

The War In Vietnam

Instead of offering our own comments on the situation in Vietnam, we wish to offer the remarks of a Presbyterian minister, who rather doubted the wisdom of our involvement there. So, he went there and talked with many people, and made observations of what was going on. He came back convinced that the United States policy there is the right one. From the Greenville, S. C. News we present a report of the minister's speech to a Greenville Audience.

Returned Minister Says U. S. Is Winning War

By Will T. Dunn Jr.

A minister recently returned from Viet Nam said here today that this country is winning the war there. He predicted the conflict would be over in two or three years.

Rev. Calvin Thielman, outspoken in his stand on the war, said pacifist churchmen should re-evaluate their position.

Those clergy critical of the morality of our involvement should consider the morality of leaving the Vietnamese to the mercy of the Viet Cong," he stated.

As a special missioner for the Defense Department the Montreat, N. C. Presbyterian cleric toured Viet Nam in early September. While there, he visited battle areas, held conferences with Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commander of U. S. forces, and with Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge.

The minister is a close friend of President Johnson, having assisted the President in an early Texas senatorial campaign. He spent several days at the White House upon returning from Southeast Asia.

Only a few hours before the Rev. Mr. Thielman was interviewed here, a young Roman Catholic, protesting the Viet Nam war, critically burned himself in front of the United Nations Building in New York. Last week, a protesting Quaker committed a fiery suicide in Washington, D.C.

A Change In Thinking

The people of all nations and races will have to rethink many issues, situations, and problems. Intense nationalism and racial apatness must give place to a world in which material and scientific knowledge and progress are sweeping away the old concepts. We are reaching the point where we must think of humanity, of all men and their needs. Instead of groups, nations, and races. We must think of the whole, rather than its parts. This is actually the Christian doctrine of man, and of man's

The Rev. Mr. Thielman said that such incidents are tragic, and they hurt the American cause. "I don't think religion prompted them to commit suicide," he said, "Strong Christian groups will resist communism to the death.

"We must look at things realistically," he advised. "In order to protect the weak, we must sometimes fight the strong."

The minister said he would like to see American churches voice support for the Viet Nam war just as they did the Korean War.

There is, he said, more Christian involvement in this war than any before. He referred to the sometimes underpublicized aid rendered Vietnamese civilians by American military men and diplomats.

"I feel," he said, that the reports we see on television and read in the press do not convey a well-rounded picture of what our men are trying to do. "I was greatly impressed not only with the morale of our servicemen, but with their sense of purpose and their desire to help the Vietnamese civilian population," he said.

"This is the first war in which military men have had an opportunity to engage in civic projects on a big scale."

He said that before going to Viet Nam he was only 'mildly interested' in the war, had doubts as to American involvement.

Now he is firmly committed. "I realize there will continue to be casualties and death, but this is the price we must pay. We made a commitment to stand by the Vietnamese and now there is nothing to do but honor our word."

Said the cleric: "There is an ethical responsibility that goes with power. We have the means, the manpower and equipment to protect these people and I believe we have an ethical responsibility to use it in this circumstance, where we have aggression."

relationship to man, and to God. But Christians have preached better than they practiced. The time has come when we must launch out into the deep with The Man of Gallilee, and become workers with Him in the redemption of all men—here and now as well as in a world to come. We are making progress. Changes have already been made which seemed impossible 25 years ago, and the changes have been accepted. More changes will come, and future generations will wonder why they were so long in coming.

Religion In The Here And Now

In one of our Church papers I read several articles by Theologians, which were of interest and value. Then, I came to an article headed "The Passing of a Pooch." I wondered how such an item could have any significance all mixed up with theological and ecclesiastical matters. The writer stated how he had come into possession of the dog, which had no pedigree, and of experiences with it through the years. The closing lines helped me to understand how such an article had some meaning for a religious publication. These lines said "Yesterday, because he was getting deaf, he was heading home and didn't hear the car coming upon him. And that was all."

"That night, on the late TV show, a movie of James Street's novel, Lady Goodbye, was shown. It was all about a boy, his uncle and a dog in the swamps of Mississippi. I thought it was a fine, sensitive film, but maybe our critical faculties weren't of the best on that occasion. "Death occurs regularly in this existence. And even the passing of a pooch leaves a gap."

I came to the conclusion that there was more religion in the article about the dog, than in all the learned expositions of the scholars. For here was a man with a sensitiveness to life itself, a sense of its value, and with reverence for life, even in the small specimen of 'Man's best friend.' There was something in it which had the spirit of Jesus, who in His earthly life showed God's concern for all creatures so much so that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice. Life is a delicate and complex matter. But even simple folks can take a look at it and feel something of its dignity, greatness, and value. Jesus had a deep concern for life in human beings. His heart. His mind, and His hands went out to all sorts and conditions of men. Learned interpretations may sometimes hide, rather than reveal, its greatness and beauty. War is a lack of reverence for life; and so is prejudice, hatred, denial of human rights, exploitation, along with the slaughter on our highways. The Divine compassion should, in some measure, be set forth in the life of every man who calls himself a Christian.

Anyone being eligible for Medicare doesn't necessarily have to go get sick just as soon as his application is approved.

This Week's

60 SECOND SERMON

By
Fred Dodge

"Ye shall know them by their fruits." — Matthew 7:16.

A life insurance agent who led his company by persistent effort, made up his mind he would marry the daughter of the company's vice president. She didn't like the salesman, but he was persistent.

He began an extensive mail campaign, plus phone calls and face-to-face interviews. Soon he increased his mail campaign with special delivery letters twice a day for 47 days. The 48th day his persistence produced results.

She married the mail man.

"We don't always know the results of our efforts, but if we try, we'll get results. There seems to be a law that governs human activity. When honest effort is put forth it is never lost. Some day proper results will come from it even though we do not gain personally."

Charles Goodyear, discoverer of the "vulcanizing" process, gained slight financial reward from his great achievement. He saw it this way. "I am not disposed to complain that I have planted and others have gathered the fruit," Goodyear said. "A man has cause for regret only when he sows and no one reaps." To which we would add that a man also has cause for regret if he never sows. What do you think?

WASHINGTON REPORT

by
CONGRESSMAN
JAMES T. BROYHILL

FOUR-YEAR TERM

The loudest applause during the State of the Union Address came when the President unexpectedly called for a Constitutional amendment to provide a four-year term for members of the House of Representatives. "Today," Mr. Johnson said, "the work of government is far more complex than in our early years, requiring more time to master the technical tasks of legislation." While this idea is not new, it is the first time it has had the weight of Presidential prestige behind it.

In quick succession, came a more detailed message from the White House urging that Congress start work on the four-year term amendment. However, the applause has died out and more analytical thinking is replacing it.

There is no doubt that a four-year term would be a great convenience for Congressmen. They would have a longer time in their first term to develop and demonstrate their ability to learn the details that are useful in serving the people of their districts. They would also be able to delay thoughts of another political campaign. Nevertheless, if we look at what is best for the country, some interesting observations can be made.

To assure a system of checks and balances, our Constitution wisely provided varying tenures of office for Federal officials. An independent judiciary is largely based upon life-time appointments for judges. The only two elected officers in the Executive Branch, the President and the Vice President, serve for four years. Relative continuity and balance are achieved in the Legislative Branch through six-year terms for Senators and two-year terms for Congressmen.

Our Founding Fathers provided the shortest term of office for the legislative body they intended to be closest to the people. It was to the House of Representatives that they gave exclusive power over the nation's purse strings, the sole power of impeachment, and the power to choose a President in the event a candidate fails to receive a majority of the electoral votes. Part of the greatest sensitivity of the House of Representatives to public opinion stems directly from the fact that its members must

return to the people every two years to account for their service.

Issues coming before the House or a national administration cannot be anticipated in advance. While European democracies can change their governments by parliamentary votes of "no confidence," the principal means of expressing dissatisfaction with our national government comes through the "off-year" elections of 435 Congressmen and one-third of the members of the Senate.

Even though, as the President argues, issues and legislative problems are more complex today, it is equally true that changes of popular opinion and the mood of the nation are far more rapid because of instantaneous communication of news events which shape our thinking.

This makes it more imperative that nothing decrease the responsiveness of the House.

A most serious argument also centers around the decrease in the independence of the House if terms of office were concurrent with the terms of the President. Certainly, this would increase the leverage a President would exercise over the Congress. We would, in fact, have a "coat-tail" situation written into the Constitution with Congressmen tied more directly to White House programs than is normally the case today.

As the debate on this issue begins, there is little indication that it will become a partisan political argument. Members of both political parties are obviously divided as they define what the House of Representatives is and what it ought to be.

The President has called for "swift action" on this change. In my mind, swift action is not essential, if, in our haste, we upset the careful balance of our Federal system. Any change we make should give this factor the most meticulous consideration. The odds seem favorable at this time that prudence will not be tossed overboard.

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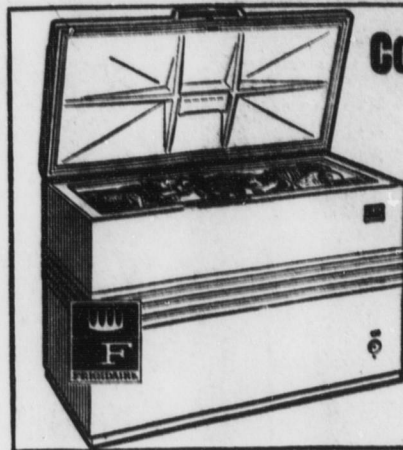
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The Cooleemee Journal

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY

J. C. Sell Owner
Mrs. J. C. Sell Editor
J. C. SELL, 1906-1940

Second Class Postage

Paid At Cooleemee, N. C.
Zip Code No. 27014

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

One Year \$1.50
Six Months75
Three Months50

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