

THE CAMPAIGN FOR COMMUNITY BIBLICAL GOVERNANCE IN WEST MICHIGAN NEWSLETTER

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Encouraging Area Reformed Churches to Petition Local Civil Magistrates

"...the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth..." (1 Timothy 3:15)

The Campaign is encouraging reformed Christian churches with residents in Georgetown Township to communicate to the Township Board the duty of all civil magistrates, including local ones like in the Township, to rule in accordance with Biblical principles. We are thankful that the consistory of Covell Avenue Netherlands Reformed Church was willing to do this, and we pray that other reformed churches would follow their example. It is important that the Christian church inform civil magistrates of their duty before God. As we read in Psalm 2, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth...kiss the Son..." Blessing comes to a people when the Church is a faithful witness and the State is a faithful ruler in the fear of God. As the letter to the Board from Covell Avenue NRC pointed out, "there was a blessing for the inhabitants of Nineveh when they humbled themselves under God after the preaching of Jonah." Let us pray for God's mercy in our own time and place. ❖

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Kiryas Joel and Other Hasidic Communities Demonstrate the Possibilities Reformed Christians Often Ignore

"...the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light..." (Luke 16:8)

Most reformed Christians assume that it is not possible to have a reformed Christian community where Biblical principles are upheld in the modern USA. But reformed Christians often ignore what Hasidic Jews are doing in various US communities like Kiryas Joel, Kaser, and the south Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. In these Hasidic communities, the Jewish Sabbath, standards of modesty, etc. are upheld by civil authorities. Not only so, US courts have upheld their civil right to do so.



Kiryas Joel, New York is on the forefront of this movement. The population now in excess of 20,000 people consists almost entirely of Hasidim of the Satmar sect. The town is governed by Hasidim according to the principles of their religion. A welcome sign to the town greets visitors by asking them to conform to these principles when in Kiryas Joel. In a recent court case against the Village of Kiryas Joel, US Court judge Jed Rakoff upheld the right of Kiryas Joel to exist in its current form. The judge noted "...American courts have repeatedly approved the formation of private self-governing enclaves by religiously homogeneous communities. Kiryas Joel thus falls into a long American tradition of robust support for

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Petitions Conveyed

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." (Psalm 60:4)

The Georgetown Township Board has decided to seek a new Township branding logo to convey the Town's essence and greatest resources, and has asked the input of Georgetown residents. The Campaign has delivered to the Township Board signed petitions from a number of residents asking the Board to incorporate an image of the Bible in this new logo, to express our gratitude to God for His word and our belief that God and His word represent the greatest resource of the Township. May God give wisdom to the Board members as they deliberate and decide. ❖

Speaking before the Georgetown Township Board

"...speaking the truth in love..." (Ephesians 4:15)

The Georgetown Township Board allows residents time to speak to the assembled Board, and we have been taking this opportunity which we are thankful the Board allows. Our plea is that the Board would lead the community in reformation and repentance, even as so many godly magistrates are recorded to have done in scripture. As we read in the Scots Confession of 1560, "to kings, princes, rulers, and magistrates, we affirm that chiefly and most principally the conservation and purgation of the religion appertains; so that not only they are appointed for civil policy, but also for maintenance of the true religion, and for suppressing of idolatry and superstition whatsoever: as in David,[6] Jehoshaphat,[7] Hezekiah,[8] Josiah,[9] and others, highly commended for their zeal in that case, may be espied." May God give us grace to speak the truth in love, and may God give conviction to the Board to lead the community in the way of righteousness. ❖

Introductory Lobbying Letters Sent to Area Towns

"Cast thy bread upon the waters..." (Ecclesiastes 11:1)

We are sending letters to the town councils of many towns in West Michigan, introducing the Campaign to them and encouraging them to "kiss the Son" in their governance. ❖

religious sub-communities, a tradition that enables private communities to form and then, once formed, to translate their private power into political power..."

Kiryas Joel began with only fourteen families in 1977, but has experienced tremendous growth due in part to movement of other families in, as well as high marriage and birth rates. Other Hasidic towns and neighborhoods also are experiencing tremendous growth.

In various respects it would seem that Hasidic Jews in New York have had more effect in establishing communities based upon their religious principles, than reformed Christians in West Michigan have had here, even though in relative numbers they are not so dissimilar. What are some factors humanly speaking that help explain the disparity? For instance, why have Hasidim in New York been able to enforce by civil means respect for the Jewish Sabbath in various communities whereas reformed Christians have not in West Michigan? In subsequent editions of this Newsletter we hope Lord willing to examine these questions. ❖

Michigan and the Christian Sabbath

"...the Lord's Day..." (Revelation 1:10)

People forget that Michigan used to have strict laws upholding the Christian Sabbath. Chapter 54 of the Michigan statutes (1892) is entitled "Observance of the First Day of the Week, and the Prevention and Punishment of Immorality". It reads: "No person shall keep open his shop, warehouse or workhouse, or shall do any manner of labor, business or work, or be present at any dancing, or at any public diversion, show, or entertainment, or take part in any sport, game or play on the first day of the week..." Sabbath desecration brings divine judgment upon us, and God calls all civil magistrates to uphold the Christian Sabbath. We are lobbying West Michigan communities to repent in this matter. ❖

This Newsletter is produced by the West Michigan Chapter of the Campaign for Community Biblical Governance. The Campaign for Community Biblical Governance is sponsored by the Reformation Party (www.ReformationParty.org) in an effort to promote Biblical reformation at the local level.

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