

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY BELIEF

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SEP 30 1983

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Harvard University

*There are always in the world a few inspired men
whose acquaintance is beyond price.*

Plato

September 29, 1983

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Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Jr.
1500 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

We've recently discovered that one of our contributors has encountered some minor difficulties while attempting to draft his essay for BELIEF IN ACTION.

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One of these difficulties stemmed, it seems, from a misinterpretation of the second of the two questions which were asked in our initial invitation letter. Specifically, we asked, "In what ways have your occupations enabled you to implement your beliefs in daily life?" Our aim in that letter, and in paragraph seven of the essay guidelines which followed it, was to encourage our contributors to relate how they have managed to put their beliefs into practice, to actually realize them on a more or less day-to-day basis.

In at least one instance, however, this has not been the case. Knowing this, and wanting to assure a uniformity of concept, as well as avoid any further possible misunderstanding on the part of our contributors, we would like to rephrase the above-mentioned question as follows: "Emphasizing your occupations, how have you been able to implement your beliefs in daily life?"

EDITORIAL BOARD

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Again, our aim in doing this is to broaden the focus of question two so that those of our contributors who might feel limited by having to discuss the implementation of their beliefs solely in terms of their occupation(s) will not be confined to doing so. This was not our original intent, nor is it now. As we've said before, this project's primary concern is that each of its contributors share an intimate and personal part of themselves and then show how that part has exerted itself in their lives, at whatever level they wish, in the hope of inspiring a large body of

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people toward a deeper and more tolerant understanding of themselves and their fellow men.

Another area of concern has to do with the length of the response to the questions our contributors are being asked to discuss. In paragraph five of our guidelines we stated that we wanted those participating in this project to feel free to concentrate more upon one question than another, yet we have been advised that, optimally speaking, a fairly equal treatment of these questions (say, no less than 800 words per topic) is essential to maintaining the compositional integrity of this book. We regret this, and feel badly at having to curtail a portion of the creative freedom which has been an integral part of the design for this project. However, we also feel that this change will make for a much stronger and more coherent whole, and that it can be effected without sacrificing the unique and personal nature of the writings which will compose this book. We hope, then, that you can understand the necessity for such a change, and beg your indulgence in seeing that it is carried out in your own writing.

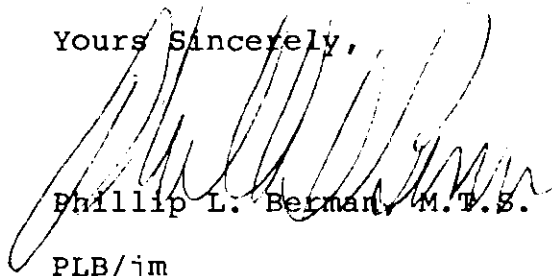
Finally, Admiral Zumwalt, we would like to exhort you to discuss, if at all possible, the nature of what you do believe rather than what you don't believe. This isn't to say that there should be no place in your writing for the latter of these points of view; however, we feel that a primarily negative approach to answering the question of what you believe is ultimately less substantial than a positive approach, and therefore less edifying for those reading your thoughts. Again, it's a question of balance, and though we understand that it's often easier to express one's thoughts (especially complex ideological thoughts) in negative rather than positive terms, we would like to see the balance we are speaking of here weighted in favor of the positive. We feel quite strongly that by striving to express your beliefs in positive terms, they will appear with a clarity and incisiveness that might otherwise be absent, and provide those reading them with a more substantive means for examining their own system of beliefs.

As most of us are painfully aware, the beliefs a person holds are all too often not the ones he or she lives by, the things a person professes, not often enough the things he or she does. It is just this observation which has compelled us to ask those questions which form the basis for this book. If you can bear this and the foregoing points in mind as you endeavor to write your essay, we feel confident that it will promote the type of growth and understanding which has inspired this book from its inception.

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As always, Admiral Zumwalt, should you have any further questions regarding either this letter or any other aspect of BELIEF IN ACTION to date, please feel free to call or write the Center at any time.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Phillip L. Bernant".

Phillip L. Bernant, M.T.S.

PLB/jm