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The Christian and Missionary Alliance

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Gen. Ltr. - Misc.

March 31, 1975

Sen. Edward Kennedy
U. S. Senate
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

The massive buildup and offensive of the North Vietnamese was hurled against Banmethuot in the central highlands beginning on March 10, 1975. At that time there were nine Americans and two Canadians in Banmethuot. Seven of these are missionaries:

Mrs. Archie Mitchell (Betty)
Mr. Richard L. Phillips, Ph.D.
Mrs. Richard L. Phillips
Rev. & Mrs. Norman Johnson
(Canadians)
John and Carolyn Miller (not C&MA)

Since there has been no contact with any of these, and since the city has now fallen to the North Vietnamese forces, we can only presume that these seven people, plus the five-year-old daughter of the Johnsons, are being held by the North Vietnamese in Banmethuot or in the vicinity.

The terms of the cease fire agreement concluded in January 1973 called for the release of prisoners. Some were released, including Michael Dennis Benge of Heppner, Oregon. There is reason to believe that many hundreds are still being held prisoner by the North Vietnamese in direct violation of the terms of the cease fire. Those being held now compound the failure of the North Vietnamese to live up to the terms of the agreement.

The brief resumé attached to this letter, of our experience in Viet Nam extending back over 64 years, with casualties in the TET offensive (eight killed) and three taken captive in 1962, will show you that our humanitarian ministry in that country has been at great price. Our concern in the present situation is, then, understandably deep and grave.

I am writing to ask that your good offices may be directed toward the release of these people with the guarantee of the North Vietnamese of their safe conduct to Saigon, or the nearest point of embarkation, with every humane consideration, and with all speed.

(Senator - 2)

This should doubtless include overtures to the State Department, to our ambassador, Graham A. Martin, and to the International Control Commission.

Our Alliance people take very seriously the word of Scripture that bids us to pray for those in authority. Be assured that you are included as you bear the heavy burden of high public office in such troublous and tragic times.

Sincerely yours,

NATHAN BAILEY
President

NB/RB/mr
Enc.

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TO: RWB
BSK
KMB
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LLK ✓

April 2, 1975

SENATOR LETTER also sent to: ~~FILE~~

International Committee of Red Cross
American Red Cross
Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller
TODAY Show

This is reference to the two-page letter re: our missionaries
in Viet Nam that was sent to a list of senators on March 31,
copy of which I believe you received.

President's Office