

Viewpoint

Eyewitness Report On Nicaragua

BY SAM HOPE

American intervention in Central America has all the earmarks of another Vietnam. I speak from personal experience, having served two years - 1966-1968 - with Vietnam Christian Service, with headquarters in Saigon. As a Presbyterian minister working in refugee settlement and medical social services for the church, I witnessed the United States becoming increasingly mired in the rice paddies and jungles of Vietnam.

I have just returned from Nicaragua, where I was part of a Witness for Peace delegation Dec. 2-17. We ate and slept with people in the countryside from the Costa Rica border to the south to the coffee fields in the mountains to the north. I speak with confidence in saying that the United States has no business intervening in the affairs of the sovereign nation of Nicaragua.

The counterevolutionary forces which the United States is equipping, training and supporting are waging war of terrorism to Christian conscience. I talked personally and at length with civilian eyewitness survivors of terrorist attacks and with four mothers who had lost their sons in the war during the past two years. I worshipped with Nicaraguan people throughout the country in Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches and in home Bible studies.

I am glad to report that there are religious freedom and fervor among the masses of Nicaraguan people.

Our Witness for Peace delegation spent two hours interviewing an official of the U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua, Robert Fretz, on Dec. 16. During that interview, which was tape recorded with his permission, Fretz stated clearly that he believes that the

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Nicaraguan government is neither communistic nor totalitarian. Further, he stated that the United States was violating international law as defined by the U.N. Charter, the Nuremburg Agreements and the World Court through surveillance flights in Nicaraguan air space, the mining of harbors and ports and in backing the counterrevolutionary military forces.

In light of our experiences, and because our views were substantiated by 35 other delegations that had preceded us during the year, we felt compelled to address an open letter to President Reagan, calling upon him to stop U.S. intervention in Nicaragua.

It has been alleged by Jerry Falwell that there is no religious freedom in Nicaragua and that there are no Bibles. I personally saw a supply of 850 Bibles that are ready for distribution. A recently elected representative in the National Assembly of Nicaragua wrote a message for Sen. Jesse Helms, R-NC, in the front of one of the Bibles and has asked me to give it to him as evidence that there are Bibles and there is religious freedom in Nicaragua. Their coins bear the same motto as ours: "In God We Trust."

I believe that the majority of people in the United States are good hearted and God-fearing, but often misinformed or uninformed on the role our government is playing in their name in other nations such as Nicaragua. When the truth is known, I believe that there will be an outcry across our land to replace our current policy of military intervention with a new policy of economic aid for our sisters and brothers in Nicaragua.

The Critics Review- St. Andrews Area Nightspots.

Betsy Chafin & Janice Adamson

Ratings:

½ a star (*) A Regression To Adolescence

1 Star (*) Don't Bother

2 Stars (**) Oh Really Now

3 Stars (***) When Boredom Strikes, Go!

4 Stars (****) Pre-Party Scene

5 Stars (*****) Let's Party!

"The Upper Deck" (Above Showtime, Laurinburg)

*½ The spot to buy non-alcoholic mixed drinks and to witness puberty in action. This is fine if you like Walt Disney movies and video games.

"Chester's"-(501 South, McColl, S.C.)

***Chili, Pig Pickings, and Free Beer; an atmosphere all its own.

"Crackers"(Rockingham, N.C.)

**** An hours worth of free draft-Just beware of people with chains dangling from their back pockets.

"Pedro's Saloon" (South Of The Border, Dillon, S.C.)

*****For happy hour 5-8 Monday-Friday, this is it! Inexpensive pitchers and mixed drinks, but it's a somewhat lengthy drive back to Laurinburg—do it carefully.

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