

“Blessed are those who work for peace; they will be called God’s children!”

(Matthew 5:9, paraphrase)”

100 United Years

J. Ray Hord

In 1965, a young minister named Ray Hord wrote a letter that was shared all over Canada. Ray was very upset about a war happening far away in Vietnam. American soldiers were sent to fight in this war, but Ray believed it was wrong and that God did not want this war.

Ray spoke at meetings where people asked for peace. He wrote in newspapers and talked on TV. Some people liked what he said, but others did not. Ray worked for The United Church of Canada, which shared God’s love through words and actions. While some people in the church supported him, the top leaders did not always agree. Sometimes, they even said sorry for his speeches before he gave them! But Ray kept speaking up.

Ray talked about peace and caring for others. Urged by Rae, his church committee gave money to help Americans called draft dodgers who did not want to fight in the war and ran away to Canada. He asked the church and the government to help both sides in the war because he saw how much the people in Vietnam were suffering. He also helped the United Church speak strongly to the Canadian government about peace.

Two years after Ray wrote his letter, the United Church said it did not support the war in Vietnam. They believed God wanted peace for the world.

Ray and his friends changed how the United Church thought about itself. The church started to see its role in speaking up for justice, not just helping with friendly service and charity work.

Today, there are leaders in the United Church who follow Ray’s example. They speak up for people who need homes, for the planet, and for peace everywhere. We are thankful for people like Ray, who speak up even when it’s hard, and who believe that God wants us all to work for peace.



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