

Vietnam

Little Nation, Big Problem

Southeast Asia's troubled Vietnam — divided into a Communist north and free south — is further divided by an increasingly bitter battle over religion.

While a Buddhist priest burned himself to death on one of Saigon's main streets, a Catholic priest from Saigon was in Rochester and described the dispute in his homeland.

Father Francis Phan, a seminary professor in Saigon who studied at Canisius College, came to Rochester to visit a former teacher of his, David M. Smith of 1329 Park Avenue. Father Phan is on a nationwide tour to appeal for aid to missions in South Vietnam.

The present dispute centers on the fact that South Vietnam, 70 per cent Buddhist, 10 per cent Catholic, is ruled by a government most of whose officials are Catholics — including the president Ngo Dinh Diem. The Buddhists claim the government discriminates against them. A government ban against public display of the Buddhist flag, even on Buddha's birthday, sparked riots in several Vietnam cities.

Buddhist monks and nuns staged a two-day hunger strike and 73 year old Quang Duc set a match to his gasoline-drenched clothing. He "sacrificed" himself he said to win religious freedom.

Salgon's Archbishop Paul Nguyen van Binh — Father Phan was his secretary for three years prior to assignment to the seminary — issued a pastoral letter read in the city's Catholic churches last Sunday. He cautioned Catholics against "dubious courses of action" to win converts or special advantages for Catholics. He also quoted Pope John's recent encyclical which stated, "Every person has the right to honor God according to the dictates of an upright conscience and to profess his religion privately and publicly."

President Diem, in a radio message to his nation, said "Buddhist rights are backed by the constitution." He claimed the religious dispute was actually a cover for political squabbles.

Father Phan said Buddhist monks resent the continued high rate of conversions to the Catholic Church — 5000 in Saigon this past year and similar numbers in other cities. He helped other priests in one ceremony where 200 were baptized, a ceremony which took two hours.

Buddhists consider a convert to the Church as a "traitor" to his family because converts are required to destroy their home "ancestor altar" — a shrine with pictures and tablets to keep alive the memory of relatives and friends.

Even Catholic priests are divided in their opinion on this requirement, Father Phan said. The Church's first missionaries to the Orient tolerated the altars as mere memorial shrines but Vatican officials viewed them as "idolatrous worship" — a pagan practice — and forbade converts to keep them. Many priests hope the Vatican Council scheduled to resume its session in September will adopt the more tolerant attitude of the original missionaries.

Many Buddhist customs are more "ethical" than "religious" according to Father Phan and he thinks Catholic faith is better presented as a "completion" rather than an "abandonment" of Buddhist practices.

His seminary pupils are refugees from Red-controlled North Vietnam. Contact with the north has been cut off but reports leak out that the Church is slowly being strangled to death. The Viet Cong (Communists) allow churches to stay open, even permit a seminary to continue in operation. None of the north's ten Catholic bishops attended the Vatican Council, however. Their invitations were never delivered to them; simply returned to Rome unopened.

The Communists want "no martyrs" at least at this time, Father Phan explained, so they wait for the Church there to die from old age or fear.

Listening to his story, one wonders how so little a country can have such massive difficulties. It is a tribute to Father Phan's faith and patriotism that he smiles confidently and says, "I think we'll work it all out satisfactorily, especially if you pray for us."

'Moral Gap' Worse Than Missile Gap

Cincinnati — (NC) — A priest editor said here the "moral gap" between preaching and practice in race relations is worse than any "missile gap."

Father Louis J. Twomey, S.J., editor of Social Order magazine, St. Louis, and veteran crusader for human rights, told the Cincinnati Catholic Interracial Council: "The modern crisis is basically a crisis of human rights. And our weakness in this crisis has been our unwillingness to have the courage, the generosity, and often the human decency to recognize that if we vindicate these rights for ourselves we must vindicate them for others."

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The ecumenical 'explosion' described in this article by Cardinal Bea is dramatized by two memorial rites honoring Pope John — one in a Protestant church attended by a Catholic prelate and the other in a Catholic church attended by clergy of other denominations. In Boston's Episcopal Cathedral, Bishop Anson Phelps Stokes presides in sanctuary while Monsignor Edward G. Murray, garbed in his red robes, representing Cardinal Cushing, sits in chancel area. Pittsburgh's Bishop John J. Wright joins hands before

Cardinal Bea Sees Ecumenical 'Explosion' In America

Atlanta — (RNS) — There has been a "benevolent explosion" in ecumenical feeling among Christians in the U.S. in recent years, says Augustin Cardinal Bea, S.J., president of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

The octogenarian prelate, who visited the U.S. for 10 days this spring, answered questions about the ecumenical movement and gave his impressions on America in the Georgia Bulletin, official newsworthy of the Atlanta Catholic archdiocese.

The entire front page of the paper's June 13 issue was used to carry Cardinal Bea's

answers to questions asked by Archbishop Paul J. Mallinan of Atlanta.

German-born Cardinal Bea, the only Jesuit in the Sacred College of Cardinals, is considered the Catholic Church's chief spokesman on ecumenical matters. He has headed the Vatican Secretariat since it was established by the late Pope John XXIII in 1959 as a preparatory body for the Second Vatican Council.

Cardinal Bea commented that he found the ecumenical climate in the U.S. had improved "in an absolutely surprising manner."

U.S., he added, he had to decline 70 speaking invitations, 20 from Non-Catholic sources.

In Europe, Cardinal Bea said, the interest in Christian unity has been growing slowly over a number of decades.

"In the United States," he went on, "one feels that there has been something of an explosion which was unforeseen — though not for that reason less useful or promising — as a result of the (Second Vatican) Council."

"This type of benevolent explosion is certainly clear evidence of the fruitful energies, ready for every type of good, which lie hidden in

American Catholicism, and only wait to be reawakened ... and directed along the ways of a dynamic activity," he said.

In reply to another question from Archbishop Mallinan, Cardinal Bea stated that the extensive religious pluralism in the U.S. makes ecumenical activity more difficult.

Nevertheless, he said, there are positive aspects to the American situation with its 300-odd Christian denominations and sects.

"The extreme intensity of the division makes more clearly apparent all the absurdity of the divisions itself and sparks on the search for a remedy," he pointed out.

Asked about the Church's position on religious liberty, Cardinal Bea singled out statements affirming that as a human right in Pope John's last encyclical, Pacem in Terris, and in a 1953 declaration of Pope Pius XII.

"It is because men are urged that the affirmation of the dignity of the human person, from every aspect, with all his rights, of which the Church (through its social doctrine) becomes more a champion every day, be applied also with respect to religious liberty," he commented.

Cardinal Bea also said that the Secretariat he heads would undoubtedly become more important after the Second Vatican Council ends.

"What the world has accomplished in the field of unity from the beginning up to the present has truly surpassed our fondest hopes and has something miraculous about it. If one considers how great were the obstacles and the age-old barriers," he said.

However, the cardinal cautioned, "it must be realized that the progress made in Christian unity is only a beginning. The true work of extending and deepening it ... still remains ahead of us," he declared.

Reapings at Random

By GERARD E. SHERRY Editor, Georgia Bulletin

The racial crisis is coming to a head. There is no more time for pussy-footing or excuses. The inevitable is about to occur, whether we like it or not. The Negro is about to become a first-class citizen, either through the voice of non-violent leaders like Martin Luther King, or through the violent approach of black Muslims or other "white-haters."

We have many times observed that extremists of both sides are preparing for a listless, unproductive, and unproductive war that few moderates have had the moral courage to stand up and be counted. Through fear or pressure, political and economic, they have stood aside and let the undesirable elements of the community set the course of community strife.

Even in our churches, moral courage, that essential Christian prep, is sadly lacking at a time when it is sorely needed. We find a so-called Christian community torn asunder, forsaking Christ over a little bit of color. Furthermore, we find men of God justifying their inaction on the grounds of love. As if love could possibly be present in a congregation or a community where some Christians

are considered unworthy of sitting beside their whiter brethren.

In many instances, the Bible is used as an excuse for perpetual segregation of the fact as congregations or as communities. It is suggested that "Love thy neighbor" is a command that can be practiced without involving our colored neighbor to enjoy his God-given rights. It is suggested that separate but equal treatment of the Negro is no un-Christian and, anyhow, that is what he really wants.

Maybe this is so when one is dealing with the uneducated and the economically oppressed. But when one is dealing with their elementary rights as American citizens that anything is better than nothing. To this class of Negro, separate but equal treatment is an improvement over complete seclusion, but with the breaking down of the racial barriers in education and commerce more and more Negroes are becoming aware of what they have been deprived of. They are slowly awakening to the fact that they are also made in the image and likeness of God — a truth that has always been but one which too few of us Christians have been willing to admit.

The sit-in demonstrators who are attempting through non-violent protest to desegregate restaurants and hotels throughout the

country are not criminals. They are merely trying to establish a right which has always been theirs, but which always has been denied them. Much has been made of the fact that the law is on the side of restaurateurs and hotel owners. Alas, many of these laws were made and aimed solely at depriving the Negro of sitting with his white brethren.

The Christian conscience cries out against such injustice. We need a few men of courage in this field who will dare to be unpopular in order to break outmoded economic and racial theories. If the Negro is good enough to fight in defense of these United States, he has helped defend — and this includes the free enterprise system.

The racists are in the minority and they act as if they secretly know that their days are numbered. In their panic they are swinging wild and furious, not caring whether they bring the good name of this country to ruin or not. On the other side of the fence the Negro extremists act in the same manner. Their hate of the White man is just as vicious. They also do not care what ruin they bring in the wake of their agitation.

It is for this reason that we can only hope and pray that the moderates of both sides

come out of the hiding places and move this country forward to racial justice and the tranquility which we all yearn.

The need for Christian leadership — the need for men of God to stop taking refuge in out-dated quotations of the Bible is pressing. We need men of God who will lead their congregations out of the abyss of racism and the real love of God and love of neighbor. To be sure, it will take moral courage. To be sure, it might mean preaching with a few empty pews, but to our mind it is better than having a congregation welded to the immoral concept of segregation.

Putting it in practical terms Christ gave bread to the resurrected girl. If the same thing happened today, many of us would be satisfied with giving her a sermon. In other words, too many of us in and out of the pulpit preach love but fail to apply it in the hard realities of life. If we cannot find moral courage in the pulpit, how can we expect the Christian to exercise it in his daily life? The Bible is silent with the necessary of ampler. And even those who use it as the cornerstone of their religious activities can find in it the mandate and the command for the application of racial justice in every sphere of life.

Christ Forsaken for a Bit of Color

Liberalizing Trend Sure to Continue

San Francisco — (NC) — Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., said here that trends toward liberalization and renewal of the Church begun by Pope John XXIII will continue.

Father Murray, professor at Woodstock (Md.) College, said these trends have achieved the status of a "historical movement" and are no longer dependent on the personality and hopes of a single pope.

The theologian, expressed this view in a press conference Monday, June 10, held the day after he received an honorary degree from the University of San Francisco.

He suggested that in many ways the Church in Africa is pointing the way in the movement of liberalization. He pointed to the development of regional "conferences" of African bishops with jurisdiction over multi-diocesan areas as a "profound change" with deep implications for the "highly institutionalized" structure of the Church in Europe and America.

Father Murray predicted that the future will see "condensations" among the many small Catholic colleges in the U.S., leading to the focusing of material and personnel resources in "great national Catholic universities."

He also forecast "some relaxations" in Church law on mixed marriages, including possibly permission for "lay" ceremonies — both Catholic and Non-Catholic — and an end to the requirement that the non-Catholic partner sign

a pledge that the children will be raised as Catholics.

The Jesuit theologian said the Church will in the future make its "moral authority" increasingly felt on such social problems as racial segregation and medical care.

In his talk at the University of San Francisco commencement, Father Murray said the world is now in a moment of hesitation when areas of religion, politics and intellectual life have become "unstuck" and are waiting for a new orientation.

In religion, he said, "what confronts us now is not some new fixed situation. What confronts us now is only a question mark. What shall be the new pattern of social, religious and theological relations between ourselves and our separated brethren?"

"We do not know. We know only one thing. It must be a pattern that will further the divinely willed end, which is Christian unity."

Father Murray said Christians today "cannot be content to exchange superficial polemical commonplaces."

"We cannot be content to draw lines between groups defined as 'we' and 'they,'" he said. "Our effort must be to speak across the lines, across the real lines and across some lines which have been false-ly drawn by misunderstanding and resentment."

"OUR AIM," he continued, "is no concordance agreement,

but reciprocal understanding (of) the other's position to the argument more conscious of itself because it is more conscious of the other. The ecumenical question is pervasive. It has already touched every theological issue that I know of and it has put to us a task that is most difficult, a task of infinite delicacy.

"If the ecumenical question is to be taken seriously (and I believe it is) in English-speaking lands, it has not been taken seriously, if the ecumenical question is not to be sentimentalized (and there is danger of this as if the issue simply were of good manners in conversation), if the ecumenical question is to be taken at its true height and its full reach, then there must be a return to sources," Father Murray stated.

"Only here does the argument begin, where it has begun — at the wellspring of the Christian tradition, whence faith set out on its long course of development, in the course of which it profoundly enriched itself and at the same time occasioned division," he said.

Noted Speakers Listed For Liturgical Week

Washington, — (NC) — Principal speakers for the 1963 Liturgical Week, to be held in Philadelphia from August 19 to 22, were announced here by Father Gerard Sloyan, president of the Liturgical Conference.

Other speakers and their topics: — August 20: Father Sloyan, "The Mystery of Christ's Father"; Richard Sneed, O.S.B., of St. Gregory's Abbey, Shawnee, Okla., "The Mystery, Fore-shadowed in the Bible"; The Eastern Vigil and Word of God Forms the Christian; Father Bernard Cooke, S.J., of Marquette University,

of the Holy Saturday ritual by a team of liturgical experts. — August 21: John R. Manion, executive secretary of the Liturgical Conference, "The Mystery of Christ Proclaimed Through the Church"; Father Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., Baltimore, a member of the conference's Board of directors, will speak on August 19 on "The Renewal of the Church."

— August 22: Father Paul Puria, S.S., of St. Thomas Seminary, Kenmore, Wash., "The Mystery of Christ, an Explanatory"; Father Bernard Cooke, S.J., of Marquette University,

of the Holy Saturday ritual by a team of liturgical experts.



In The Vineyard The Redemptorist Fathers, The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (C.S.R.), was founded in Italy by St. Alphonsus Mary de' Liguori in 1722. It is composed of priests and lay brothers who take the three vows of religion and live together in community. The religious life of a Redemptorist is part contemplative and part active. They first came to the United States in 1822. The principal work of the Redemptorist Fathers is preaching, especially in large city parishes. Like St. Joseph's in downtown Rochester, many small chapels (like the Chapel for the Deaf and the St. Joseph's) many American Redemptorists are now working on the foreign missions in South America, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo.

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