

MEMO TO RDW FROM RDW

Institute of International Studies, R.D. Winter, July 2, 1993

I am aware of the fact that the Prayer Room, so-called, is probably a misnomer. It's the sight of what we have more formally referred to as the Prayer Watch — the 24-hour Prayer Watch which isn't merely or simply a prayer time, but also a prayer watching time. It's a time to be wakeful and watchful as to needs of people phoning in and so forth. This 24-hour prayer watch system, going back to my first sentence, is probably for some people a real tough road to hoe.

I would imagine that some young Christians or fairly young Christians have never quite gotten beyond the legalism level. They, in becoming Christians, are handed a lot of aspirations or goals or requirements or rules, or whatever, to live up to, but they don't have the corresponding passion or motivation that would normally fill the sails of those ambitions and aspirations, and when there is no wind in the sails of purposeful activity, there is no motivation, to use psychological terms. Then rowing the boat instead of being borne along by winds of God, the winds of the Holy Spirit, the power of the Spirit, is as they say a tough road to hoe. It's a tough boat to row. It's legalism; it's the attempt to be something that you are not, in the worst possible frame of reference—to attempt to be something that you aren't in the aspirational sense—it's the attempt to live up to high ideals which are certainly to the good, but it doesn't mean that the 24-hour prayer watch assignment is a well accepted assignment. As a result, unfortunately, probably a great deal of anguish, unnecessary anguish, or let's say unfortunate anguish arises in regard to the prayer watch, and I'm really sorry about that.

Properly understood, the prayer watch certainly ought to be a time of rejoicing and should basically be a 4-hour personal retreat, and a personal retreat is not merely a time for prayer; it's a time for self-examination—well, call that prayer if you want—that's a good kind of prayer. It's a time for planning and thinking; it's a time for reevaluation; it's a time for personal growth, and coming once every two weeks, certainly that isn't too often. The more staff we get, the less frequent it will be, and it may become a once a month activity. And then maybe people will have to schedule an additional time—not an official prayer watch slot—but just a personal time anyway.

In any event, I think it's unfortunate if people

don't understand the prayer watch in positive terms. Those who resist it, or who resent it, or who try to dodge out of it, or try to get people to take their place all the time are obviously fleeing something that they don't think is all that important to them, or desirable to them, and since our generation is not one which suffers duty willingly or happily, the mere obligation or responsibility, the basic obedience involved in taking such an assignment is probably rarely enough to carry a person through triumphantly.

But this is all, as I say, very unfortunate, and it would be nice if somehow those who don't have good feelings could make a step forward spiritually that would allow them to value and to covet this kind of a prayer watch opportunity.