

Do You Know the Real Differences Between Secular and Kingdom Churches?

Click here to read Part 1 of "Understanding the Difference Between Secular and Kingdom Churches."

Contrasting the Two Churches (Ekklesias) in Acts 19

The governmental church of God that transforms society (according to the Genesis 1:28 cultural mandate) is illustrated succinctly in Acts 19 where, in a three-year period, Paul and his disciples engaged the powers of darkness that were behind the goddess Artemis, filled all of Asia Minor with the gospel, and transformed the economics and culture of that region. (Their influence was not limited to the lecture halls of Tyrannus.)

Acts 19:9-10 says Paul "took the disciples, lecturing daily in the school of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Verse 17 says, "This became known to all Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus. And fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." We see in 19:20, 23-27, "So the word of the Lord powerfully grew and spread."

(In all these instances we see the gospel permeate every aspect of the city—not just the lecture hall of Tyrannus; hence, the true ekklesia is an equipping center that sends disciples out to permeate every aspect of culture with the gospel of Jesus.)

In my opinion, God doesn't really care how many people you squeeze into a building on Sunday morning—He cares about how many you send out to serve the community on Monday so that the

church *gathered* on Sunday becomes *scattered* on Monday!

A Riot at Ephesus (Acts 19:23-27)

“About that time great trouble arose about the Way. For a silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines for Artemis, brought much business to the craftsmen. He gathered them together with the workmen of similar trades and said, “Men, you know that by this trade we have our wealth. And you see and hear, not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, that this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that these things made by hands are not gods. Now not only is our trade in danger of coming into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Artemis, whom all Asia and the world worship, may be discredited and her magnificence destroyed.”

We see in this passage that the effect of the ekklesia Paul planted was that the whole economic structure of the city of Ephesus was turned upside down, which resulted in a secular ekklesia being called to try to fight the Christian ekklesia—something we still witness today when certain political parties, ideologies and factions attempt to systematically shut the kingdom ekklesia out of politics and its influence in the public square; hence, it is a fight against the two ekklesias.

Acts 19:28-32, 35-41 shows the function of the secular ekklesia:

“When they heard this, they were full of anger and cried out, ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’ The city was filled with confusion. And in unison they seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed into the theater ... Therefore some cried out one thing and some another, and most of them did not know why they had come together. ...

“The city clerk quieted the crowd and said, ‘Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the image which fell from heaven? ... If you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the legal assembly. For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no reason we may give to account for this uproar.’ When he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.”

Every time the word “assemblies” is mentioned it’s really from the Greek translation ekklesia, which we call the church—hence, there were two churches in conflict in the city of Ephesus: one empowered by the god Artemis and the other representing the kingdom of the one and only true Lord and God, King Jesus.

Consequently, when the contemporary church tries to be relevant instead of revolutionary they represent the secular church, or ekklesia, more than the kingdom ekklesia! The secular ekklesia is a neutral concept made up of earthly governments that are either influenced by God or by the evil one.

God places the secular ekklesia over a nation through creation or common grace as we see in Romans 13:1-7 but expects the kingdom ekklesia to influence the greater culture and shift policy toward righteousness. Hence, if the kingdom ekklesia is effective, then it will influence the laws and policies of the secular ekklesia; but the two should never mix and converge together! Those called by God to serve in the secular ekklesia should never become an organic part of it but always view themselves as a kingdom plant representing His ekklesia for His purposes. (I may be in the Democrat or Republican Party, but I am first representing His kingdom—God is neither a Republican nor a Democrat!)

The secular ekklesia shown in the city of Ephesus almost had a riot because they were upset the city was being influenced by

the government of God. Scripture is clear that one of the mandates of the true church (ekklesia) is to influence the nations with the Word/law of God.

Isaiah 2:1-3 says:

“In the last days, the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall go and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

Psalms 110:1-2 says:

“The Lord said to my lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ The Lord shall send your mighty scepter out of Zion; rule in the midst of your enemies.”

It is clear that the church is not a secular political entity; by contrast, it is the only corporate body capable of manifesting the wisdom and government of God to the earth, which is why we should always focus all her efforts through those connected to the Jesus community, which make up the true ekklesia.

Read the continuation of this three-part article series next week. {eoa}