



THEIR TEACHER KNEELING BEFORE THEM, THE MEMBERS OF THE BOYS' BATAAN PRAYER BAND WHISPER THEIR YOUTHFUL, EARNEST PRAYERS FOR ALLIED VICTORIES ABROAD

PRAYING BOYS

Atlanta Sunday-school intercedes for Allied leaders

Shortly after the fall of Bataan, a group of Sunday-school boys in Atlanta, Ga. decided that although they were still too young to fight they might help their country with their prayers. They organized themselves as the Boys' Bataan Prayer Band and decided to pray for Allied commanders. "Every soldier and sailor has some family or somebody who prays for him," they say. "We ask for special guidance for the men in charge."

Every Sunday now the boys meet in the Capitol View Methodist Church and spend 45 minutes in earnest supplication. Though they pray together, each one composes his own message. While one boy may be asking "help for the leaders here at home, such as President Roosevelt," another may be interceding on behalf of General Montgomery while yet another whispers, "We pray for Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek." After they have prayed for some general or admiral, the teacher writes him a letter explaining what they have done. To the boys' pleased surprise, most of these letters have been answered and each boy now treasures photostatic copies of acknowledgments from 13 generals, three admirals and half-a-dozen other leaders. These letters and the recent Allied successes make the boys feel that their pious efforts have been well rewarded.



Writing letters is done by Teacher James Worthington who composes as the boys look on. Letters usually contain some Biblical or historical allusion to the glory of righteous warfare.

MACARTHUR MESSAGE INSPIRED PROGRAM

The idea for the boys' program of prayer came to their teacher when he read reports that General MacArthur, after escaping to Australia from the Philippines, had asked for "divine guidance for me in the great struggle that looms ahead." Deciding that if MacArthur needed help, other generals would too, he drew up a list of 45 key war leaders for his boys. The assignment is so popular that his class has grown from 12 members to 24.

Atlanta, Ga., U.S.A.
August 4, 1945

Major General Ira C. Eaker
Commander 8th Air Force,
London, England

Dear General Eaker:

Congratulations from nineteen praying boys who wish to tell you that they think you are doing a swell job in directing those stout-hearted men who fly over enemy territory again and again, blasting into smithereens the strongholds of evil. Such systematic and devastating blows from the air have already greatly shortened this war and thus saved thousands of lives.

It was Clovis, a barbarous king of barbarians, who, while listening to the story of the crucifixion, and unable to control himself any longer, grasped the hilt of his sword and cried out, "Oh, that I had been there with my Franks!" You and your heroic airmen are the modern "Franks," battling and beating the foes of righteousness. General Eaker, as we see it, you have a mighty big job to do. So, we youngsters trust that you will welcome this letter which brings to you the news that your name will be audibly spoken by each of the boys as we pray together every Sunday for your Divine Guidance. May the Lord's Invisible Crew go with your airmen. General Eaker, we boys shall anxiously await an answer to this message.

"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my FORTRESS: my God; in His will I trust." (Psa. 91:2).

Yours sincerely,

James D. Worthington
James D. Worthington, S.S. Teacher
Capitol View Methodist Sunday School,

686 Lexington Ave., SW.
Atlanta, Ga., U.S.A.

Signed by members of Sunday School class
We pray on and on.

Jim Brindline
Eugene Francis
Richard Kelly
Bobby Smith
Billy Watson *Joe Everett*
Billy Coley *Alma Bailey*
Ted & Ila
Bill Elife
Mendell Powell
A. L. Keelin
Jack Stinson
Mary Miller
W. S. Thompson
Muffin Easton
John Holba
Jimmy Tinsley
Bobby Callaway
Clayton Clark
Carlton Petty

A letter to General Eaker of the Eighth Air Force includes congratulations on his recent military achievements. "We pray on and on" is class slogan.

Office of the Commanding General
HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH AIR FORCE
United States Army
A.P.O. 633

16 September, 1945

Mr. James D. Worthington,
Capitol View Methodist Sunday School,
686 Lexington Avenue, SW.,
Atlanta, Georgia.

Dear Mr. Worthington:

I was greatly touched and pleased by the letter from you and your Sunday School class. With such warm support from home, we overseas face our tasks with renewed zeal and enthusiasm.

Your quote from Clovis calls to my mind another quotation from ancient days, which may amuse you and your class because it seems to have such pertinence today:

"Germany heard a clashing of arms over all the sky;
The Alps trembled with uncommon quakes.
...Never the lightnings fall in greater quantities
from a serene sky,
Or direful thunders blaze so often."
Virgil Georgics. 1474 seqq.

With thanks again for your letter, I am

Sincerely,

Ira C. Eaker

IRA C. EAKER
Major General, U.S.A.
Commanding

Eaker's answer carried out Clovis theme with classical quotation. Recent acknowledgments came from General Wavell and Field Marshal Smuts.

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
Office of the Commander-in-Chief

24 May, 1943.

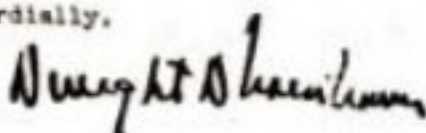
Dear Mr. Worthington:

I am grateful for your letter and for the salute sent to these Allied Forces by you and the members of your Sunday School Class. Since the time you wrote that letter, on May 9th, you have read of the final and complete defeat of the Axis forces facing us in Africa. This continent has been freed forever of the influence of two of the greatest criminals of our time.

There can be no doubt that entirely aside from the men and material resources that make up Armies in the field, the steadfast spiritual support of our citizens - as represented in the earnest prayers of the boys of your class - directly and forcefully contributes to such successes. Therefore, on behalf of all the soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilian workers in this great Allied Force, I return the salute of your Sunday School Class and assure its members that so far as I am concerned, they, too, are soldiers in the great cause for which the United Nations are fighting.

I enclose the picture that you requested, with an inscription to you and your boys.

Cordially,



Mr. James D. Worthington,
686 Lexington Avenue, SW,
Atlanta, Georgia.

General Eisenhower sent signed picture. Boys never let correspondence lag, watch war news closely for opportunity to congratulate leaders anew.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY
Office of the Commanding General
AIO 464, U. S. Army
New York City

January 29, 1943

Mr. James D. Worthington, SS Teacher,
Capitol View Methodist Church,
686 Lexington Ave., S.W.,
Atlanta, Georgia

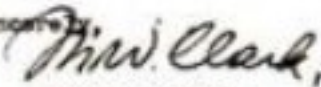
Dear Mr. Worthington and Boys:

Your thoughtful and greatly appreciated letter of November 14th has reached me today. Moving about the world as rapidly as I have often results in my mail taking considerable time to catch up with me.

It is truly inspiring to know that you are praying for divine guidance for our military leaders and their men. Your prayers, coupled with ours, will inevitably bring us the victory which we are entitled to. I can assure you that I have always found great comfort in placing my affairs in the hands of the Father.

I appreciate your sending me the newspaper clippings showing the fine work which you and your Sunday School class are accomplishing. Please extend my warm greetings to every member of your class.

Sincerely,



MARK E. CLARK,
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

General Clark answered letter written after North African landing. Boys feel that prayers helped him. They think they helped Montgomery too.

HEADQUARTERS
NORTHWEST AFRICAN STRATEGIC AIR FORCE
APO 520 U S ARMY

12 April 1943

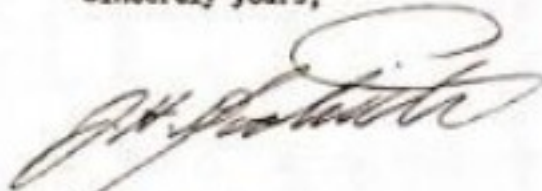
Mr. James D. Worthington,
Capitol View Methodist Church,
686 Lexington Ave., S.W.,
Atlanta, Georgia.

Dear Mr. Worthington:

I wish to thank you and the boys of your Sunday School Class for your kind letter of March 21st, 1943.

It is a very real comfort to know that folks back home are thinking of us and an inspiration to learn that they are praying for us. The officers and men of my command join me in expressing our appreciation and men of my command join me in expressing our appreciation to you boys for the fine work that they are doing. Right is on our side, their prayers will be answered and we shall win.

Sincerely yours,



J. H. DOOLITTLE,
Major General, USA.

General Doolittle answered with characteristic folksiness. Boys also got letters from Generals Marshall, Patton and Admirals Nimitz, Halsey.