

LEARNING FROM DUTCH BIBLE BELT COMMUNITIES

The Blessing of a Reformed State and Church

There is a special blessing that comes with having a reformed state and church working together to kiss the Son. We read of such in Zechariah and Revelation:

“What *are* these two olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof?... Then said he, These *are* the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” (Zechariah 4:11-14)

“I will give *power* unto my two witnesses... These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.” (Revelation 11:3-4)

The reformed confessions testify of this blessing revealed in God’s word:

“The chief duty of the magistrate is to secured and preserve peace and public tranquility. Doubtless he will never do this more successfully than when he is truly God-fearing and religious; that is to say, when, according to the example of the most holy kings and princes of the people of the Lord, he promotes the preaching of the truth and sincere faith, roots out lies and all superstition, together with all impiety and idolatry, and defends the Church of God.” – The Second Helvetic Confession

“For this purpose he has invested the magistracy with the sword, for the punishment of evildoers, and for the protection of them that do well. And their office is, not only to have regard unto, and watch for the welfare of the civil state; but also that they protect the sacred ministry; and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; that the kingdom of Antichrist may be thus destroyed and the kingdom of Christ promoted. They must therefore countenance the preaching of the Word of the gospel everywhere, that God may be honored and worshipped by every one, as he commands in his Word...” – Belgic Confession

Before Christ’s return, we should not imagine that all (or perhaps even most) people in such reformed states are saved; nevertheless, there is a greater public acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ, which He so richly deserves, owing to His glorious accomplished works of creation and redemption. There can be a certain outward conformity to the moral law of God without spiritual regeneration; but where there is an inward circumcision of the heart by the Holy Spirit outward conformity to God’s moral law is a fruit. The Christian should yearn that Jesus Christ be so glorified, and the Christian should be grieved when instead He and His moral law are publicly ignored or even despised. Every recorded reformation in Israel’s history involved church and state supporting it; seeking a reformation with only one on board is like trying to walk or run with only one leg. What does it say about a person or people if they do not desire this?

Our Current State of Spiritual Declension

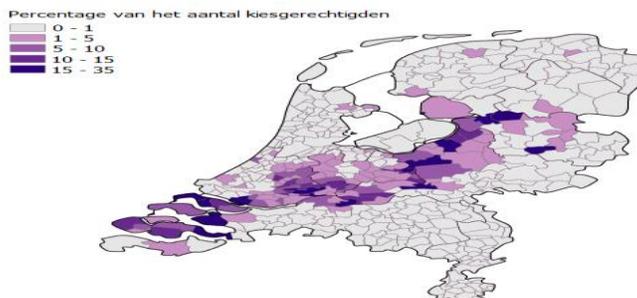
During the Protestant Reformation and its aftermath the world was blessed with a number of professedly Protestant nations with established Protestant churches. Indeed, many of the most powerful and expanding nations of the time were such: Great Britain and its colonies, the Netherlands and its colonies, Sweden, etc. Both the English and Dutch colonies in America were examples of such. However, since the Protestant Reformation there has been a progressive falling away from the Biblical Protestant faith, even as in the centuries after the Apostolic era there was a progressive falling away. We have become a religiously adulterous generation. It would seem like our present time is characterized by such words as these: “all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication” (Revelation 18:3).

Vestiges of the Protestant Reformation in the “Dutch Bible Belt”

Yet even in our sad state, God has preserved vestiges from the Protestant Reformation, and one such vestige seems to be found in a number of the communities of the “Dutch Bible Belt” region of the Netherlands. Here is how one recent article at <http://www.hewdge.com/2009/08/978/> has described them:

“A 90-minute drive from liberal Amsterdam, a pocket of orthodox Calvinism thrives where women shun trousers, swearing is banned and television is scorned as an ungodly intrusion. Pious sobriety dictates politics, fashion and other aspects of daily life in the town of Staphorst, nestled near the top end of the so-called Dutch Bible Belt that stretches from Zeeland in the southwest to northeastern Overijssel. “People here see themselves as the true heirs of John Calvin,” the reformist Protestant theologian born 500 years ago last month...Residents flock to church in their thousands twice every Sunday, when no buses run, and shops and the town swimming pool are closed. The topics of euthanasia, abortion and gay marriage, which the Netherlands was first in the world to legalise, are taboos here. And four years ago, the municipal council banned swearing, though imposing no penalty. In the most recent municipal elections, most residents voted for the SGP Christian party which bars women from holding public office...The town of 16,000 people has one of Europe’s highest birth rates, few career women, fewer restaurants, and nearly 1,000 women who still wear the chaste, cover-all outfit of their great-grandmothers...Only one in 30 babies are born to unmarried parents and the enclave has one of the Netherlands’ lowest divorce rates...”

Below is a map of the Netherlands showing where the Reformed Political Party (SGP) received a significant amount of votes in 2010, largely coextensive with the Dutch Bible Belt (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_Belt_\(Netherlands\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_Belt_(Netherlands))):



An Encouragement For Those Elsewhere

We need to be careful not to over-eulogize the situation in the “Dutch Bible Belt”. They are struggling with the onslaught of worldliness and humanism there as the rest of the world is, combined with indwelling sin which besets all of humanity. Nevertheless, the example of these communities should spur us on to seek such Dutch Bible Belt communities in our own nation, following their example where it is consistent with Biblical principles. Civil government at every level – local, state, and federal - should “kiss the Son” and uphold God’s moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments. Every man and institution of man should bow the knee to Jesus Christ, looking to Him as Lord and Savior.

This tract is published and distributed by the Reformation Party (www.reformationparty.org) to encourage explicitly reformed Christian politics so that civil governments “kiss the Son” by upholding God’s moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments. Such Reformation Party Tracts are available for free print out and distribution from www.reformationparty.org/rp/tracts.php.