

AL / 2104

19 Woburn Square.

W.C. I.

June 14th. 1937.

My dear Miss Belfield,

I think her proposal
was that she should
give herself up
to organizing the
Anglican Growth
on full-time
Sec²

I have been thinking a great deal about your proposal with regard to the S.M.W. and I am quite sure that there is a very great deal to be said in its favour. Your enthusiasm, your pastoral experience, your freedom to give yourself up to the work, your organizing ability, and your gift for establishing contact with people outside the Church: all these are very great assets. I do agree over each qualification.

But there is one other point which you also mention: and that is your bitterness. My own feeling is that this quality outweighs the qualifications. I hate saying this. I have not said it to anyone else on the Committee. I hoped to avoid saying it to you: that is why I mentioned only a secondary consideration in my last letter. I did not want to hurt you, or to make you angry. Now, after further thought and prayer, I have come to the conclusion that to be evasive out of consideration for your personal hurt is not fair either to you or to the situation. I have got to explain to you before tomorrow's meeting why I should not be able to support your proposal. If it becomes necessary to express an opinion, I shall say to the Committee just what I am saying to you.

That I regard your bitterness as a disqualification does not mean that I do not understand it. I think you have been very badly treated by the Church, and I recognize the fact that it is

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far harder to be badly treated by one whom one loves and longs to serve than by an enemy. You have had extreme provocation. It is a case of "My own familiar friend whom I trusted", and "It is not an enemy who hath done me this dishonour, else could I have borne it".

I am very much aware that if I had had your provocation I should most likely have been equally bitter. It is not that I want to condemn or criticise: it is just that it seems to me a fact that bitterness, as a result of whatever provocation, does not ever help to bring about any good end. Your situation is terribly sad because you want so much to prevent other women from suffering as you have suffered, and this plan of yours seems to you at the moment the only way to help them. I recognize the irony of it, and the hurt of it: do try to believe me when I say that; though, I know, it won't be easy.

I should like to think that someday, and before long, it may be possible to feel enthusiastic over your plan: I want to, most sincerely and profoundly. It seems to me that the speeches on May 28th illustrate the kind of difference that I have in my mind. Madame Tchernavin has had provocation as great as your own: she is as bitter as you. Dr. Waldstein has had provocation as great as your own: she has no bitterness. Dr. Waldstein's attitude to those who have wronged her is the kind we need in our work; Madame Tchernavin's is not. Have I made myself clear to you and can you forgive me for writing like this? Not now, I fear, but I hope you will be able to when your first feeling of resentment has passed.

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perhaps I ought to have written this before, but I have hesitated for fear of doing it amiss. I have failed so badly myself from time to time under my own so much less provocation that to write on these lines to another seems presumptuous. ^{what I have learnt through} But possibly it is just because of my own failures that I ought to try.

May I send you my love, and sign myself,

Yours affectionately,

WR

P.S. In my rough draft of this letter I had another paragraph. On further consideration I have omitted it, thinking that I ought not to include it unless you give me any encouragement to say more. If what I have said makes you merely angry to say more now might be to make things worse. If you can forgive me for thinking as I do, and if you want me to make further observations I will gladly do so. But I do not want to obtrude any suggestions. It is different to explain in advance why I shall not be able to support your plan.