future role of just ordinary working people of God who needed and would be willing to work for a better world.

EPCOT opened in 1982 at the Disneyworld park in Florida. Just in time for me to experience it during my 1980's journey. Let me quote to you what EPCOT was all about from their literature....

*The **Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow**, or **EPCOT**, was an unfinished concept for a planned community developed by Walt Disney. EPCOT will take its cue from the new ideas and new technologies that are now emerging from the creative centers of American industry. It will be a community of tomorrow that will*

never be completed, but will always be introducing and testing and demonstrating new materials and systems. And EPCOT will always be a showcase to the world for the ingenuity and imagination of American free enterprise.— Walt Disney, describing the genesis of EPCOT.

Its purpose was to be a "real city that would 'never cease to be a living blueprint of the future'", drawing on the latest technology and innovation from American industry.... and featuring commercial, residential, industrial and recreational centers, connected by a mass multimodal transportation system. Based on ideas stemming from modernism and futurism, it was designed to replace the inefficient infrastructure created by urban sprawl that was growing in the United States in the 1960s.

Ok so I admit this whole idea and vision of EPCOT really exited me. I would travel there regularly and just be inspired by the various showcases of the pavilions....the "World of Tomorrow", the "Energy Future", the farm and ecology pavilion of new ways for hydroponics and sustainable farming, the vision of transportation and how to move people and more. But the whole vision behind EPCOT was how can we redesign how we create our living, our working and our entertainment spaces of our cities to reflect the needs of people and families. How can we create a new way of designing cities that can move a multitude of people without cars and within an environment dominated by parks and rivers integrated into safe and clean living spaces.

The things that intrigued me about how they designed the whole place was that they were able to move many thousands of people all over the huge area of the park without cars and streets and noise and pollution but with very clever things they called "people movers"; everything from trams, to trains to boats to monorails.

They also developed a very sophisticated underground world below the park where there were long tunnels under the park that connected places where trash is collected, electricity and water distributed, where park attendants would use for work spaces, all unobtrusive underground allowing the whole place to be kept incredibly clean, safe and enjoyable in an apparently effortless way. Much like a swan on water, effortlessly gliding but furiously paddling under the water.

I loved sitting at an old fashioned ice cream shop on Main Street USA enjoying some of the best chocolate malted milkshakes of my time (and I am an expert on milkshakes) and just watching families and children strolling by laughing and enjoying themselves and the beauty and joy of the place.

Walt Disney died before he could realize the actual fulfilment of his dream of creating the communities of tomorrow. But what he did show is that it is possible with the technology we have today that we can design far better cities and living spaces and working spaces and shopping and entertainment than what we are doing today.

So I would sit there and pray and ask myself and the Lord, What can I do to create a world like this in South Africa and Africa for the church, for the people for the families. Is it possible?

So from those visits I formulated in my heart and mind **APROCOT: African Prototype Communities of Tomorrow**. The vision was and is this:

If we are to disciple Africa into the Kingdom of God we need to go beyond evangelism and mass meetings. The five-fold ministry has done a wonderful job of preaching the gospel in Africa with churches established everywhere. But we need to take a major step forward. We need to change the world in which the people of God in Africa live.

I started to research how can we create sustainable productive communities in Africa in which we can create jobs and community and food security with the local church being the centre of community life. I decided that renewable fuels production from biomass was the best long term strategy for implementing APROCOT and also the best means of getting international funding and support. So I started travelling across America to universities and American Dept of Energy laboratories that were researching ethanol and biodiesel production technologies and decided to become skilled in those technologies. And it certainly helped that I could basically fly for free with Delta Airlines everywhere in America I needed to be.

My strategic vision for the Church in South Africa is this....

I viewed Africa as South Africa's mission responsibility. The Lord established a church base and an industrial base here for a platform of ministry into Africa. All that was needed that the barriers for South Africans to get into Africa had to be removed. That happened in 1994 with a new government and the dropping of Apartheid.

I also view Africa as the continent that will make it into 2100 with food, minerals, energy and a vibrant young population creating a future while America and Europe and Asia are dying a demographic death and collapse of consumer capitalism and social welfare with too many old people to support and not enough young people to pay the debts and taxes of previous profligate generations. That means Africa is the future! And the church in Africa can create the world of tomorrow!

I see across Africa an enormous shift of populations from the rural villages to the big cities. The big cities of Africa are and will be ever more dysfunctional, corrupt and corrupting. Like Lot and his family in Sodom and Israelites in Babylon...there will come a great need for the people of God in Africa to rebuild the waste places of vast rural stretches of Africa to build new communities.....thus the need for APROCOT. And thus the need for the church to begin thinking, praying and planning for how we create the communities of tomorrow that will populate and possess Africa.

One thing I am also certain of is that the world by 2100 and most probably by 2050 will be very dependent on Africa for food. And I am certain that like Joseph was sent to Egypt to prepare for his extended family to survive and thrive through their coming famine and that from the best part of Egypt in Goshen.....so the church in Africa will be able to feed the world in the coming world famine.

Our other great advantage over the rest of Europe and the world is that we can inhabit basically a continent that needs to be developed and we can therefore design that and plan that development. That means we will need to do Kingdom city design, we will

need renewable farm and energy technologies, it means we can preserve the beauty of our wild life and preserve that heritage for all time as heritage for all mankind while doing and planning responsible development.

That is the legacy of what Disneyworld and EPCOT created in me in the 1980's. And thirty-five years later I am more sure of this vision than I was then. The technologies we now have available from the tech revolution of the last 40 years have made sustainable local community development more viable than ever before. Furthermore the potential enormous wealth of Africa available in its natural resources and people resources mean that we can actually build and finance our Kingdom version of EPCOT here on this earth, on this continent. If we had the vision and the leadership to do so!

And on just a personal note I must tell you that all that tech stuff I started studying because I decided I needed a whole new knowledge base for this new calling of my life, gave me in later years a tremendous financial payoff in business that has sustained our family and our ministry support to others for decades. My testimony is this....if you seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness then truly all the other things will be added unto you. God is debtor to no man!

The last weeks images of looting and destruction by tens of thousands here in South Africa has gone all over the world. We cannot accept that this is the testimony of South Africa to the world that the Lord created this nation for.

It is time for a new vision of what the Kingdom message is for this nation at this time. It is time for new leadership in the church that will give new vision to mobilize the vast resources of the people of God in South Africa to turn this nation around and then disciple Africa.

In the blogs ahead I will do what I can to teach you about the essentials of Kingdom Dominion to help you understand where the new strategy of the Church needs to be and I hope that you can use that revelation, if it witnesses in your spirit, to start sharing vision in your fellowship groups.

Again I want to emphasize, I am not proposing myself as a five-fold ministry teacher or prophet or leader. Like that story of the lepers in the Bible who found food, I am telling you from one leper to another where I found food. What you do with it is up to you. But from my personal experience I can tell you once I got out of the dead end of dispensationalism and "end-time delusions" the whole of scripture came alive to me and I could see where I as an ordinary in the pew believer can start making a real difference with the giftings the Lord had given me even if it did not fit into the current church structure as it is.

But I am like Caleb who long ago decided I am not going to be walking in spiritual circles for the next 40 years....I am already in my promised land possessing my inheritance in this promised land of South Africa. I want to encourage you to do the same.