

Kingdom Report

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Part 3 : Creating New Jerusalem's - Free Private Cities

In plotting our strategy for the long term growth of the Kingdom of God on earth assume that governments and especially urban cities are becoming more unlivable and dysfunctional. The answer is what king Cyrus did for unhappy Jews : Gave them a charter to exit and build a new Jerusalem.

There was a time in Israel's history when living in Babylon was no longer a happy experience. They got permission from the ruling authority to leave and build a city that reflects their faith and their values. So left Zerubbabel and 50,000 fellow Jews returned to a destroyed Jerusalem, rebuilt the waste places, rebuilt the temple and priesthood. They were the essential carriers of the Kingdom vision. Those who stayed in Babylon were lost in history.

There was a time in the Protestant Reformation when even living in Protestant England or Europe was no longer tolerable. So the Pilgrims got a Charter from king James to go to the new America and build their new communities and order their lives according to their own new constitutions. King James owed a big financial debt to a person called William Penn. He did not have the money to pay him back, instead he gave him a charter to large piece of land in America....which became the state of Pennsylvania.

In the Middle Ages of 1300's the Hanseatic League was a league of free cities that broke from feudalism and created thriving private enterprise trading fleets and free cities for skilled craftsmen to create and trade products. What followed was an explosion of chartered free cities across Europe as kings and rulers tried to lure skilled craftsmen to come and create work and wealth in free chartered cities within their realms. Most of the major cities of Europe started this way.

All across Africa in the midst of broken economies dysfunctional governments and chaotic cities there are vast uninhabited lands, undeveloped natural resources, ready for Christians with skills and vision and anointing to make agreements with governments for the right to charter new free cities that will create wealth and welfare for nations and people.

This is the future of the new Ekklesia that will heal nations and create wealth and prosperity for God's people. I will be doing lots more in future on this concept but let me give you an introduction on some key ideas:

Free Private City Concepts

I am assuming here that a group of Christian leaders come together to form a "for profit" Operating Company. This should include:

- 1) Spiritual leaders who can be responsible for the formulation of city spiritual development and guidance.
- 2) Administrators who are knowledgeable in finance, admin, legal, town planning.
- 3) Technical people like engineers and technicians in electrical, civil, and construction engineering.

The Operating Company is essentially a management company that creates a separate equity investment company that issues shares to investors in new city development. The shares can be traded publicly or privately.

The Operating Company negotiates with a suitable national government who grants a portion of land and signs guarantees to the company for a special economic zone, a special municipal zone and rights as regarding its own law and order applications and financial rights as to taxation, currency movements, entry and exit rights etc.

Once receiving a binding charter from a national government with adjudication rights in an international court jurisdiction, the Operating Company can commence with fund raising, city construction and citizen recruitment.

The defining feature of a Free Private City is that it is run by a for-profit company, referred to as the Operator, which acts as a "government service provider". This company can also be organized as a cooperative or be wholly owned by the citizens. In this capacity, the Operator offers citizens of the Free Private City protection of life, liberty and property. These services encompass internal and external security, a predefined legal and regulatory framework and an independent dispute resolution system. Interested individuals and companies enter into a Citizens' Contract, paying a fixed yearly fee for these services instead of taxes. Within that framework, a "spontaneous order" can develop which emerges from the voluntary activities of the citizens. The Operator cannot later unilaterally change the Citizens' Contract without the permission of the citizen concerned. Disputes between citizens and the Operator are heard before external arbitration tribunals, as is already customary in international commercial law. If the Operator ignores arbitral awards or abuses its power, customers will eventually leave and the Operator will face the risk of bankruptcy.

Since all land is currently controlled by governments, the establishment of a Free Private City requires that an Operator enters into a contractual agreement with an existing state, referred to as the Host Nation. In this agreement, the Host Nation grants the Operator the right to establish the Free Private City on a defined territory in accordance with certain predefined conditions, normally encompassing extended regulatory autonomy in various fields. One would expect states to be willing to surrender some of their power if they expect large enough benefits in return. Such benefits could include job creation, attraction of foreign investment and a percentage of profits generated by the Operator. The existence of a large number of Special Economic Zones worldwide demonstrates the willingness of states to do this.

Defining Elements of Free Private Cities

- A Free Private City is a sovereign or semi-autonomous territory with its own legal and regulatory framework. It has its own tax, customs and social regime, as well as its own administration, security forces and an independent dispute resolution system.
- Free Private Cities are run by an operating company as a for-profit business. This company may be a private or publicly listed entity, organized as a cooperative and can be also wholly or partly owned by the citizens. The Operator guarantees inhabitants of the Free Private City protection of life, liberty and property which it provides in exchange for a fixed basic fee.
- Each individual resident or residing entity has concluded a written “Citizens' Contract” with the Operator, which clearly defines their mutual rights and obligations. This includes the services to be provided by the Operator and the fees to be paid to them for their services; there are no taxes. It also outlines rules that apply in the Free Private City: both for the citizens and the Operator. A defining aspect of the Citizens' Contract is that it cannot be unilaterally changed by either party. It represents the “personal constitution” of every contract citizen: a real and reliable social contract.
- Participation and residence in the Free Private City is voluntary.
- There is no legal claim to admission to the Free Private City; to fulfil the security promise, the Operator decides on residence according to his criteria and his discretion ...the criteria will always be Biblically based.
- Furthermore, contract citizens can do as they please, provided that they do not violate the rights of others and provided their actions and lifestyle are in accordance with the Christian values of the community.

Financial and Social Development

The Operator will provide a constructed city consisting of rental accommodation, social and religious buildings for rental by religious and social groups. School buildings for companies providing education. Clinic for private health care groups.

A notable investment will be for the Operator to provide factory space for businesses who are able to hire or provide work for residents.

Shops will be provided for retailers to rent.

The city will provide and maintain all needed utilities: refuse removal, water, electricity and city maintenance.

The city is planned and constructed in such a way that encourages the principles of community which is now all the rage with New Urbanism or also known as "15 minute cities". You work, shop and live in easily accessible spaces. Minimum cars, maximum city public transport.

A key consideration here is that the residential accommodation is also rental properties. The reason is very important for social development. Consider this:

if you just sell plots for people to build own homes you have no control anymore as to who lives in the community or to who they resell it to. If people misbehave and are in fact social or criminal disruptors you need police and courts and prisons. In this city you can simply ban them either for a month or a year or a lifetime depending on the disruption. The Amish call this "shunning". So does scripture.

This type of arrangement is also very viable for families and workers. If you have a good job but get a better offer elsewhere you simply give notice and move. Selling a house and buying a new house is costly. Eventually you just move to another Free City in the Kingdom network.

If the Christian community want to make an investment in property then investing in the City Operator company is a very good investment that can be profitable for a lifetime and those shares handed down to children and also special residence rights can be arranged for shareholders.

Hopefully Free Cities franchises are erected in many places and citizens can move from City to City depending on where their skills are most valuable.

Is this financially viable for Operator Investment?

It is all a matter of scale and productive efficiency and return on investment.

Someone buys a plot build a spec house and rents it out.

A group pool money and build a factory and rent it out.

A large property developer buys land and builds a shopping mall and rents out the shops. And they are very popular because a shop in beautiful, safe, easily accessible shopping mall is better than shops scattered in along city streets.

The same for the coming new property development concept:

Build a private, beautifully designed high functioning, safe city and you can easily rent out all available structures for a profit....houses, shops, factories, schools, clinics etc. You establish a private equity investment vehicle for investors to buy or sell shares. At heart it is a great property investment combining residential and commercial properties in one large integrated investment.

People have discovered that governments cannot operate trains or airlines or power stations or post offices or schools.....private enterprise can and always do operate them better.

The world at least the world in Africa now also know that governments cannot design or build or operate cities. Therefore the time has come for private cities!

It is time for Christian entrepreneurs to get into the business of city construction and operation and make those the platform where families and businesses and science and education and innovation can thrive to produce a Christian civilization that has nations clamoring for Christians to come and build cities in their nations.

It is time to move from "Megachurches" to "Private Christian Cities". Because a Megachurch is not a Christian City.

That is how we disciple nations into the Kingdom and the best place to start is Southern Africa!