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The Christian's Political Responsibility
REV. JOHN A. HEYS

Ostrich and White Elephants
REV. G. VAN BAREN
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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ECUMENICITY

One of the most "talked-about" issues today is that concerning the World Council of Churches (hereafter — WCC) and ecumenicity. The Church papers and periodicals, also those of the Reformed community, are full of articles discussing the pros and cons of membership in the WCC. In not a few such articles it is argued that it is the calling of the Reformed denominations to join the WCC. That there should be articles and discussion on the subject is understandable: but, that there are those who openly (among Reformed leaders) advocate membership in the WCC is indeed strange and lamentable. It ought to be very clear what our reaction to the WCC should be, yet evidently to some it is not.

In the December issue (1963) of Stra-
mata, a periodical published by the students of Calvin Theological Seminary, there appeared an article entitled, "Catholicity and Ecumenicity" by Mr. Henry Venema. In this article Venema concludes that the Reformed denominations (particularly the Chr. Ref.) ought to join the WCC. He arrives at his conclusion by pointing out that the aims of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES) and the WCC are essentially the same. Since this is true, argues Venema, members of the RES should also be members of the WCC.

Catholicity must be understood in a qualitative, not a quantitative sense, writes Venema. Writes he: "In this way we acknowledge that Christ is King of all creation and that this kingship is visible or ought to be visible especially in the Church. . . . The Church's only task is to confess His rule and display it in word and deed . . . This is true catholicity."

About Ecumenicity Venema states: "... the picture of a truly ecumenical Church is one which is organizationally one and spread over the whole world." Understood in the above senses the two ideas are closely related according to Venema. "If a Church is truly catholic it cannot help but be ecumenical"; he writes. Furthermore according to Venema: "... the reverse is also true. Catholicity must also be the aim and goal of ecumenicity."

He goes on to say that since the definition of the WCC states: "that the WCC is a fellowship of churches which . . . seek to fulfill together their common calling . . .", its aim is catholicity and only then ecumenicity. The WCC is geared to that purpose viz. "... to uncover the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord . . ."

The aim of the RES is essentially the same says Venema. "What we have observed so far in essence is that the primary goals of both RES and WCC are the same. Both are trying to deepen the Churches (sic.) understanding of catholicity first of all. Only then true ecumenicity, true church union, is possible."

Finally He writes in the last section of his article as follows: "On the basis of these considerations it is clear that our church should not belong only to the RES but also to the WCC simply because the primary aim of both organizations is very similar. . . . It seems to me that every church which confesses that Christ is Lord has the duty and obligation to find out what this means in cooperation with other churches which hold to the same confession. Only in this way will churches learn from each other and grow together toward the universal Church of Christ."
With these sentiments we disagree. Certainly these are strange words to be coming out of the Reformed community. Our calling, our “duty and obligation” is certainly not to join the WCC in order to find out what it means that Jesus Christ is Lord. The WCC is composed of many denominations which in fact deny the Kingship of Christ. They deny it in that they deny the virgin birth, the atonement, the resurrection, and many more cardinal truths of Scripture. How can we who are truly Reformed have fellowship with this? How can we work with such people?

The Apostle John writes in 1 John 4:1-3: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. . . . Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” It’s as simple as that! Taking these words as our criterion we should have no problem in concluding that we do not belong in the WCC.

Our prayer is that God give us the grace to remain faithful to His Word — rejecting all that is contrary to it — even until He comes again.

R.D.D.

Open Forum

MARK HOEKSEMA

Dear Mr. Editor,

After reading the article “A House on the Sand or on a Rock” by Mrs. Toni B. Quenga which appeared in the December 1963 issue of Beacon Lights, the following questions arose in my mind.

Mrs. Quenga writes, “What are you looking for in life?” My answer would be to look for first things first. In the fear of God and in the fellowship of His Covenant people, we must seek His glory. This includes seeking the purest manifestation of God’s truth in church and in school. Has Mrs. Quenga done this in her world travels and in her absence from the Protestant Reformed Churches?

What was God telling Mrs. Quenga through this typhoon? Was He giving her an opportunity to testify of her faith? Or was He telling her that she does not belong on Guam and to return to the Protestant Reformed Churches?

Mrs. Quenga asks, “What do you have to give to your Master?” I think I can answer this question. Absolutely nothing! The impression that I received of this question and of the last paragraph of her article was this: that we can do something for our Master by looking for ways to help and serve others. Ephesians 2:8-10 tells us that our good works are not our gifts to God, but God’s gifts to us. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Isn’t this what we as Protestant Reformed people believe?

Respectfully submitted,
MARK HOEKSEMA

QUIET THOUGHTS:

“Some people fall for everything and stand for nothing.”

“The men who moved the world were men whom the world could not move.”
The Christian's Political Responsibility

REV. JOHN A. HEYS

Man's responsibility is his ability to respond or answer for his conduct or behaviour. You may note two elements in this statement. Responsibility is a response or answer. And responsibility is definitely an ability to respond or answer. That creature only is responsible who is able to give answer for his deeds before God. This every rational-moral creature has. And therefore every man, angel and devil will appear in judgment before God and be called to give answer for every thought, word, desire and deed which has ever been his.

The implication of responsibility is that man has a calling. Every answer implies a call which is answered. God is the one Who calls us and gives us work to perform. To Him we will have to give an answer for how we conducted ourselves in that work. And since the subject assigned speaks of the Christian's political responsibility, it has to do with the Christian's life in the sphere of civic matters, the matters of government and State. The word comes from the Greek word for city.

And finally by way of introductory statement, we may say that responsibility means that we must answer. It is our calling to answer, and we shall never escape it. For every deed which we perform, we will be brought into judgment and we will be required to answer. For all responsibility is to God. The employer may call you in and ask you to answer for an infraction of his wishes. The parent may send for and call in his child to answer for this or that deed performed. The police may issue to you a ticket which requires of you that you appear in court and answer for a deed performed. But each and every time it is also that for which God demands and answer. And in the day when we appear before His judgment seat, we will be required to answer for that deed.

Nevertheless we must not overlook the element of ability in responsibility. Men may deny that they are responsible. They may ask as Cain did, "Am I my brother's keeper?" We may doubt that we need to answer for what we have done to the brother or failed to do for him, but the fact remains that we will not escape that judgment seat and avoid giving answer. Exactly because God has made us to be rational-moral creatures, we have responsibility before Him. The brute beast of the field may have to answer to his owner. The wild jungle creature and even the little mouse in your home will not be called before your bar of judgment to answer why this or that deed was performed. Nor will these appear in judgment before God and answer in the judgment day. With the shedding of their blood, their existence is gone. But man, made in the image of God as a living soul, with a rational-moral nature, exists everlasting and has the ability to answer. Most assuredly he will do so even when he escapes the searching eye and questioning tongue of his fellow men.

Responsibility is always first the obligation, demand and ability to answer before God. Our political responsibility before our government and before our fellow man is secondary and must never be put on the foreground. We must conduct ourselves in the consciousness of being responsible before God and only for His sake before men. That is what Paul teaches us in Romans 13. He writes, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power (authority) but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." God gives answer to no man for His works. He is sovereign and need not answer us, if it does not please Him to do so. All authority is of Him, for He is the Creator. And all crea-
tures shall give answer to Him. Let us remember that when we speak of man's political responsibility. The question is not what men demand of us and like to see us do. The question is rather what God demands and what deeds there are for which we can give a good and satisfying answer to Him. Never mind what any political party may tell you is your responsibility. Ask yourselves, young people, whether the action can be performed and you can through it and because of it give God a satisfying answer. We have fulfilled our responsibility in any sphere of life, in the home, in the shop, in political matters or in any other sphere only when we are able (for responsibility is the ability) to answer God's call by works that please Him. It is not merely a matter of answering pretty soon in the judgment day. That belongs to the subject. But it means that now we are able, not only as rational-moral creatures who can understand God's call, but also as regenerated children of God, to do that which He calls us to perform. Our works must be the answer to His call to activity.

The Christian's political responsibility is no different from the responsibility of the unbeliever. Both as rational-moral creatures can know God's will. They, the unbelievers, see the invisible things of God, namely, His Godhead and power. They too must be subject to the powers that be. But the Christian's responsibility is unique in this that He is God's royal priesthood and bears God's name in the midst of a wicked world. He has the responsibility of upholding that name in his political, social, family and church life. He may not bring reproach to that name by his failing to answer the call of God in the sphere of his political life (or in any other sphere) by actions that are not the response of obedience to God's call. He has then an added responsibility because he has an added calling.

Needless to say, he need not respond in compliance to the call of his government when that government demands the wrong answer to God's call. We must obey God rather than men. He need not listen to this and that political party that has no authority over him. There may conceivably be times when he cannot vote and his response must be to God that he does not and will not support either of the wicked candidates. There may be projects and proposed endeavours on which he certainly must vote. A safe guide always is for the Christian to ask what the will of God is and what He says in His Word. Always the first question must be as to what answer one must give to God in this circumstance. Answer that question correctly, and you have also solved the problem as to what your responsibility is before men. Always it is a responsibility unto God and before men.

There are principles in the Word of God to guide us. The so-called golden rule applies. The instruction of the Heidelberg Catechism, in the treatment of the commandments five through ten, is also worthy of note in this matter. We are to be faithful to the authorities; do good even to our enemies; promote the advantage of our neighbour, defend and promote the honor and good character of that neighbour. There are civic affairs into which we as Christians not only may but must enter in order to defend and protect the neighbour. For we are our brother's keeper. We are to promote our neighbour's advantage. And since we live in a country where matters are decided by majority vote, we may strive to prevent the evil proposed from being adopted by factions that are moved with selfish interest and not the good of the community.

We are citizens of our country. We are residents of cities, villages, and states. And Jesus told the wicked Pharisees, who wanted to have Him oppose Caesar, to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. That surely means that to the Christian's responsibility belongs his call to answer with obedience that tax program of his government. And we will have to give answer to God in the judgment day for these matters as surely as we shall for our conduct in His Church. We must be able to answer with obedience in the affairs of the State.

To vote or not to vote becomes increasingly a question when the platforms of the candidates become more openly a promise to produce the antichrist. For although no man is going to hold you responsible — for to date no record is kept of how you voted — for the man in office, there is a political responsibility before God. We will have to answer Him whether we voted or not. And even though the antichrist beaster for whom we voted did not get in office, our desire to have him further the lusts of our

(Continued on page 11)
The Synod of Dortrecht had finished its sessions; the delegates had returned to their homes. A great victory had been won in the Church of Jesus Christ. The truth of the Reformation had triumphed over the errors of Pelagianism as they had reappeared in Arminianism. The fruit of this great victory was our Canons — a precious heritage which we treasure today.

But history moves on; and we must move on with it.

The period from the end of the Synod of Dortrecht in 1619 to the time of the first major schism in the Reformed Churches in 1834 was not a happy time.

It was a period in which the Church became more and more corrupt. Not only did Arminianism reappear in this period as an influential voice in the Netherlands; but more fundamental doctrines were openly attacked and denied as the years rolled by. Such basic truths as the infallibility of the Scriptures, the truth of the trinity, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ were called into question and publicly denied. Evil heresies that had been condemned by the Church a millennium before this at Nicea and Chalcedon were once again defended within the Reformed Churches.

And along with this doctrinal decline was also a spiritual degeneration in the lives of the people. Discipline all but disappeared in the Churches. The people became very worldly. Disgraceful practices were tolerated. Piety all but disappeared in many sections of the country. Materialism gripped the people with its icy and deadening clutches. It was a time of darkness with little that was commendable.

Before we enter into a little more detailed discussion of some of the errors that were taught in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands during this period, it might be well to try, if possible to lay our fingers on the reasons for this swift and sorry decline. The question naturally arises how it was possible for the Churches which had so recently won such an astonishing victory over heresy now to fall so miserably into worse errors yet.

This question is not so easy to answer, for the reasons were complex. Especially it is difficult to determine how much each separate factor contributed to the general apostasy of the Church. What role did all these things have in the decline of the life of the Churches?

Nevertheless, the following factors were undoubtedly the main reasons why this period is best described as a period of decline.

1) First of all, the times were times of great material prosperity for the people inhabiting the Low Countries. The Netherlands had become a strong nation politically with a stable government, a powerful army and a mighty navy that sailed the seven seas. Colonists were being settled around the world, especially in the Dutch East Indies and in the New World in what is now New York. Trade was flourishing and the colonies were bringing in rich rewards. The industrious and talented Hollanders were
making products that could readily be sold in all parts of the civilized world. The Netherlands had been famous for its craftsmen and artisans; a ready market could be found for its products. The country was becoming a world power of sorts.

But material prosperity is, as a general rule, not conducive to a strong Church. Usually when the Church flourishes materially, her spiritual life suffers. When the people of God have an abundance of material things, they tend to forget that they receive everything from the hand of their heavenly Father. They become so engrossed in accumulating earthly possessions that they lose interest in the treasures of the truth and in the spiritual wealth of the kingdom of heaven.

This was true in the Netherlands.

2) Secondly, there are some church historians who find another contributing factor in the immigration of many French Hugenots. From the time of Calvin, a strong Reformed Church had been established in France and had written a strong Calvinistic Confession. But these French Calvinists (called Hugenots) were severely persecuted in France and many of them fled to the Netherlands which had become a bulwark of the Reformed faith. As the years went by however, and the immigration from France continued, the spiritual qualities of the Hugenots did not improve. Many of them had come under the influence of French rationalism. It was the time of the French Revolution when men bowed before the goddess of reason. Old philosophies were revived; Deism became the fashionable religion; Scripture was ignored and mocked. French Calvinists became tainted with these influences and carried them into the Dutch Reformed Churches when they moved their homes to the Low Countries.

How important a factor this is and how much this contributed to the decline is difficult to determine. Surely there is an element of truth in the contention that these things added to the general apostasy. But, at the same time, it must be remembered that many strong Calvinists also came from France (witness the many French names among our own people of Dutch background) and were a source of considerable strength to the Netherlands Churches.

3) Thirdly, we may find a reason for decline in doctrine in the fact that, after Dordrecht, a reaction set in. This is often the case in the history of the Church. After a prolonged and bitter struggle to defend the truth, the Church is tempted to rest on its laurels and sit back at ease. A great victory had been won over the forces of Arminianism, and the people thought there were no more battles to fight. They were weary of struggle and became complacent and lethargic in a false sense of security. This was not unique among the Churches in the Netherlands. This had happened before in the Church; and it has happened since. But the devil never accepts defeat. He attacks again even though he may have lost a battle. The war of faith goes on throughout all the ages and will cease only when the Lord returns. Each battle is only part of the long and bitter war of the history of the world. But the people of God sometimes are inclined to think that one battle won brings an end to the war. And this is dangerous, for then they are no longer watching and guarding the truth. Unnoticed then evil and heresy again creeps into the Church. And the saints, lulled to sleep, weary of fighting, do not see that the devil is not yet completely overcome, but that he has attacked again in his unrelenting determination to destroy the Church.

This happened in the Netherlands. Dead orthodoxy was a chilling reality. And the Church suffered on account of it.

4) There was however, one factor which probably more than any other contributed to the spiritual decline of the Churches. I refer to the unique relation that existed in the Netherlands between Church and State.

We have already noticed this relation in past articles. You will recall that the Churches could not call the Synod of Dordrecht until they had the approval of the States General. The result was then that many years elapsed before a national Synod could meet, years in which Arminianism made deep inroads into the Church.

This same relationship continued to plague the Churches throughout this entire period and contributed considerably to the degeneration of that day.

I say it was a unique relationship. Not because the Netherlands was the only place where the Church and State had such close ties; this was true also in England. But

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FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION

Education is costly in terms of dollars and cents. Witness the item "schools" on your local tax statement for proof of this statement. Christian education is doubly so but it is an invaluable commodity in terms of privilege and rewards. Christian education involves a staggering outlay of money for the devoted Christian parent. Some there are who define this activity in terms of Christian sacrifice while other denominate this activity as Christian necessity, privilege or obligation.

Linked to the whole problem of school financing is the question of federal aid to education. Two schools of thought currently prevail concerning this controversial and timely topic. The one school of thought argues that government aid is principally wrong while the other school of thought would argue that the receipt of government aid is part of the legitimate reimbursement from taxes paid which is made available to all the citizens.

Writing in Christianity Today, Lester De Koster, professor at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, takes an affirmative stand when he writes "Federal Aid to Christian Education: Yes," February 28, 1964. He argues the actuality, necessity and the legitimacy of federal aid in his own seductive style. We will quote at length selected portions from this article.

"We all know, for example, that tax exemption is tax support, for the community together pays for certain services to our schools through property taxes. If we are really opposed to public aid for religious schools, let us initiate petitions to set matters right.

"And there would be much more than tax exemption to set right. For the various GI bills have poured, and still do in lesser measure, billions of dollars into pedagogical life-blood regardless of whether it flows through public, private, or religious arteries.

"Again the Surplus Property Act of 1944 enriched educational institutions supported by some thirty-five religious denominations with grants of land, buildings, and supplies, all paid for by public funds; and this continues today.

"The Defense Education Act puts millions of loan-dollars into student packets on all campuses, on deferred interest and with promise of half-cancellation to future teachers. Faculty members share in outright grants under the same act, regardless of confessional status or institution.

"Therefore the point I am suggesting is ineluctable: for most religious institutions the question of the hour is not, Should we take federal aid? We simply do! The vital question is: How much, and in what form should such aid come to us?

"Why federal money?

"1. We know as many of our more secular-minded contemporaries have forgotten, that widespread religious practice and sensitivity are indispensable to a democratic way of life.

"2. We ask, further, only for what is our own. Each of us pays, it is estimated, no less than three hundred tax dollars annually for the nation’s schools.

"3. We ask, indeed, only just payment for work well done.

"4. Nor have we any right to watch Christian education progressively priced out of many parents' market.

"5. And, finally, to share with the educator, and with us all, that awesome responsibility, God has placed at our right hand one of his good gifts: the state, a great and good democratic institution under whose wings we praise him." (End of Quote)

Writing in the same issue of Christianity Today V. Raymond Edman, president of Wheaton College, Illinois, defends the nega-
tive position in an article entitled "Federal Aid to Christian Education: No." He begins by arguing that historically federal aid to education is not justifiable.

"... federal responsibility for education was discussed in the Constitutional Convention of 1787 when a national university was proposed and was rejected as being outside the province of national government."

He continues by suggesting some considerations which he feels seriously argue against federal aid to higher education.

"1. It is unnecessary, despite the enthusiastic advocacy of politicians and some educators.

"2. A subsidy is an unwarranted assumption that money is the answer to quality education.

"3. Federal subsidy involves inevitable standardization. The department that dispenses federal funds for education will establish the kind and quality of education subsidized.

"4. Subsidization means inevitable control of education, a prospect of particular concern to the Christian college.

To substantiate this fourth point he quotes a rather worthwhile study made by Harold Orland, "The Effects of Federal Programs on Higher Education: A Study of Thirty-six Universities and Colleges." (Brookings Institute)

"The danger of federal control should not be dismissed as a myth designed simply to serve the interests of local and sectional forces. It is and will remain a continuing danger to the independence of academic institutions which must be guarded against more vigilantly as the role of the federal government in higher education grows."

Dr. Edman further substantiates his position in the fourth consideration by quoting a decision of the Supreme Court in 1942, (Wickard vs. Filburn), "it is hardly a lack of due process for government to regulate that which it subsidizes."

"5. Subsidization will demand secularization of education — again a cause for concern to the Christian college. The alternatives will be religion and no federal money, or federal money and no religion.

"6. Federal subsidization, especially long-range scholarship aid, will mean a shift in responsibility for the education of the children from parents and students themselves, from colleges and their constituencies, to the national government."

Professor Edman concludes his argument by stating:

"It may be necessary at times to walk in the rags of self-determination of our own plans and programs under God rather than to be clothed in the dubious riches of dependence on federal support."

How shall we evaluate these pronouncements and considered opinions of spokesmen from two colleges which are more or less conservative when compared with the universities of this age?

Must we adopt the opinion of a member of the education department of Calvin College, Dr. Marion Snapper? "... those who strongly opposed the seeking of government aid because they feared control completely missed the point. They failed to see that government control would come faster as a result of no support than it would from support. They failed to see what others saw, including the Masonic orders, the National Education Association, and Citizens for Educational Freedom, that the competitors of the state schools could be closed by simply pricing them out of the market." Quoted from "Christian Education in 1989." Reformed Journal, May-June, 1963.

It is evident the Professor De Koster considers the federal government to be a welfare organization. As a welfare state it has a responsibility toward all taxing citizens. He argues that the fact that no strings are attached when personal grants or loans are made is reason to assume that this same situation will prevail when direct grants for education are made to the institution. With this opinion the study of Harold Orland cannot concur.

I also cannot help but believe that such government aid will cause the college to tend more and more toward secularization and the establishment of the kingdom of this world.

As Protestant Reformed Christians I am convinced we must cling to the basic premise of parental control in education. This means that we continue to finance our own schools, whether they be elementary or secondary. We have a calling to provide the best for our children. This implies that out teachers should not have to spend their summers picking up odd jobs to support their families when studying is essential to their chosen profession and calling.

We stand on the undoubted threshold of an age during which the cost of education will rise immensely. Shall we continue to fulfill our calling we shall be called upon to give of everything that we have.
TRUTH Vs. ERROR

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

THAT NEO-EVANGELICAL EVANGELIST, II

In our previous article we briefly delineated neo-evangelicalism. Fitting within such a framework Graham said in St. Louis, "I am not a fundamentalist. I consider myself to be a Conservative-Liberal." In Europe he had said, "I am not a fundamentalist. I am not a modernist. I am a constructionist." In this connection I think of Nimrod. He, too, was a constructionist. I also think of Noah. He was a constructionist. But we cannot put Nimrod and Noah in the same boat. Their construction was by no means on the same project. Noah was an ark builder. Nimrod was a Babel builder. Graham belongs either to the Noah construction company or to the Nimrod construction company. But that judgment I leave to the reader.

We read frequently of Graham’s construction operations in the news reports, and, to Bible-believing Christians, each report is in its own way a new shocker. We are given a jolt, for example, when we read of his close connections with the modernist-liberalist National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. The San Francisco Examiner of December 5, 1960, reported that "Evangelist Billy Graham preaching to an overflow audience in Grace Cathedral (the Episcopal citadel of Bp. Jas. A. Pike, who denies the virgin birth and the trinity), warned yesterday that America’s race problem will get worse . . . Graham spoke in a program sponsored by the Christian Men’s Assembly, held in conjunction with the opening of the meeting of the National Council of Churches." Two years before this in Grace Episcopal Cathedral, Graham was an honored guest at Bp. Pike’s "consecration" on May 15, 1958.

When Graham was at the Cow Palace, May 24, 1958, he had Pike on the platform to read the evening prayer after warm words of praise. On Dec. 4, 1960, Pike had Graham in the Grace Cathedral pulpit for the National Council address. Graham therefore gives public recognition to and has fellowship with the man who said of the virgin birth, that he would not “deny in the least the doctrine of the virgin birth, namely the paradox which the myth presents so well.” Of the Apostles’ Creed Pike says, “I certainly do not believe that Christ ‘sitteth on the right hand of the Father’,” and adds, “I feel the same about ‘ascended into heaven,’ and the same about ‘conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary’.” Of the doctrine of the Trinity he said, “I see nothing in the Bible, as critically viewed, which supports this particularly weak and unintelligible philosophical organization of the nature of God.” It is not the calling of a true man of God to “help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord” (II Chr. 19:2). Nevertheless, of such a nature is Graham’s endorsement of the ecumenical movement. Like Janus or Amyrald, Graham has two faces, one out of which he insists that he is a minister in the Southern Baptist Convention which is not a
part of the World Council, and another out of which he puff's the National and World Councils.

From neither the news reports, the packets, the critiques on Graham, nor from his own words as heard on radio or TV is it easy to determine the doctrinal standards of the man. I could tell you what articles of faith are held meaningless, it easy to ship you, with SA any man packets, the Councils. ever). one of his up Christ, intend to go or not to choose anything but sin. He never taught that it was within the power of unregenerated man to make a choice unto good. Until he is given a new heart will invariably reject the good and choose the evil. Man's heart is evil from his youth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil, and that continually. He. accustomed to doing evil, cannot do good (Jer. 13:23).

But, we are reminded. B. G. wins thousands of souls to Christ. That many souls become converted to Grahamism is beyond question. We are absolutely convinced of it. But whether converted to God is quite a question. Souls undoubtedly were saved through the ministry of Judas. God saved souls through the ministry of Balaam. But He does not save souls through humanism and Pelagianism. Then, if souls are genuinely saved under Graham's campaigns, it is because the Lord uses some part of His own bare Word in the heart of His chosen ones to clinch some truth previously and otherwise sown in their hearts. This is then done in spite of Graham's philosophy. The late Dr. Jas. E. Bennett wrote a critique on Graham in which he reviews the latter's "evangelism" as "A Ministry of Disobedience." In it Bennett states, "that souls were saved in spite of the methods and teachings of Billy Graham and his followers."

We once saw Billy on TV in Philadelphia where he informed his audience that God never sends a soul to hell; that God has done all He can to prevent men from going to hell; and that He has raised up the cross over against the pit of hell, and that the reason any go there is because they refuse and trample the cross under foot and so fall therein. This is misleading, dangerous doctrine. For Scripture says that God does send men to destruction, "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction" (Ps. 73:18)! When Billy was in Oklahoma we heard him preach (?) to the Indians whom he flattered and praised for their sense of honor and truthfulness, as well as their
Bravery and endurance. How he painted the American Indian with virtue! Naturally, in all he had nothing to say of man's total depravity, certainly not the Indian's. He does speak of sin, in what sounds like rather strong terms, but sin is all too often presented in the abstract way of the moralist. He strikes out at the false gods of "selfishness," of "covetousness," etc., saying nothing, however, of the sin of modernism, ecclesiastical unbelief and the apostasy in the churches. He does not strike at the false prophets of today, nor expose them. He is too busy enjoying their company.

This company includes, among many offensive characters, E. Stanley Jones, as at the Los Angeles campaign, who has said that capitalism has "the cheapest and most taudry" goal. Also he identifies the kingdom of God with socialism. Another crony is John S. Bonnell, a Presbyterian minister in New York City connected with the NYC Graham crusade, who in Look, Oct. 6, 1953 wrote an article entitled "What Is a Presbyterian?" in which he stated that Presbyterian do not believe in the three persons of the trinity, nor the resurrection of Jesus, nor in a material heaven or hell, nor in the verbal inspiration of Scripture. Bp. Gerald Kennedy, a Methodist, headed the 1963 L.A. crusade, and calls the traditionalist position "muddled theology," and thrills over the writings of a man who has broken with historic Christianity. When we consider the long line of modernists Graham so freely works with, we wonder what sort of "Christianity" today he holds. He has been many times admonished according to such Scripture as, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11), "be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (11 Cor. 6:14), and "if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house: neither bid him God speed" (11 John 10). His defense at this point is that these Christian principles do not apply to him, or to his methods. It is certain that Herod felt the same way about the seventh commandment principles that John the Baptist applied to him. Ahab also in the identical manner tried to avoid the force of Micaiah's charges that the fawning prophets of Ahab were motivated by the devil. A man caught in the company of guilty thieves may rationalize that the eighth commandment does not apply to him. But see Psalm 50:18-21.

Graham, a former fundamentalist, has now come to the place where he advocates and practices peaceful cooperation with the modernists. But to show them too much hospitality is to become partaker of their evil deeds. The next step will be peaceful capitulation. For already there is compromise with the false doctrine with which these modernists have destroyed the church. Their error strikes at the roots of the Christian faith, and for that reason is to be utterly condemned. Constructionist cooperation with destructionists! Unpardonable contradiction! Constructionist constructing what? The latest channel to "peace"—Babylon-building! As Jas. E. Bennet said of Graham's methods, they "have done incredible harm, not only to those who are seeking to be saved, but other unbelievers who have not yet made any profession of faith. They have spread false doctrines and made them popular."

(Continued from page 4)

flesh and vote for carnal reasons still, in His judgment, is not the right answer to our calling.

Let all your political activities be performed coram Deo—before the face of God—and you have fulfilled your responsibility. Ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And then answer His instruction with obedience.

(Continued from page 6)

because it is different from the relation between Church and State which we know in this country.

It is impossible to enter into this subject in detail in these articles; nor will that prove to be of any particular advantage. It will be sufficient to sketch the broad outlines of this aspect of the history of this period, if only the reader will bear in mind that it is difficult to overestimate the importance of this factor as it contributed to the sad state of affairs.

But this must wait till our next article.
"Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isaiah 55:2.

OSTRICH AND WHITE ELEPHANTS

Though it is a colloquialism, the term "white elephant" is rather expressive. According to Webster's dictionary, it is something requiring much care and expense, but yielding little profit. An elephant would surely require such care and expense—while at the same time, its whiteness suggests its uselessness; it has no place among that which is profitable. Often the term is applied to purchases made of items which appear to be inexpensive—yet utterly useless. Or, the term has been used in connection with large possessions which are costly to maintain—but which could hardly be given away.

I would suggest that the term could well apply to so very many things in relation to the spiritual life. The child of God, living in this sinful world, finds himself often with spiritual "white elephants." These represent such things as do not benefit him spiritually—but nevertheless require of him much of his wealth and time to maintain. We do well as young people too, to examine ourselves and our lives to see how many white elephants we have in our possession. Needless to say, the possession of "white elephants" is exactly the characteristic of the flesh. It is natural man, the depraved sinner, who puts all his trust and reliance upon such things which have no spiritual value whatsoever. All that he possesses, all that he does, all that he uses—can be said to be "white elephants." Nor does he desire anything else.

The second animal to which I would call your attention is the ostrich. Concerning this bird there is the story that he will hide his head in the sand in order to evade reality. If an enemy threatens, he can place his head in the sand and pretend that no enemy exists. I suppose this theory concerning the ostrich is not true; yet it is very really the picture of man who has his "white elephants." Why does not wicked man see that all he possesses is but a "white elephant"? The fact is that he blinds himself to reality. He refuses to see that all things must be done to the glory of God. He will not acknowledge that it is wrong that he exalt himself and seek his own pleasures of the flesh. He will not confess that the just wrath of God rests upon the transgressor. As the ostrich, he hides his head in the sand of his own depravity and refuses to see his own abominable foolishness.

Isaiah was speaking of such in his own time in the second verse of chapter 55. He spoke prophetically of the captivity and the return again to the promised land. But there were many of the Jews who would not be interested any more in the promised land—and in the fulfillment of God's promise concerning redemption. They would be content in the land of captivity. They would have established themselves; they would have a measure of earthly prosperity; they would have a measure of respect and honor from their neighbors. They would be spending their money for that which is not bread and
their labor for that which satisfied not. They would care no more for Jerusalem and the temple and all that these included. They had set their hearts on "white elephants," and, as the ostrich, they had buried their heads to the revelation of God’s Word which condemned them for all their lustfulness.

Especially as young people, we must beware of the setting of our hearts on spiritual "white elephants." We confess that we are pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land. We do not have our citizenship papers on the earth. On the contrary, we seek that better and heavenly kingdom prepared for us in Jesus Christ. Our gaze must be fixed on that. But, is it?

We often fall into the very sin that the prophet condemns: we spend money for that which is not bread and labor for that which does not satisfy. Just examine yourself. What do we do with our wages? What type of books and magazines do we buy? Do we earn wages simply in order that we may wear the latest fashions, or drive around in the "hottest" car available? Do we use our possessions so as to enjoy all of the sports and other entertainment which is so readily available? Do we so use our possessions in such a way that when it comes time to support the cause of God’s kingdom—there is but little left? Are we spending money for "white elephants," and then complain that the church budget is too high, or Christian schools cost too much?

The same can be said concerning the time given to us. Often young people, though not exclusively they, believe that their time is given them simply for a good time. If they are not going to school or working, they believe that they can simply be having a good time with their friends—doing nothing profitable. Night after night is spent—yielding no spiritual profit whatsoever. Duties toward the family are simply ignored as though they did not exist. One’s calling to work and study in the church are not considered at all. The time is not used to help one another in our spiritual burdens—but simply for self. If that is true with us, then we surely have another evidence of seeking "white elephants"—spending much time and effort upon that which yields no spiritual benefit.

And if you are not an "ostrich," and hide your head to reality, you will have to confess with me that very often we become guilty of spending money for that which is not "bread."

What is wrong with all this? If we seek "white elephants," we are in reality following the philosophy of this world. There is the oft-repeated philosophy, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." We see about us the urge to attain to earthly, materialistic comfort. Striving has as its end to obtain a place here below. Politically, across this earth, there is the argument whether capitalism or communism can best supply the citizens of the world with earthly goods. Far too often, this philosophy, which we deny in principle, is nevertheless the philosophy which affects our own lives. It is high time that we realize that we are not, after all, a part of this earth—except that we live here now as pilgrims and strangers.

The influence of the world’s philosophy can be seen also in our seeking of entertainment. We have reached the point where there seems to be nothing "off limits" for the Christian except the most gross corruptions which many of the world are already ready to condemn. We can watch its drama and movies over television (a censurable sin before the advent of T.V.)—except that usually we restrain ourselves on Sunday. We can enjoy all of its sports with the same zeal and enthusiasm as the world itself shows. Our flesh too seeks worldly pleasures—and most likely because the world itself has convinced us that all this is "innocent" pleasure to which a working person is surely entitled.

If not "white elephants," then what? The prophet says, "Eat what is good; let your soul delight itself in fatness." This is the "water" and "wine and milk" which Isaiah mentions in the first verse. Though I cannot enter into the riches of these ideas, we must see that this refers to Jesus Christ and all His benefits. He Himself called Himself the Water of life and the Bread of life. And again, in Matthew 6:33 Jesus says, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness . . ." That must be the guide for you as young people. First of all, in all you have and all you do, you seek the honor and glory of God. And out of this central principle must follow also your relationship to the church and to one another. If we seek what is truly "bread," then we can not simply use our possessions and our time for self. Young people, by grace behold your calling. From youth up there must
be evident the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. Then you can not seek “white elephants” — nor will you be an “ostrich” and hide your head to the reality of our own sinful nature, and the true calling of the Christian in the world. You will seek the Kingdom of heaven.

**QUIET THOUGHTS:**

"Hatred does more harm to the vessel in which it is stored, than to the object on which it is poured."

**HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON THE**

**Genesis 17-21**

**REV. H. HANKO**

**III. The gift of a son a demonstration of God’s mercy**

Soon after this, Abraham journeyed to the country of the Philistines near Gerar after having spent some time in the land between Kadesh and Shur.

Gerar was in the land of Canaan to the south and west and was ruled by a man whose name was Abimelech. This Abimelech was a God-fearing man preserving a remnant of the true worship of Jehovah in Canaan. There were these few remnants for a long time after the flood where the worship of God was kept alive for some time. Cf. e.g., Melchizedek. But Abraham was afraid in this strange land, and therefore promoted the lie that Sarah was his sister. This seems to have been a common policy with Abraham for he did this same thing in Egypt, and he tells Abimelech, "And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother." vs. 13.

Yet Abraham sinned in doing this. He sinned because he failed to trust in God that God would care for him even when he was among enemies. He sinned because, while it was true that Sarah was his half sister (vs. 12), nevertheless, the intent was to leave the impression that Sarah was not his wife. But the greatest part of the sin was that he was willing (which is hard for us to understand) to let Sarah become the wife of another to protect himself. Yet Sarah was, according to God's Word, the mother of Isaac and of Christ. If she had married another, and left the home of Abraham, the promised seed could never be born. This sin of Abraham shows a most remarkable callousness with respect to the promise, and an astonishing disregard for the importance of Sarah's place in the line of the covenant. Abraham by this sin forfeited all right to God's promise. And yet, how often do we do the same. No doubt the frailties of the ancient patriarchs are mentioned in Scripture in order that we may know that they were men like us. For if they were men like us, then the faith which God gave them by which they performed such mighty deeds is a faith which God also gives to us. We are so inclined to think that they are too great for us to emulate. But God's gift of faith is as great in us as it was in them, for they were as weak by nature as we are.

But this was also a sin for Abimelech. It is true that he took Sarah out of innocence and in the integrity of his heart. God also recognizes this. Whether he was attracted by Sarah's beauty which remained even when she was an old lady of ninety, or whether he took Sarah as the first step in concluding a treaty with Abraham is impossible to determine. But he also sinned. If he had married Sarah, he would have been guilty of taking another man's wife, and this was his intent. He may not have known that Sarah was Abraham's wife, but he should have made it a point of finding out. The strangeness of Abraham having an
old lady of 90 in his tent who was supposedly only his sister was point enough to make Abimelech investigate if he had wanted to. Therefore the Lord also punished the house of Abimelech by some sickness which made conception and childbirth impossible for anyone—a sickness which could only be cured by the intercession of Abraham. And therefore God threatens the whole house of Abimelech with death if he did not immediately restore Sarah to her husband.

This Abimelech hastened to do while, at the same time rebuking Abraham for his deception—a rebuke which Abraham deserved. To Abraham however, he gave gifts, and especially 1000 pieces of silver so that Sarah would not be shamed in the eyes of others. For by this gift Abimelech showed that he had respect for Sarah and justified her conduct. (Such is evidently the meaning of vs. 16, for the latter part of the vs. could better read, "Thus he justified her.")

The whole event is a most remarkable demonstration of God's mercy. By striking the house of Abimelech with illness, God prevented this mother of Christ from becoming Abimelech's wife. By a dream God revealed Abimelech's sin to him and used this as a means to restore Sarah to Abraham. And all of it showed that Abraham was not at all deserving of a son, nor of the promise of God's covenant. But God is merciful to His people and gives His promise not on the basis of their own merits, but out of the infinite fountain of His own sovereign grace.

IV. The fulfillment of the promise

At last the time came when the promise was fulfilled. At the time appointed by God Himself, Abraham and Sarah became the parents of a son. Abraham was 100 years old; Sarah was 90. From every human point of view the birth of Isaac was out of the question. God had seemingly waited too long; Abraham and Sarah were too old.

But this was exactly as God intended, for the birth of Isaac was, in its miraculous nature, a picture of the birth of Christ. Isaac was not born by the will of man nor by the power of the parents who produced him, but by a miracle—a wonder of grace. And so it was with the birth of Christ. He too was not born by the will of man. For it was impossible for man ever to bring forth the Christ. The royal line of David ended in the virgin Mary. But how could men bring forth Him Who is both God and man? So Isaac typified the miraculous birth of the true Seed of Abraham.

Yet at the same time, this birth of Isaac is a picture of the spiritual rebirth of all the elect people of God—the true seed of Abraham. For they too are not born as children of God by the will of man and the natural process of conception and childbirth (Cf. John 1:13). They too are born by a wonder of grace, by a miracle as wonderful as creation, by the power of regeneration by which the life of Christ is given to them. Abraham and Sarah had to learn that they could never bring forth the seed of the covenant. This required a work of God. But is not this always true of the seed of the covenant? Cf. Gal. 4:22-28.

The child was named "Isaac." Isaac means "laughter." Once Abraham and Sarah had laughed in unbelief. But now, with the birth of their child, their laughter became the rejoicing of thankfulness in which all the saints participate as they contemplate this wonder of grace. Thus Sarah also prophesies, "All that hear me shall laugh with me." vs. 6.

But trouble soon arose in the home of Abraham and Sarah. This trouble was, in a way, the consequence of Abraham's own foolishness when he married Hagar in an attempt to produce the promised seed. For Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, began to mock Isaac at the feast that Abraham had prepared at Isaac's weaning. This was a terrible sin. But Isaac, the firstborn, and therefore the heir of Abraham's possessions and the birthright blessing. He jeered at the promise of God fulfilled in Isaac and seemingly contradicted the wonderful things God had said of this seed of Abraham. Paul tells us in Galatians that Ishmael persecuted Isaac. Gal. 4:29.

Sarah insisted that Ishmael had to be cast out, for she saw the presence of Ishmael as a threat to Isaac who was divinely destined to be the heir of the promise. This was not a cold-hearted, selfish and petty wish on Sarah's part, but a profound understanding of the truth, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Although Abraham was naturally reluctant to do this, for Ishmael was his own
flesh and blood, he obeyed the Lord when God told him that Sarah was correct. But this too is significant, for Paul later refers to this same event in Galatians 4:29, 30. Ishmael was the reprobate seed of the covenant. (There is some dispute as to whether Ishmael was a child of God or not. But, notice: 1) he is called always the seed of the flesh in distinction from Isaac who is the seed of the promise; and is a picture of all the reprobate seed of the covenant. 2) Paul’s words are surely conclusive; “Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” 3) Ishmael’s “blessing” of becoming a great nation was not the blessing of God’s favor and love, but a temporal and material prosperity that was granted to him for Abraham’s sake.) As the reprobate seed of the covenant, he could not be heir with the child of the promise. He had to be banished from the home, for he rejected, in his sin, the promises of God. Thus he is a picture of the apostate and reprobate seed that is always born in the covenant, that receives the mark of the covenant, but that must be, when sin becomes manifested, cut off from the Church of Christ. Cf. also Rom. 9:4-8. Thus also Ishmael’s life is preserved in the desert by a miracle of a well of water in order that God may make of Ishmael a mighty nation as He said.

This entire significant section closes with a description of a treaty that is made between Abraham and Abimelech after the dispute over a well of water is settled. This treaty is the only one of its kind mentioned in Scripture between Abraham and the inhabitants of Canaan, and is proof of Abimelech’s spiritual character. Here Abraham found rest for some years—in Beersheba, the “well of seven” named after the seven eves that Abimelech received as a witness that the well was Abraham’s.

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**NEWS**

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

**LOIS E. KREGEL**

**Around the Societies**

Something unique in the society life of our churches has been planned by the Young People’s Society of Oaklawn: they have invited the Young People’s Society of Randolph for an overnight visit, intending to have a meeting on a Friday evening, and various social activities, including a pancake breakfast on the following Saturday morning. The visiting society would leave for home again on Saturday afternoon.

Among the topics which our young people have been discussing in their after-recess programs are “The Missions, Challenge or Millstone” (Hope), and “The Place of Women in Modern Society” (First).

The young people’s societies of Hull and Doon travelled to Edgerton for a joint meeting on January 23.

The League of Mr. and Mrs. Societies plans to have its spring meeting on April 17 at Hope Church; Rev. B. Harbach will address the League on the subject “Stimulating Interest in our Seminary.”

**Membership transfers:**

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Block changed their membership from First Church to South Holland; Mr. Milton Alsum was received from Randolph by Oaklawn as a member by baptism; Doon welcomed Miss Mary Ann Mantel from Redlands Protestant Reformed Church.

**Calls**

Rev. B. Woudenberg has declined the call from Redlands; Southwest has called Rev. G. Lubbers.

**Congratulations**

To Mr. and Mrs. Ben Bleyenberg (Hull) who celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary on Feb. 6.

To Mr. and Mrs. John Blankespoor (Doon) who celebrated their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary on Jan. 18.

To Mr. J. Bolt (First) who was eighty-three on Feb. 15.

To Mr. G. Bergsma (First) who was ninety years old on March 11.

**Sixteen**
To Mrs. F. Decker (First) who was eighty-one on March 6.

Confession of Faith
was made recently by the following young people:
From Southeast: Roselyn Ondersma, Harlow Kuiper, Lois Schipper, and Linda Wierenga.
From First: William Doezeema, David Doezeema, and Roselyn Tryon.

Wedding bells
rang for Mr. Gerrit Schut and Miss Marcia Lou Steenstra (Hudsonville) on Feb. 20.

New arrivals
A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. Erne Miedema (Hudsonville)
A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. J. Schwarz (Loveland)
A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hoekstra (Hull)
A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. D. Mensch (Loveland)
A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Kuiper (Hope)
Twin daughters, born to Rev. and Mrs. G. VandenBergh (Oaklawn)
A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Poortinga, Jr. (South Holland)
A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. C. Kamps (Southeast)
A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. Arie Nobel (First)
A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Jansma (Hull)
A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Corson (First)
A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Hop (Edgerton)
A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. John Kamps (Hudsonville)

Here and there
May 8 is the date to be reserved for a Choir Festival sponsored by the Hope School Circle.
Easter Sunday will be appropriately concluded with a Singspiration in First Church.
On February 14 Rev. C. Hanko and Mr. H. Meulenbergh travelled to South Holland to show their slides and speak concerning Jamaica at a gathering of our people there. This followed a spaghetti supper sponsored by the Ladies’ Auxiliary.

In order to relieve its crowded auditorium Hope Church has begun to seat a number of families in the basement of the church; this is done by turn and each week the names of those who are to sit downstairs the following Sunday are published in the bulletin. Plans are being made to begin building a new church soon.

The mission committee has decided that Rev. Lubbers should continue working in the Houston area. It was also decided to intensify the efforts in that field of labor, perhaps by means of a local radio broadcast and a printed “monthly community messenger.”

Miss Agatha Lubbers spoke to the Adams School Mothers Club on March 5, regarding the work in Houston and also showed some slides taken there.

Randolph’s bulletin contained the following quotation from a letter received in response to the last pamphlet sent out by the Reformed Action Society: “We receive the Reformed Witness pamphlet and like to read it. I think good literature should be sent out. So often in God’s work we hold back and don’t send it out which is a good way of doing and reach some who maybe have never heard much about the Bible or go to a church where the sound doctrine or the whole truth is not brought . . . I hope you may be encouraged in your work . . . .”

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BEACON LIGHTS SINGSPIRATION
Sunday, March 29
9:00 P.M.
FIRST PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCH