

In the Magazines

In the November issue of *Worldview* Tran Van Dinh considered the role of Roman Catholics in Vietnam, expressing optimism about the future of the Vietnamese Catholic community. Sir Robert Thompson, in the same issue, recalled the exodus of large numbers from North Vietnam following the signing of the Geneva Accords and predicted a sorry fate for the Northern refugees, among them many Catholics, should a Communist government be established in the South.

How have Catholics who remained in the North fared? Two recent American visitors, coordinators of the International Assembly of Christians in Solidarity With the Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian Peoples, found "not only a relatively free church but also a spiritual revival which was both pious and patriotic."

Their visit is reported on by one of the travelers, Father Harry Bury, in the November 24 issue of the *National Catholic Reporter*. "It occurred to us," he writes, "that Catholics in the north of Vietnam are similar to the Roman Catholic immigrant in the United States from the turn of the century until recent times. That is, an eagerness to be accepted by one's peers, to be seen as a good and loyal citizen. As a result, more often than not, an earnest disciplined effort was made to go above and beyond the call of duty in serving one's country and contributing to the war effort."

After his week in the North, Bury draws some conclusions about religious freedom and the degree to which it is enjoyed in North Vietnam. His first: That "freedom is not absolute; it is not a question of either/or, but rather one of degree." Second, "that Christian maturity goes through three chronological stages of spiritual growth; all three stages are important and need to come to fruition in a mature Christian.

"In the first stage emphasis is placed on strictly spiritual activity: prayer, administration of sacraments, catechetical instruction. . . .

"In the second stage the Christian also involves himself in the corporal works of mercy. . . .

"The third stage described by the theology of liberation is the revolutionary stage. At this level the main energy is given to making it possible for man to liberate himself, in attaining power to determine his own destiny as an individual and as a member of a group. . . .

"The role of religion at the first two levels of

growth is normally seen by the state as complementary. This is the case both in the north of Vietnam as well as in the United States. . . .

"However, when mature faith calls for confronting injustices of a given government, it is an altogether different question. History indicates that few governments have allowed such freedom. Our experience last week suggests a reticence on the part of the North Vietnamese government to allow criticism. Longer experience in the USA points to the same inability to permit serious criticism. My arrest for attempting to celebrate mass in the Pentagon, praying for a change in U.S. policy in Vietnam, is a firm reminder of our lack of that kind of freedom. . . ."

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Introducing James M. Wall, the *Christian Century's* new editor. . . . "During a new editor's first weeks . . . at the helm of this magazine, readers should know with what bias and background he will approach the agonies and the joys of the 1970s. He is a southerner by birth; thus, despite his almost two decades in the midwest, he will continue to think in those images that shaped a boy growing up in Gene Talmadge's south. . . . [H]is journalistic mentor, in spirit and style, remains Ralph McGill, who gave this editor his first newspaper job as a copy boy on the *Atlanta Constitution*. There will be no hesitancy to provide close editorial perusal of the secular from the pages of this religious publication, for the mentor McGill was a southerner whose writing style and evangelistic concern for people was biblical. Covering a football game, a political speech or a lynching, McGill spoke the language of the spiritual south—a land heavy with prejudice, but also a land weighted with religious belief. This, then, will be the style of the new editor, tempered perhaps by the reserve of the midwesterners who now surround him, but unashamed of the religious bias—part emotion, part intellect—that governs his desire to inform and interpret. . . ."

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The following is reprinted in its entirety from, and with the kind permission of, the *New York Times*, on whose Op-Ed page it appeared one mid-November day. Aubrey Cox is a writer and former safety engineer.

The Paper Work

By Aubrey L. Cox

WAR-PERMIT APPLICATION

Name of Applying Country
 Location °North, South Latitude
 (underline one) °Longitude.
 Continent
 Number of Square Miles or Kilometers
 Population Date of Last Census
 Form of Government
 (Monarchy, Anarchy, Dictatorship, Democracy, etc.)

Previous War Experience

Name of War Duration
 Opponents
 Why Was This War Started?
 How Did It End?
 How Has Your Country Benefited?
 How Have Your Opponents Benefited?
 How Has Humanity Benefited?
 Have You Paid Off All Obligations for This War?
 If Not, List the Names of the Creditors and the
 Amount(s) Still Owed

Anticipated Conflict:

Proposed Opponent
 Where Do You Propose to Wage This War?
 How Many Casualties Do You Expect?
 Yours Theirs
 Property Damage: Yours Theirs
 Are Your Weapons Equipped With Pollution Control
 Devices?
 Do They Produce Noise Levels Below 50 Decibels? ..
 What Provisions Have You Made to Avoid Death and
 Injury to Nonparticipants?
 How Do You Reconcile This Proposed Conflict With
 the Tenets of Christianity?
 Judaism?
 Mohammedanism?
 Buddhism?
 Hinduism?
 Other?

All of the foregoing answers must be made in full.
 Additional information and verification will be re-
 quired as determined by the members of the United
 Nations Security Council, the General Assembly, the
 Secretary General of the United Nations and any in-
 dividual or group assigned by any of the above.

A report on World Military Expenditures prepared in July, 1972, by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency contains the information that world military expenditures in 1971 "amounted to a record \$216 billion," an increase of \$97 billion since 1961. However, Agency Director Gerard Smith notes, the strategic arms limitation agreement and the ongoing multilateral arms control negotiations might well be the first steps toward reversing this trend.

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Question: "Why was the most dramatic instance of the revolutionary priest in contemporary Latin America, Camilo Torres, found in Colombia, and not in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, or Chile?" Answer: "The Torres phenomenon must be explained within the total context of Colombian Catholicism, focusing on the ways in which the Catholic system is anchored in and interdependent with Colombian society. This phenomenon occurred in Colombia because there were neither religious nor political roles for channeling and releasing innovative impulses. . . .

"The most likely expression of radical Catholic initiatives in this kind of situation is the revolutionary priest who, in desperation, emerges as a social leader of the people. Because the situation is clericalized in the name of traditional values, it is not surprising that radical initiatives will also be pursued in clerical form. These new priests, walled in by a comprehensive system of traditional Catholicism and its political expressions, tend to go all out against the system, confronting the old totalistic model with a new totalistic model. Traditional clericalism breeds radical clericalism, and the consequences are relatively easy to imagine: abrupt challenges to the traditional system by radical priests divide Catholics into political camps in terms of religious differences; the radical priests try to mobilize the minorities and the poor on behalf of social justice and economic revolution; the conservative bishops, priests, and laity demand that the radicals desist, which only drives them to a more dramatic commitment to the revolutionary cause; and since the radical priests are now publicly committed to the people's cause without the possibility of changing the local situation, they move into the wider system of secular, left-wing politics and try to find a role there. It may be noted in passing that clerical radicalism appears to be most vigorous in situations where the secular left does not hold a legal or institutionalized role in national politics. . . . If the laity has pushed into new political fields, the radical priests ratify efforts at change, as in Chile, rather than initiate revolution. . . ." This from "Radical Priests and the Revolution" by sociologist Ivan Vallier, just one of the thirteen views of "Changing Latin America" in the latest *Proceedings of The Academy of Political Science*.