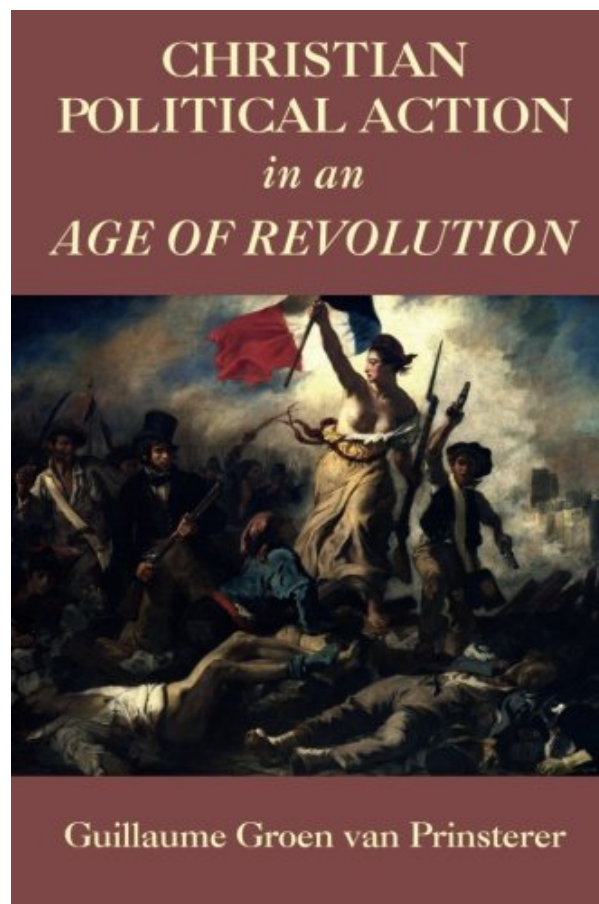


CHRISTIAN POLITICAL ACTION IN AN AGE OF REVOLUTION BY GUILLAUME GROEN VAN PRINSTERER



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A companion volume to Rougemont's "The Individualists in Church and State," this outline of Christian political action was written by the nineteenth century pioneer of the genre, the Dutchman Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer. Groen not only developed a political philosophy based solidly in Reformation truths but he also formed a political party to bring those truths to bear in the political forum of his day. Then, as now, the battle was against the Revolution: "the invasion of the human mind by the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of man, thus making him the source and centre of all truth, by substituting human reason and human will for divine revelation and divine law." It is "the history of the irreligious philosophy of the past century; it is, in its origin and outworking, the doctrine that—given free rein—destroys church and state, society and family, produces disorder without ever establishing liberty or restoring moral order, and, in religion, inevitably leads its conscientious followers into atheism and despair." Against the Revolution there is only one antidote: the Gospel. To proclaim and elaborate this truth was Groen van Prinsterer's life work. This volume—never before published in English—is an adept summary of it.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 166 pages

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An insightful and astonishingly relevant analysis of the great paradigm shift in Western culture since the thought of ...

By Arie van Dijk

An insightful and astonishingly relevant analysis of the great paradigm shift in Western culture since the thought of the Enlightenment, the experiment of the French Revolution, and the practices of modernity guided by liberalism. The translation is eloquent and dignified, as befits the 1860 original.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

If Groen van Prinsterer wrote it, it will be good.

By Ben House

This political classic, only recently translated into English from the Dutch, is not very well known to American readers. Yet, I think that both the author and the book are quite important. While lots of Christians have gotten involved in politics, very few have gotten into Christian political philosophy. I read this book near the end of 2015 and am currently reading it again. It is published by Wordbridge Publishing, which is under the direction of Ruben Alvarado and is the publishing house for some outstanding works on political

philosophy and Christian thought.

Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, commonly just referred to as Groen, ranks as one of the greatest Christian political thinkers and activists of all time. His realm of action was in the Netherlands during the 1800s where he was a court historian who turned his scholarly labors to dealing with political issues of his time. He rightly determined that the philosophy stemming from the French Revolution was a poison that would destroy Christian culture and the political order of Christendom.

Groen, along with others, started a political party. He and his political allies worked to create one of the most vital ingredients for a Christian society, Christian schools. His labors involved writing and assembling the Christian history of the Netherlands and the contributions of Christian thought and action from the time of the Protestant Reformation. Specifically, he labored for the freedom and opportunity to start Christian schools. It turned out to be an 80 year battle for the heart and soul of the Netherlands.

As with many Christian works, the first fruits are short lived, but the labors have long-term effects. We are still tapping into the resources of Groen's thought. His name is overshadowed by that of his colleague and successor Abraham Kuyper. Kuyper's brilliance and many accomplishments are not to be minimized, but without Groen, there would have been no Kuyper as we know him.

Groen's main work was titled *Lectures on Unbelief and Revolution*. It consisted of talks he gave to a group of interested friends on the impact of the French Revolution and how that movement was at heart unbelief. That work, which was his earlier work, and *Christian Political Action in an Age of Revolution* were originally in Dutch. Outside of some Reformed theological circles and Neo-Calvinist philosophical circles, few people look into the writings of Dutch theologians and philosophers.

It is amazing how the little country of the Netherlands produced a whole array of brilliant Christian thinkers during the 1800s and early 1900s. The names include Groen van Prinsterer, Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, Herman Dooyeweerd, H. Van Reissen, G. C. Berkouwer, Klaus Schilder, and many more. We can add the names also of those who crossed the pond from the Netherlands to North America. Louis Berkof, Gerhard Vos, and Cornelius Van Til are among the esteemed names we give here.

Basically, our current political struggles are a re-fighting of the issues of unbelief. I don't want to simplify and over-simplify current politics so as to boil this down to two charts with one being the good guys (belief) and the other being bad guys (unbelief). We are not talking about current candidates, the two-party system, or the 2016 election cycle. Unbelief is a deeper problem than Bernie's Socialism, Hillary's emails, Donald's tweets, or Ted's abrasive personality.

The problem is not located in the candidates, but in the heart and soul of the country. We expect flawed sinners to bring us "hope and change." We expect walls to keep out problems and bombs to make the world safe.

We need to get back to some deeper issues. Some of the answers—or at least the right questions—can be found in such works as Plato's *Republic*, *The Federalist Papers*, and Mill's *On Liberty*. As we get serious about rebuilding a political and social culture, we have to mine the gold found in those Dutch writers like Groen van Prinsterer and in this fine book *Christian Political Action in an Age of Revolution*.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

This book is a historical treasure, with a message ...

By Jan van Eys

This book is a historical treasure, with a message applicable today.. However, one has to be careful not to over-interpret the message in the current debate on religion in politics. Groen van Prinsterer was an important figure in the Netherlands in the mid 19th century. He advocated independence, but not necessarily separation, of church and state. He worked hard to allow religious education in private schools. Public schools in the Netherlands were made by law secular only, and the government did not allow new private schools to teach religion either. Groen van Prinsterer started a new political party -- the Anti-revolutionary Party -- and was elected to parliament where he successfully pushed for the independence of church and state, resulting in curricular freedom for private schools.

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