

OCT 17 1983

East Sandwich, MA
USA

Telephone:

THE GOD LETTERS

October 12, 1983

Admiral Elmo Zumwalt
1500 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Sir/Madam:

Some time ago I wrote to you and other prominent people around the world inquiring as to your views concerning belief in God. The questions I posed were: Do you believe in God? And, if so, how did God make himself known to you? My purpose was to gather data on the great variety of ways that people understand and view God. I chose to write in the guise of a fifth-grader in order to obtain sincere, unguarded, "from the heart" replies.

The results have been overwhelming. I have a collection of inspiring, educational and often amusing responses. I am planning to publish a book which will compare current significant opinion on this subject with that of earlier centuries. The book will include both the devout and the doubtful:

St. Thomas Aquinas: "Reason in man is rather like God in the world."

Mark Twain: "If there was an all-powerful God, he would have made all good, and no bad."

Herman Melville: "Yea and Nay - Each hath his say: But God He keeps the middle way."

I thank you for your graciousness in responding to my questions. I would like to include your reply along with those of Jacques Cousteau, Mother Teresa, Marcel Marceau, Will Durant and others as representatives of 20th Century thinking.

Enclosed is a copy of your response. I am requesting your permission to print your reply in my book. Please sign the enclosed grant of permission and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. A complimentary copy of the book will be forwarded to you upon publication.

Thank you for your reply.

Sincerely,

Paul Rifkin
Paul Rifkin

PR/gw
Enclosures

*U/R/K 10/20/83
2 anth. fee*



E. R. ZUMWALT, JR.
ADMIRAL, U. S. NAVY (RET.)

21 November 1980

Mr. Paul Rifkin

East Sandwich, Massachusetts

Dear Paul:

God first made His presence known to me in the battle of Surigao Straits when the Japanese battleships had opened up on my destroyer with their main battery guns. The first salvo was over. The second salvo was short. The third salvo would have hit but, at that point, our torpedoes hit them and our U.S. battleships opened up on them. The Japanese shifted their fire and we were not hit. Afterwards, we discovered that every man on our ship was praying at that moment.

I have not always been constant in my prayers, but I have found that, in adversity, He is there and quite forgiving for my lapses.

All best wishes to you.

Sincerely,

E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.

1500 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22209
703/841-8960

25 Nov 83

DATE

I herewith give Paul Rifkin permission to include
this response in his forthcoming book.

SIGNATURE