

Kingdom Report

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When the Greeks Discovered Logos, the Polis and the Ekklesia

The Church needs to rediscover the real revelation of Logos, Polis and Ekklesia if we are to heal the nations. God first revealed it to Israel who failed. The Greeks like "tares in the field" tried to copy it and the failure of Western Civilization is the result.

I am doing background research for my up-coming book "Ekklesia: The City Church to heal the nation." I thought this week just to give you some interesting insights I am developing and will be expanding on when the book comes out.

My basic idea on the book is that while the 5-fold ministry of the local church is there to fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28 "to go into all the world and make disciples"....it is the job of those disciples to fulfill the Great Commission of Genesis 1:26-28 to "take dominion over all of God's creation and be productive and multiply".

For the Great Commission of Matthew 28 we build local churches as a platform for the ministries of the pastor, apostle, prophet, teacher and evangelist to operate on.

To fulfill the Genesis Commission the theme of my book is we need to build a larger platform so that all God's people who each have their own calling and gifting can network with other disciples to fulfill this great commission.

This larger platform in scripture has many different references to it such as: "The mountain of the Lord", "Zion", "the City of God", "the New Jerusalem"....or as Paul addresses it "the Ekklesia" of Corinth or Ephesus or Rome. It is this structure that Jesus refers to when I said "I will build my church". The "church" is far more than Sunday morning meetings.

So I am promoting the idea that we need to look at the concept of the "City Church" of Joburg or Cape Town or wherever and how can we create a platform for God's people to come together to create and interact and develop in order to do what the New Jerusalem of revelation describes as a healing stream that flows from the city for the healing of the nations.

In doing research on this vision I realized that there are key words used in our scriptures which are Greek in origin and had a certain and definite meaning to the Greek speaking people who they were addressed to. These words and their meaning are critical to understanding the larger vision of what is the "church". These key words are "Logos" and "Polis" and "Ekklesia". We translate these as "Word", "City" and "Church"

What we have done I am convinced of is to give our own meanings to these key words without understanding their origin and background and therefore what information they should be conveying to us. Are we in fact getting the same message from these words than what Jesus, John and Paul meant to convey?"

So I went back to do some historical research to get a better perspective and see if as I suspect we are missing something. Obviously there is a lot here to relate which I will expand on in my book but I thought you might find some of these insights interesting:

The Greek term "Logos" was a new word invented by one of the first Greek philosophers named Heraclitus in the city of Ephesus about the year 500 BC. We translate it as "Word" but the Greeks already had a word for that "rhyma". Heraclitus created this new word to describe a new idea. This idea he was conveying was very important and therefore needed a new word.

What is important about this new idea and new word is that in the same city of Ephesus more than 500 years later the apostle John made this city his home church and wrote his great gospel there and started that Gospel with... "In the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with God and the Logos was God...and the Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us.... and all things were made by Him". What did this mean to the Greek church at Ephesus?

Now here is another important insight I discovered. Because of the radical new philosophy of "the Logos" by the first Greek philosophers (and I will shortly tell you what it meant to them) they developed the idea of the "Polis" or the city or community that would reflect this Logos in the world. And then an extension of that was if we build such a new "polis" we need a new way to operate such a "polis" according to "Logos" and that new operating entity is the new concept of "the ekklesia".

To describe to what this discovery of the Logos was to the Greek philosophers I need you to understand what their problem was. They looked up in the sky and saw all the stars are fixed and unmovable. But there were 7 things that moved in the sky: the sun, the moon and 5 stars which we now know are the planets you can see with the eye....Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

They wanted to know what causes movement? There is always a cause for any movement. The only cause they had up to this time was the theology of Hesiod who got a "divine" visitation from the gods to say it was the gods who are the cause of that movement and in fact all movement, love, war, conflict, seasons, rain, sunshine etc. By about the 6th century all over the world people were starting to look for a different answer than "the gods".

The Greeks asked how can we build a prosperous nation of order and lawfulness if the gods themselves are capricious, vengeful, lustful, warlike etc. So there developed a small group of philosophers in these Ionian cities (based on the west coast of Turkey the same cities that John addressed Revelation to).

They concluded basically this. There are things that move. But there is one who is unmovable that causes all else to move but who Himself cannot be moved. There

must therefore be one God from which all proceeds. The next conclusion is that if this is so then the basis on which this one God moves all is by "Lawfulness". There is a basic law order underlying all of reality. It was Heraclitus who then decided to call this underlying lawfulness by the term "the Logos". He did not understand what ties it all together but his speculation was that fire being energy is probably the connection. Another philosopher Anaximander said he thought it was "air" that permeated everything. Another philosopher Thales said no it was "water". What they were grasping at was that living things die without light, water or air and this demonstrated an underlying law of life that had nothing to do with the chaotic gods of Hesiod....it had to do with 'Logos'.

To these people "Logos" was and I quote

"God the unmoved one is universal reason (logos) the universal law immanent in all things binding all things into a unity and determining the constant change of the universe according to universal law, it is the all-pervading order of things and people"

Can you imagine the impact that John's opening 5 verses in his gospel had to the inhabitants of Ephesus the city where the Logos idea came from? And for a people who were taught that the manifestation of this life bringing Logos could be either water, fire or air.....can you see what it meant in that day to be "baptized in water" or John the Baptist declaring in this gospel story that I not only baptize you in water but there is one coming who will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire or when John recounts Jesus "breathed on His disciples and said receive the Holy Spirit".

The result of this philosophical and theological revolution in the Greek community was the realization that Logos needs to be manifested in how we conduct our affairs on earth. So they said we need a "polis" or city of a community of people who reflect the order of Logos. And to operate such a city we need a people who will reflect this Logos in their lives who are called out by their exemplary lives to be the ones who can operate the Polis according to Logos and we call them the "ekklesia" meaning the "called out ones" who understand Logos and will order the life of the city according to the laws of Logos. And for one brief moment in time and space the Greeks tried to live the city life of the Logos and the polis and the Ekklesia through Solon and Athens and the golden age of Pericles.....and failed.

And then the apostle John introduced the Ephesians and the Greek Ionian cities home of the philosophers to the real Logos of God and why they failed in their attempts to live and demonstrate the Logos of God.

Which brings me to Israel and their failure to live and demonstrate the Logos of God in either the polis of Jerusalem or the life on the nation or the laws of God to the world which He called them to do.

The amazing thing is that there was a parallel phenomenon happening to the Greeks among the Israelites. It is the usual story of when God sows His wheat the enemy sows his tares in the same field.

When Hesiod was getting his divine revelation from demons at the same time Isaiah was getting his divine revelation from God. When Hesiod was writing "Theogony"

about the gods Isaiah was writing his great revelation of not only God but the savior to come and salvation for all mankind.

When Heraclitus and the philosophers were struggling with discovering God and the Logos at the same time an amazing thing was happening in Babylon. From history and scripture we know that God raised up Cyrus the Great to release the Jews from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. Cyrus also conquered Ionia in 546 BC so when these Greek philosophers were doing their searching they were part of the Persian empire along with the new returning Jews to Jerusalem...at the same time!

The king following Cyrus was Darius who had an amazing revelation. He had to throw Daniel into the lions den when he did not want to do it but we know what happened in that story. But what most don't realize is what Darius commanded after this incredible display of the power of God. He proclaimed this.....

Dan 6:25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

Dan 6:26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

Dan 6:27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions

This decree went out at the time when the Greek philosophers of Ionia who were under the rule of Darius at that time would have heard this decree. And as Ezra and Nehemiah were rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple and Ezra was restoring and compiling the scriptures of Israel the emerging philosophers of Ionia would have heard of the God of Daniel and the restored city of Jerusalem as God's Polis and they would have had access to the scriptures that Ezra compiled.

And from this they would have concluded: There is only one God.....because king Darius proclaimed it in all the world.

And when they read the scriptures of this one God of Israel in Proverbs there clearly states how the great unmovable one God created the world. He created it by the one He called "Wisdom"

Pro 8:1 Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?

Pro 8:22 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

Pro 8:23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

Pro 8:24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

Pro 8:14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

Pro 8:15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

Pro 8:16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

Pro 8:17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Wisdom is the Logos of God and the Logos of God is Jesus Christ. God created by Logos and rules by Logos. The Greeks had that right. They just did not realize who Logos is.

I believe the Ionian philosophers got their concept of Logos from Proverbs of Israel when Darius commanded that the God of Israel is the One great God.

The tragedy of Israel at this time was that the Greeks like tares in the field ran with the vision of One God, the Logos and the City of God and the Ekklesia of God which Israel should have introduced to the world but they did not. Nehemiah and Ezra tried to instill that vision in them with the help of the two great prophets of that time Haggai and Zachariah but they failed.

When Jesus came as the revealed Logos of God he told Israel "the kingdom has been taken from you and given to another nation who will bring the fruits of the kingdom to the world".

Which brings us to the church today.

In the last 40 years the dominant Greek word to hit the evangelical charismatic church has been the Greek term "rhyma" meaning the spoken Word of God. This has been a valuable contribution to the idea that there is power in the spoken Word of God and we need to exercise that power as the authority of the believer.

However if we are to fulfill our Genesis 1:26-28 mandate we need to rediscover that other Greek word "Logos" in its original intent. Because when we do then like the Greeks of Ionia we will discover that the Logos of God is the wisdom of God on how all of reality operates, both this world and the spirit world.

That has implications. It means we need to develop the Logos Polis...the city and community of people who base their way of life on the Logos of God...the wisdom of God. And that Polis or City or Community of God needs a disciplined "ekklesia" a called out people who are what God has always wanted from Israel a nation made up of "kings and priests" that populate the city of God. That implies that a city whose citizens are all trained kings and priests means that it is a people who understand the Logos of how the earth works, how the spirit realm works.

And to give you one good example of where the church has gone wrong...the creation of wealth. You cannot create wealth by "rhyma" regardless of what the prosperity preachers tell you. The scripture of Proverbs 8 tells you that wealth creation comes from operating by Logos...the wisdom of God. Because that is how reality on this earth works. You cannot talk wealth into existence...it requires work by wisdom!

That is the theme of my new book. We need to rediscover the Logos of God. It was our revelation to begin with and the Greeks stole it and tried it and failed and the modern democracies of the West tried to copy it but have failed as the British philosopher Sir Roger Scruton observes...

"The roots of Western civilization lie in the religion of Israel, the culture of Greece, and the law of Rome, and the resulting synthesis has flourished and decayed in a thousand ways during the two millennia which followed the death of Christ".

Western Civilization is decayed and dying all over the world and for the same reason the Greek polis and ekklesia died. They sought the Logos in the human mind and man's ability to manifest the Logos of God without the indwelling Logos of God in your heart..

And thus to us lies the challenge of building the New Jerusalem as the city of God to heal the nations. A city church on the Logos of God and a people trained in the Logos of God. That is the next great move of God as Jesus builds His Church.

Each of us need in our calling and work in life to discover what is the Logos of God in my field of work. We need to discover the Logos of God in science, education, farming, business, entertainment, economics, politics.....all of existence was created by the Logos of God and operates by the rules of Logos.

And then how best do we bring the people of God together in a new way so we can all display the manifest Logos of God on earth as a city on hill shining its light to dark world.