

Reformed Faith and Life

Inside this issue

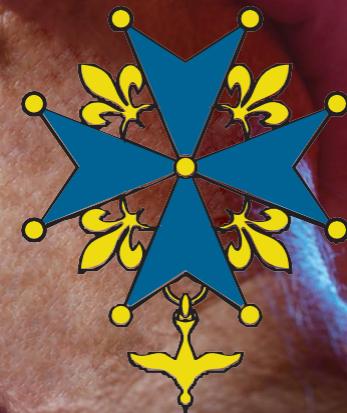
- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Islamism on the rise in France | 1 |
| Also lost for the Kingdom? | 2 |
| Travelling abroad | 2 |

Dear friends,

Islamism on the rise in France

« *The lost territories of the Republic* »: this is how entire French suburbs plagued by violence and various gangs are now known. In French the word *banlieues* is equivalent to the Anglo-Saxon inner cities, with their related social problems. Police forces, insufficient and inadequate in terms of numbers and equipment, do not even dare to attempt to restore law and order there. Without even mentioning the alarming rise of violent crime in Paris itself, the département of Seine-Saint-Denis, the eastern suburb of the capital, has become the most troublesome of these *lost territories*. By subway, it is merely twenty minutes away from the Elysée palace where the French president lives and the country is governed! In his gloomy resignation speech a few days ago, former minister of security and internal affairs G. Collomb mentioned this state of affairs as a dark reality and the ferment of even greater civil troubles to come if not rapidly brought under control. He said these things despite the ongoing pressure from the French liberal intelligentsia and mainstream media bent on minimizing this trend. Through the years they have tried to redirect people's legitimate concerns against their own ideological foes (easily labeled as reactionary) instead of opening their eyes and facing up to the reality of a situation spiralling out of control.

What is more, these suburbs are gradually being taken over by rampant Islamism wanting to impose its religious and political worldview and laws. As a conquering ideology going back to the very roots of the Quran, Islamism feeds on the radical rejection of the secularized Western way of life by a younger generation originating mostly from North Africa or Sub-Saharan countries (former French colonies). Still, their conviction that they are discriminated against and denied proper means of integration into French society, could be disproved by the professional success of many among their ranks, who in turn suffer from being identified with the most troublesome groups.



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These radicals fuel and exploit existing discontent

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And so it becomes a vicious circle: tired of having to prove themselves twice as much when searching for employment, some of them are choosing to leave France to settle in countries where they hope to feel more welcome. Yet another loss of skilled and hard-working young people for France... The rejection of the highly secularized French culture - wrongly assimilated to Christian influence-, is aggravated not only by hateful rap songs drummed out by popular “artists” with their reprehensible message (“Crucify the secularists at Golgotha” says one...) but also by sermons delivered by Salafist preachers in a growing number of mosques. These radicals fuel and exploit existing discontent and the violent way it is expressed, so that in the eyes of this unruly younger generation islam will eventually appear as the only alternative to bring structure to society. They aim at provoking a transition from criminal gang violence to criminal jihadist violence to establish their totalitarian order. For a number of observers, successive French governments have reacted only timidly against this trend, by fear of being labeled “islamophobic”, meaning intolerant and anti-humanistic.



Presenting a paper during the International Calvin Congress at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

“ *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost* ”

Their fear is also of being accused of discriminating against Islam on account of an alleged pro-Christian bias. In a country that takes pride in the strict separation between State and Church since a decisive law introduced in 1905, such a bias is actually anything but real. Legislation on various bio-ethical issues to be enacted in 2019, favored by the current government and the majority in Parliament (legalization of euthanasia, surrogate motherhood for gay couples, artificial insemination for single women or lesbian couples etc.) goes directly against the deep convictions on the nature and essence of human life still held by traditional Christians.

Also lost for the Kingdom?

From a Christian perspective, however, the essential question should still be: are the *lost territories of the Republic* automatically and definitively *lost for the Kingdom*? Does the inability of civil authorities to acknowledge the severe political, cultural and social crisis and react accordingly, necessarily imply that there is nothing else to be done, that *all is lost*? Obviously, that would be denying the authority and permanence of the words of Christ himself: *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost* (Luke 19:10). Not to mention the words of the apostle Paul, sent like so many others afterwards: *And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?* (Rom. 10:14).

In view of the growing presence of Salafist preaching on YouTube and other social media, the only thing to do is to bring the Gospel of light and life via the same media as clearly and loudly as possible. And this we should do despite the contempt of secularists who would do better to face the collapse of their own “enlightened” ideological views. After all, not only have they proved incapable of stopping the rise of a counter-ideology which negates everything they claim to stand for, but they have repeatedly showed signs of actively abetting it, displaying tremendous weakness in the face of a danger which threatens the social cohesion of an entire country.

Travelling abroad

Over the last eight weeks I have done a lot of traveling abroad. After attending the Calvin research congress in Philadelphia, I headed for the U.S. again a month later for the annual meetings of Reformed Faith and Life, also to preach in a few United Reformed Churches South of Chicago. On Friday Oct. 5 I had the wonderful privilege, along with our North American committee and members of local churches, to celebrate fifty years of God’s faithfulness since the beginning of Rev A.R. Kayayan’s radio ministry (1968-2018). Shortly after coming home, I was off again, this time to Germany where I was invited to give the opening lecture for the new academic year at Heidelberg’s Reformed Seminary. Delivering a one-hour lecture in German was no small challenge to me, although I was told (perhaps a sign of German diplomacy towards their French guest?) that it really went well...

As the end of the year approaches it is time to resume “regular” activities. Please pray for spiritual lucidity and boldness in the context described above. Above all may the sovereign Lord of all things be glorified by each and every message posted on the various media which we can use for that purpose.

In His name
Rev Eric Kayayan



Heidelberg in Germany, the city where the well-loved catechism was published in 1563.

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