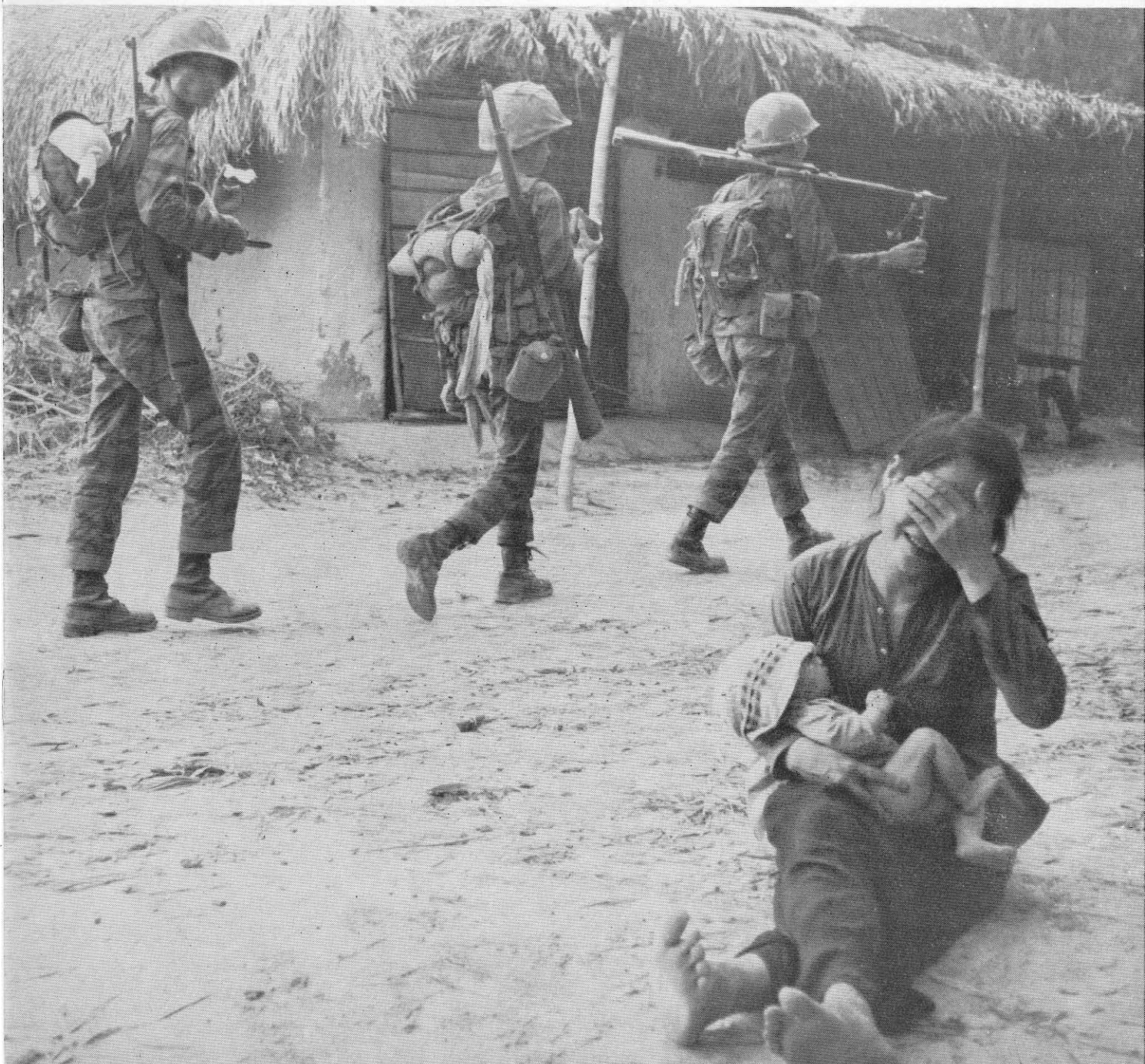



THE MENNONITE

81:4 JANUARY 25, 1966





Soul Sick
and
War Weary

Willard S. Krabill

Vietnam is a beautiful country weary of the long ravages of war. Many families are split. Brother fights brother in this land of tragedy.

THE SMOKE BOMB was laid down by a small fighter plane to mark the place where the pilot thought the opposing forces were. From somewhere out of the stratosphere came the jets screaming vertically toward the earth, dropping their bombs, then leveling off and leaving behind a smoking ruin.

Vietnam is a beautiful country with a sick soul—wary from the long ravages of war. It is a country divided, geographically and politically. An estimated 80 percent of its land mass is controlled by the National Liberation Front. Its major towns can be visited only by air.

And the number of refugees—mostly children, women, and older people—grows. By the end of 1966 the number may be a million. The absence of men between the ages of fifteen and forty-five in these refugee camps is striking. Their men away with the troops of one side or the other, these refugees don't know and can't find out where their true sympathies lie—with the National Liberation Front or with the South Vietnamese government.

Tragically, many families are split—one time one son is conscripted by the South Vietnamese, later another son or husband is conscripted by the Vietcong. Brother fights against brother in this land of tragedy.

On a recent return visit to Vietnam, I saw the mountains of war materiel, the planes, the trucks, the ammunition dumps. I saw the Chulai beach, south of Danang, where U. S. Marines first went ashore last summer.

I saw soldiers lining up and waiting at airports to go off to battle in a few minutes—men soon to become statistics about which I read the following day: "176 Vietcong Killed by Body Count; Our Losses Moderate." One of the most difficult experiences in my life was to look into the faces of those about to kill or be killed.

I saw a military government in Saigon and in all of South Vietnam generally. It is estimated that some 15,000 South Vietnam government leaders (village, district, and province chiefs) have been systematically assassinated by the Vietcong, thus leav-

ing a leadership vacuum in Vietnam.

I saw the bars in Saigon which have increased by the hundreds since 1955. Prostitution was again evident—something nearly nonexistent during the days of Ngo Dinh Diem.

Sounds Are Worse

I not only saw in Vietnam, I also heard. From my bed in a Saigon hotel I heard the bombardments at night, the whine of the jets overhead, the rumble of the trucks, the chop-chop of the helicopters. I also heard people—people asking for help, for medicine, for doctors, nurses, teachers. Their stories of life were a bitter tale.

In the case of Christians, I heard them asking for our prayers. I can think of no better description of this human suffering than that of Steve Cary, member of a recent Quaker mission to Vietnam, when he said, "Misery and suffering in Vietnam, resulting from twenty-five years of war, surpasses that found in Europe during and after World War II. In Europe and Africa in 1946 we saw suffering but the misery of the people was tempered by hope."

Through all this warfare, the United States has steadily become more involved. And, unfortunately, throughout this period of social revolution and military conflict, although the United States has subscribed to generally worthwhile goals for the Viet-

namese people, it has succumbed increasingly to the premise that social problems have military answers.

The suffering this period of war has brought the Vietnamese is almost unimaginable. Today, the refugee in Vietnam is a different person than he was in 1955. Then he was a refugee from communism—an ideological refugee. Today, he may be a refugee from typhoon and flood, sometimes from communism, but mostly war.

He is not necessarily pro-Saigon, nor is he necessarily pro-NLF. American military leaders in Vietnam estimate that South Vietnam has three groups of people today: 10 percent strongly procommunist; 10 percent strongly pro-Saigon; the other 80 percent noncommitted.

The latter are people buffeted about by war for more than twenty-five years—disillusioned, cynical, and having no real stake in the outcome of this conflict whatsoever. They only wish the whole thing would come to an end and that all foreigners would go home.

These refugees are a concern to the U.S. government, not only because of their large numbers, not only because of the massive human need, but because of the political implications. They are a potential asset to the South Vietnamese government if their allegiance can be won by Saigon.

Because of the intense need, our voluntary agencies will have to expand their ministries. For maximum impact a greater degree of cooperation between these agencies is needed.

Generally, the refugee problem is a manageable one. With the relief

activities being carried on by the U. S. military, the U. S. AID programs, and the expanded programs of the voluntary agencies, the basic need for food, clothing, and shelter can be met.

However, no one in Vietnam is really doing anything designed for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country so badly needed when peace comes. Great is the need for trained personnel to help the Vietnamese help themselves to build programs which will be of benefit in the future.

The greatest need in the Vietnamese refugee problem is to quit making refugees. The best medicine is preventive, and the best way to help refugees today is to quit producing them. No effort should be spared in ending the war.

Several challenges face the U.S. and its citizens concerning Vietnam. First, to become aware that the real aspiration of the Vietnamese peasant is for land, preferably that of his forebears. He wants to live on his own piece of land; live in peace, and be left alone.

The real revolution in Vietnam is not basically military. It is rather a search for a Vietnamese national identity, for Vietnamese solutions to their problems. The people want all foreigners to leave; they want land reform; they want tax reform; they want a new Vietnamese society.

For a hundred years they have been pawns of the white man, and even today they have few stakes in this conflict. The procession of Saigon governments has thus far done very little for them.

And the Vietnamese have a natural antipathy toward the Chinese. Naturally a rival, the Vietnam nation for the first ten centuries after its formation struggled against Chinese domination. With that struggle still continuing, it is a mistake to push the Vietnamese into the embrace of China.

I am saddened to see a country as great as the United States surrender the moral leadership required to bring about a better solution in Vietnam. I would expect greater courage and imagination to find a better alternative than the present military escalation.

Challenges Facing the Church

Having said all this, how shall we, a small peace church serving in a war zone, proceed? How shall we proceed in a situation where we are identified with the Americans, working alongside 200,000 U.S. military in small zones representing 15 percent of the country's land area?

Obvious is the problem of identity. How can we as mission and service representatives show the love of Christ in a war zone such as this? Transportation, for example, is a problem. Going by road is impossible; transportation by sea and air are the only alternatives and such are completely controlled by the military.

Thus our relief goods must be transported by the military, or at least by their permission. And, of course, transportation of relief goods takes second place to the transportation of war materiel.

Despite the drawbacks, we are able to help alleviate human suffering there. As the only Protestant relief agency operating in Vietnam for the past ten years, we have gained the confidence of the people. The U.S. government and the South Vietnamese government are anxious to assist us.

We can hardly leave in the face of these opportunities. Our goods are needed, our people are needed, and our witness is needed. Where in the world today is a greater need for a witness for peace and reconciliation?

Let us pray for Vietnam, for the leaders of the governments involved, that they will make those decisions which will bring the conflict to an early close; for the people of Vietnam; for the church in Vietnam as it attempts to witness in conditions of suffering; and for all those working in Vietnam to help these sufferers.

A MANUAL FOR ACTION AND WITNESS

In a joint meeting at Goshen, Indiana, on November 5, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite General Conference acted to request the *Gospel Herald* and *The Mennonite* to devote a special issue as a congregational action manual on the war in Vietnam. Hopefully, this will equip readers in the United States and Canada to witness to their governments. The witness of Canadian Mennonites may be more complex as it is a witness not only to their own government to exert an appropriate influence for peace; it is also a witness to their United States brethren whose patriotism can blind them to the moral implications of United States military action in Vietnam. Committee representatives consulted with the editors in the preparation of the materials. The two agencies conducting work in South Vietnam, namely the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities and the Mennonite Central Committee, were consulted, and invited to present their programs and concerns. Many people, whose names cannot all be listed, submitted suggestions. While the materials here included thus represent a broad consensus, the writers listed carry ultimate responsibility for the item in question.

Stanley Bohn and Paul Peachey.

The Moral Bankruptcy of America's Vietnam Policy

The fact that the United States is not willing to withdraw from Vietnam says that in its judgment the Vietnamese people are more expendable than its own. In order to guarantee itself a land base in Asia, it engages in what amounts to the mass murder of a civilian population in another country.

THE AVERAGE PERSON today is at loss for accurate information about Vietnam and the undeclared war raging in that unhappy country. Most newspapers have meekly accepted the role of aiding the consensus makers in Washington to create the impression that the United States is in Vietnam, at the request of a free government in Saigon, to save South Vietnam from communist-inspired North Vietnamese aggression. No doubt these claims carry a measure of truth, since propaganda, in order to be successful, cannot be built entirely on falsehood.

The False Claim of Vietnam's Request for American Presence

That area of the world which is today known as Vietnam was before World War II a part of the French colonial empire of French Indochina. The French had dominated the area for fifty years before World War II and had exploited both its economic resources and its people. Little was done in the way of an attempt to make the population literate or to institute much needed land reforms. Practically no effort was made by France to prepare the Vietnamese people for eventual self-government. The colonial possessions yielded too many economic dividends to the mother country to be given up lightly.

The outbreak of World War II and the aftermath of that war's end caused the collapse, not only of the British

colonial empire but that of France as well. During the war Vietnam was occupied by the Japanese. The Vietnamese under the leadership of the Vietminh, a popular resistance movement generally regarded then as totally communist-inspired, fought a guerrilla war for independence against Japan. After Japan surrendered to the United States in 1945, Vietnam was free for a short time.¹

The French, however, were not prepared to give up this prized colonial possession without a struggle. They engaged in a hard-fought and bitter war which lasted for nine years in an effort to reconquer Vietnam as a colonial possession. The French army of nearly one-half million men finally surrendered after the battle of Dienbienphu in 1954. The war would have ended sooner except for the fact that the United States was supporting the French as liberators from communist aggression.

This was the era of McCarthyism when the test of the patriotism of even a liberal statesman was found in the strength of his anticommunism. Liberal statesmen who had found themselves betrayed by communists whom they had trusted during the war years when Americans were partners in a war against the Nazi tyranny were suspicious of any revolution anywhere in the world as having a communist base.

Because America feared that com-

munist might spread throughout the whole of Southeast Asia, as it had spread through eastern Europe at the end of World War II, it did not sign the Geneva Accords of 1954, which ended the war between the French and the Vietminh. America, however agreed not to disrupt the agreement.

The Geneva agreement divided Vietnam into northern and southern sections at the seventeenth parallel. This aided in the evacuation of the French army and the resettlement of the population. It also called for free elections in 1956 to allow the people of Vietnam to choose their own form of government.

These elections were never held, because the United States saw the revolution as communist-inspired and dominated and had no concept of an independent nationalist communism. America was certain that if elections had been held, the Vietminh would have won. This would have meant an unquestionably greater communist influence in Vietnam and would have meant a decrease of Western power in Asia.²

This unreasoning fear of communism as the source of every revolution has made Americans incapable of seeing that some revolutions are badly needed. In the name of democracy America has supported some of the most corrupt dictators in history, simply because they were anticommunist.

Rise of Ngo Dinh Diem

It was the anticommunism spirit that launched America's unfortunate policy in Vietnam after 1954. It is the United States' worship of power which presently finds it waging a war from which every ounce of human compassion has now been drained.

It was the tidal wave of anticommunism that swept into the camp of

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the liberal statesmen after the McCarthy era that swept Ngo Dinh Diem into power as head of a so-called democratic government in Saigon. Robert Scheer and Warren Hinckle in "A Special *Ramparts* Report on Southeast Asia" report on the manner in which Diem became enthroned as actual dictator.³

Ngo Dinh Diem was discovered in a Tokyo tearoom in 1950 by Wesley Fishel, a young political scientist from Michigan State University. Diem was then in his seventeenth year of exile from his native Vietnam. An ardent Catholic and a staunch anticommunist he was by training and family background a member of Vietnam's feudal aristocracy. He needed the French presence to maintain his way of life and had risen to the rank of governor of Phat Diem province in the French colonial civil service.

Fishel was impressed by Diem's long wait to rule his country, his views on independent nationalism, anticommunism, and social reform. He urged Diem to come to the United States to win the government's support and arranged for Michigan State University to sponsor the trip. Here Diem found extensive help both within the faculty and the administration. Outside the academic community Diem found support within the American Catholic hierarchy. Diem's brother, Bishop Can, made arrangements for the exile to stay in Maryknoll seminaries in New Jersey and New York, the territory of Cardinal Spellman.

Outside the academic community and the Catholic hierarchy Diem found strong support among political liberals intimidated by Senator Joseph McCarthy. Still shaking from the loss of China, the Korean War, and the conviction of Alger Hiss, they found it impossible even to think of dealing with any type of communists. Yet it was the communists in Asia, who, by appealing to latent nationalism and the need for social reform, had won the popular support of the people of Vietnam. The liberals searched for a

third way and thought they had found it in an anticommunist Diem as the ruler of a free democratic Vietnam.

But the liberals had failed to reckon with the wishes of the Vietnamese people. They did not suddenly give their allegiance to this absentee aristocrat who had been in self-imposed exile while the communists had been leading a twenty-year anticolonial war for independence from France.

Nevertheless, the course of events was such that the Diem government was established in Saigon, not at the request of the South Vietnamese people, as the American government has insisted, but by that peculiar coalition of forces and interests which discovered Diem in Tokyo and groomed him in this country for the premiership in Saigon.

From the very day on which he ascended the office of the premiership in July 1954, Diem began to crush all opposition. Those who were particularly obnoxious to him were anticommunist Vietnamese leaders who made the mistake of being also anti-Diem. The identifiable Vietminh partisans who remained in the South were also eliminated in one way or another. While his high-handed way of running his government did not make Diem popular, it was not popularity that he was looking for. He knew that his base for support was very small and that he

would have trouble with the majority of the population who had supported the Vietminh in their long war against the French. Force was, therefore, the only way in which Diem could ready his people for the so-called democratic alternative.

Although Diem ruled autocratically from the first, his authoritarian tactics were not reported to the American people until he had fallen from favor eight years later. A group of men known as American Friends of Vietnam, organized by the Vietnam Lobby, worked for six years to present Diem's regime as a "showcase of democracy."

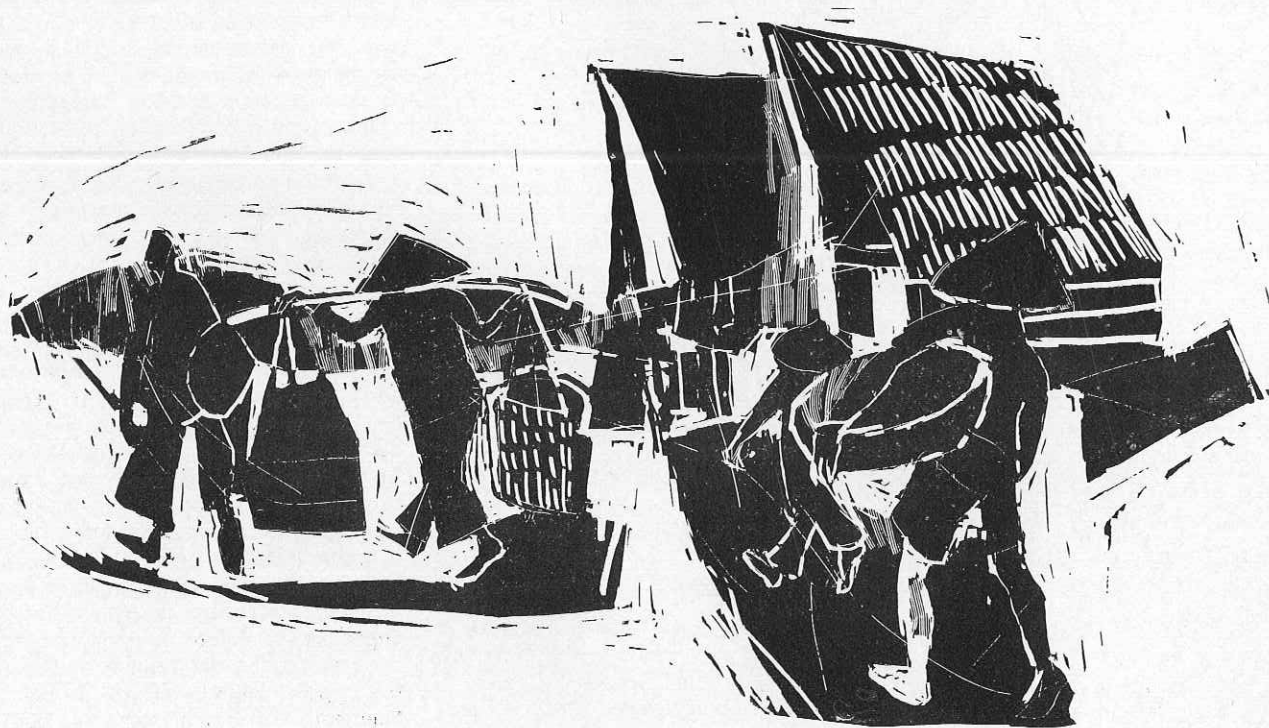
The American Friends of Vietnam was directed by a fourteen-member executive committee, among whom were Sol Sanders and Harold Oram. The task of these men was to make Diem palatable to the American people. They wrote his speeches and sprinkled them liberally with democratic clichés. Sanders, who remained a loyal friend to Diem, even after he had fallen from favor in the United States, resigned from the American Friends of Vietnam, when its executive committee sent a congratulatory wire to the generals who had deposed and murdered Diem, which arrived in Saigon while Diem's body was still warm.

By 1957 Diem was a certified pres-

ident of South Vietnam, and he had crushed all rival religious sects and independent politicians. He had surrounded himself with a court of American advisors, but he had accomplished little else.

The Vietnam Lobby, which had created the myth that the Diem government was a showcase of democracy, also worked to create a second myth; namely, that free elections for all Vietnamese, as called for in the Geneva Agreement, would be a means of enslaving the free people of Vietnam. The fact is that Diem used strong-arm methods to control the millions who were not favorable to him. Since the Vietminh, backed by Ho Chi Minh, would almost certainly win if elections were held, as they had duped the populace, the United States could strike a blow for freedom by keeping the people of Vietnam from holding free elections. In this manner we could both save the people of Vietnam from their own naivete and teach them the golden way of democracy through Diem's showcase government. It took the self-immolation of a Buddhist monk to destroy this myth.

The real tragedy is that the Vietnam Lobby was the end-product of liberal cold war anticommunism. The men who formed it were not self-seeking, but true believers who were on a crusade for democracy. They looked



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at the world through anti-red glasses and were convinced that Diem could be a democrat. When they could not convince President Eisenhower, they pressured his administration into line, and set out to convince the country. "They succeeded, and the myths that they created—that we were 'asked' to step in by the Vietnamese people, that we are protecting 'democracy' by blocking elections—remain long after Diem to haunt the State Department White Paper and President Johnson's speeches."⁴

In the light of the above facts, our claim that we are in Vietnam at the request of the Vietnamese people can no longer be defended. With the fall of the Diem regime, government after government has toppled so rapidly in Saigon as to become, outside of United States' circles, something of an international joke.⁵

A recent article in the November 30 issue of *Look* magazine now openly admits, "Our government installed its own handpicked Vietnamese leaders and continued propping them up long after they had become dictators; it OK'd coups d'etat, countercoups and coupettes."⁶ Our claim that we are in Vietnam at the request of the majority of the Vietnamese people in order to save them from communist aggression from the North is manifestly false. Its falseness is proved not only by the fact that Ambassador Lodge has recently said that the campaign to win the support of the Vietnamese people for the government is now going better, but also by the fact that a Johnson assistant has said as recently as November 2 that the Saigon rulers are irresponsible and do not have the support of the population or the confidence of the peasants.⁷

The New Face of War

This myth that we are in Vietnam at the request of the Vietnamese themselves must be destroyed. It is now leading the United States into a cruelly savage war. The South Vietnamese people themselves have expressed the wish that we would leave them alone. In any event, they are quite sure that we by our unrequested intervention have made matters much worse for them. The South Vietnamese may prefer the terror of the Vietcong to the terror of American indiscriminate bombing raids.

However honorable original intentions may have been in Vietnam, present terror tactics in the conduct of the war now make America the aggressor

nation in both North and South Vietnam. Why has this crusade against the communist enemy now turned into a slaughter of the innocent? The simple reason is that the United States was losing the war without terror. Convinced that the United States had come into Vietnam at the request of the Vietnamese people, Americans interpreted the loyalty of the peasants to the communists as being induced by their fear of Vietcong terror. As a desperation measure America decided to outdo the Vietcong at their own game.

A recently returned war correspondent reports the following conversation between himself and an officer of a helicopter unit. The conversation had drifted to the inevitable question of "What's the answer?" as they discussed how badly the war was then going.

"Terror," he said pleasantly. "The Vietcong have terrorized the peasants to get their cooperation, or at least to stop their opposition. We must terrorize the villagers even more, so they see that their real self-interest lies with us. We've got to start bombing and strafing the villages that aren't friendly to the government. Of course, we won't do it. That's not our way of doing things and the people at home would not stand for it. But terror is what it takes."⁸

Unfortunately, just what this unidentified officer said *America would not do is exactly what it is now doing*. Prior to that, American forces were few in number and, says Langguth, had been justly praised for decency and bravery. They had some doubts about the effectiveness of their effort in Vietnam but none about the justice of the cause. They had seen the cut throats and the ripped bowels which the Vietcong left behind, and they had been welcomed as liberators in villages which the communists had seized and occupied.

But the face of the war has now changed, and it is a very ugly face. The new war is American paratroopers abusing a village chief, because they do not understand his importance. It is a detail of American marines setting fire to a village of 150 dwellings without giving the villagers time to remove their food and personal belongings, because they *thought* the village was the source of one burst of sniper fire as they approached.⁹

More than anything else, the face of the war is the bombing of undefended villages, not friendly to the

government—villages, which by the way, have no protection by means of antiaircraft fire.

American pilots are disturbed by the fact that they are killing civilians, although the official line in Washington is still that this is not the aim. However, in the current burst of bombing raids no attempt is any longer made to identify legitimate bombing targets. Vietnamese observers no longer ride in the rear seats of spotter planes to identify such targets. The bombers are usually met by a spotter plane which leads them to villages or jungle thickets from which ground fire has been received in recent hours. The bombers then dump their loads and head for home. "If there is no target, they are directed to 'open areas'—villages that have either been abandoned or *are suspected* of harboring Vietcong units" (italics supplied).¹⁰

In the South then, the United States is apparently willing to win the war at an enormous cost to civilian life and unspeakable misery of the refugee. In the North it has simply hoped to bring Hanoi to its knees by a demonstration of military might. The longer bombing continues the more it looks as though President Johnson's offer of unconditional negotiation really means unconditional surrender. It looks all the more so, now that it has been revealed that Hanoi's offer to negotiate in the summer of 1964 was declined, because the offer was *thought* insincere.

The war of terror has now put the United States in a position where it cannot be pushed out of Southeast Asia but at the cost of thousands of friendly Vietnamese dead, among them women and children, not to mention American casualties.

What are the reasons for our continuation of this horrible war with these terribly inhumane methods? Sam Castan, senior editor of *Look* magazine perhaps said more than he intended to say when he wrote, "*President Johnson saw only one course left if the United States was to save its prestige and keep a strategic Asian land base against the day when we may need one against China*" (italics supplied).¹¹

He also says that "U. S. troops have only one way of hooking the Vietcong out of the sea of hiding that is the Vietnamese population. Every day we must stalk through villages, warily and with weapons cocked, and some innocents are inevitably hurt. If such

casualties do not endear foreigners to the Vietnamese, neither does their habit of harboring guerrilla snipers make us love them."

There is one other thing which the United States could do which the senior editor of *Look* did not mention, namely, withdraw from Vietnam, where its presence is no longer desired, if it ever was. The fact that it is not willing to do this seems to say that in its judgment the Vietnamese people are more expendable than its own. Its soldiers suffer and die, but the American civilian population is untouched and its land unscathed. But in order to guarantee a land base in Asia against the day when it may need it to resist China, it engages in what amounts to the mass murder of a civilian population in another country and devastates the land of another people in order to protect its own. If this does not smack of white supremacy, then I do not know how to interpret what I read.

In fairness to the American soldier it should be pointed out that the merciless character of our war in Vietnam is not due to the fact that the soldier is a depraved person. It is rather due to the fact that policy is made in Washington, not on the Vietnamese battlefield, and to the fact that the technical nature of modern warfare makes mass slaughter both possible and highly impersonal. Max Born, writing of the effect which modern technology has had upon traditional ethics on both peace and war, has this to say about its effect upon war: "In war, strength and courage, magnanimity toward the defeated foe and compassion for the defenseless characterized the ideal soldier. Nothing is left of this. Modern weapons of mass destruction leave no place for any ethical restrictions and reduce the soldier to a technical killer."¹²

How aptly Born has here described the character of modern warfare is revealed in the words of a Navy pilot who flies daily bombing missions over North Vietnam. "Bombing's a job. We've had the best training in the world, we've got the best equipment, and we're good. I've dropped over forty tons of bombs on North Vietnam because it's what I've been training to do for the last twenty years. Results? We never see them. They're someone else's job."

Another pilot said after a return from a bombing mission, "It was a milk run. We didn't see a soul down there!"¹³

If this is the nature of modern warfare, it raises serious questions about the possibility of a Christian's participation in it at any time. Are not Christians held responsible for their deeds? How can a Christian participate in a war where the act of showing mercy to the foe is either impossible or treasonable?

In any event, the fact that Americans were not asked to intervene in South Vietnam by a freely elected government in the first place, plus the fact that the South Vietnamese people have now expressed the wish that they should leave, plus the fact that the real purpose is to prevent the expansion of China at the expense of Vietnam and its people, plus the fact that the war is now one of calculated mass terror against a civilian population, has brought American policy in Vietnam to absolute moral bankruptcy. No nation has ever successfully flouted the moral order of the universe. Those nations that have tried it have gone down to destruction. Unless America repents of its worship of power and mammon, it shall likewise perish.

Let repentance begin at once by halting the bombings in both North and South. Set a date for a ceasefire and give the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese a chance to honor it. Finally, bring this dishonorable war to an honorable end at the conference table, where the problems that led to the conflict must finally be resolved in any case.

Notes

1. *ABC's About Vietnam*, a leaflet issued October 11, 1965, by the Friends Peace Committee, Philadelphia.

2. Robert Scheer and Warren Hinckle, "The Vietnam Lobby," *Ramparts* Special Report on Southeast Asia, p. 4.

3. Copyright, 1965, by *Ramparts* Magazine, Inc., 1182 Chestnut St., Menlo Park, California. Fifty cents.

4. Scheer and Hinckle, pp. 4-10.

5. Jack Langguth, "The War in Vietnam Can Be Won — But," *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, Sept. 19.

6. Sam Castan, "How Johnson Changed the War in Vietnam," p. 33.

7. Jack Foosie, "Analysis," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov. 2, p. 2.

8. Jack Langguth, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

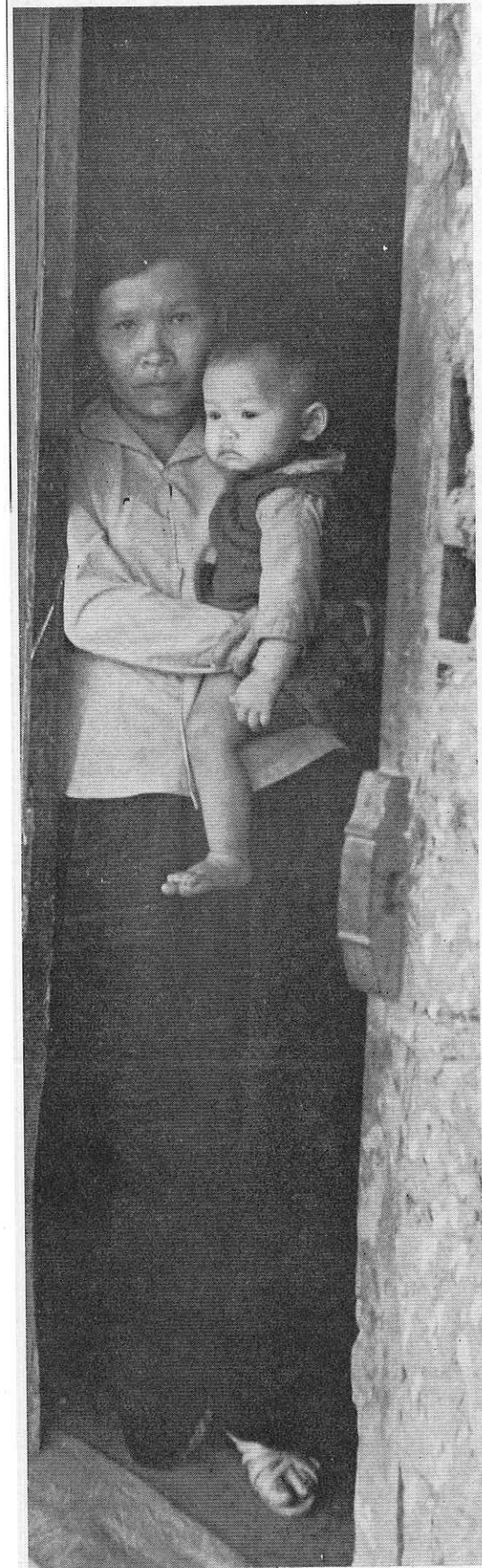
9. *Ibid.*, p. 40. Also Norman Cousins, "An Invitation to Return to Cam Ne," *Saturday Review*, Sept. 4, pp. 16 and 30.

10. Sam Castan, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

11. Sam Castan, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

12. Max Born, "Recollections of Max Born—III. Reflections," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, November, 1965, p. 4, col. 2.

13. Sam Castan, "The Navy War in Vietnam," *Look* Magazine, November 30, 1965, p. 30.



Vietnam Calendar

The following material was assembled by Paul Peachey. Chronological data comes from The Two Vietnams by Bernhard Fall (Praeger, 1964) and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

1863. French protectorate established in Indochina.

1885. French treaty with China at Tientsin recognizing French suzerainty over Vietnam.

1928. Formation of the Indochina-wide legislature called the Grand Council of Financial and Economic Interests.

1940. Japanese increasingly displace French in Vietnam for five years.

1941. Communist Party forms the Revolutionary League for the Independence of Vietnam (Vietminh).

1945. March 10, under Emperor Bao-Dai Vietnam is brought into Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prospereity Sphere; August 25, Emperor Bao-Dai hands over the Grand Seal to the Vietminh forces; September 2, proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh; October, arrival of new French reinforcements, appointment of Admiral d'Argenlieu as first French high commissioner.

1946. January, general elections coupled with ruthless internal struggle by the Vietminh to consolidate control (murder of provincial chiefs, leaders of sects, etc.); February 28, French recognition of the Republic of Vietnam as a free state, Ho Chi Minh signing for the Vietnamese; May, maneuvers of Admiral d'Argenlieu to undercut Ho Chi Minh by separating the Republic of Cochinchina (Saigon area).

1947. Failure of efforts to reach a compromise, emergence of open conflict between the French and their Republic of Cochinchina, and the Vietminh Republic.

1948. June 5, agreement between French and Bao-Dai (as chief of state) establishing the State of Vietnam.

1949. July 1, Bao-Dai formally establishes State of Vietnam.

1951. September 7, U. S. signs direct economic assistance agreement with Vietnam.

1954. May 8, defeat of French at Dienbienphu; July 7, former Emperor Bao-Dai appoints Ngo Dinh Diem as Premier; July 21, signing of Geneva Accords; October 24, letter of President Eisenhower to Premier Diem, promising direct American assistance (rather than through France), the promise to the Vietnamese people which is said to be the commitment behind present policy.

1955. February 12, the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group takes over training of South Vietnamese Army which French relinquish; July, communists initiate first move in South Vietnam by distributing literature signed by the National Liberation Front; July 20, Government of South Vietnam rejects North Vietnam government's invitation to discuss elections; October, Bao-Dai deposed by referendum, Republic of South Vietnam proclaimed with Ngo Dinh Diem as Premier.

Vietnam comprises a territory of 127,300 square miles along the eastern coast of Southeast Asia, with a population of about 30 million. European explorers touched these shores in the sixteenth century, while French Catholic missions were established in the seventeenth. By 1863, these regions, along with the neighboring areas (today Cambodia and Laos) became a French protectorate known as Indochina.

Various ethnic groups comprise the population of these three states. Numerous migrations, conquests, and political systems have prevailed in the past, notably a thousand years of Chinese domination (during the first millennium of the Christian era in the West).

Though culturally and ethnically interrelated, the peoples of the two Vietnams as they came into existence after 1954, have never been totally unified as a modern nation state. There have been several political cen-

ters (Hanoi, Hue, Saigon), as there are distinct geographical regions (notably the Red River Valley in the North, the Mekong in the South). The present division along the seventeenth parallel mirrors ancient rivalries and divisions, as well as the recent conflicts which culminated in the 1954 Geneva Accords.

Thus, the Vietnamese people share a problem common to many others in Asia and Africa: How can small ethnic and geographical units of population be combined quickly into larger political and economic systems, so as to cope with human needs amid rapidly growing populations? As late as 1870, Germany and Italy were still caught up in wars seeking such unity.

By 1946, however, unity and independence were within sight. The struggle against French colonialism and Japanese occupation had rallied diverse groups around a common goal. Communist revolutionaries provided the most energetic leadership during these struggles, and Ho Chi Minh emerged as the national hero, esteemed by noncommunists as well. For a time he enjoyed American support and in 1946, he was briefly acknowledged, even by the French, as the Premier of all Indochina. Other forces soon gained support, however, and the bitter struggle began. Yet as late as 1954, it was conceded generally that Ho Chi Minh would handily gain a national election.

Though Ho Chi Minh gave priority to national independence while the French remained, he was also a Marxist, interested in total revolution. This aroused the opposition of the feudal families, of some religious groups, and above all, the Catholics. Most Catholics lived in the North, and of these, 679,000 fled South after the Geneva Accords. Against these forces, the Vietinh, as the revolutionary movement was known, applied the ruthless tactics characteristic of communist revolutions. Yet Ho Chi Minh is a pragmatist who could co-exist with other forces if he had to. In any case he seeks to keep Vietnam independent from China.

Our Witness to Government

Why Should We Speak to Government?

The following analysis was prepared by John Howard Yoder.

WE SHOULD SPEAK because Jesus Christ is Lord. He is seated at the right hand of God even though His lordship is not acknowledged by the powers of this world. Within that framework, the authorities have their limited place; it is part of the Christian proclamation to remind them what these limits are. Their place in the world is not to make war but to keep peace; to reward and protect the good, and to repress evil within the area of their authority. (See Rom. 13 and 1 Peter 2.)

We should speak to government because we love our neighbor. Government action, whether in the field of war or in the realms of education or racial injustice, contributes to the welfare or to the suffering of our fellowman.

We should speak to government because we reject idolatry. In much of the life of a nation, and especially in times of war with regard to international conflict, the national state becomes much more than a modest and necessary instrument of organizing social life; it becomes an object of religious loyalty. Since the Old Testament times, it has been part of the task of the prophets and God's people, who have a concern for the unique claims of the one true God, to unmask idolatry.

We should speak to government because the statesmen in North America feel they are church people. Most persons in major public office in North America feel they are exercising a Christian responsibility in a Christian way. Whether they are sincere or hypocritical in this claim, is not a matter on which we can have a settled judgment without having first made the effort to speak to them. The committed Christian therefore must witness to such persons in every realm, but especially when a proposed action

is harmful to his fellowman. This is the duty of reprimand which every Christian owes the erring brother.

We should speak to government about its international behavior because we are Christian missionaries. The fact itself is most regrettable, and it is the result of a theological misunderstanding, but in other parts of the world the political activities of the western governments are taken as a commentary upon the Christian churches. This means that unless we speak to the contrary, American military involvement in Vietnam, as is furthermore dramatized by the military chaplaincy and by the religious involvement of the Diem family, the war in its goals and its methods will be identified in the minds of the local population with the Christian message. If we have any interest in preserving the Christian message from distortion and corruption so as to make it more understandable or more believable to men whom we wish would give it a hearing as the gospel for their lives, we must disavow the religious motivation claimed for the war by some Americans.

We should speak to government because we live in a democracy. Now good reason exists for doubting the usefulness of the slogan that we have "government by the people." We must sometimes reject the idea that because we live in a democracy, or if we vote, we are therefore, because of our participation in the entire system, morally responsible for everything that happens. This is an unrealistic description of the democratic process or of moral accountability. Nevertheless, a democratic organization does represent an openness, to which the agents of government are formally committed, to any kind of communication, including the expression of moral concern or condemnation, concerning their functions.

Selfishness may be involved in many citizens speaking to government, both

in what they communicate to government about what it should do, and in what the governmental leaders themselves decide. Yet the rulers still claim, by which they open themselves to our witness, that they are serving the will and welfare of the population. Even should we choose not to respect the claim of persons in high office to be Christians, we still must face the challenge of their claim that they are doing what we tell them to do. The very fact the claim is made involves us, if we say nothing, in a degree of responsibility for our apparent acquiescence in what goes on.

We should speak to government because we are already involved. Not only because governments of North America have chosen to consider us citizens, but for much more substantial reasons as well. Mennonites are already speaking in Vietnam. We are providing relief assistance to many needy persons, especially war sufferers, within the part of the country under the control of the Saigon government. For obvious practical reasons, Mennonites are not providing relief services in the parts of Vietnam dominated by the National Liberation Front or the government of North Vietnam. Not only does this threaten to give the wrong impression that Mennonites take the side of the Saigon regime and the American army; this impression is intentionally fostered by the American military, who want to use these material contributions to strengthen the acceptance of their authority by people whom we help. Thus if we say nothing but merely continue our relief activity we are by our very silence saying something; we are taking sides in the war itself. The only way *not* to be understood as being willingly and partisanly involved in the war effort is to be vocally committed to peace.

What Do We Say?

God is on the side of man. Every human being is a man for whom Christ died. Rather than getting in-

volved in speculation about the nature of creation and just what "the image of God" means, it is more appropriate for us to say this in terms of atonement. The death of Christ at the hands of and for the sake of unworthy men is itself the foundation which makes every man, regardless of his human qualities or merits or achievements, the object of our love and responsibility. This absolute Christian responsibility for the neighbor allows no justification for distinguishing between friend and enemy, good and evil, Christian and communist in our obligation to seek the welfare of the other.

God is on the side of the poor. This is not only the idea of a few of the more socially-minded Old Testament prophets; it is powerfully stated at the beginning of the New Testament story in the Magnificat (a most strange kind of thing to be said by the tender maiden Mary) and in the latter part of the New Testament in the Epistle of James. The statement that God is on the side of social revolution, which is currently being made in much popular Protestant writing, is confusing and should not be used; but the cause of and the needs of the poor have a special place in God's intentions and, conversely, that the rich and mighty in this world face a very special kind of judgment.

Man cannot be trusted to be his own judge. Perhaps the greatest threat to the wholesomeness of the life of any society is the tendency of man to be judge and jury in his own case. The value of democracy is that it provides checks and balances and sources of criticism whereby the persons wielding power must recognize their weaknesses and limits. Modesty is therefore the first virtue of the statesmen, and it will express itself in attitudes, institutions and procedures contributing to effective self-criticism. In the case of Vietnam this would mean subjecting to legal analysis our claims to be there in the first place, remembering the inappropriateness of any nation's claim to be policeman to the world, challenging the validity of the assumption that it is the American government's responsibility to stop communism wherever it occurs, and using the available channels to find out what the rest of the world thinks.

Violence is no basis for social peace. The arguments which can be made in the extreme case for the moral acceptability of a certain

amount of force used within limits in certain cases to maintain peace and order has been radically misunderstood as promising in principle that if sufficient power is used peace can be imposed. The opposite is the case, both in the lessons of history and in the intention of traditional Christian acceptance of the police function and war. Mennonites especially have fallen prey to this idea as over compensation for fear of being associated with humanistic pacifists.

What the Churches Have Said

Following are excerpts taken from the official statements of three Mennonite brotherhoods.

War Is Sin

We believe that war is altogether contrary to the teaching and spirit of Christ and the gospel; that therefore war is sin. . . . We believe that strife and wars are born of the selfishness and greed of individuals, groups, and nations (James 4:1). *General Conference Mennonite Church, Portland, August 22, 1953.*

Human life is sacred unto God, and a Christian has no right to destroy life. War is evil, brutal, and inhuman. It glorifies might, greed, and selfishness. The nature of war remains incompatible with the new nature of a regenerated Christian. *General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church, October 28, 1954.*

Duties of Statesmen

Statesmen must continually be challenged to seek the highest meanings of such values and concepts as justice, equality, freedom, and peace.

Even though they may reject the highest good in favor of relative and lesser values, statesmen must nevertheless be challenged to find the highest possible values within their own relative frames of reference. In so doing, the Christian may, and can rightfully speak to decisions which the Christian ethic will not permit him to assist in carrying out.

The evils of war, particularly in this nuclear age, must ever be pressed upon the consciences of statesmen. *Mennonite General Conference, August 25, 1961.*

Negotiation in Vietnam

We recognize that many countries, including the United States, share responsibility for the war in Vietnam, and we abhor the subversion and ag-

gression of the communists in Vietnam. In the first place, we call on the United States government and the other governments involved immediately to halt and disavow the bombing of noncombatants, the torture of prisoners, and other such acts of war which are particularly abhorrent even to many in the general public, which seriously damage relationships to the peoples of Asia.

Furthermore, as a conference, we appreciate the efforts of the United States government to negotiate a settlement and urge that it continue to explore every possible means to end the war. Acknowledging the complex nature of the problem and the ambiguities involved we would propose consideration of the following steps:

Use the United Nations and agencies of government neutral to the conflict in negotiating and controlling a settlement of the war.

Use the reduction of military acts and increased economic aid to demonstrate our good faith and sincere desire to end the conflict. We believe that intensified and increased economic development in the Mekong Delta would contribute to the resolution of the total southeast Asian problem.

Initiate negotiations for a united Vietnam arrived at by an internationally supervised system of self-determination, without insisting strictly on our preference of a political, social, and economic order. *General Conference Mennonite Church, Estes Park, Colorado, July 15, 1965.*

Set the Pace in Sacrifice

Finally, having recognized that desperate economic need is one of the factors driving men to embrace the communist ideology . . . it is incumbent upon us as the people of God to set the pace in sacrificial service, both to those who suffer as a result of the war, and to those who live in poverty and need. We must recognize that extra dollars are coming into our hands because of the worldwide military buildup. Are we willing to be enriched at the cost of the suffering of others? Or will we use any such increase in income to further the preaching of the gospel, and to minister to the needy, both those in emergency situations, and those in the developing nations, helping them to help themselves? *Mennonite General Conference, Kidron, Ohio, August 27, 1965.*

The Christian Presence in Vietnam

VIETNAM IS BY tradition a Buddhist country. Christians — both Roman Catholics and Protestants — are a distinct minority. The Protestant Christian community in South Vietnam numbers only 100,000 adults and children.

An independent Protestant church was organized in Vietnam in 1927. Called the Evangelical Church of Vietnam it was the outgrowth of the first Protestant missionary effort. The Christian and Missionary Alliance came to Danang in 1911 in the person of Robert A. Jaffray. Within four years nine missionaries were working in the country.

Prospects for evangelism were bright until the Roman Catholic Church on the basis of an 1884 treaty got a decree from the French government excluding all non-Catholic missionary work among the indigenous people. The ban was later relaxed, but Protestant missionaries were restricted to the port cities and S. Vietnam.

In spite of these limitations, Vietnamese Christians carried the gospel into the countryside. Fierce persecution in every village met them but it did not stop them.

The guiding purpose of the Christian and Missionary Alliance has been to win personal commitment to Christ. As a rule it has not set up schools, hospitals, or orphanages. It has depended on Bible teaching to establish the church with the hope that a well-taught church will develop its own conscience for physical, social, economic, and educational needs.

And this has taken place in a limited way. The Evangelical Church from its own resources has established an orphanage and school to care for the children of pastors who have been killed. With the assistance of the Mennonite Central Committee, a hospital was established at Nhatrang.

It was late in 1954 following the Geneva Accords that the Mennonite Central Committee came to South

Vietnam. Refugees from the North needed material aid. Neither the church nor the mission was prepared for this emergency. The relief agency also provided personnel for student work camps and stationed a medical team at the Banmethuot leprosarium.

Since 1954, forty-seven people have served in the MCC program in Vietnam. Among them is Daniel Gerber who was captured by the National Liberation Front forces in 1962.

Mennonites have often followed up their relief projects with mission programs. This has happened in Ethiopia, British Honduras, Puerto Rico, and

Taiwan. In Vietnam, the mission phase did not follow, but became the companion of the relief endeavor.

The Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, Salunga, Pennsylvania, entered Vietnam in the fall of 1957. It came to express Christian concern for the people of the land by developing a more direct ministry of teaching and preaching.

It decided to work in Saigon. At that time this city of three million had only ten Protestant churches, most of which were small chapels. Less than a half dozen missionaries were engaged in full-time evangelistic work.

The Evangelical Church of Vietnam

The quality of witness in Vietnam is described by Mahlon H. Hess

WE CAN ONLY guess as to the increased suffering and persecution which the church is undergoing. The Evangelical Church of Vietnam, now fifty years old, has many excellent qualities. It is known for its simple acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the revelation of God to men, as the rule for faith and life. The Bible school is a most important institution.

Our brethren stand for holiness of life and for separation from sin and worldliness. However, growth in some matters of ethics and honesty is still needed in the life of the church. On the one hand these problems are deeply rooted in culture and tradition; on the other hand some second and third generation Christians have not yet experienced the new birth.

The Evangelical Church of Vietnam has a firm belief in the power of prayer. Special prayer services are held each Sunday morning and mid-week. In worship services, opportunity for sharing requests and for voluntary prayer is given.

This young church has a strong emphasis on evangelism. Pastors give active leadership in outreach; each congregation has a witness band; each district has a full-time itinerant evangelist. Colportage work, market preaching, and radio programs over fourteen stations (valuable in reaching students, military personnel, and government officers) are fruitful.

In 1962 the first Vietnamese foreign missionary was commissioned to serve in Vientiane, Laos. In the national church conference of June, 1963, several young people responded to the call for missionary volunteers; offering in cash and pledges was adequate to support a national missionary.

The church has a concern about stewardship of life and possessions. Self-support is a condition for membership in the national church organization. However, the church has a real problem in the matter of pastoral support. Most pastors have demonstrated a sacrificial spirit of service. Conferences of deacons are held in many areas to help laymen to give leadership in Christian education.

The Evangelical Church has a con-

science sensitive to the social needs of its fellowmen. In addition to its orphanage and its hospital, twenty of its members now share with the missionary staff in the ministry carried on from Banmethout leprosarium.

Our brethren are growing through the discipline of suffering. While due to the testings and opposition, some have grown cold and turned back, many have been purified and perfect-

ed. A witnessing band went into a communist-infested area, and had the joy of seeing thirty respond.

A leading pastor was given a gun by government officers, but declined to use it, even when he had to flee for his own life. He was continuing in earnest prayer for the backslider who sought to kill him, and looked forward to a day when they would be reunited as brothers.

ly misunderstood by Vietnamese and Americans alike, Eastern Board missionaries plan to remain, keeping politically neutral. They will seek to proclaim the Prince of Peace, protesting the evils of hatred and war, of greed and power, wherever or within whomever they are manifested, so that more and more people will see the missionaries' distinctive character and message.

One of our workers overheard his Vietnamese helper reprimanding neighbor children for referring to a missionary as a *huguoï My* (American). He told the children they should call him the *giao-sy* (missionary), because "he isn't involved in the killing and bombing that other Americans do here."

Since it can appear that Mennonite missionaries are benefitting from the protection of the American guns (supposedly staying off a communistic take-over) while continuing freely to build the church in Saigon, we feel they dare not remain quiet simply in order to stay. This is not to imply that demonstrations and formal protests are necessary.

The quieter routines of mission life may have a more convincing effect, as Luke Martin writes: "Often English students will stay long after class to ask our opinions on the war in this land, or some subject pertaining to the Christian faith. The political unrest is always on the minds of the students, especially when the specter of the draft is before all the

The Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions

Paul N. Kraybill describes the work of the two Mennonite mission centers in Saigon. He also analyzes the special problems faced.

IN SAIGON AT 336 Phan Thanh Gian the Eastern Board operates a book-room, reading and study room, and English classes. Other activities include Bible correspondence courses, children's Bible hour, a Sunday Bible study class, and a weekly evangelistic service.

Most of the work continues to center around student contacts. In this downtown location many young people of the large student population of Saigon find this center a place for reading, study, and fellowship.

A new center was opened in 1964 in Gia Dinh, a suburb of Saigon. Besides activities similar to the other center, a day-care nursery is operated. Most of the activities at this new cen-

ter have tended to draw in community folks rather than students.

It was inevitable that in a land where American armed forces are so prominent and so despised that the presence and activity of American missionaries would raise questions in the minds of the people. But, when the United States government dependents were evacuated from Vietnam early in 1965, it did become more clear that the Mennonite missionaries are not United States government employees.

It is basic for missionaries today to work with the aspirations and hopes of the people. But it is precisely here that our missionaries are caught with frustrating embarrassment, for within South Vietnam there is support both for the present autocratic "democracy" and for communism as the lesser of two evils.

Despite the risk of being complete-



young men. Many are uneasy with the American involvement in the war; some want peace so badly they would accept any form of government. We avoid becoming involved in the political controversies of this land. At the same time we try to show that the American policy is not necessarily the best policy nor synonymous with our convictions."

In the face of suffering the Mennonite mission stands beside the Evangelical Church as brother and friend. This church is seeking to maintain a strict neutrality in the conflict that seesaws over it. It is evident that after the war has ceased another chapter of great suffering will come to light.

In the present crisis the Eastern Board has set for itself the following purposes:

1. To reaffirm our opposition to war on the basis of the Scripture as we have always believed, and to make

clear our protest against the evils inherent in either of the conflicting ideologies that have brought about the present struggle.

2. To reaffirm that we are in Vietnam because we believe that Christ has called us to witness and to serve.

3. To call the church to prayer on behalf of our government and all governments involved, and for the Christians of Vietnam and all the suffering people in that nation.

4. To confirm that we intend to continue a positive program of Christian witness in spite of uncertainties, remaining in Vietnam as long as humanly possible, unless the influence of our presence would become an embarrassment to Vietnamese Christians.

5. To state our intention of gradually increasing our staff to develop new and enlarged areas of service and to relate effectively in a liaison role to Mennonite Central Committee program in South Vietnam.



The Mennonite Central Committee

SAIGON, NHATRANG, AND Pleiku soon will see the expanded efforts of the Mennonite Central Committee. New projects will also be opened.

As reported earlier in our news columns (Jan. 4), forty-five volunteers are scheduled to be sent to Vietnam between February and September. This group will consist of seven administrative personnel, five doctors, six nurses, three social workers, seven home economists, four agriculturists, four mechanics and builders, eight Paxmen with mechanical, construction, or agricultural skills; and one secretary. They will join eleven workers who are already in Vietnam. Atlee Beachy, Goshen, Indiana, will administer the program.

Seventeen of the forty-five new volunteers will be recruited by the Mennonite Central Committee. The remaining twenty-eight volunteers will be recruited by Church World Service and its member denominations.

Budget for this program will increase tenfold. The allotment in 1965 was \$32,500; in 1966 the total will jump to \$350,000. Mennonites hope to raise \$50,000 of this amount, and Church World Service and Lutheran

World Relief will supply \$250,000 and \$50,000 respectively.

Highlights of the aid endeavor are:

Saigon. A project team, designed to serve a number of refugee colonies in the slum outskirts of the city, will consist of a doctor, nurse, home economist, and two social workers.

Nhatrang. The national Evangelical Church's hospital in Nhatrang will have an enlarged medical and service staff. A social worker will also be added.

Pleiku. A doctor and two nurses are now stationed at Pleiku, where a small hospital will be constructed shortly.

Hue. The World Relief Commission, relief and service arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, is operating a refugee vocational training center at Hue (pronounced "way"). To this project an agriculturist, mechanical engineer, home economist, and a person skilled in cottage industry will be sent.

Danang. A refugee colony of 4000 people on the edge of Danang has a clinic building but no doctor. A doctor and nurse will be provided, as well as a home economist.

Quang Ngai. In the Quang Ngai (pronounced "nigh") area large numbers of people are being resettled. Several hundred thousand more refugees are expected to come from Vietcong territories soon. A seven-man team will be placed here.

Tuy Hoa. A double team similar to the one envisioned for Quang Ngai will also be recruited for Tuy Hoa (pronounced "twee wah"), whose large refugee population is expected to become even bigger soon.

Kontum. World Relief Commission is also planning to establish a refugee training center at Kontum.

The Mennonite Central Committee continues to be the only Protestant relief agency handling government surplus commodities in Vietnam. It will be receiving 4,250,000 pounds of dried milk powder, flour, bulgur, cornmeal, beans, and vegetables.

An unusual aspect of the Mennonite relief effort in Vietnam is the opportunity to serve a wide range of Christian groups in a cooperative ministry. The relationships established in past years with the Evangelical Church in Vietnam, the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, and

the Christian and Missionary Alliance are being preserved.

The Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches has been channeling support for the relief effort in South Vietnam through the Mennonite Central Committee since May 1965. It is aware of the MCC's special concerns in Vietnam as a peace church, but this has not prevented it from reaffirming its intentions of working jointly with MCC. Other agencies with which MCC is

cooperating in some measure in Vietnam are Lutheran World Relief, and the World Relief Commission of the National Association of Evangelicals.

"The Mennonite Central Committee, as one of the pioneer American Protestant agencies in Vietnam, has a special responsibility there," says William T. Snyder, MCC executive secretary, "but the need is far beyond our capacity to meet. We must be prepared, therefore, to work with other Christian groups and voluntary agencies."

A Missionary Concern

WE REALIZE THAT in this complex and changing situation it is very difficult to determine what the truth is and make valid judgments. But the intensifying of the war through increased involvement of foreign forces is greatly increasing the suffering of these people. We therefore as residents of Vietnam who are committed to seeking the way of Christ, wish to share the following concerns with Christians everywhere and especially with the Mennonite fellowship.

We are concerned that the church

is not misled as to the nature, causes, and consequences of the conflict here, through possible manipulation of mass media of communications by those forces that follow human reason rather than the mind of Christ.

We are deeply concerned because Vietnam has become a focal point for a larger international struggle which greatly increases the possibility that the conflict here could quickly expand beyond control bringing unimaginable suffering to large parts of the world's population.

We are troubled by the great suffering the Vietnamese people have had to endure due to acts of terrorism, fighting, bombings, and shellings. Tens of thousands are being killed or maimed for life. Social fabric is being torn and the morality of the people adversely affected.

We are concerned because a large majority of the Vietnamese people have no voice in deciding their fate under present circumstances. Some strongly support one side or the other but most, we feel, desire only a cessation of the conflict to enable them to live in peace.

We are concerned because the justification for our own country's heavy military involvement here is open to question. The issue is not so clear-cut as those who defend United States military actions would have us believe.

We are concerned because Asiatics tend to identify Christianity with Western civilization. When large armed forces from Christian nations fight Asians on Asian soil there is danger that Christianity is brought into disrepute and the communication of the gospel made more difficult.

We are concerned that Christians elsewhere are aware that on both sides of the conflict there are Christian brothers caught whose lives and witness are in jeopardy. Justification of the conflict by some elements of the church abroad heightens their sufferings.

Therefore, we urge Christians everywhere to:

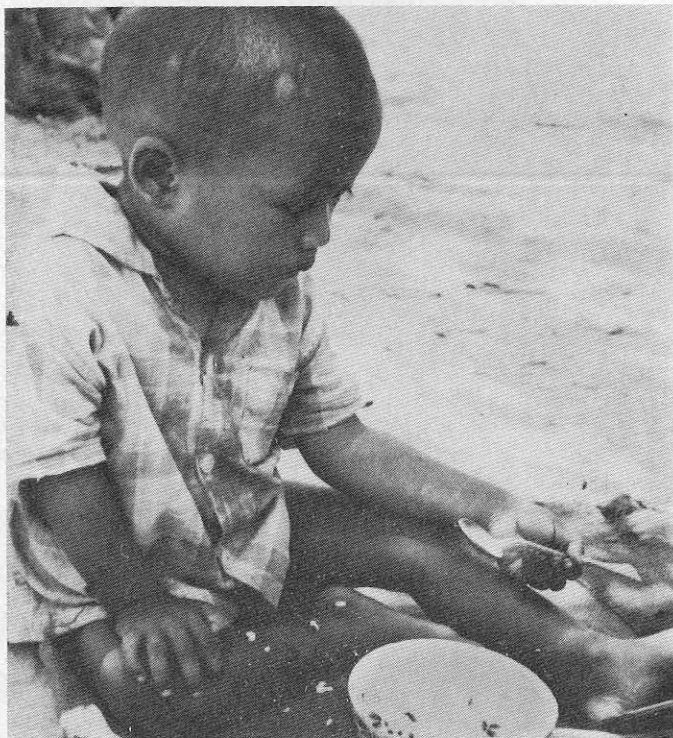
Be certain that our attitudes concerning the Vietnam conflict are consistent with the mind of Christ as revealed in the New Testament rather than molded by the spirit of this world.

Repent of the sins of omission and apathy which have helped to bring on the present conflict.

Hear the call to deeper commitment to Christ and the way of Christ that the struggle here engenders, willingly taking up the cross of self-sacrifice and misunderstanding.

Speak out as opportunity affords and the Spirit of God directs us to do what we as Christians can to bring the present conflict to a conclusion.

Pray that the church here will be faithful in suffering, that the conflict will soon be resolved, that governing powers will recognize the limits and obligations of their power. *Vietnam Mennonite Mission Council: Luke Martin, James Metzler, Everett Metzler, Donald Sensenig.*



America's Hour of Truth in Vietnam

Asia was the birthplace of civilization—and of our biblical faith. Ironically, however, the industrial revolution broke through first in Europe. But European enrichment often meant Asian impoverishment, a legacy now enhanced by American folly in Vietnam. Today Asia is on the rebound. How can Americans make room on the bench of privilege for others?

WHY ARE AMERICANS fighting in the jungles of Vietnam?

According to the government's explanation, these men are there to defend freedom. A weak and hapless nation has fallen victim to outside aggression. This aggression is a local incident in a vast global conspiracy. The fate, not merely of 14 million South Vietnamese, but of free men everywhere, hangs in the balance.

This explanation is simple, forthright, and, to many people, convincing. Public opinion polls indicate that two-thirds or more of the American people support it. Some do so after careful consideration.

As Mennonites we repudiate all war, but the meaning of our witness must still be worked out in terms of the specific situation which we now confront. Indeed, do we understand our own commitment if we do not face the complexities of particular conflicts?

We face a dual problem. What are the facts? And what do they mean? The first is difficult because our perception of the facts is limited by the narrow range of our experience. The second is difficult because the yardstick whereby we measure these events is made in our own image. Complex forces are at work in the power confrontation between China and the United States.

Unfortunately, even our Christian concepts have been debased by our

own national myths. In our North American churches we tend to concentrate on the biblical imagery of personal salvation, while in public or international matters we are often secular or actively pagan. In any case, our perspective is so short and self-centered that we cannot recognize the larger contours of events in Asia.

The Long View

In a televised interview several months ago, Premier Yew of Singapore observed that while Mao Tse-tung of China thinks in terms of generations and centuries, American leaders find it hard to think beyond the next election. As a young nation, unhampered by history, the United States fails to comprehend the glacial character of Asian events.

About a decade ago an Indian historian, K. M. Panikkar, placed this generation into significant perspective. "We are witnessing today," he said, "the end of the Vasco Da Gama era in history." That era began with the arrival of Vasco Da Gama, the Portuguese explorer off the coast of South India in 1498 and ended with the departure of the Europeans from India and China in the late 1940s. During these four and one-half centuries the maritime powers of Europe came to dominate the affairs of the great land masses of Asia. Today Asia is on a rebound.

Asia was the birthplace of civiliza-

tion—and of our biblical faith. While our European ancestors were still barbarians, high civilizations flourished in India and China. The basic discoveries on which our modern technological civilization is based come from them. Ironically, however, the modern scientific and industrial revolutions broke through first in Europe. Thanks to this advantage, the peoples of Europe wove the network of trade and political fabrics that now envelops the globe. Their great leap forward, however, disrupted the ancient equilibrium of the Asian world. European enrichment often meant Asian impoverishment.

Technological superiority, however, soon fostered attitudes of disdain in the white man for men in less developed societies. This sense of superiority was reinforced by religious conviction. Europeans championed the true religion. Indeed, thought some, the Christian religion was the key to their technological superiority. In any event, the Vasco Da Gama era was characterized by the white man's cultural imperialism.

Colonialism brought not only bane but also blessing. The colonial presence in Asia introduced ferments that in time were to destroy colonialism itself. Western political concepts came to be taken seriously. Even the communism which has meanwhile become the American national scapegoat is a *Western* faith. Communism began as the cry of Western men against the injustice of their own society. Leaders like Lenin were soon to link that cry to the groans of the oppressed everywhere.

But America, suddenly rich and powerful, seems unable to assess the profound, often traumatic impact of its imperialism on the peoples of Asia. Theoretically, the United States has long since condemned colonialism. Yet at the deeper human and social levels it fails. Somehow its people

seem unable to surrender the advantages of political and economic power which the colonial era achieved for them. The United States is like a ball team which cheats its way through the game to a point where victory is assured, and then suddenly demands that all rules be strictly observed. The West achieved its dominance by actions which it now labels violence or aggression when practiced by others still dispossessed.

The matter has another side, to

be sure. Premature independence in Congo illustrated the great danger of immediate withdrawal. American companies cannot simply scuttle their investments abroad, and accept total loss. The instability of country after country provides endless temptation and opportunity for evil men. In many cases representatives of Western powers have shown greater wisdom than ambitious national leaders.

Nonetheless, Americans face a task seemingly greater than their capacities.

How can they slide over on the bench of privilege to make room for others?

The Trauma of Communist Victory

Communist victory in China in 1949, followed soon by war in Korea, sent an earthquake-like tremor through the American body politic. China had been taken into the United Nations as one of the four major powers, and as a Pacific pillar in the postwar world order. Suddenly, from the American viewpoint, a major asset turned into a major liability. An ally became a determined opponent.

However the communist victory in China may be judged, it is the consequences which concern us here. For fear now transformed American foreign policy from benevolent flexibility to the aggressive containment of communism. The goal of containment increasingly eclipsed support of "the revolution of rising expectations." In effect American actions now began to say: better to prolong colonial or feudal *dependence* than to risk communist-led *independence*.

Communism — must it be said again? — is an aggressive political faith, capable of brutal and enslaving action. Its atheism repels not only Christians but many other religious people around the world. But the record also shows that the strength of communist appeal and power is often a good barometer of economic and political desperation.

Perhaps no one who is immersed in the prosperity and security of American life today can comprehend the agony of many non-Western peoples who must achieve in a decade tasks for which the West had generations and even centuries. Many face but three alternatives: 1) anarchy or chaos; 2) intervention or subjugation from abroad; and 3) iron-handed self-rule. The third, of course, may be military dictatorship, or rule by a strong man. Rarely, however, does the strong man bring a vision or the political resources necessary to new institutions.

From Colonialism to Anticommunism

Communism, on the other hand, though ruthless in method, does bring a comprehensive blueprint. Under today's circumstances in Vietnam, why should we wonder—or object—at the continuing appeal of Ho Chi Minh? If you were a loyal Vietnamese, how would you choose?

The rebound of Asia from colonial-



ism and the American trauma produced by communist victory in China provide the key to American action in Vietnam. In his presidential memoirs, *Mandate For Change*, General Eisenhower admits candidly that America entered Vietnam because of American strategic interests, that is, concern for the balance of power and for Vietnam's natural resources. It was the *importance of Vietnam in America's grand design for communist containment* rather than the primary interests of Vietnam itself that brought the United States in.

Vietnamese resistance movements had long fought against the French colonial masters, and against the Japanese who succeeded them during World War II. The United States wanted French colonial rule to end, and during the war, worked with Ho Chi Minh. Though important population groups opposed communism, by war's end Ho Chi Minh had become the recognized national leader. In December 1945 the French signed an agreement recognizing him as such, and the following month he won a national election. The new French high commissioner, however, worked toward a French comeback. While Ho was abroad, and without authorization from Paris, the commissioner set up a separate government in Saigon. But the forces of Ho Chi Minh, too, dealt treacherously. Their mutual perfidy led to the bloody struggle that ended eight years later in the French defeat at Dienbienphu.

The communist victory in China and the Korean War both fell within this eight-year period. As General Eisenhower indicates, the American government was eager to undergird the French effort. It sought to make a moral case for intervention that would satisfy free world opinion. The French struggle was to be redefined so as to become "a clear case of freedom defending itself from communist aggression" rather than "an effort on the part of the French to sustain their former domination" (*Mandate For Change*, p. 336). But the French, given their colonial holdings elsewhere, could not accept this.

As the French position disintegrated, the United States began to move in unilaterally, picking up the remnants of French rule. Already when the Geneva Accords were made, the United States refused to sign, and two years later, to permit the elections for which the Accords provided. It was committed rather to

build a new state in the South, even though no legal basis existed for such a state, and it admitted that 80 percent backed Ho Chi Minh.

Just before the Geneva Accords were enacted America brought in Ngo Dinh Diem as premier, a Catholic mandarin who was living in exile in the United States. It was to this ruler whom America set up that America made that famous commitment which underlies its policy. Because Diem lacked a legal and a popular base for his rule, he resorted to many police state measures to gain and then to maintain power. Eventually, however, he fell in disgrace. In the instability which followed, the United States eventually dropped its advisory military pretenses, and committed its own forces to savage battle.

A brief sketch as this oversimplifies. The basic contours, however, are clear—and shocking. Against a regime which in 1946 had achieved national status, and which after eight years of fighting forced the French to withdraw, and still commanded the loyalty of the populace, the United States set up a competing government which possessed neither popular nor legal base. It took this action, not because of the best interest of the Vietnamese people, but because of American strategic designs in Asia. Usually, in international relations, when a nation interferes in the internal affairs of another for its own reasons, such intervention is labelled aggression. Brazenly, however, the United States insists instead that the North Vietnamese are the aggressors.

It must be stressed that this critique does not exonerate the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Hanoi regime, nor, for that matter, Moscow and Peking. The actions of the NLF in South Vietnam have indeed been terrifying and repugnant, while Peking and Moscow likewise seek their own advantage. But the central fact dare no longer be evaded.

Neither communist atrocities nor aid to Vietnamese villagers can create the moral basis which the United States' presence in Vietnam lacks. Victory, if it could be had, would not establish the righteousness of the American cause.

This is crucial in the question of negotiated settlement. From the standpoint of the enemy, whoever he may be, the American offer to discuss unconditionally is meaningless as long as the United States presupposes the retention of its illegal state in the

South. How the administration is to untangle itself is not easy to foresee, nor are we competent to outline specific solutions. But until the United States is willing to recognize and to admit the perfidy of its action in Vietnam, how can it hope to devise sound alternatives?

An Hour of Truth

Vietnam thus becomes for the American people an hour of truth. Present policy implies that communism is already so pervasive in power, so evil in character, that in order to stop it Americans may on occasion suspend their constitution, their treaties, the charter of the United Nations, and international law. It attributes to communism the power to crush the diverse and creative forces of human behavior which in the end frustrate tyranny. And what is all this but to imply that communism thwarts the sovereignty and freedom of God? But if these assumptions are valid, perhaps American policy in Vietnam is appropriate.

If Americans choose this option, however, what of their democratic institutions and values, to say nothing of their Christian faith and trust in God? Will they not fall under the same judgments whereby they condemn communism?

If they reject these assumptions and policies, as surely they must, let them embrace no alternate illusions. Having sown to the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind. It would be irresponsible, therefore, to wave painless and risk-free panaceas. However unreasonable Chinese actions may seem, the Vasco Da Gama legacy of bitterness has now been enhanced by American folly. Yet surely, once America begins to act in discernible good faith, new relations can be built. Once America recognizes that its armies in Vietnam mean to them what Chinese bases in Mexico would mean to the United States, perhaps they can proceed more dispassionately. Indeed, do they not dishonor their own national leaders when they attribute to them, in their misguided patriotism, the inability to devise more creative policies?

The war in Vietnam is but a chapter, not the whole book, of American confrontation with China. Can its national self-conception and its perception of world events be brought closer to reality, before it is too late? Now that we have peered into the abyss, let us turn back.

The witness about a better way in Vietnam is not a side issue for Christians. Christ came for all men and the activity we choose should be a proclamation of that Christ.

WHEN ASKED TO work for peace in Vietnam our first escape route is "We don't know enough to decide! The radio says this. Our preacher says so. My cousin in Vietnam says the beatniks are prolonging the war. Whom can I believe?"

The crucial decision for the Christian is: Do I really want to know enough to decide how to work for peace? It is an especially hard decision when some of the things we find out do not give us a good picture of ourselves. Yes, we might argue, we want to know, but we can't trust our newspapers and other sources.

We know we have to want to find out what's going on in our world. In real life the basic decision is the decision between avoiding the world or deciding to see and know the world. It is so easy to be caught up in the pursuit of exciting novelities, business competition, and even a heavy church calendar so that we do not see the wounded man beside the road.

Being Where We Can Find Out

The second step involves the decision to work for peace. Have we skipped a few steps? Seemingly, step one would be to decide if we want to know; step two would be getting the facts; step three should be considering the facts and making a decision; step four should be taking action to get involved or not to get involved. In real life, however, we know that no one can find out how to work for peace unless he begins doing just that.

If you really want to seek peace and want to know the problems and issues, you will have to become in-

involved in some group that works for peace. Few of us are wealthy enough to take time off to do research or to evaluate the sources to find which are reliable. The alternative is to join those reliable groups working for peace, or create our own, where information and reports are collected.

We have to be where the facts are reported and peace conferences and seminars announced. We have to subscribe to appropriate publications. Some Mennonites belong to the Fellowship of Reconciliation or to SANE, and read their publications.

Last spring several congressmen petitioned for open hearings on Vietnam. Unless we are on the mailing list of some peace group, we may not know of an effort such as this and therefore can't ask our congressman to sign the petition or to push for economic rather than military programs in Vietnam.

Don't Wait for the Church

When you have participated in working for peace, how can you share what you have found out? At least two channels are open to us: 1) nondirect action or discussion in the local congregation, or 2) a direct action witness in a group not identical with the local congregation.

If we would turn to our local congregations for support for a specific peace witness concerning Vietnam, we would no doubt find resistance and reluctance. The church is neither a peace club, nor a support-the-American-policy-in-Vietnam committee, even though we might wish it were. We need to seek out the people inside and outside the congregation

You Can Do Something About Vietnam

who are ready to work for peace.

The Elkhart County Committee of Christian Conscience Concerning Vietnam, composed of people of a number of churches, took this second way. If this group would have waited until their congregations or colleges had studied the issue, they would have been unable to get agreement in the group to put a full-page statement in the *Goshen News*. In the process some churches might have been split as people felt that a new test of membership, your conviction about Vietnam, is subtly being applied.

To retain acceptance of Jesus Christ as the test of membership rather than Vietnam, the race issue, capital punishment or any other issue that is taken up, we can reserve the significant hard-to-agree-upon action for those groups of people ready to move ahead. The congregation can be the place where the clash of opinions, painful confrontations, and searching take place. It can be the place where neither the draft card burner nor right-winger is indirectly pushed out. It must remain the place where people are helped to be their true selves and helped to face moral responsibilities.

In this kind of congregation God's power to break down the barriers between very different people can be seen. We do not need congregations where the witness to each other is only to those who think alike, and the creative dissenters have been pushed outside. The kind of congregational life that permits several viewpoints is painful but it is no more painful than growth.

Kinds of Witness

When the action group has planned its witness, often others from the congregation who are ready will join in, glad that someone has opened up a way for them to express their faith and convictions.

One of the most important things a Christian can share is information

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that is different from the information given to defend the present policy.

You can do this in your church or you can sponsor a public meeting in a public building. You could invite someone to present the opposite point of view so as to help those who want to know both sides and who are suspicious of your motives. Presenting both sides would encourage anyone to come. It is of little help to present information to the already convinced. Presenting both sides has the danger of confusing people. This danger is not too real, however, since almost everyone has already heard the "other" side in the daily press and should get to hear different views.

Letter writing to public officials, ads in the local paper, letters to the editor, offering a speakers bureau, panels, and TV and radio phone-in programs, anything that sponsors free discussion should be used. This does not require that you know all the arguments. Should you wait until you have enough information so you will never lose an argument and can overpower all opposition, you will never do anything. We admit we don't have all the information. It requires, instead, that we be willing seekers of what is going on, asking others to explain their assumptions so that we can discuss what a Christian should do.

This discussion is important. Some have the idea that free discussion and

the suggestion of different approaches in foreign policy during war is communistic. If only one side of the Vietnam war is reported, local discussion is especially important and even a duty. The power of the oft-repeated unrefuted half-truth or lie is well known. Information that is false should be drained of its power by refutations.

Our relief witness in Vietnam is now especially important because MCC is playing a key role. The seminary community at Elkhart took on a prayer, financial, and letter support program involving giving up one meal a week to support relief work there. Many of you must choose whether or not you will volunteer for relief work. Could anyone make a presentation in the local high school for relief workers similar to the presentation given by the Marine recruiting officer?

Has your congregation made it financially possible for anyone to go to the aid of the refugees of the war in Vietnam? Has it publicly encouraged any steps to peace?

The witness about a better way in Vietnam is not a side issue for Christians. We proclaim the Christ that came for *all* men and the activity we choose should be a proclamation of that Christ. In other words this witness is evangelism, proclaiming Christ as He is, which is the main business of the church.

Reading List

Included in the following list are materials representing a variety of viewpoints including some defending the present American policy on Vietnam.

Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam, Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402, 1965. 233 pages.

Fall, Bernard B., *The Two Vietnams*, New York: Praeger, 1964, revised edition. \$7.95.

Johnson, Lyndon B., "U.S. Vietnam Policy," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, April 15, 1965.

Ramparts Special Report on Southeast Asia, Ramparts Magazine, 1182 Chestnut St., Menlo Park, Calif.

Vietnam: The Struggle for Freedom, Questions and Answers, Department of State Publication 7724, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., Aug. 1964.

Periodicals

Between the Lines, the Wells Newsletter, Newtown, Pa. 18940. Twice monthly, \$2.50 per year.

I. F. Stone's Weekly, 5618 Nebraska Ave., NW, Washington, D. C. 20015. Weekly, \$5.00 per year.

Viet Report, 133 West 72 St., New York, N. Y. 10023.

NEWS

Words and Deeds

A coffee house for young people will be opened in a blighted area of St. Louis by the city's Bethesda Mennonite Church. The pastor, Hubert Swartzendruber, says that it will serve refreshments and light lunches, and have a nonreligious atmosphere. People in the community, he feels, are often scared away from a "church atmosphere."

The Netherlands Reformed Church has welcomed a proposal that overseas missionaries from Asian countries should be asked to serve in Holland. The suggestion came from the Dutch Mission Council which pointed out that, owing to the growth of secularism, Holland has become a mission field as much as many overseas areas. The proposal is to be put into effect by the appointment of Japanese industrial chaplains to serve in the Netherlands.

C. N. Hostetler and John Hostetler attended the White House Conference on International Cooperation in November representing the Mennonite Central Committee. The conference sought approaches and avenues of cooperation "that could lead to peace."

The Fine Arts Center of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., will be dedicated on February 6. "The Gypsy Baron," a comic opera by Johann Strauss will be presented in the center, Feb. 2-4.

What's Going On? is the theme of a weekend conference on vocation at Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Feb. 3 and 4. Over one hundred colleges and university students are expected to attend.

A Hymn Contest for hymn tunes is being sponsored by the Western District Worship and Music Committee. Deadline for the eighth annual competition is March 1. Details on prizes and rules are available from

Hymn Contest, North Newton, Kan. The First Church of Phoenix, Ariz., broke ground for its new building on Sunday, Dec. 19. The structure will cost \$44,000 and it is expected that it will be completed by spring. The new congregation is being aided in its efforts by the Pacific District Conference.

Mennonite Life in its January issue has published ten articles on missions. Writers include Orlando A. Waltner, S. F. Pannabecker, Jacob A. Loewen, Ferd Ediger, Peter Fast, and John Howard Yoder. The quarterly is produced by Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Japan has 5967 Protestant churches and 993 Roman Catholic churches according to the Japan Christian Yearbook. The Christian population of Japan is 794,586, just over eight-tenths of one percent of the general population.

VOLUNTEER TAKES ON NEW TASK MENTAL HOSPITAL IN ASUNCION

WESLEY SCHMIDT, a Mennonite Paxman, has been assigned to the 800-bed federal mental hospital in Asuncion, Paraguay. His responsibilities

include showing the patients how to care for the institution's five-acre vegetable garden, and seeing to it that the produce gets to the kitchen.

Wesley reports that the hospital staff eats the same food as the patients. A little milk and sugar mixed with local tea usually constitutes breakfast, while soup containing meat, beans, corn, rice, or noodles forms the usual menu for lunch and supper. When available, some vegetables, grown on the institution's plot, are also included with the meals.

Besides being allowed to work in the fields, men patients can tend a small dairy herd, while the women patch clothes and other articles. Inmates who can afford to pay a small fee can enjoy the use of the volleyball court on the hospital compound.

On Sundays and other spare times Schmidt fellowships with the German Mennonites in Asuncion where he attends church and youth meetings. On some weekends he visits his parents who work at a leprosy station some fifty miles east of the city. His father, John R. Schmidt, is in charge of the work among leprosy patients and is currently acting director of the MCC program in Paraguay.

<p>CLASS OF SERVICE This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.</p>	<h2 style="margin: 0;">WESTERN UNION</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">TELEGRAM</h3> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT</p>	<p>SYMBOLS DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LT = International Letter Telegram</p>
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<p>Y LLA619 111/110 NL=CNT FD WINNIPEG MAN 11= MAINARD SHELLEY= 722 man. EDITOR THE MENNONITE NEWTON KANSAS= REGARDING CANADIAN VIETNAM WITNESS BOARD OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE SENT DECEMBER 24 TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON AS FOLLOWS QUOTE ON BEHALF OF TWENTY THOUSAND MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES IN CANADA WE CONGRATULATE AMERICANS AND VIETNAMESE FOR CHRISTMAS CEASE FIRE STOP PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT, PLEASE BEND OVER BACKWARDS, PLEASE TURN THE FIRST AND SECOND CHEEK TO MAKE CEASE FIRE PERMANENT STOP THE PRINCE OF PEACE HAS COME STOP MAY HIS RULE INCREASE THROUGH US AND THROUGH YOU STOP WE PRAY FOR YOU AND YOUR GOVERNMENT, BUT NOT FOR THE CONTINUATION OF VIOLENCE AND HOSTILITY UNQUOTE LETTERS AND PREPARATION TO CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICAL AND BILLY GRAHAM= FRANK H EPP.</p>		

CANADIAN MENNONITES sent a letter to U. S. President Lyndon B. Johnson in December commending the American government for the Christmas cease-fire. The Board of Christian Service of the Conference of Mennonites is also preparing a communication to Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson supporting his efforts to find a solution to the Asian-American conflict.

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CHURCH RECORD

CALENDAR

Conferences

Apr. 28-May 1—Eastern District Conference, Bedminster, Pa.

May 5-8—Central District Conference, Fairview, Mich.

June 2-5—Pacific District Conference, Upland, Calif.

July 6-9—Canadian Conference, Winnipeg.

July 23-30, 1967—Mennonite World Conference, Amsterdam.

Canadian

Feb. 7-9, Altona, Man., stewardship institute.

Mar. 1-4, Saskatoon, Sask., stewardship institute.

Eastern

Jan. 30 — East Swamp Church, Quakertown, Pa., Blooming Glenn Church male quartet.

Western

Feb. 1—North Newton, Kan., Bethel College Church, special meeting on Vietnam, Clarence Bauman, speaker.

DEATHS

John R. Duerksen, Hesston Kan., a former General Conference Missionary to Arizona, died on Dec. 29. He was born Nov. 2, 1884, near Hillsboro, Kansas. He began work in Arizona in 1911, continuing for twenty years. The Duerksens worked first at Moencopi and then at Oraibi and Hotevilla. He translated part of

the New Testament into the Hopi language and worked on a Hopi hymnbook. He served in pastorates in Kirk and Vona, Colo., the American Sunday School Union near Limon, Colo., Zion Church, Kingman, Kan., and the Herold Church, Bessie, Okla. Survivors include a son, John P., professor at Hesston College; three daughters, Marie, a former missionary in India, now Mrs. John P. Kleinsasser of Freeman, S.D.; Martha, Mrs. Evan Oswald, Hesston; Ruth, Mrs. Lorne Schmitt of Minden, Ontario.

Leonard Friesen, Tabor Church, Newton, Kan., was born Apr. 11, 1915, and died Dec. 23.

Nettie Hilty (Mrs. Alvan B.), Grace Church, Pandora, Ohio, was born July 15, 1888, and died Dec. 24.

Isadora Hirschy (Mrs. Gilbert), First Church, Berne, Ind., was born July 28, 1896, and died Jan. 4.

Maria Janzen (Mrs. P. J.) was born May 27, 1887, and died Jan. 2.

Fred Koehn, Bethesda Church, Marion, S. D., was born July 8, 1888, and died Jan. 7.

Grover W. Sprunger, First Church, Berne, Ind., was born June 27, 1890, and died Oct. 24.

Roger Carl Thieszen, son of the Carl D. Thieszens, Ransom (Kan.) Church, was born and died Jan. 3.

WORKERS

Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Duerksen, Goessel, Kan., have accepted an assignment under the MCC senior volunteer program. Since Nov. 1, they have been working with the heifer project of the Prentiss (Miss.) Institute, a junior college which seeks to encourage better farming practices among low income groups. Mrs. Duerksen will also



Duerksen (Deaths), Nickel (Workers).

work in home visitation and clothing distribution.

John Ewert, Freeman, S. D., has been named a consulting editor of *The Mennonite* by the Board of Education and Publication, of which he is a member. He is also president of Freeman Junior College. The consulting editors are an advisory group.

First Church, Phoenix, Ariz., will have the help of nine volunteers recruited through MCC senior voluntary service to erect its building. George D. Rempel, Mountain Lake, Minn., will supervise the construction. Persons helping for varying periods of time include: Roland Epp, Dan Thieszen, and Chris Peters, Henderson, Neb.; Dave Steider, Geneva, Neb.; J. B. Neufeld, Inman, Kan.; Emil Dester, Deer Creek, Okla.; and P. W. Enns, Winkler, Man.

Marlin Guhr, Tabor Church, Newton, Kan., has entered 1-W service in an Indianapolis, Ind., hospital.

Arnold Nickel, Moundridge, Kan., has been appointed General Conference personnel director beginning next summer. The work of the personnel director is a new service of the General Conference for its boards and institutions. The office will serve in the area of Christian vocational guidance and recruitment of voluntary service and missions-Pax workers as well as short- and long-term missionaries. It will make initial contacts with people and will process papers. Nickel will continue as pastor of the Eden Church until the end of June.

Bob Reimer, Goessel, Kan., is in 1-W service in Topeka. He works for the State Board of Health.

Harlow Schmidt, Jr., Newton, Kan., started his 1-W service in the Denver General Hospital.

Melvin Dean Schmidt, Hebron Church, Buhler, Kan., has entered 1-W service at the Denver General Hospital, Denver, Colo. He left on

DO YOU RECEIVE THE MENNONITE EVERY WEEK?

If you don't and would like to, we can suggest you do one of two things:

1. If you are a member of a General Conference Mennonite Church, ask your pastor or church secretary to add your name to the Every Home Plan list for *The Mennonite*. (Churches receiving *Der Bote* under the Every Home Plan may also receive *The Mennonite*.)

2. Or send us one dollar (U. S. or Canadian) with the blank below and we'll send you the next eighteen issues.

Enclosed is \$1.00 for the next eighteen issues of *The Mennonite* for:

Name _____

Address _____

Mail to: The Mennonite, Box 347, Newton, Kansas 67114



Voth, Voth (Workers).

Jan. 1. He works in the X-ray department.

Mr. and Mrs. Alvin P. Voth, Aberdeen, Idaho, have accepted a two-year senior voluntary service appointment to the Markham (Ill.) Mennonite Community Church program. They will assist in the church's day care program.

Philip Wulliman and William Lehman, First Church, Berne, Ind., will leave on Jan. 25 to spend six weeks in I-W service at National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md. Following that Philip will go to Boys Village, Smithville, Ohio, and William will go to Wiltwyck School, Esopus, N. Y.

LETTERS

ARE WE PEACEMAKERS?

DEAR MR. SHELLY: There is something that concerns me very much about the Mennonite church today. It shows up in the shock expressed by Mennonites when they learn that some other Mennonites actually take part in those communist-inspired and infiltrated "peace" marches. It shows up in the statistics brought up at this year's ministers' conference here, which I was privileged to attend. That statistic was that about 50 percent of our General Conference young men serve in the armed forces of the U. S., and that in at least one district the percentage is as high as 75.

My concern is this: We Mennonites seem to have lost sight of the fact that ours is a historic *peace* church. When things like that which I've mentioned above are prevalent in our church I begin to doubt quite seriously whether our church has lived up to its role as *peace witnesses*, let

alone its role as *peace makers*, which it has generally never lived up to.

As a historic *peace* church, we have an obligation to be always working against an enemy even more vicious and dangerous than atheistic communism and that enemy is war. Atheistic communism can easily be defeated, and without war. War itself is a much harder thing to defeat, especially when those to whom society turns for an alternative to war have so lost sight of their historic traditions and teachings that they support war more than the society about them.

In closing, since several people who have written to you have boasted about their military service, I would like to claim the same privilege. In the January 4 issue, in the Words and Deeds section you mention that members of the Fairfield, Pa., Church took part in the March on Washington on Nov. 27. I was one of them, and I would do the same again, because if war is more horrible than I can imagine it is certainly more horrible than *anything* else in this world.

Thank you for your attention, and keep up the good work with *The Mennonite*. It is one of the most exciting church papers I know. *Michael Smith, Hirschy Hall, Bluffton, Ohio.*

NO PLANS FOR EXTERMINATION

DEAR EDITOR: The letter by Mike Schmidt in the January issue sounds like good worldly wisdom, but hardly like the gospel of Jesus Christ. According to Jesus, John, and Paul, love is the Christian's only weapon and when love is spurned, the Christian suffers as Jesus did. There is no plan for exterminating our enemies, even the enemies of God before they exterminate us. But are we ready to be Christian? *Marie J. Regier, 4600 Woodlawn, Chicago 60653.*

EXTRA COPIES

Would you like to have an extra copy of this special issue on Vietnam? Could you use extra copies for your Sunday school class or a special discussion group on the Vietnam crisis? Would you like to distribute copies to your friends, leaders in government, and others? We will be glad to make extra copies available to you as long as our supply lasts. Single copies are free; for two or more copies, six cents a piece. Order from: *The Mennonite, Box 347, Newton, Kan. 67114.*

CONTENTS

COVER

The crisis in Vietnam, though far away, is personal. It is close to those who suffer its horrors. All of us are concerned and want more understanding. In producing this special issue we were happy to have the support of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church as well as that of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of the Mennonite General Conference. They assisted in the gathering of materials and contributed financially for the extra pages.

CONTRIBUTORS

Willard S. Krabill, M.D., Goshen, Ind., a former relief director in Vietnam, was part of a six-member investigating team representing voluntary agencies working in Vietnam. Sponsored by the U. S. government, the team visited Vietnam for five days in October. His article is adapted from an address given to churches in the Elkhart, Ind., community.

Alvin J. Beachy, 203 East Broad St., Souderton, Pa., is the pastor of the Zion Mennonite Church.

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THE MENNONITE

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ONE OF THE weapons being used by the United States in Vietnam is called the anti-personnel bomb. The bureaucratic term anti-personnel softens its real impact. Anti-people or anti-human being bomb would be a more accurate description. When the bomb explodes it scatters incandescent fragments over a wide area and the tiniest fragment will burn a hole through a man's flesh to the bone.

All wars are anti-person. An added tragedy of the war in Vietnam is that the richest country in the world is using its resources for destructive purposes on a people who desperately need help to enhance rather than endanger human life.

The first and most urgent step in that direction is to stop the war. Left alone the Vietnamese people would likely be better off than some of their Asian neighbors. The country is blessed with rich soil and a favorable climate. In recent years rice exports have averaged 250,000 metric tons, worth about 25 million dollars. War has now so disrupted village life and transportation that in some areas rice, the staple food of the Vietnamese family, has become a scarcity.

In any case, man does not live by bread—or rice—alone. Health and education are two primary needs to enable a nation in the modern world to expand its industrial base. South Vietnam has only one doctor for every 22,500 persons, compared to one to 1600 in Taiwan and the Philippines. Life expectancy is thirty-five years. If South Vietnam had doctors in the same ratio as the United States it would have 5000 instead of the present 200.

President Johnson has repeatedly stated the need to work at the basic human problems in Southeast Asia. Last April 7 at Baltimore he said, "Neither independence nor human dignity will be won by arms alone, it also requires the works of peace. . . . Now there must be a much more massive effort to improve the life of man in the conflict-torn corner of the world."

He also said that we do not need to wait for peace to begin working at these problems. But is it possible for the mailed fist to work in unison with the hand of compassion? As the war escalates the military effort takes priority and other programs become subordinate to it. An official AID publication states that the agency's counter-insurgency program "directly supports the war effort in the rural areas."

The words describing the American purpose in Vietnam appear less than sincere to the Asian be-

cause the bombs that kill are so much louder than the bulldozers that build. The Mekong River development project, which promises to release the whole Indochina peninsula from the one-crop system and provide vast new economic vitality, is stalled because of the war. To finish one of the tributary projects in Laos \$4,500,000 was needed but could not be found. The same amount is spent by the United States every day in the military buildup in Vietnam. How will history judge a nation that has such immense potentiality for sharing the wealth and know-how to build a more tolerable life for millions in Southeast Asia but is using it to devastate the land by making it a battleground for our ideological conflicts?

But Christians have the opportunity to do more than criticize the government's policy of making Vietnamese pawns in the cold war struggle. Through word and deed Jesus spoke clearly about His followers' response to those who are hungry, without shelter, naked, ill, or imprisoned. This response is part of the way the gospel is proclaimed, for is the gospel anything other than the concern of God for man in all his lostness?

The churches have said that they want to respond to Vietnam in compassion. Through the expanding ministries of relief and service they have that opportunity. Will we back up our good intentions with the resources of personnel and funds that match the opportunity?

William Snyder, executive secretary of the Mennonite Central Committee reflected recently on this challenge. He said, "Our words spoken at Estes Park and Kidron actually mean very little unless we are prepared to enter into the suffering of the people of Vietnam. We must find ways and means to identify ourselves even more completely with the victims of the United States bombings by pouring out our personnel and treasure in amounts that we heretofore have not considered. Our willingness to suffer with the people of Vietnam is the acid test."

The real need is for identification with those in need, regardless of the side of the struggle on which they happen to find themselves. That identification can be realized only through persons, sent and supported, in spirit as well as matter, by the entire brotherhood. Then our witness both *against* the war and *for* the people will have integrity. Against the anti-people bombs the church can send pro-people teams of dedicated servants.