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Another year is history. From now on the year 1963 and its events will sink farther and farther into the hoary past. This will be whether we like it or not. For many of us it was a year of joy and accomplishment. For many others it was not. Some graduated from High School or College, and 1963 is the year during which they entered upon their life’s work. For these and many other reasons 1963 was a year of happiness for many. But for others, the Lord made it not so. A year of hardship, of personal tragedy, of heartache, of grief and deep sadness, 1963 proved to be for many.

What must be our attitude as we begin another year? Do we stand in fear at what 1964 might bring? Are we filled with a false sense of security? Neither extreme should characterize our living; not if we are walking in the way of faith. By faith we know that whatever befalls us in 1964 will come from the loving hand of our Father in heaven. All of the events of 1964 will be for our good and for our salvation. Certainly this faith must underly our attitude toward the year just begun.

We do well, then, to turn to God’s Word to see what He has to say to us concerning the new year. The Apostle Paul tells us in his epistle to the Romans, chapter 13, verse 11: “... it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” My dear young friend, are you awake? Do you know what is going on? Do you know what it means that another year is begun? Or are you oblivious to all of this and sound asleep?

Always at this time of the year we are reminded of the passing of time, of the fact that we are always moving out of the past into the future. But what does this mean for you and me? It means this: we must be awake and not asleep because our salvation is nearer. That 1963 is gone means that the day when our Lord shall come again is one year nearer. Paul tells us to be awake!

The Christian is further enjoined to put off the things of darkness and put on the armour of light. He must walk honestly as in the day. He must put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh (verses 12-14). No, Paul did not mean by this last that we must forget about making a living and wait for Christ to come. He does not mean that we ought to seek the highest mountain and look for Jesus. But he did mean that we may not make provision to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

Yes, it is high time to awake and be busy with the things of the Lord. Put away the works of darkness. Know that Christ is coming and be busy with all of your powers in the things of the kingdom. Seek its advancement and let us let all of our actions be with a view to the advancement of the cause of Christ.

Then 1964 will be blessed, then we shall have a profitable year.  

R.D.D.

BEACON LIGHTS

One
THE GREAT SYNOD

We are now ready to discuss the Synod of Dordrecht itself. You recall that, through the overthrow of the government of Oldenbarneveldt in the Netherlands by Prince Mauritius, a government sympathetic to the Reformed cause had come into power. This government convened the Synod that met in the city of Dordrecht and dealt with the problem of Arminianism.

The Synod began its meetings on November 13, 1618 and met until May 9, 1619. In all, 154 sessions were held, although the Synod dealt with considerably more than the error of Arminianism. The first month of the Synod (until December 6, 1618) was occupied with other business. It was toward the end of April in 1619 that the Arminian controversy was finally settled by the adoption of our present Canons of Dort.

The Delegates at the Synod

The Synod was not, as is sometimes supposed, simply a "Dutch" Synod. There were delegates present at the Synod from practically all the Calvinistic Churches of the continent of Europe. It is true that these foreign delegates did not have a deciding vote at the Synod (their vote was more advisory); but the fact remains that they did a tremendous amount of work, entered freely into all the discussions, served on the committees of study, composed their own written opinions about the articles of the Arminians and the Canons themselves, and even signed these Canons when they were finally adopted.

There were, in all, 57 delegates from the Netherlands Churches. Thirty-four of these were ministers, 18 were elders, and five were professors from the Reformed Universities and Seminaries in the Netherlands.

Among the professors we ought to take special notice of Gomarus. He was the man that had opposed Arminius for many years while they were both professors at the University of Leiden. He had long argued for the convocation of just such a Synod as now was meeting to treat the Arminian heresy. He had seen from personal contact with Arminius and his followers, the terrible danger of these views. It was with deep thanksgiving, no doubt, that this venerable defender of the faith now saw the Synod convened which could treat the errors of Arminius and his followers and settle the terrible controversies that were raging in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

There were 27 foreign delegates which came to the Synod from all parts of the continent—Great Britain, the Palatinate (where the Heidelberg Catechism had been written), Hessia, Switzerland, Westphalia, Geneva, Bremen and Emden. The delegates of France could not attend although they had been invited. They were refused permission to leave their land by the French government. Another staunch defender of the faith, Dr. Paraeus who was professor of theology in the University of Heidelberg, also could not come because of the infirmities of old age. But he did send to the Synod a written opinion of the five articles of the Arminians which agreed essentially
with the position that was finally adopted by the Synod in its Canons.

All of these men were leaders in the Reformed and Calvinistic Reformation. They were the theologians, the scholars, the brilliant lights of the Post-Reformation period. They represented Calvinism at its purest and had a hand in developing the great principles of the Genevan Reformer in the Century following the Reformation. Many of them had studied in the centers of Reformed and Calvinistic thought — the University of Heidelberg in the Palatinate where Ursinus and Olevianus had taught; and in the University of Geneva founded by Calvin and administered later by Calvin’s successor, Theodore Beza.

There were also present at the Synod representatives of the government. This was due to the unique relation between Church and State that existed in the Netherlands, which we have discussed before. The State could convene a Synod; and all the decisions of the Synod were also approved by these governmental representatives. The former government of Oldenbarnevelt would never have approved of what the Synod did, for it was always sympathetic towards the Arminians. But the present government of Mauritz favored the Reformed cause, and the Synod had no trouble in its work from the government’s delegates.

Finally, you may perhaps wonder why the Arminians are not listed above as also being present at the Synod. The fact of the matter is that they were there. But, in the first place, they were only there from December 6, 1618 (when they were invited to come) until they were dismissed on January 14, 1619. When the Synod finally got to work in the formulation of the Canons, the Arminians were gone. In the second place, the Arminians never had a vote on the Synod. This was due to the Church Polity then in effect. They were, prior to the convocation of the Synod, indicted for heresy; and the Synod was called to pass judgment on this indictment. They could be present to defend their views and state their objections to the Synod’s actions; but they could not vote in their own case and in the proceedings that dealt with their matter.

However, we must not be left with the impression that the Synod simply condemned them without a hearing. They were given abundant opportunity to defend themselves, to prove, if they could, that their views were in harmony with Scripture, to point out what they considered to be errors in the Synod’s actions. In fact, they were given so much opportunity to do this that even the foreign delegates, who generally knew very little or nothing about the Arminian controversy, concluded that Synod had exhausted a most remarkable patience in dealing with them.

Not only this, but there were always delegates on the Synod who favored to a greater or a lesser degree the position that the Arminians had taken. This was especially true of some of the delegates from England and Emden. Thus, in one way or another, the position of the Arminians was represented on the Synod throughout the entire proceedings.

This is important to emphasize because those who object to the Canons of Dordrecht sometimes make the charge that the Canons are not very important because they were adopted by a “straw Synod” or a “packed Synod” that allowed no other views to be entertained but the views of a minority who were determined to foist their minority position on the Churches. This is a slanderous charge and does grave injustice to the fathers who composed this important and beautiful confession.

Finally, it ought to be remarked that the foreign delegates did not speak for the Churches they represented. They were not at the Synod as representatives of the Reformed Churches in their particular countries. They were merely called in to help the Netherlands Churches and to serve them with advice. And, even though they later signed the Canons, they did not do this as official representatives of their Churches in order to make the Canons binding also upon them. This is also misunderstood. One Church historian, evidently adopting the position that they served in an official capacity, claims that the Synod was an attempt to unite all the Reformed Churches. He writes, “An attempt made at a general synod at Dort to unite all the Reformed national churches under one confession failed.” This was not the purpose of this Synod, and the attempt was not made. It was a matter concerning only the Dutch Churches.


To escape criticism, do nothing, say nothing, be nothing.”

—SOUTHEAST BULLETIN

Three
"WHY I CHOSE TO BE A TEACHER"

WINIFRED KOOLE

While my playmates were busy with dolls, I was reading everything I could lay my hands on. Housework bored me—and still does. One of my favorite games was playing school. And yet I never gave one thought to making the teaching profession my life work. That was due mostly to the times in which I grew up—desperately poor times. I could hardly wait until I graduated from high school to start earning money to help my parents.

After I had done clerical work for over eight years, I became extremely dissatisfied with this type of work. Some of my friends were teaching or going to college after having worked at other jobs; I had saved a little money hoping to buy a car in the near future; it was time for a change! At that time there was a nation-wide appeal for more nurses—in fact, one could even earn a small monthly wage while in training. I decided to be a nurse, but I soon found that my high school background was lacking in the required science subjects. That meant more schooling. I discussed this matter with Alice Reitsma who assured me that she had not found it a difficult thing to go back to a life of classrooms, textbooks and study and encouraged me to do the same. But she also urged me to go in for teaching instead of nursing as there was a strong movement for our own schools, and there would be a great need for Protestant Reformed teachers. Our ministers were also presenting this same need in their sermons, and it was during one of Rev. H. Hoeksema’s sermons that God gave me the deep desire to work in His kingdom in this capacity. I was able to finish my college work in three years and as many summers—and when Adams St. School opened in September of 1950, I became “teacher” to forty-five fifth and sixth graders.

I’m sure that every teacher’s first year cannot be as discouraging as mine was. One thing I do remember: I prayed without ceasing for guidance and help and God gave me what I needed day by day. The next four years were happy years, but when I faced my class in the fall of 1954, I saw that only five of my previous twenty-three pupils had returned. My heart grieved for those others whose parents are to be held accountable for the setting of their children’s feet upon the pathway of their future life. Later, I was to go through a similar heart-rending experience, and I still pray for my dearly loved former pupils. My work load for the next few years was heavy but enjoyable. For some of these years I taught grades 5 and 6; for other years it was grades 4 and 5; for two years it was grades 3 and 4 mornings and grade 4 afternoons. Yet each year of teaching makes me realize anew how privileged I am that God has chosen me to be a teacher.

There are many advantages in being a teacher. The profession gives one a measure of financial security. Of course there are many higher paid professions, but I have always found my salary sufficient for my needs. And my responsibilities have been more than that of many single persons. Besides, I have constant fellowship with persons who feel as I do about the things that matter most in this life. A teacher in a Christian school really lives a wonderfully sheltered life. Furthermore, there is no end to learning in the teaching profession. No talents or abilities need to lie dormant. A teacher must be continually improving himself or herself, keeping informed on the latest methods, but also being stimulated with new thoughts and ideas. There are no idle moments for a conscientious teacher, and the teaching day is never monotonous or dull.

But above all else, teaching is a most rewarding work spiritually! A teacher who is called to hold always before the
consciousness of her pupils Almighty God who rules over all the works of His hand and who shows to us His children His un-speakable love and goodness in the gift of His Son must have that love of God deeply rooted in his own heart and mind and soul. It is a teacher's blessed calling to show the children how to be citizens of the Kingdom of God while living useful temporal lives. Presenting each school subject in the light of God's Word, the teacher strives to im-

plant in the heart of the pupil a realization of his relationship to God in every part of life. Both pupil and teacher must know that during all the days of their pilgrimage here God calls them to be faithful stewards in His service. Psalm 90 verse 17 summarizes well the prayer of every God-fearing teacher: "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

CRITIQUE
AGATHA LUBBERS

HERO WORSHIP OR HONOR

The assassination of the late President J. F. Kennedy has provided the news media with an abundance of material. Every newspaper and news periodical carried comment of varying proportion concerning the late president and prediction concerning which is to come.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of time . . ." and in these times God spoke. He had something to say but there were few who heard his voice resounding in the events of the times. Almost everyone was too engrossed in the immediate problem. These were the events that will form an integral part of the content of future social science and history textbooks. History was being made and historiographers were attempting to interpret the events; but the deeper historical perspective of the Whole as differentiated from the Partial eluded most of those who wrote or spoke. They were groping for an answer but the real answer to the catastrophe eluded them. God was not in all their thoughts. As the dead President was eulogized and the dead assassin was denounced, there was no mention of God and his Providence in all the transactions of men.

Lee Harvey Oswald, morally and rationally responsible, fired a weapon but it was according to the determinate counsel of God that this man accused of the murder took the lethal weapon to his work that memorable November 22nd. It was then that infidels forgot that not a hair falls from our head or a sparrow to the ground except it be according to the will of God. Scriptural imperatives were forgotten that day; false philosophy and pseudo petitions were entoned. The Scriptures were too long forgotten by men in an age of sedatives and psychoanalysis. These men had established the axiom that the Scriptures in order to be effective or genuine must be demythologized. Higher criticism knows better than to accept the Scriptures as the only rule for faith and conduct of thankful, sanctified Christians. It is only faith that can pray; that accepts the
Word of the Gospel as truth. Natural man would not hear the Word of the Gospel. This Word has nothing to say concerning the direction of history and the particulars in history.

A perplexing question faces the writers and thinkers of the age. How could anyone in this civilized society commit such a brutal crime? How could anyone take the life of the chief executive of this great, progressive nation? He was at the height of his career; he was peace-loving; he advocated an alliance for peace; he had always recognized diplomacy, peaceful coexistence, and compromise as the method for solving difficulties. How could such primitive, barbarous methods still prevail? With these questions psychiatrists, sociologists, and social historians, struggle and have attached significance to various aspects of the contemporary American way of life. The attacks made upon the present administration by the Right Wing and Conservative Front in national politics is considered by some to be the cause. Others have concluded that the accessibility of weapons with lethal potential is the cause for this crime. There are those who claim that the crime was the result of a deranged fanatic.

Over against such argumentation has come the counterattack that free society permits for freedom of expression and freedom to differ. This is part of the American way of life. These are the guarantees of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Besides the American right to own guns goes back to the early minutemen. It is argued that the second amendment to the U. S. Constitution guarantees this freedom. "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

To the Reformed Calvinist, however, these are peripheral matters. The discussion of these matters give no answer to the Whole question of right and wrong, justice and injustice. The discussion of these matters is a part of the "vanity of vanities". The basic issue to the Reformed thinker is not one of cause and effect, of ideological difference, of civic righteousness but is one of a good conscience and righteousness as a citizen in the midst of a sinful generation. The Reformed Calvinist recognizes Esau and Jacob and reckons with them. The Calvinist knows of two kinds of people irrespective of their position in life.

Liberals and moderns with their post-millennial dreams wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. They are those who with Satan clothe the lie in the garb of truth. Let it be unequivocally stated that the issue is not one which deals with the peripheral problems such as sale of firearms or personal invective, but the issue is one of loving the neighbor for God's sake. The issue is one of showing honor, love, and fidelity to all that are in authority over me. The issue is that I begin to live not according to some of God's commandments but according to all of the commandments of God. The issue is not the moralistic one which simply states that I wouldn't do anyone any harm because that isn't the way I myself should want to be treated. This is moralism, false Christianity and a twisting of the moral imperative of Christ. The moral requisites of the Saviour were more far-reaching and of deeper significance than the social reformer and do-gooder would mean. This is not the message of the Gospel. The lowest common denominator type of message is far from the message of the Reformers who declared that good works are those done out of faith and are not founded on the imagination and institutions of men.

The Mosaic, God-ordained Code for good living is not founded on the imaginations of men. It was thundered in lovingkindness from the smoking mount of God's holiness. Jesus Christ who was the fulfillment of all that lovingkindness was not the vain babbler that contemporary rabbis claimed that he was. He spoke concerning the mysteries of the kingdom and placed the imprimatur, "Truth" upon the work of holy men inspired by the spirit of God.

Paul, the apostle, had the answer to the problem. His exhortation was that supplications and prayers be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high places. (Cf. 1 Timothy 2:1-3.) The imperative of the Scripture is that prayer be made for all kinds of people. The scope of prayer is universal; it is not limited to the particular. It includes all kinds of sinners. This included Nero who after setting fire to Rome blamed the Christians whom he was persecuting.

In the age of "Kennedyism" Paul would advocate a distinction between hero worship
and respect for divinely appointed authority as an institution of God. In his day there was a Cult of Caesar; he was the reigning emperor and was called "saviour". This anti-Christian dogma is accursed idolatry.

Is this fundamentalism? Is this fatalism? The Word of God is then fundamentalistic and fatalistic. This is fundamental Calvinism. Prayers are to be offered for all men, for kings so that the people of God may lead a quiet and peaceable life. Calvin states that Christians might wrongly neglect prayers for kings because they of all men were most monstrous in their attitude toward the kingdom of Christ. Jeremiah said to the Israelites, however: "Pray for the peace of Babylon for in their peace ye shall have peace." Jer. 29:7.

The position that we take is that prayers be made that peaceful conditions may prevail so that we, the Church, may lead a peaceful and quiet life. The magistracy is armed with the sword, that wicked men may be punished and sinners may be restrained. This is not the restraint of sin in the individual through the operation of Spirit. Godliness and freedom of religion is the prayer of the saints so that God can be worshipped in a free society.

Hence we conclude, that fanatics, who wish to have magistrates taken away, are destitute of all humanity, and breathe nothing but cruel barbarism. How different is it to say, that we ought to pray for kings, in order that justice and decency may prevail. John Calvin

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**FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY**

**Fully Catechised?**

**REV. GEO. C. LUBBERS**

I understand, youthful reader, that you are a member of our churches; that you have passed through the various Catechism Classes, the earlier and the later which were prescribed for you. That is the way you look to me from the distant perspective I have of you from my study window here in the "deep South"!

Are you fully catechised?

Possibly you have passed through the years of life from the simplified Catechism Book, "Stories for Beginners" through the more ponderous, "Essentials of Reformed Doctrine" without ever having given any attention to the meaning of the term Catechism? It was simply a term which you took for granted; it simply meant that you were to memorize the various questions and answers in a given Catechism book. If one would interrupt you with the question: what is Catechism you might look at him in bewildement with a bit of youthful scorn, and say: "Catechism? Why, that is going to Catechism!!"

Now we don't want to go around in circles, do we?

Did you ever stop to ponder the meaning and the usage of the term Catechism? Well just draw up your chair a bit closer and let me tell you a bit about this term and the wonderful institution of Catechism in the Church. Maybe I'm telling you something you had not been told, or possibly didn't remember after it was told you by your faithful minister. The term Catechism comes from the Greek language; it is a word which is made of two different words put together which we call a Composit. Now here is the
word: *Catecheco*! You guessed it. The last part is exactly what it says. It is the word which in our present day English is *echo*. An echo is a sound which we emit and which reaches our own ears as it sounds back. Now the first part is not to be identified with our word “cat”, but it is found in such words as *catastrophe*. It is a Greek preposition, the root meaning of which is: down. Again you have already seen the combination; it means to *sound down*!

We are told by men who have studied these words a great deal, and who wrote dictionaries on the Greek language called *Lexica*, that this is a term which is really only found in the Bible in the general sense of giving instruction. We are further informed that the term is never used in the Old Testament Scriptures, and I believe they are correct. There is no such word found in the Old Testament, although we hasten to add that the entire Old Testament is simply replete with the same kind of instruction which is indicated by the term: to Catechise. Yes, it is only found in the New Testament times which was in a Greek speaking world. And in the church of the New Testament Dispensation, to which we too belong, we have a church vocabulary which speaks of Catechism, Catechumens, Catechists. Those who give instruction are the Catechists, and those receiving instruction are the Catechumens.

It is necessary at this point that I warn you not to jump at conclusions! You should not conclude, that, when the Bible-writers use the terms above-indicated, they necessarily have in mind formal catechetical instruction as an institution in the church. That was quite likely a later development. One rather receives the impression that both Luke and Paul, who are the only New Testament writers using this term, employ the term “*Catecheco*” in the general sense of *instruction* concerning the facts and history of the Gospel.

The instances where Luke uses the term catechise, to instruct, are the following: Luke 1:4; Acts 21:21, 24. The usage of Luke in Acts 1:4 is rather interesting, and we intend to come back to this a bit later. The apostle Paul uses the term in Rom. 2:18; 1 Cor. 14:19 and Gal. 6:6. And, now, I am going to ask you to leave your chair for just a bit, go and get your Bible, look up all these Scripture passages, and then read “catechise” where your Bible has “instruct”, “inform” or “teach”.

At least it was a bit rewarding, wasn’t it? That the term catechise and not simply instruction became the term for the ecclesiastical teaching of the children and the youth of the church, evidently underscores the truth that the teaching in the Church is *not a matter of private opinion, personal research*, but principally of imparting the doctrine, the teaching of the inspired Scriptures, which is profitable for instruction, correction in righteousness, reproof, that the man of God be thoroughly furnished unto every good work! The church placed the teaching in the minds on the youthful believers, aspiring to full communion with their Lord, in the form of questions and answers. Not only the answers are important; the formulation of the questions is equally important. Both are given in the Bible as to their material content. The implication and presupposition of the “question-and-answer” form of teaching is that to the particular question there is but one correct answer, which must be placed in the mind indelibly so as never to be forgotten! The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth, and, therefore, teaches the truth of the Gospel with full assurance of faith!

Dear Covenant young man and young woman, take note!

You must hear the joyful sound (echo) and must “sound” it back. That must be a sounding back in childlike faith. We call this confession with the mouth of what is believed with the heart. It is in your heart and mouth; the Word is very nigh unto you (Rom. 10). Hence, nothing is left to hit-and-miss in this instruction. The trumpet must emit a certain sound in the Catechism class, both by the Catechist and the Catechumen!

We said that we would reflect a bit on Luke 1:4. Notice, that Luke is writing his “Gospel” to a man named Theophilus. It is a very beautiful name which, in a way, is the name of all of God’s dear children. It means: friend of God. The Bible is full of beautiful names. Incidentally, James 2:23 tells us that Abraham, the father of believers, was “called a friend of God”. We hold that Luke is not writing to some
imaginary "Theophilus" but to a historical person by that name. He was undoubtedly a man of rank and honor amongst men, for he is designated as the "most excellent", Luke writes to "His excellency". Yet, he is a member of the church, a past Catechumen. He has been catechised in the words (things) pertaining to God, Christ, salvation and all the basic redemptive truths of the Gospel.

You should notice that Theophilus had been instructed too, just as you have been too or are now. He knew the great truths of the Gospel, the fulfillment of God’s sure promise in the Lord Jesus Christ. He had been instructed concerning the supernatural birth of Jesus, concerning His suffering and death, His resurrection and glorious ascension.

But, notwithstanding all of this, there was a place for more instruction to Theophilus. He must see the entire truth of the Gospel, and must see it in its historicity! That will give him instruction concerning the "certainty" of the things in which he has been instructed. It is on this count that all other "religious" fail miserably. They are all based upon cunningly devised fables. They cannot point out the calendar date and the geographical place of the happenings of their religion. That Luke will shew to Theophilus. I believe that when Theophilus received this "Gospel" he read it from beginning to end. Have you, dear reader?

Then you will have noticed the grand "It came to pass in the days of Herod the King of Judea . . ." Luke 1:5. And, again, you will have noticed that sublime statement that "It came to pass in those days", when God was sending Gabriel, John was born, and Jesus was about to be born, that "there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed"! Yes, when God does His work, Caesar must do his own little work and the "wise of this world are taken in their own craftiness!"

Have you read this? Or are you "fully Catechised" beyond the measure of Theophilus, and need not read concerning the "certainty" of the things in which you have been instructed?

TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACh

THAT NEO-EVANGELICAL EVANGELIST

The above title assumes that the following article deals with a certain well-known personality. The assumption is correct. Intended is an expose of that personality. Where that is warranted and called for, such a task is not only in order, but incumbent upon all who love the truth and hate the lie. There is no doubt in the mind of this editor that the flaccid, compromising, uncritical approach to popular issues and public figures is the modern way of presenting a controversial picture in a red herring frame. The trend of the liberal, controlled press, where any particular piece of (in its eyes) undesirable news cannot be suppressed, is to tone it down, minimize its critical or
controversial nature, and instead of publishing in accordance with journalism's highest principles of reporting, rather in the guise of reporting to editorialize off the editorial page in belittling, detracting language. But *Beacon Lights* is no liberal publication. Nor is this feature of the magazine a *vox populi* column in which only "issues, and/or conditions, not personalities" may be discussed. Nor is this publication hampered with a super-clergy organization which dictates to the writers, holding them with coercive policies. There is at least one city we know where the local ecumenical ministerium has adopted a policy of infringement with regard to the writers for the newspaper's "voice of the church" column. Nothing of a controversial nature is to be written by any of the contributing persons. (I do not say "ministers.") Anything antipodal to the liberal conception of academic freedom (excuse my "harrumph") is castigated as "not in accord with current American thought," which implies that the ideas so expressed are basically "reactionary," unsophisticated and antidemocratic.

This is not only the incessant one-string fiddling heard in the secular sphere, but the identical jangle jars us in the religious sphere. We are often slapped with that misapplied text (which really has to do with matters neither commanded nor forbidden by the law of God), "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" Who are you to judge someone God is tremendously using in His service? Who are you, as a man of God, to criticize another man of God? Who are you to attack a servant of the Lord who wins thousands of thousands to Christ? Are you so full of grace that you are qualified to so charge one of God's rarest exemplars of sweet humility? "Now walkest thou not in love?" (More misapplied Scripture irresponsibly hurled!) This is the very rebuttal shot at the watchmen on the walls of Zion. They, it is said, had a zeal according to knowledge, but not according to love! (A false antithesis!) Micaiah was one of those nasty, narrow-minded, pedantic preachers. So was Elijah. The latter rebuked sin in high places, would not condone the wicked, and attacked amalgamation with compromisers. He was a disrupter of the peace. He was a trouble-maker. The puppet head of the Jezebel party said so. But now that Micaiah! The effrontery of the little man! He was always criticizing the current administration, and never had anything good to say of conditions either in church or state. He must have been addle-pated, for his utterances were always adverse. He was a political "sore thumb," an ecclesiastical "odd-ball," the last of an all but extinct species of "hate mongers." All the other prophets, with one ear to the ground, and one finger in the air, knew which way the wind was blowing — to the left, of course! With united voice they announced the arrival of the eleventh hour with "all's well"; like the man who fell out of the window on the 90th floor of the skyscraper, and as he passed the 18th floor he cried out to those huddled in the windows, "All right so far!" Micaiah had been intimidated often to bring him in line with the latest whims of the Baal regime. He was summarily advised to be like the local diplomats, and to pattern his style after their numbing pronouncements. His answer was a flat refusal. The local "press", if it reported it at all, must have in some obscure section of its cuneiform edition passed it off as "juvenile." It was, to be sure, the epitome of simplicity. "As Jehovah liveth, what He says to me, that will I speak!" Poor fellow! So pitifully out-dated! He just didn't fit with the spirit of the age. There is too much in the whole counsel of God which grates on the flesh. Few today, then, will stand with the Micaiahs. He (it was a majority opinion) was not motivated by Christian love. Witness his contention that the pronouncements of the opposition were inspired by the devil. Micaiah was no echo, no yes-man, but he was down-right unethical. He kept harping on that "there is no compromise between Jesus Christ and the devil" line. Then when he could have commended his liberal contemporaries as experts in social progress, he instead denounced them as speaking lies in hypocrisy. He was immediately branded as an enemy of the state, one of the pestilent humatic fringe. For his refusal to desist from his fanatical obscurantism he was forcibly sequestered without a hearing, investigation or examination in the executive's "psychiatric" ward. (Cf. Christian and Evangelist at Vanity Fair, Pilgrim's Progress). There he was accorded the state-imposed diet of the concentration camp.

What has all this to do with the present topic? Just this — that if the truth is de-

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**BEACON LIGHTS**
fended and the lie opposed, we may expect the same treatment as the prophets. And if we criticize a neo-evangelical we may be regarded with as much horror as the Birmingham bombers.

But what is a neo-evangelical? He is one in the Protestant pale who detests the label of "Fundamentalist," who shies away from the designation "modernist" or "liberal," and because the term "conservative" might connote a compromiser with the latter, or appear to identify him with the former, he like a frog in his own pond rests on the lily pad of "neo-evangelicalism." He prefers mightily not to be recognized as a Fundamentalist, the separatist who practices coming out from Babylon and being separate from Belial. He prefers an inclusivistic approach which will allow him in-and-out contact with any company which appeals to him, especially that of the modernist camp. A Fundamentalist, to the neo-evangelical mind, has no "depth of sympathy and understanding" and so renders himself unfit for witnessing with cultured grace to the liberal strains in the church. He will not take a clear-cut antithetical stand on the fundamentals and essentials of the faith over against everything contrary to sound doctrine. He adopts rather a soft, weak pacifist attitude toward the enemies of the historic, Reformed, Christian faith. He puts on a strong front, uses some strong terms, but will not maintain a consistently traditional orthodox position, since he must proceed out of expediency and opportunism. He shuns his Fundamentalist brother as a "too independent Christian who has failed to progress with God." But no attempt is made to avoid the modernist enemies of the gospel.

A prominent neo-evangelical organization is the National Association of Evangelicals which would definitely refuse to go along with us who confess the truth in the Belgic Confession, Articles 27, 28, 29 on the true and the false church, not accepting the concept of the purity of the church, but the inclusivist idea of the church. The neo-evangelical publication, as already noted in this magazine, is "Christianity Today." Another such publication is the formerly Fundamentalist "Sunday School Times." The neo-evangelical movement presents no protection against the tide of apostasy, the socialism and leftism of the ecumenical movement, or the coming one world church of antichrist. Neo-evangelism goes along with the tide of Babel-building.

Now who is the most outstanding neo-evangelical figure but Billy Graham? A much criticized evangelist, but the critics perhaps nearest to him have in mind only his dubious methods, his hobnobbing with the world, and his yoking up with modernists who preach a false gospel. These critics do not judge him personally to be a false prophet, but are very careful to make it understood that they believe he does "preach the simple gospel of salvation." They merely regard him as a misled, or an inconsistent or compromising, or even backshidden "true preacher" of the "simple gospel." His Pelagian teaching that the natural man can make a decision for Christ is taken up by many in the Christian schools. Am I wrong in feeling that the Christian school movement is swallowing up everything in the religious, secular and political realm without evaluation in the light of that system of doctrine taught in Scripture?

What we find in the newspapers about Billy Graham becomes increasingly shocking as time goes on. However this documentation which may be used adversely against Graham will more than likely be rejected by him, and especially by his followers as the usual tabloid inaccuracies and misrepresentations. What then shall we say of this statement found in the April 28, 1962 Washington Post: "The ground of Christian fellowship, he (Graham) says, is 'not the inspiration of Scripture, but the deity of Christ'"? Also stated in this article: Graham "says verbal inspiration of Scripture is only a theory and not a matter of great importance for Christian faith." Are these really Graham's statements? or are they the "usual twisted reports of the newspapers"? Certainly the language is not that of one firmly standing on the rock of Scripture, nor does it agree with the great confessions of the true church, as e.g., "the Holy Scriptures . . . are given by inspiration of God," and ought "to be received because it is the Word of God . . . the infallible truth . . . the whole counsel of God . . . being immediately inspired by God," and "the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself." Does anyone believe that Graham would agree with this from the Westminster Confession, or that he would
express himself as clearly and forthrightly?

The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin reported Graham as saying, "We in America have been called by God . . . We were once God-fearing. We took in minority groups, and we showed the world democracy in action. But we have become sinful . . ."

This is typical of his modern flattery of man. Here God has called, not the church in America, but America, and that as Americans we once were God-fearing, i.e., we were kind to minority groups, and so demonstrated not Christianity, but "democracy in action." No wonder so many in Christian Reformed circles see nothing wrong with the content of Graham's preaching! Here is the error of the Christian Reformed Third Point of Common Grace, that there is in man a common grace which enables him to do deeds in civic good in his unregeneracy. This is contrary to that great truth of the Canons of Dort, III, IV, etc., and therefore contrary to Scripture. The natural man is dead through trespasses and sins. The dead can only become more putrefied. His civic acts he is incapable of using aright (to God's glory), and the best of them are all polluted. Therefore America demonstrates nothing but sin in action. It is only of the people of God in America that He says "I see no sin in Jacob." But if Graham preached the gospel truth of men's total depravity, what would become of his popularity and following?

In Adelaide, Australia, The News of March 1, 1962 carried the headline, "Churches to Discuss Unity Plan . . . The topic arose from the recent assembly of World Council of Churches in New Delhi." These Adelaide churches were addressed by a Mr. C. H. J. Wright. He expressed his regret that it was impossible for five Romish observers at New Delhi to have full participation at the assembly. He mentioned the presence of Billy Graham, that he was very favorably impressed with the NDA meetings, and would return to his country to do his best to use his influence for the So. Baptist Church to join the WCC. In the La Prensa, Lima, Peru newspaper, Feb. 8, 1963, Graham eulogized the attitude of Pope John XXIII in his efforts to obtain greater tolerance and the final union between all the Christians." (Itd., RCH).

"According to him (Graham), there is now greater understanding and comprehension between the religions." This "greater understanding" does not mean that the Romanists are more understanding of Protestants in general, nor more tolerant toward their theological position and their missionary endeavors. It merely means that nominal and renegade Protestants are more tolerant and soft toward the femininities and flateries of hierarchy and priestcraft. The Kalamazoo Gazette, Nov. 14, 1963, reports that "Graham will preach at a Roman Catholic College next week, thanks to a Jew . . . The sermon will be Graham's first before a Roman Catholic body . . . 'I think,' said Graham, 'that it is evidence of the ecumenical (Christian Unity) spirit in the world today.'" No proof is needed that Graham is an ecumenist. Everyone knows that. But what does he mean by such statements as the above? Evidently he means that the great dialogue between Jews, Romanists and Modernists is succeeding, the world is learning that we have so much in common, that labor toward organic union into one church must be our present aim. Of course, the Romish church in its Christian Unity Movement has for its purpose the bringing of all (no longer Protestant "heretics," but) "separated brethren" back again to the "mother church." Does Graham favor this? That would be fair inference from the above new items. The Hearst newspaper chain decided to "Puff Graham." Graham's decision? He has decided to "Puff" the one world church.

(To be continued, D.V.)

FAITH

MRS. H. C. HOEKSEMA

When, in a meditative mood,
I gaze upon the throbbing throngs
Of sinners, loving lusts, and held
With zest in its relentless things,
Then I look up.

When all the world, in woeful mirth
With decible delight depart
From treasured truth, God's gift supreme;
With wond'ring and with heavy heart
I still look up.

And when I muse that it must be
That only God's own grace can give
A sinner, sunken deep in sin,
The precious privilege to live,
I dare look up.

I need not look around me more;
For Christ has paid the penalty,
And pointed out the pathway home,
Where ever, to eternity
I will look up.
1. The Occasion  
a. "After these things"  
   (1) The connection between this chapter and the preceding chapter is indicated by this statement.  
   (2) The question here then is, After what things did this vision come to Abram?  
      (a) The most natural antecedent of these things is that which is recorded in chapter fourteen. However the plural these could refer to more than one incident and include Lot's departure from Abram.  
      (b) There are strong indications in the chapter itself as to what it is to which "these things" refer.  
         1) What in chapter 15 indicates that Moses has in mind Abram's rescue of Lot. Did Abram have to fear a return battle with these four kings?  
         2) What does it mean that God is Abram's reward? How can God be his reward? See also Psalm 16:5, 6; Rev. 21:3, 4.  

b. Abram pleaded for Eliezer.  
   (1) What does Abram mean by the statement that the steward in his house is his heir?  
      (a) Did he think that God would give him all this land in Eliezer's children?  
      (b) Is it possible that Abram had before this considered Lot as the one who would be his heir? Could this be part of the reason why he rescued Lot? See Gen. 11:31; 12:4 and 13:1.  
   (2) Is there anything at all in the promises that God had given Abram up till this time that would give him the assurance that he would have a son of his own flesh? Was there any reason why Abram could have doubted that God intended to do this? What factors especially did Abram take into consideration in his reasoning? Do we throw away all reason when we walk by faith? Is a walk of faith unreasonable?  

2. The Method of Approach  
a. God came to Abram in a vision  
   (1) What is a vision and how does it differ from a dream?  
   (2) Did this vision continue through all that is recorded in this chapter so that Abram killed these animals, drove away the birds all during the time of that vision? Was it a vision of hours and hours in length, or does it stop at the end of verse 9?  

b. And this by revelation  
   (1) This was that which man could never know without revelation. He could receive a son without it but would not know the covenant promise in that son.  
   (2) To what degree and for what are we dependent today upon revelation to know the covenant promises? What is the difference between direct and indirect revelation, and which do we have today?  

3. The Promise  
a. God promises a child out of his own bowels  
   (1) Does this promise yet imply that it will also be Sarai's son? Must Abram from any point of view be forced to conclude that it would have to be Sarai's son as well?  
   (2) Can you suggest any reason why God did not reveal to Abram ALL the covenant promise at one time? Why did He not tell him in Haran that this would take place?  
   (3) What part of the covenant promise makes the birth of a son so necessary?
b. Abram’s reaction

(1) Abram believed God.
   (a) Did this in any way require of Abram that he believe in a miracle?
   (b) Does salvation require of us today that we believe in miracles? Is regeneration a miracle? When young men and young women confess their faith before the congregation, are we witnesses of a miracle? What miracles do we have to believe, if we are truly to be believing children of God? What two fundamental miracles for sure?
(2) What does it mean that it was counted to Abram for righteousness?
   (a) What is righteousness?
   (b) Does it mean that God counted Abram righteous because he believed? Or does it mean that God counted Abram’s faith as a righteous deed? See also Galatians 3:1-6.
   (c) Was Abram’s faith essentially a faith in Christ? How would you show this?

c. The ratification of the Covenant promise

(1) Abram’s part
   (a) We are not to shy away from saying that we have a part in God’s covenant. What does the Baptism Form say is our part in the covenant? What according to this Baptism Form is God’s part? What is in this form the relation between these two parts? Is there any significance, that is, in the fact that God’s part is mentioned first?
   (b) Abram was to take various animals, cut them in two—with the exception of the birds—and wait for God to come.
      1) This was not a sacrifice even though there was a shedding of blood. There is no mention however of an altar.
      2) This was an ancient ritual whereby a covenant was ratified or made valid, put a) See Jeremiah 34:18ff. for an into effect.

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other reference to this practice in which it is literally suggested that this belongs to the covenant.

b) Notice also the practice of passing between the parts of the animals in Jeremiah 34.

c) There is a difference of opinion as to the significance. Some maintain that both parties agree by walking between the parts that they and their animals may be destroyed, if they break the covenant. Others insist that by going between the pieces the two parties signified a formation of the two parties into one: That which is divided is now one by the joint act of the two entering into the covenant. Two partners become one party.

(c) Abram finds opposition in the covenant sphere

1) The birds sought to devour and destroy the elements to be used in the signs of the ratification.

2) Thus we will always find opposition in the covenant life.

a) Abram has a long wait—till the sun goes down; and the sun often goes down on our lives as well and things look dark as far as God’s promises are concerned.

b) It is not simply men around us who oppose us when we live as covenant children and wait for God; there is that within us also that opposes and seeks to fill us with horror and fear that God’s promises might not be fulfilled in us.

(2) God’s part
   (a) Note that we are speaking here of God’s part in the ratification of the covenant and not of His part in the covenant. This we treated already above in 3, c, (1), (a).
(b) God ALONE goes between the divided pieces. He appears as a smoking furnace (a burning cloud of smoke) and as a burning lamp (the flame). See also Exodus 3:2; 13:20: 24:15-18; Leviticus 16:2, 1 Kings 8:10 and Revelation 14:14.

(c) The point is that God establishes the covenant without Abram's help.

1) Abram falls into a deep sleep and did not go between the pieces.

2) The covenant stands by God's work and not man's. Indeed we have a part, but this part we do only because God fulfills His part. But we have NO part in the establishing, realizing or originating of that covenant.

3) See Hebrews 6:13-18 and note that no mention is made of Abram being required to swear for the confirmation of the covenant.

4) What all is implied in the statement of Genesis 17:7, when God says, "And I will establish MY covenant ..."? (Capitalization is ours. J.A.H.)

(d) further details of that covenant promise

1) The number of his seed. Is this literal or a figure of speech?

2) Prediction of enslavement in Egypt which will not be because the covenant fails or God is faithless but to serve their going out "with great substance."

3) The borders of the promised land defined. How large an extent of land was this?

ABRAM BEGETS ISHMAEL

1. The Birth of Ishmael

a. Sarai takes the initiative

(1) Was there any element of faith at all behind this act of Sarai? Was it because she too believed the covenant promise and desires to see it fulfilled?

(2) Is this another case of Satan coming to man through the woman to realize covenant rebellion?

b. Abram yields

(1) Was this a case of adultery? Was there any way in which Abram might know that one wife was all a man might have? Do the ten commandments specifically forbid more than one wife? What texts would you quote to maintain our stand of one wife for one man? Does 1 Timothy 3:2 refer only to bishops? Does the passage itself speak as though Hagar is Abram's wife?

(2) Was it a case of unbelief? Was not a son in the very near future necessary since Abram was already 85 years old? Should his waiting for God to appear at the ratification of the covenant not also have been practiced here? Was it an act of relying upon God when Abram took his wife's maid for the "covenant's" sake? Is it ever necessary to sin in order to further the covenant of God?

c. Ishmael is born and named.

(1) At the time of his birth Abram is 86 years old. But compare this with chapter 14. Was he a frail and weak man, physically "played out" or in good physical health yet?

(2) Abram calls his son Ishmael after the child is born.

(a) This name was given to Hagar by the angel; and she in turn told Abram that her son should so be named.

(b) This was an act of obedience on Abram's part; but was it an act of faith?

1) Did Abram receive Ishmael as the promised seed? Is there anything in the account to indicate whether he did?

2) Do you suppose that Hagar told Abram ALL that which transpired in the wilderness or simply the name? Would verse 10 give Abram the right to assume that this
was the promised covenant seed? Compare it with 15:5 and decide whether this is conclusive evidence.

2. The Flight and Return of Hagar

a. Sarai is despised by Hagar

1) The word *despised* that is here used (there are several others even in the Old Testament) means to be or to become light. Just what would you suggest then as to Hagar's attitude towards Sarai? The word is not derived from the word *contempt* (the root meaning of which is to tread upon or loathe). What does it mean that she considered Sarai "to be light"? Light in what sense?

2) Sarai speaks to Abram about this behaviour of Hagar. She says, "My wrong be upon thee . . . the Lord judge between me and thee."

(a) What is the idea here of the word *wrong*? Is it wrong in the ethical sense of "my sin" or physical sense of "my injury"?

(b) And in that connection, does she mean that she has sinned by the words MY *wrong* or that Abram wronged her?

(c) Was Abram's answer to Sarai correct? Did he disown Hagar as his wife? Does he show true covenant excitement, joy and interest in the news that a child is to be born in the covenant sphere? Or does he simply mean that Sarai may punish her own maid for her act of disrespect?

(d) Does the whole incident give any ground for the position that neither Abram, Sarai or Hagar expected or intended that Hagar would be Abram's wife and that she would ever, even in bringing forth a son for Abram, be more than a servant?

(b) Hagar flees

1) Was Hagar justified in fleeing? Would you quote 1 Peter 2:18 or Matthew 24:15-21?

2) Is there any reason to believe that Abram encouraged her to flee? Why did Hagar not appeal to Abram for protection? Could she claim it?

3) Can you give a reason why Hagar fled to the way to Shur? Where is this way to Shur?

4) About how many days, do you suppose, was Hagar gone from Abram's house and away from Sarai?

5) That she stopped at a fountain, does that suggest that she might have intended to try to live there?

c. The angel of the Lord appears to Hagar

1) Who is this angel of the Lord? See also Exodus 14:19; Isaiah 63:9; Daniel 3:25.

2) May we conclude from the appearance of the angel of the Lord that Hagar was an elect believing child of God?

3) What is implied in the words *submit* and *mistress*? Is this a rebuke to Hagar or instruction?

d. Hagar's response to the angel's words.
3. Ishmael's Character and Future Foretold

a. He will all be wild man. This is further explained by the statement that he will have constant war and strife with his fellow men.

(1) "Against" in the verse does not mean that he will lean against men for support, depend upon them. It means against in the sense of opposition.

b. He will dwell in the presence of his brethren.

(1) Grammatically this could be either Isaac and his seed, or it could be the Egyptians. For his mother was an Egyptian.

(2) Genesis 25:17, 18 indicates that he did live to the east of the Egyptians. And the phrase "in the presence" does indeed mean "to the east of."

(3) But subsequent history also makes it very plain that he and his descendants always maintained an independent life. They lived boldly before the face of their brethren. See also again Genesis 25:17, 18.

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**NEWS from, for, and about our churches**

**LOIS E. KREGEL**

**Mission Activities**

From Houston our missionary, Rev. G. Lubbers, reports that, although the group there does not experience numerical growth, there is spiritual growth, which is evidenced by the interest shown in the catechetical instruction, the generous giving, and the receptivity toward the preaching. This year for the first time they had a children's program on Christmas Day. Miss Agatha Lubbers told the Christmas story to the children and organ music on tape was furnished by Mrs. C. Lubbers, playing on the organ of First Church.

**Our Servicemen**

We have the addresses of two servicemen from First Church. Donald Ezinga is taking up radar in Mississippi; his address is as follows:

D. Ezinga,
Lot No. 24, Box 131 K, Pass Rd.
Biloxi, Miss.

Pvt. Arthur Bult, Jr., is stationed in Ber-
Congratulations

to Mrs. Wm. Nienhuis (First) who celebrated her 89th birthday on Dec. 12.

Calls:

Rev. G. Lubbers has declined the call extended to him by our congregation in Lynden.

Rev. B. Woudenberg has declined the call from Southwest.

Rev. G. Lanting has declined the call from Redlands.

Called Home:

Mrs. S. Bylsma (First) at the age of 76 years; Mr. J. Kerksstra (First) at the age of 78 years.

Future Conventioneers:

A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Jansma (Hull)

A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Schipper (Hudsonville)

A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. C. Kamps (Southeast)

A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. K. Rietema (First)

A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. D. Hauck (First)

Wedding Bells
rang for Henry Bleyenberg and Judy Gilman (Edgerton) on Nov. 29; and for Don Kraaienga and Sandra Pfishner (Southwest) on Oct. 11.

Membership Changes:

Rodney Miersma of Edgerton transferred his papers to South Holland; Southeast welcomed Mrs. Kenneth Schipper from Kelloggsville Chr. Ref. Church.

Around the Churches

South Holland’s congregation was saddened by the loss of two of its children, the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. Buijter and the eight year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. Zandstra, both of whom were killed in an automobile accident on Jan. 3. The others in the car were injured, Mrs. H. Zandstra the most seriously. We commend these two grieving families to the care of their Heavenly Father, who will surely comfort them with His Spirit and Word.

Rev. and Mrs. D. Engelsma recently spent three weeks in Redlands, Calif., where the pastor had a classical appointment; they brought back the greetings of the people there to Loveland.

Dooi’s bulletin contained a “thank you” from the consistory for all those who gave of their time and work toward the building of the new addition to the parsonage. Rev. and Mrs. H. Hanko thanked the congregation also and invited them to come and see it.

The friendly rivalry between the basketball teams of Adams and Hope Schools was to be resumed January 17 at Sylvan Gym and continued at another game on Feb. 21.

The young people of our Randolph Church were invited to the home of the pastor, Rev. G. Van Baren, for a Christmas Eve party; ice-skating was planned for the evening.

From Hull’s bulletin we gleaned the following quotation: “Pearls are not gotten but from the bottom of the water; and gold is digged not from the surface, but from the deep entrails of the earth. So the joy of God is not to be found but in the inward recesses of a broken and contrite spirit.”

—Cowper

BE YE HOLY!

Eighteen