

## **NEWS AND UPDATES: WEST MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR COMMUNITY BIBLICAL GOVERNANCE – JUNE 2013 EDITION**

### **Communication to the City of Kentwood**

In June a request has been sent to the City of Kentwood encouraging the city officials to rule in accordance with Biblical principles. We can pray that God would move them in this direction, as well as praying that God would raise up a reformed ‘city upon a hill’ whose pattern they could follow.

### **Addressing the Declining Moral Standards of Our Day**

There is abundant evidence of declining moral standards in our society. Ultimately, the only way out of this current downward drift is the mercy of God. “If [it had not been] the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say ...then the proud waters had gone over our soul” (Psalm 124:1-5). Hence, we ought to cry mightily to God for mercy, that we might repent. We also ought to exercise the God ordained means leading toward repentance and reformation. One of those means is exhibited in the “two olive trees” spoken of in Zechariah 4:3 and Revelation 11:4. Zechariah 4:14 calls them the “two anointed ones”, represented in Zechariah’s day by Zerubbabel (civil leader of the people of God) and Joshua (ecclesiastical leader of the people of God). Such officers are referred to as God’s “gifts unto men”, in texts such as Ephesians 4:8 and Psalm 68:18. Such gifts restrain evil and promote good among people, including the professing people of God (eg, see Romans 13:4). We should not be surprised that the declining moral standards have occurred at a time of rampant secularist civil government. Current civil rulers do not consider it their job description to glorify Jesus Christ in their rule and uphold His moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments. Hence, our society is becoming a Sodom and Gomorrah. Should we be surprised if the societal wickedness affects the professed people of God, especially given fallen human nature? To address this sad situation, do we not have responsibility to use means to seek a community blessed by “two olive trees”, where both the elected civil and ecclesiastical officers are seeking to glorify Jesus Christ and uphold His moral law?

### **Rhode Island in Reverse**

Before Roger Williams founded the community of Providence in Rhode Island in 1636 the well entrenched model for civil government was based in the “establishment principle”. It was believed and taken for granted by all nations in that day that civil government should defend and support what the political leaders of a given nation regarded as the true religion. By founding a community set against this basic model, Roger Williams set in motion a very different pattern of civil government- one that led to the modern secularist state. Williams, along with 12 friends, started the small community of Providence, which rejected religious establishment by a civil government. Over time the community grew, and over time other political entities followed its example. A lesson can be learned from what Roger Williams and his small band of compatriots did. Even a small community can change the direction in which society is going, by offering an alternative model. If God were to bless a small community following a Biblical model, then it could be a means for restoring what has largely been lost over time since the Protestant Reformation.

## **A Reformed Outpost in the Past Should Encourage Us Today**

In past newsletters example cities upon a hill like Plymouth Colony and Massachusetts Bay Colony have been cited. It has been noted how the communities of New England and beyond were formed as covenanted reformed Christian communities established to glorify Jesus Christ, uphold His moral law, and witness His gospel to surrounding unbelievers. But who would guess that at its founding what today we call New York City was such an outpost for God? New Amsterdam was originally settled by only 30 families. The Dutch Reformed Church was the established church of the town, and the community was professedly committed to running in accordance with reformed Biblical principles. May God today raise up a reformed outpost.

## **Some Current Precedents Toward a Reformed Community in West Michigan**

Even today in West Michigan there is precedent in some measure toward a neighborhood or community of professedly reformed Christians. For example, consider what is happening in the neighborhood around Hope Protestant Reformed Church and Reformed School in Walker. Members of the church and users of the school are moving into the neighborhood and in many respects dominating it. Without wanting to get into the theological details related to the PR denomination for purposes of the Newsletter, one thing that is lacking in this example is a church committed to upholding the Biblical doctrines outlined in the original Three Forms of Unity and Westminster Standards. Nevertheless, this and other examples should encourage us to consider how feasible it would be to have a covenanted reformed community if there were those God raised up with this conviction.

### **Imagine If...**

- A reformed minister and some members of the congregation began a covenanted reformed community even of 5 to 10 households at its inception.
- The community over time grew and had elected civil officials seeking to rule according to Biblical principles.
- In time the church and school building were within the community, such that both were within short distance of the community members to encourage reformed Christian community life and walk.
- Other reformed congregations in other localities, seeing the example set, were to adopt a similar course.
- More and more people, seeing the examples of such covenanted reformed communities, and the blessing of God that came with such, wanted the same for their community, state and even nation.

Such a scenario only occurs if God mercifully turns the hearts of men to seek such. Should we not pray and strive for such?

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](http://www.ReformationParty.org)) in an effort to promote Biblical reformation at the local level.

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