

THE PASTORS' PEN

articles from the elders of BBC

"Khoi-San king declares that the Cape has seceded from SA." So the headline in *The Citizen* this past Tuesday. At first blush, one is very sympathetic, even *hopeful*. Yet when you look below the surface, well, not so much.

This brings to my mind my recent interaction with a pastor from the UK, who upon learning that I was from South Africa, asked me for some advice. There is a married couple in his church; the husband is from South Africa and his wife is from a country in Europe. He desires to move back to South Africa but his wife is very hesitant. I asked about their disagreement. Apparently, the man wants to move back home because he is

concerned about the state of our nation. That sounds good. We need all the constructive help we can get from other Christians. But what is his solution? Settle in Orania, the

Afrikaner enclave in the Northern Cape. No wonder his wife is hesitant. I told the pastor to advise his church member to stay in the UK. The last thing our country needs is increased segregation—especially by those who profess to be Christians.

Well, apparently for quite some time, there has been a much larger attempt at segregation than Orania, albeit under the more political word: "secession." This movement is called "The Sovereign State of Good Hope." This is the movement represented by the Khoi-San King in the quote above. Well, good luck; they are going to need it.

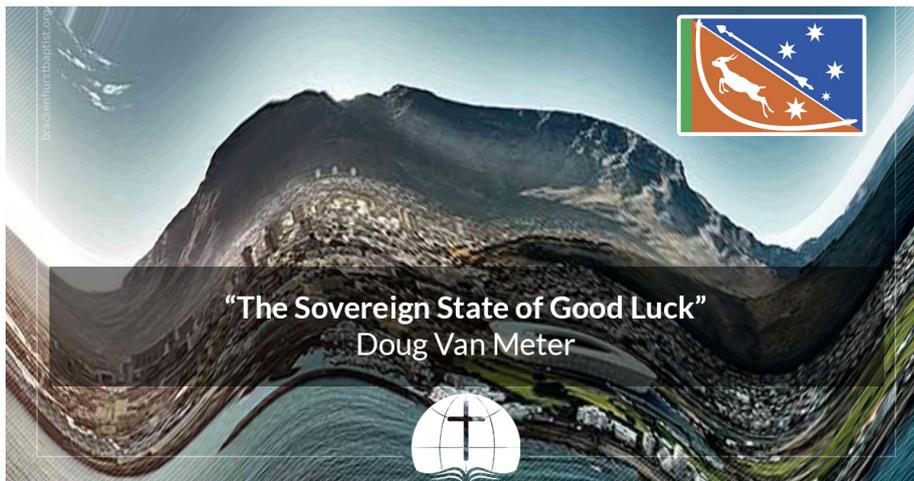
As publicly declared this week, the plan is to secede from South Africa with the new country made up of the entirety of what has historically been known as the Cape Province. That's right—from Kimberley to Cape Town, from Upington to Port Elizabeth, will all be known as a new Sovereign State. If it were not so sad, it would be comical. After all, one of their major motivations for this secession (I gleaned from their website) is because of the ANC's determination to enact land expropriation. The solution of the Sovereign State of Good Hope? Appropriate one third of the country for their own misguided purpose. Ironic. Sad. Especially if any of these "seceders" are

Christians.

Christians have a higher allegiance than to their own culture and comfort. We have an allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We are

citizens of his kingdom, and his kingdom is comprehensively multi-ethnic. That is, all people groups are included. And this kingdom characteristic should be displayed in our day-to-day living. Further, those who belong to God's kingdom lay up treasures above, not on large tracts of land below—especially tracts of land that implicitly exalt one people over another.

I have read their documents, so I think that I can speak accurately. It is very clear that, despite their denials, this movement is dominated by those who are *not* black. To put it more straightforward, it is very "non-black" with heavy shades of "white."



Officially, this movement claims to respect the dignity of all peoples. And, no doubt, many of those committed to this endeavour live this out. I don't think it is fair to characterise everyone in the movement as racist. But I am not naïve. I've been to the Apartheid Museum. I am aware that such declarations of "dignity" and "equally" rarely meet reality. Simply look at the featured photo on their website: very white, very blonde—a very clear message. Further, I saw a snapshot of their Facebook page. The profile pictures don't display much of a "rainbow."

Their document, *The Oath of Allegiance*, is also troubling. It begins, "I witness Myself before God, and in the presence of His Spirit, Country, Countrymen, and King..."

Interesting. And clever. This supposedly all-inclusive nation excludes Muslims. No Muslim will recognise God and *His Spirit*. And without this mandatory pledge of allegiance, one cannot be a citizen of this "Sovereign State." Further, and most importantly, the absence of the Name which is above all names—Jesus Christ—is conspicuous in this pledge (at least, conspicuous to those with eyes to see). Why? Because this is a *quasi-Christian* "State." When their documents talk about "God," the reference is to an anaemic, moralistic concept of some higher power. Those who think that they will be a part of a "Christian nation" that honours "family values" are in for a rude awakening. Perhaps not unlike the awakening we have experienced after decades of religiously-enforced evils of apartheid. History informs us that the guise of Christianity has often been used to hide sinister, ungodly, racist, ethnocentrism. Beware.

Aside from the folly of thinking that the UN will support this endeavour (just ask Tibet, Catalonia, and Taiwan how that's working for them!), the greater folly is if *Christians* fall for this. We are called to assimilate with others rather than to isolate ourselves from them. We are called to go to the nations, rather than *from* the nations. Assimilation, or integration, is necessary if we will carry out the Great Commission. We must connect with all peoples, not create our own little safe ghettos. Again, I am aware that this movement claims to respect all peoples. But their gratuitous caveat reminds me of the words of the late Hendrik Verwoerd: "*Apartheid could just as easily, and perhaps even better, be described as a policy of good neighbourliness.*" Right. If you believe that, I have some beachfront property in the Karoo I'd like to sell to you. But then again, since the Karoo is in the Cape, I guess those properties have already been purchased.

If Christians are a part of this "secession," I wonder what their plans are for a local church? For those who move to "Good Hope," have they even contemplated what it will mean for them to leave their local church? Have they made a plan for the establishment of a biblical, gospel-faithful, Christ-centred, non-ethnocentric church? Is this even a priority for them? I seriously doubt it. Like the Amish, the gospel and gospel churches will be the casualties in such a movement. There is nothing good or hopeful about that. Good luck.

I am not unaware of the crime, violence, and corruption in our country. It is deeply troubling. And I understand that many who support this new movement are concerned about safety and security. They are concerned about the rampant crime in our nation. Who isn't? In fact, three of the fifty most dangerous cities in the world are South African (Cape Town is ranked fifteenth; Durban is ranked 44th and Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality is ranked 46th—good news: Joburg didn't make the list!). And by the way, two of these most dangerous cities are in what is now the supposedly "seceded" Cape of "Good Hope." Good luck.

So, yes, we are all aware of the concerns in our country. But Christians should be *more* aware that God has put us here for such a time as this. Let the unbelievers flee as a bird to their self-serving mountain, for in the end that is all that they have. But the Christian has the Mount of the Triune God in which to find shelter—even amid a very *evil* culture. He is our Good Hope; anything or anyone or any place else is a useless refuge on what is ultimately sinking sand. So, if you choose the latter, then all I can offer is, "Good luck." And when it comes to "luck," there is nothing remotely sovereign or biblically hopeful in *that*.

