

Sample letter from C+H to daughter

February 9 1973

Dear Betsy,

Two or three letters ago you wrote that you were changing your vacation plans, and instead of going to Synod and then to Arizona, you would go to Arizona first and Synod afterward. Correct?

You wanted to know if we would take Zephi. Of course. In fact I miss him when I take a nap. I ought to take a walk too. But the effects of flu and cold make it very comfortable for me not to take a walk. It would have been hard, some of these past evenings, to take him out; and I am very grateful to you for keeping him. Last Sunday I did not even go to church. I slept two hours in mid-morning and three hours in the afternoon. This week I feel a little better.

Here is our schedule for the next months. The ETS meets at Trinity Ev. Div. School, in Deerfield, on March 30-31. I may read a paper - not sure yet. Easter is very late this year and our spring vacation begins April 20 and ends Mon. 30, 8:00 A.M. We could come and get Zephi then.

Or, could you possibly bring him here earlier? I just don't see how you by yourself, can bring a dog and two lively boys. Could Wyatt come with you? Needless to say, we would be glad to see you at any time.

Now sit down and get ready for a shock. This week Bill Bright, of Campus Crusade, asked me to teach for him for a period of time! He wants to give his apostles some education, and will get teachers for one week periods and for one month periods - with repeats. His sheet had a list of maybe fifty subjects from which his prospective teachers could choose.

Well, it is not likely that he and I could get along very well. But I wrote him a polite letter, indicating that he had omitted some information that would be almost essential for a decision. I also asked him for the statement of faith on which he operates. I have never seen one, and do not know whether he has one.

A few years ago, maybe when you were at Covenant, you compared one of his psychological laws with a verse in Corinthians, to show that they contradicted each other. Do you remember the law and the verse? I would be glad if you could give them to me.

The radio says it will drop to 2 tonight. We have had up into the fifties recently, a lot in the forties.

The reports to and from your congregational meeting were interesting. Maybe if Wyatt is more firm, things will improve.

Love,

Daddy

Carlisle, Mass.
May 15, 1942

Dr. Gordon H. Clark,
Wheaton, Ill.

Dear Dr. Clark,

I can give only hasty remarks and reactions due to the pressure of time.

As for your choices concerning occupation I would suggest that you follow your own heart. Don't enter the ministry because of the pressure of circumstances--only if you feel a real call which can't be turned aside. If I felt called to teach I would even leave the denomination if it seemed wise and necessary to do so in order to keep on teaching. If I felt called to preach I would first exhaust every possibility of getting into the denomination with which I was most in accord, theologically and ecclesiastically (I mean Church Government).

As for presenting resolutions and hinging staying in or getting out of the church on anything pertaining to such resolutions, I can only say that that isn't my idea of the church and denominationalism. The only reasons which appeal to me for leaving a denomination don't include such an one. It seems too much like the Bible Presbyterian business. I don't think we have any right to leave a church because of extra-Confessional differences.

I'm sure my remarks don't sound humble, but I mean them that way. I just don't have time to write at length and so must go right to the point. I hope you'll forgive me.

With all best wishes--in Christ,

Burt Goddard

Carlisle, Mass.
May 4, 1942

Dr. Gordon Clark,
Wheaton, Ill.

Dear Dr. Clark,

Thanks for all the information in your letter. I may have occasion to use some of it to correct false notions.

It would be my judgment that it is best to wait and see whether you hear from Pres. Wood. I am quite sure that Tenney will bring up your name, and if Pres. Wood is at all interested he will undoubtedly get in touch with you.

If I can be of help at any time, please let me know.

Sincerely in Christ,

Burt Goddard

First, the philosophy major was dropped from the catalog without departmental recommendation, committee action or faculty approval. One cannot submit to such an ~~un-~~ *unorthodox* ~~handed~~ procedure and retain self-respect. I am also at variance with the policy of lowering graduation and entrance requirements, and the lack of encouragement, not to mention the positive handicaps, with reference to scholarly productivity by the faculty.

Second, while the college has the undisputed right to require a sincere adherence to the doctrinal position stated in the catalog, ~~I have been denied the right to acquaint the students~~, either in class or in a student club, with the historic position of the several Presbyterian denominations, the several Reformed Churches, the Congregational bodies, a large number of the Baptist churches -- in general the position of the greatest men of the Protestant reformation. Cooperation ~~is defined~~ as compliance with the theology of one or a few individuals, a theology never adopted by any denomination, nor by Wheaton College. The unauthorized imposition of ~~new~~ standards, contrary to the historic creeds of Protestantism, is on a par with the unauthorized dropping of the philosophy major, and its cause.

an attempt is being made to deny the students the right to become acquainted with the Trustees (?)

being

I am entirely out of sympathy with this situation and, to maintain my self respect and to permit Wheaton College to function as the Trustees (?) desire, I must resign my position as _____

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x. Keeping the students thus in ignorance is neither intellectually worthy of a college nor morally worthy of a Christian.

610 Howard St. Wheaton, Ill.
May 1 1942.

Dear Cliff, Bob, and Burt,

In reply to a letter from Cliff urging me to withdraw my total abstinence resolution, I think I owe a statement to Bob and Burt since I respect their judgment, desire their advice, and in the case of Burt because what I may say here will sound inconsistent with what I wrote him previously on this matter.

First of all, to try to make this letter a little more complete, I affirm my belief in the doctrine of Christian liberty. Spurgeon smoked, Luther drank beer (the stinking stuff), and with the statement prepared by the committee of nine on the matter I am in complete agreement.

Furthermore I sympathize, more than the seminary men image I judge, with their unwillingness to make even an apparent concession to the Wheaton group, the perfectionists, the victorious life group, and that type of people. I know very well that my resolution would not change their attitude one bit toward us. The people whom the resolution is aimed at are good, humble Christians here and there who have been deeply grieved at our mess. It is a fact that the students at Westminster, and perhaps the younger ministers, have said and done unjustifiable things. People will no doubt always call us (as Burt so cautiously expressed it to me) "unbanding." And our men must be ready to take it on the chin. Guts are required. But I do believe that some of our number have voted unwisely even taking into consideration either their youth, their more prominent position, or any and all considerations.

No doubt all this is granted. Now what am I to do about it. I wrote to Burt that I felt I had put my hand to the plough. But if it is really the wrong plough, I should turn back and be inconsistent. So let me be as inconsistent as possible in this letter, if for no other reason than to get your reactions.

Whatever I do will no doubt be misconstrued. In fact the situation I face is so complicated that I cannot construe my own conduct. To make this clear will require a few personal details. Kindly have patience.

The whole question of my right at Wheaton to acquaint the students with the historic position of a large section of Protestantism has been raised. The head of my department defines "cooperation" as requiring my compliance with his theology. A lot of it reminds me of our delightful Presbytery meetings in the old church, except that there it was more in the open. To be brief, I am considering resigning, though one or two of the faculty who know me a little more intimately than the rest say not to. But it seems to me that my days are numbered no matter what.

Hence I must find a new job. College or university positions are scarce. There is just a possibility at one or two seminaries, for example Reformed Episcopal. If I should turn to the ministry, it would be just for the job, wouldn't it?

As a matter of fact, about a year ago, I wrote confidentially and tentatively to Woolley about the wisdom of seeking ordination from Phila. Presbytery. The drawback of course is that I lack certain parts of seminary work, the matter would therefore have to be taken to the General Assembly. I dislike the publicity of this course, and if denied would dislike it still more. Then when I learned I was on the Committee of Nine, I postponed this idea, and no one knows of it but Woolley. I would be far more in accord with our Church than with any other. I greatly appreciate Cliff's statement of solid contentment (recognizing room for improvement of course) with our set up. Yet, on account of personal connections, I could get along with the R. E.; and it might seem best, if teaching in their seminary, to enter their church. The requirements are easier, and no doubt they would accept my academic work as the full equivalent of seminary work. Well, you say, I am looking for a job. If I withdraw the resolution and seek ordination in the OPC, I'm playing politics. If I go to the R. E., I never had any convictions of a reformed nature. And if I leave the OPC for any reason, I am backing out and doing dirt to my friends. The last sentence has a great measure of truth to it, as Burt very kindly indicated privately to me at our last meeting. My lawyer friend puts some emphasis on this last point; the other things will be said, though I do not regard them as true.

There are some minor considerations that you think I should not even think of. I have all sorts of thoughts, without necessarily having the right one yet. One of these is the probable fact that I could be ordained in the R. E. church almost at any time. But for the Phila. Presbytery to act, and then the G. A. would take at least until June 1943. Should anyone be ordained after he is forty? That age is bad enough as it is. Further, I have grave doubts that the Phila. Presbytery would be willing to make the concessions I need.

To sum up: I cannot now see what is morally right, nor what is expedient for me. To you three I am ~~making~~ disclosing the whole situation, subjective as well as objective. I shall greatly appreciate your advice. You will I know be cautious how you use this information. Whether Bob ought to approach Rian about my chances in Presbytery, I leave to his discretion. I ought to tell Woolley at least that I have indicated to you my thought of ordination, and release him from any imposition of confidence on this point. Will you, Bob, do that; my time right now is jammed full. I am enclosing a tentative draft of my reasons if I present a resignation.

Cordially

To take effect at the close of the present semester
I hereby present my resignation as Asso Prof
of Phil. at Wharton College in ~~full~~ protest
against two phases of current policy.

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Second:

MAIL ROOM

610 BOX 58

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Second: while the college has the undisputed right to require a sincere adherence to the doctrinal position stated in the catalog, I have been denied the right to acquaint the students, either in class or in a student club, with the historic position of the ^{several} Presbyterian ~~Churches~~, ^{denominations,} the ^{several} Reformed Churches, the Congregational, a large number of Baptist churches, — in general the position of the greatest ~~representative~~ men of the Protestant Reformation. Cooperation is defined as compliance with the theology of one or a few individuals, a theology never adopted by any denomination, nor by Wheaton College. The unauthorized imposition of new standards, contrary to the historic creeds of Protestantism, is on a par with the unauthorized dropping of the philosophy major, and its cause.