

# the catholic peace fellowship

*An educational service conducted by Catholic members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation*

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Feb. 17, 1967

Dear Tom:

On this day some years ago (my calendar assures me) the Daughters of the American Revolution labeled the Supreme Court unconstitutional.

Thanks for the good letter. I will continue to hope providence will guide your hand to the carbon of the lost letter, as it continues to be lost. But if not, I suppose I've got more than enough to keep me busy ruminating for the next four or five hundred incarnation anyway.

John Heidbrink's address, by the way, is: Maple Road,  
Cornwall-on-Hudson  
N.Y. 12520

Dan is still at 211 E. 87th St.; we will be together this Sunday afternoon and Monday morning, trying to make some sense of where the CPF should be moving.

My own instinct right now is to get going on a campaign within the Church regarding aid to the war victims. Of course such aid is worse than useless, however, if it goes hand in hand with support of the war machine which has made such aid necessary. What we need first of all, I would guess, is a small panel of theologians and scriptural scholars to piece together a statement to the bishops of the subject of relief and the war, which would be sent to each of the bishops privately and a week or two later publically released in the hope it will prod some serious re-thinking of Christian responsibility in time of war. Any thoughts you have on such an effort would be warmly appreciated. You might even be interested in writing a statement.

In fact I do want to ask you if you would write a statement on this general area, but not especially to the Catholic hierarchy. As you know, the FOR, with its "Brothers" program, has been raising money for medical relief throughout Vietnam. (I enclose an extra copy of the booklet.) The indications are that the government will not give us a license to get relief through. We have drafted a letter to the Treasury Department, which has the responsibility for the licenses. On or after the 27th of this month we expect to go down to Washington for a meeting with Treasury officials to try to change their stated position on the matter. If we are not successful,

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and indeed we must be ready for failure at that juncture, we will have a press conference immediately afterward at which time we will release statements on relief and the religious responsibility to the press. The point here is that we must make as much as an issue out of this as we can if Americans are to begin thinking seriously about what this war is doing to the Vietnamese. I hope we can make some sensible and compelling noise. What we need now, in advance, are statements from a number of religious persons whose names are familiar enough to provoke some news media attention. It needn't be long; it should say only what you want to say and feel compelled to say. If that means saying nothing, so be it; I hope however that the spirit moves that very verbal angel who dwells within you.

We are moving ahead on the booklet. Type is set and it will probably be in the next issue of Fellowship, though the death of A. J. has caused much re-working of the next issue to reflect this extraordinary loss and may crowd you--and others--out. (I enclose a poem which A.J. mused in the first few pages of his Not By Might.) I have to write to Corita today about the booklet cover.

By the way, I am also enclosing a copy of the letter we have sent to the Treasury Department.

I have met at some length in recent weeks with Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska, the former governor of that state and one time editor, decades ago, of The Nation. He is planning on the basis of those discussions to speak on the Senate on relief in enemy areas of Vietnam, and is considering introducing legislation on the matter. This could be a major breakthrough in getting the issue into the national head, though I think very few in the Congress are willing to stick their necks out in a similar matter. How rare, altogether rare, are men in Washington who will say what they think, vote for what they believe! It is a privilege to spend some time with one of the real exceptions. He's of A.J.'s vintage, by the way; what is happening to us? We don't seem to be making many like that these days.

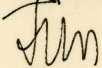
I am having a copy of A.J. Essays sent to you; they were published a week or two before his death.

Have just finished an article for Commonweal, though I don't know whether they will want to use it when they read it. I am supposed to explain the reasons I want the bishops to speak out on important issues, but what I have to say about their past statements, especially their declaration of support for the war, is hardly going to be seen as a warm pat on the back. I am convinced, however, that if honesty in the Church is to have any meaning, our compassion for the antique situation in which the bishops have been placed ought not to outweigh honest and serious criticisms of what they have to say.

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This is long enough, and badly typed. Much love in this season of ~~penitence~~ penitance.

  
Jim