

## Monday, March 16, 2020

This is Mr. Dykstra writing for this week. I thank the Seniors who had the courage to write recently.

Last week we imbibed a steady diet of “obey because, obey because, obey because.” This week, I want to deconstruct this, to invert this, to turn over this coin of obedience and look at when we should disobey. Yes I said that.

Part of the Reformed Tradition that has shaped Illiana is a healthy sense of civil disobedience. Civil Disobedience could be defined as “the refusal to comply with certain laws or to pay taxes and fines, as a peaceful form of political protest.” Civil disobedience is peaceful in that no violence is being used, just a refusal to participate which also includes a peaceful acceptance of the civil consequences. One of the founding documents used to mold Illiana known as the Belgic Confession comes from the 2nd generation of European reformers. The author, Guido deBres [Ge-Dough DeBray], was no stranger to civil disobedience. He spent the last years of his life dressing in disguise and took on a second name to throw off the authorities who attempted to capture him. He held secret church services wherever he could--against his government’s wishes--and in the end was captured, tried, and hung for it.

There are legends that while on the scaffolding of his hanging, while the noose was being placed over his head deBres spotted soldiers who were there to liberate him. Those soldiers would have had to kill many opposing soldiers in order to liberate him from his circumstances. With his dying words this Reformer made it plain that he did not wish to be liberated by the sword and that he had resigned himself to die at the hands of his captors.

Guido wrote these words about the proper role of the government:

“... everyone, regardless of status, condition, or rank, must be subject to the government, and pay taxes, and hold its representatives in honor and respect, and obey them in all things that are not in conflict with God’s Word, praying for them that the Lord may be willing to lead them in all their ways and that we may live a peaceful and quiet life in all piety and decency” (Belgic Confession Article 36).

Did you catch how complicated this is? The same guy who wrote that and accepted his punishment held illegal meetings and never turned himself in. Guido accepted his punishment but never turned himself in. He paid his taxes but he practiced civil disobedience when it came to matters of the gospel and worship. You will have to decide for yourself when it is God honoring to disobey authority, but may I suggest to you in the Reformed fashion that you do so with all civility, without violence, and only because you are obeying the LORD above all.

Luke 23:34 And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”