



"SO THAT'S WHAT OPENS YOUR GARAGE DOOR? I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU JUST SAID A LITTLE PRAYER!"

On the Line

A Mother And Viet-Nam

By Bob Considine



Hawaii — Here where American bravery and stoicism were displayed in a shorter and costlier war, World War II, those qualities still prevail in a longer and more controversial conflict.

The other day the Hawaii Tribune-Herald, published in Kona on the Big Island, ran an "open letter" from Mrs. Wattie Mae Hedemann to her 24-year-old son, Wayne, a warrant officer serving in Cambodia as gunner on a Cobra attack helicopter.

The mother's letter did not express sentiments often heard today. They are largely drowned out by the protests over the turn the war has taken. The "open letter" read:

"I am deeply concerned, as I know we all are, with the situation in Vietnam and our President's recent decision to move troops into Cambodia. Enclosed please find a letter I have written to my son in Vietnam.

"As a mother, I hate violence and want my son safe at home with us and peace throughout the world. We owe our President our support for the six weeks he has asked for, so that our boys can come home sooner. Please make the letter an 'open letter to the people' or something of that sort."

This was the enclosure:

"Dearest Wayne: Your letter from Cambodia brought cheer to my heart. I cannot begin to describe the contrast in my feelings between your letter of two months ago and the one that arrived last Thursday.

"I realize the seriousness of any war and the preciousness of every young man's life. I am proud of you. It was you who helped me see the rightness of President Nixon's action. I know that you are busy and and have probably forgotten the details of your letters. To refresh your memory I quote from them:

"Letter No. 1 (two months ago): 'We fly on missions and have visual contact of the enemy, but we must have clearance in order to fire at them. They must shoot first. Yesterday a company was getting ripped in the field by an ambush of Viet Congs. We could see

the battle but couldn't get clearance, and since they were not firing at us we just watched a company get slaughtered without being able to help. So I feel that my year is being wasted and it is more dangerous than ever. The first bullet seldom misses the Cobra helicopter gunner, if the enemy wants to shoot. So we are bait.'

"Let No. 2 (received Thursday): 'I am so busy I don't have time to be afraid. Yesterday my Cobra was shot down in Cambodia after my turret was shot away, but luckily I was able to get the Viet Cong gunner out of action before landing. I jumped out on Cambodian soil and a helicopter was right there to pick us up while about 20 others circled over us to give us cover.

"We got so many Viet Congs by surprise with this attack that Nixon is getting my vote in the next election. In my opinion there will be no telling how many lives will be saved and have already been saved by this move.'

"Wayne," the mother's open letter concluded, "I know that you are only one of many supporting President Nixon's action, for on Thursday, shortly after your letter arrived, a gentleman came into my office. He is an airlines pilot headquartered in Saigon. His comments concerning the servicemen in Vietnam with whom he had contact were in complete support of our President's action and there was the feeling 'now we will get the job done.'

"We are very proud of you and miss you very much. 'Love—Mother.'"

Mrs. Hedemann's letter appeared in Sunday's edition of the Tribune-Herald. She was still taking congratulatory calls that afternoon when the telegram from the Department of Defense arrived.

Her son was dead.

When she composed herself, Mrs. Hedemann told a reporter, "If Wayne had been killed two months ago I would have been very bitter about the whole situation, but now I know he died doing what he believed was right."

Letters

'Nothing Opposed To Church'

Editor:

Father Shamon's recent column, "No Shortcuts to Holiness," indicates that perhaps he never has been present at a Pentecostal meeting. Therefore his "observations" must be regarded more as "a priori condemnations."

He says that some Catholics seem to be attracted to the sect. I am afraid it is not so much the sect itself that has attracted Catholics as the possibility of giving the Holy Spirit His due after years of neglect in the Church.

We often have heard that the Holy Spirit is the forgotten person of the Blessed Trinity. We have tended to think that He operated in a visible way only in the early days of the Church, and that one could not realistically expect this kind of activity in our day and age.

I have been present at about 30 Pentecostal gatherings. In many cases the majority present have been Catholics; several priests and Sisters have been involved.

There has been nothing contrary to the teaching of the Church. In fact, the people who go to these meetings have been more orthodox about matters like the Virgin birth, the divinity of Christ, moral standards, and so forth, than many Catholics.

At all times there has been a spirit of fraternal charity, with no one trying to impose

Reflection of Adult World

By FR. JOHN J. HEMPEL

Recently the city of Rochester has experienced an upheaval in some of the high school communities. As I walked through tense corridors and sat in auditoriums listening to young people struggling to find a solution to the antagonisms that existed on racial lines, I agonized over the why of the conflict.

Why does a generation of young seemingly so bent upon finding peace in a world of conflict, a generation so gifted with sources of knowledge, a generation which is about to inherit a glorious age of technology, why does this generation seem so bent on producing a society of hate, distrust and conflict?

Would that there were a simple answer, an easy solution. No doubt a combination of many things is responsible. Could it be that our generation became so concerned with the things of this world that we began to build a tower capable of reaching to the sky but in this process lost the ability to communicate with each other? Could it be that a white-dominated community finds its culture so

differing views on others. We consider this an ecumenical movement from below rather than from above in the sense of an organized movement.

It is not insisted that "the gift of tongues" is the be-all and end-all of the Holy Spirit movement. Rather, the praise of God is the central theme.

threatened that it cannot accept the intrusion of those who happen to be born black?

These are some of the questions that filtered through my mind as I sat with the young. The more I saw and heard them I realized that they were but the mirror of the adult world. All their prejudices, their frustrations, their antagonisms were but the mouthings of adults.

We taught them to hate each other by our condemnation of a whole race based on the failures of a few. We are the ones who have opened their eyes to the realization that men may have different colored skin yet we fail to educate them to a realization that mankind is judged not by what he is, but by who he is.

Our generation has much to answer for, not only in our failure to resolve this problem but even more so in the scandal we have presented to our young people. May a merciful God spare us, we who have been so lacking in mercy and understanding. In God's providence may the youth of today produce a world in which all men can truly share equal rights in spite of our failures.

With St. Paul, Pentecostals agree that the gift of tongues is the least valuable of the gifts, but that it nevertheless is a true manifestation of the indwelling of the Spirit. I do not speak in tongues, but I am not scandalized by those who do.

—George L. Jost
Rochester

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