

From the Editor

In the last issue I made a comment about President Obama winning the Nobel Peace Prize. Since then, an ironic thing has happened. Ten days before the President flew to Oslo, Norway to actually accept the Peace Prize, the White House announced the deployment of an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan.

Strange how history repeats itself ... In the 1960s Vietnam was the target. In that skirmish, American “Christians” joined the throng to liberate that poor country from the “perils” of Communism. To do so, B-52’s and F111’s flew through their naive, Asian skies blanketing them with napalm and cluster bombs. Pondering our most recent war, I thought about the Nobel Peace Prize winner of that day, Martin Luther King Jr. Now, while I don’t think Jesus would have marched on the White House, I do think King had some good things to say to the church of his day. During his speech in Washington D.C., King revealed what winning the Nobel Peace Prize meant to him.

I cannot forget that the Nobel Prize for Peace was also a commission—a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for “the brotherhood of man.” This is a calling that takes me beyond national allegiances; but even if it were not present, I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I’m speaking against the war. Could it be that they do not know that the good news was meant for all men—for Communist and capitalist, for their children and ours, for black and for white, for revolutionary and conservative? Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the One who loved his enemies so fully that he died for them? What then can I say to the Vietcong or to Castro or to Mao, as a faithful minister of this One? Can I threaten them with death or must I not share with them my life?

And as I ponder the madness of Vietnam and search within myself for ways to understand and respond in

compassion, my mind goes constantly to the people of that peninsula. I speak now not of the soldiers of each side, not of the ideologies of the Liberation Front, not of the junta in Saigon, but simply of the people who have been living under the curse of war for almost three continuous decades now. I think of them, too, because it is clear to me that there will be no meaningful solution there until some attempt is made to know them and hear their broken cries. They must see Americans as strange liberators.

King called us “strange liberators.” You would think that if 6000 years of world history would have taught us anything, it would have taught us that war always begets more war. The kingdom of God follows a different course. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” (Jn. 14:27) When everything in life seems counterfeit these days, I am thankful that “all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” (2 Co. 1:20)

There are many challenging articles in this issue. Don’t miss Mike Fisher’s article on the mixed message of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, or Chester Lehman’s challenge of everyday church life; both challenging articles. Phil Haines of Georgia gives an insightful look into the danger of our churches becoming a morph between conservative Christianity and the world. Paul Lamicela submitted another engaging report of Bible school, bringing the messages and experiences to life anew. Mike and I did a book review on Bercot’s new book *Will the Theologians Please Sit Down* and some sobering thoughts about Judgment Day. Michael McDaniel sent us an article on humility entitled *Fork Lift Theology*, reminding us that the way up is always down. And finally, the Seed Sower award of this issue went out to Chris Armstrong, who is ministering to the river children of Huaycan, Peru.

A “Thank You” to all who responded to the request to send in articles, poems, and songs. We have used a few in this issue, and plan to use more in the future. Keep them coming! ~Bro. Dean