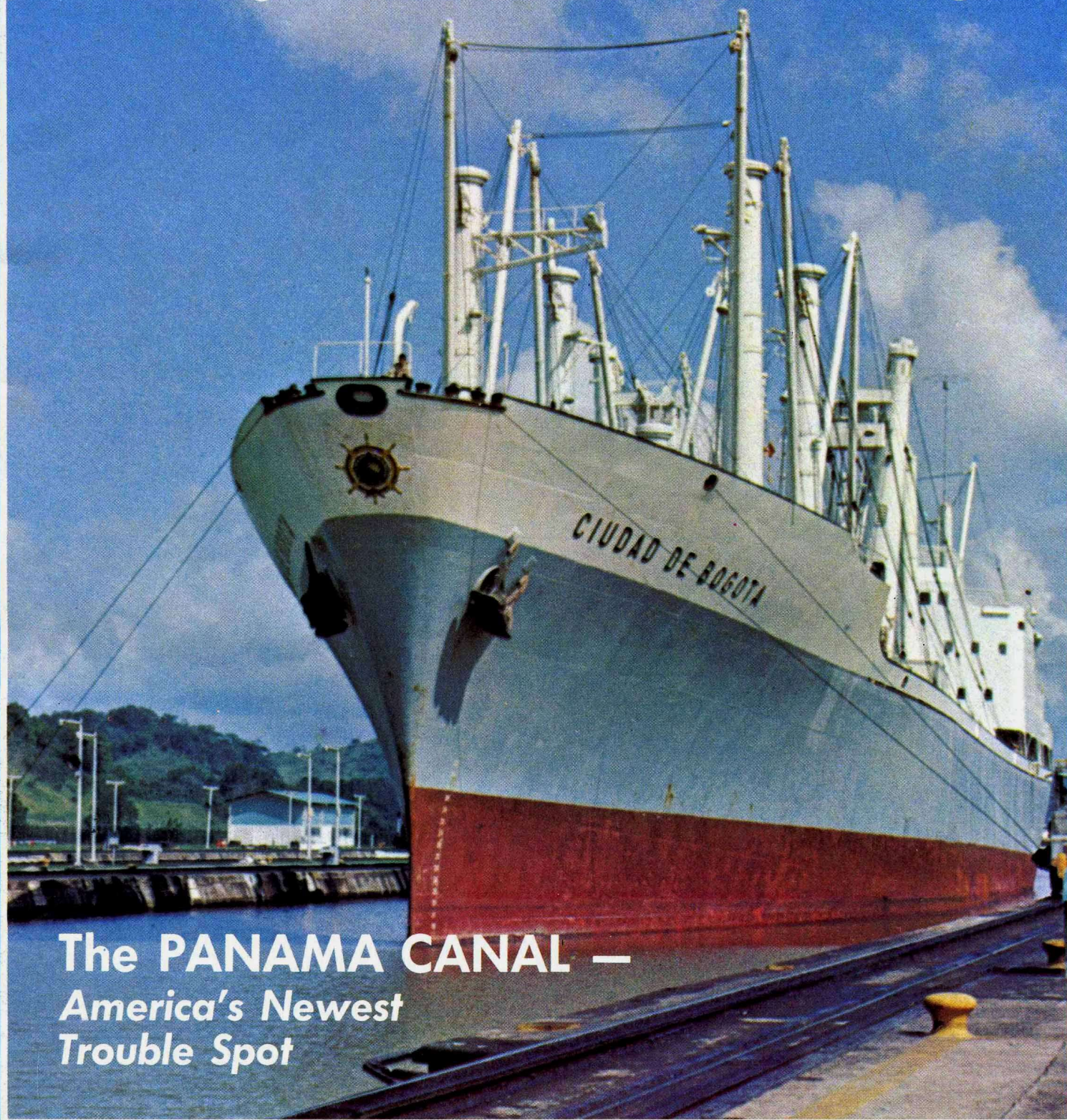
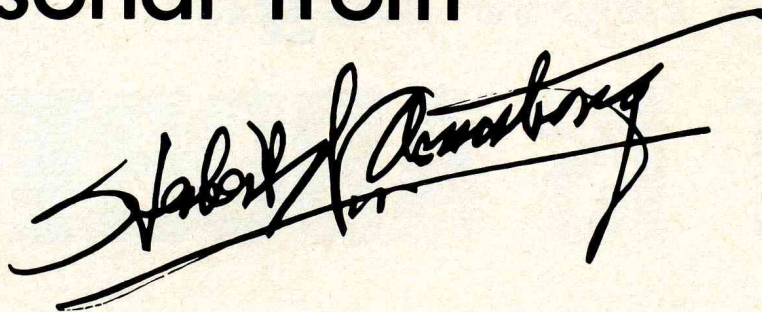


the
PLAIN TRUTH
a magazine of understanding



The PANAMA CANAL —
America's Newest
Trouble Spot

Personal from



After Vietnam — The NEW Bastion

I HAVE JUST flown into Tokyo from Bangkok. After departing from Bangkok, we flew over Saigon and South Vietnam. The truce teams are still trying to stop the sputtering of gunfire here and there — in the so-called cease-fire that was supposed to end the Vietnam war.

The new center of this Indo-China war has been Saigon. It may soon shift to Bangkok. After my visit there, I'm convinced that Thailand may now become the new bastion of the free world in stopping the Communists' relentless drive south.

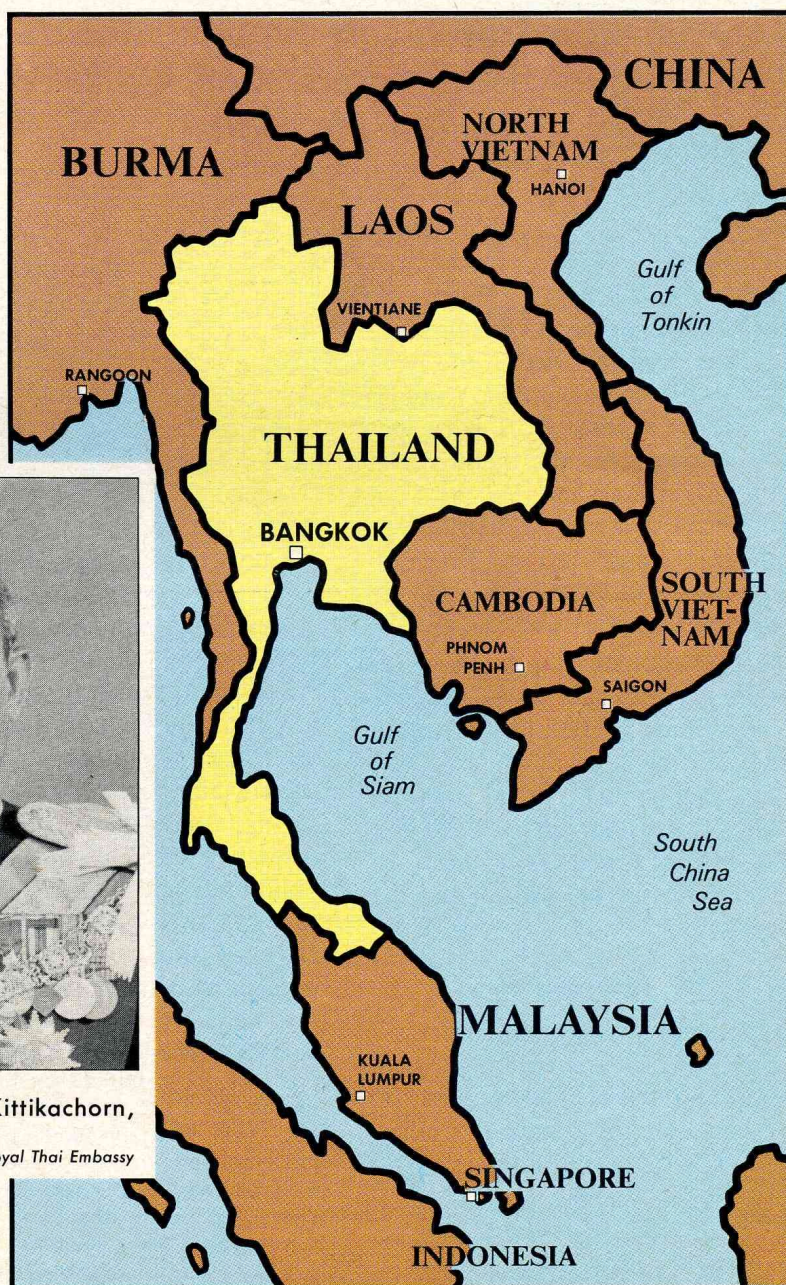
I flew down into that embattled area of Southeast Asia, just as negotiators were completing the cease-fire agreement work. I wanted to investigate firsthand the probable course events will take, from now. You haven't been hearing much about Thailand — the war news has been coming out of Saigon. Thailand is immediately to the west of the war zone, and I predict you'll be hearing a good deal more about Thailand, its capital, Bangkok, and its Prime Minister, Thanom Kittikachorn.

As the cease-fire agreement was being
(Continued on page 46)



Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn,
Prime Minister of Thailand.

Royal Thai Embassy



Abortions Now Legal

... BUT IS ABORTION

The U. S. Supreme Court has ruled that abortions are legal. Many now ask, "Is abortion murder? When does human life start?" The experts do not agree. Heart transplants brought doubts about exactly when death occurs. Can we know when human life starts?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

IT DIDN'T get the BIG headlines. It was overshadowed in the news by the ending of the Vietnam war (so far as direct U. S. participation is concerned) and by the death of a former President. Yet the U. S. Supreme Court ruling handed down January 22 may have even a more important and lasting effect on the future of America and the world.

It was probably the most sweeping and sensational decision of the Nixon Court. It abolished the criminal abortion laws of almost every state, ruling that the decision regarding abortion, prior to the last ten weeks of pregnancy, must be made solely by the woman and her doctor.

Two Opposing Views

The ruling "sets in motion developments which are terrifying to contemplate," said Cardinal Krol, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

But, applauded Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America,

it was "a wise and courageous stroke for the protection of a woman's physical and emotional health."

But is abortion murder? The Supreme Court carefully avoided answering the question of when a human life begins. It said, "We need not resolve the difficult question of when an unborn child actually becomes a human person, with a legal right to live."

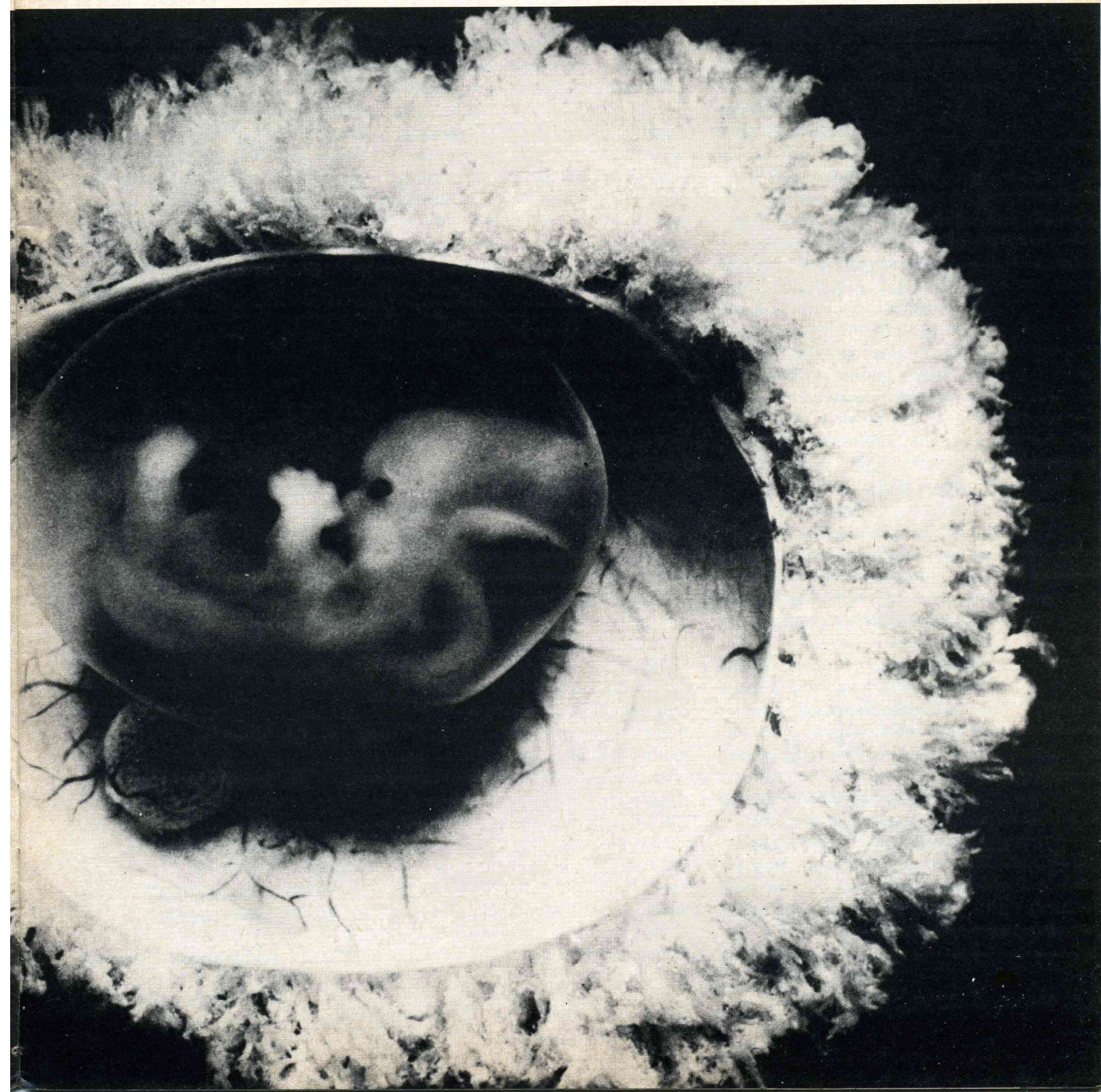
The Court's majority (it was a 7 to 2 decision) justified this dodging of the question of legalizing LIFE or DEATH, and "passed the buck" by saying, "When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not

A FORTY-TWO-DAY-OLD EMBRYO, one half inch long, bathed by the fluid in the amniotic sac. Attached is the yolk sac, with the surrounding chorionic placenta. Embryo already looks human, its eyes, ears and nasal organs have started to form, the jaws are well formed and the rudiments of fingers and toes have become evident.

UPI



MURDER?



in a position to speculate as to the answer.”

And dissenting Justice Byron R. White said, “The Court apparently values the convenience of the pregnant mother more than the continued existence and development of the life or potential life which she carries.”

For the past five years, pressures have been accelerating in the Western world to make abortions legal. These pressures have been primarily one-sided and well organized. The protests of the Roman Catholic Church have been far less vociferous. There have been other indignant, emotionally aroused protests, but none sufficiently strong to match the organized demand for legal abortion.

All this is another drop downward on the moral toboggan slide.

The “new morality” is neither new nor moral. It merely appears new since it follows the era of Victorian prudery and medieval Roman Catholic domination of moral standards. The opposite extreme has taken over. Permissiveness has befouled the air. Promiscuous sex has accelerated. Fornication and adultery have gained public toleration, if not complete acceptance.

For 25 years, outright profanity has been accepted on the stage. Finally, in some areas, actual and simulated nude sex performances have been tolerated. Some movies have descended all the way into the X-rated cesspool.

And now the question of whether legal abortion amounts to legal permission to commit murder does not appear to raise many eyebrows or ignite indignant flames of heated protest.

These current trends accompany the alarming increase in crime, in broken homes and divorce, increasing violence, racial strife, riots, arson and sniper killings.

These are the conditions. These are the trends.

But what are the answers to all

these problems of modern society?

The editors of *The PLAIN TRUTH* often say that newspapers, newscasts and news magazines report the news, picture the conditions, and pose the questions, but *The PLAIN TRUTH* gives the answers, reveals the SOLUTIONS.

Also, we have said that when society looks to science and technology for solutions to society's problems and evils, we find that these questions are outside their field. We look to modern education, but find it generally unconcerned about moral and spiritual standards. The emphasis in education today is on the intellect. Governments have no solutions. Governments may pass laws and sometimes enforce them, but they are neither teachers nor custodians of morals, short of crimes. Religion has failed to make this a better world. Religion is hopelessly divided on doctrines and on what is truth, and many large religious groups have been tacitly adding their assent to the current immoral “new morality.”

Where, for Authoritative Right Answers?

As I said, the newscasts, newspapers and news magazines report the happenings and the evils. Our Philip Wylies and John O'Haras have painted masterful word-pictures of the world's troubled and sick society. But their brilliant rhetoric stops short of workable solutions.

WHERE, then, for right answers?

There *is* a supreme authority that reveals infallibly *true* answers. It is, unfortunately, a neglected, rejected, misrepresented, maligned, almost totally misunderstood authority.

And *there is no other!* That is the reason this world goes on suffering in confusion, full of evils that should not exist. Those who refuse even to listen to this one supreme authority have only to say in hopelessness, “I don't know — I'm ignorant.”

The plain truth about life — what it is, *when* it is, *why* it is and *where* it

leads — is very essential knowledge. But the tragedy of human society is that it has been deceived into accepting humanly reasoned fables, postulates and errors in the guise of knowledge, science and truth. And this sick, sick world suffers on!

The one supreme and sure authority is the world's best seller — the same book so many religious denominations claim as the source of their beliefs. Yet, incredible though it seems, most of their teachings and customs today are diametrically contrary to those of the book they profess to follow! They *could* find the true and right answers to questions, problems and evils if they would read it like it is. But they interpret away the one tenth of it they use, while ignoring utterly the other nine tenths.

Assuredly, as Bruce Barton said, the Bible is “the book that nobody knows” — well, *almost* nobody! We can understand it — if we are willing — and what an eye-opener it is to the one willing to be astonished by what it really does reveal!

And Now — Our Answer

I know well this is a highly controversial question. I can tell you only what this authoritative Source, from the Maker of us all, reveals. One may take it or leave it — and the world has been “leaving it” for entirely too long, to its own hurt! I merely give it to you to accept or reject.

When, then, does a human life start? When does it become a human life, the taking of which is murder?

Is it actually a human life at and from conception? Or does it first become a human life when an embryo becomes a fetus — approximately three months after conception? Or does it become a human life only at birth?

The answer to those questions determines whether abortion is murder.

And who, after all, is the giver of

life? *Who* has given the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit murder" (as it should be properly translated)? The Almighty One who forbids murder under penalty of capital punishment is the *only* One who can tell us *when* terminating a life becomes murder!

WHY Not Understood

If those professing the Christian religion had understood what is the true gospel of Jesus Christ, they would be in no quandary as to whether an abortion is a murder. But, incredible though it sounds, that true gospel was not understood or proclaimed to the whole world for 18½ centuries!

In astonishment one might ask, "But haven't people been preaching Christ to the world all through those 18½ centuries?"

Oh sure! They've been preaching Christ. They've been pleading: "Accept Christ." "Receive Christ!" They've been preaching about Christ — about his person — saying that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ. But they have not been preaching *Christ's gospel!* And that's why those who have listened to them do not understand when a human life begins and whether an abortion is murder.

Jesus himself said this would happen. In the most important, pivotal prophecy in the New Testament, Jesus said: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name [that is, professing to be his ministers], *saying*, I am Christ [saying that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ]; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5).

His disciples had asked him *when* the *end* of this world — this age — and his return to earth would occur. He said there would be deceived ministers preaching in his name, preaching Christ, deceiving the MANY. There would be wars, famines, disease epidemics, earthquakes — but these were not the time of the END. He then said, "But he that

shall endure *unto the end*, the same shall be saved. And *this gospel of the kingdom* shall be preached ["published" in Mark 13:10] in all the world for a witness unto all nations; *and then* shall the end come" (verses 13-14).

What Gospel?

What gospel must be proclaimed *worldwide*, just before the END of this age and the second coming of Christ to earth? He said, "This gospel of the kingdom" — the same gospel Jesus brought to mankind from God — the gospel the world rejected. Jesus could not have said the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom would signal the end of the age if that gospel had been preached these 18½ centuries.

The word "gospel" means "good news." Jesus brought news — and good news — from Almighty God. God sent him to earth — to mankind — with a message — with a news announcement — the most important news ever announced to the world.

But the world rejected it! They crucified Christ because of that message.

Some believed on him — but refused to believe what he said! Read it yourself in the 8th chapter of John: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word [that is, in "my gospel"] then are ye my disciples indeed. . . . I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. . . . But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God [the message God sent him to announce to mankind — his gospel]. . . . and because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (John 8:30-45).

Believing on Christ in Vain

Those people "believed on him" — but they did not accept his message from God. They finally did kill

him *because of his gospel* — the gospel of the Kingdom of God!

For 18½ centuries, professing Christians have "believed on Jesus" — have preached Christ to the world — but have NOT proclaimed his gospel — his message — his good news announcement — his truth — to the world.

Because they preached Christ — even worshipped Christ — called themselves Christians — people have been deceived, as Jesus said they would, into believing they preached and heard "the gospel." Jesus said they would be deceived. One who is deceived *does not know* he is deceived. He may be entirely honest and sincere in his belief.

"But," one might exclaim, "people have actually worshipped Christ." Yes, but what did Jesus himself say about that? "Howbeit IN VAIN do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7). Actually WORSHIPPING Christ — but all in vain, because they *substitute doctrines of men* for Christ's truth — for his gospel! Read it in your own Bible! Astonishing! But true!

What Was Jesus' Gospel?

Note the very beginning of Christ's gospel.

It is recorded in the first chapter of Mark, starting in verse 1. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Then beginning in verse 2 it is recorded how John the Baptist prepared the way before Christ. It records that Jesus was baptized and defeated Satan. Then it says: "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching *the gospel of the kingdom of God*, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and *the kingdom of God* is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (verses 14-15).

Jesus' gospel was the NEWS announcement of the coming world-ruling Kingdom of God!

Not many who have "accepted Christ" have the slightest idea of

what that kingdom is! Yet Jesus said, "Repent, and believe." Believe *what*? Believe the good news of the Kingdom of God!

And what is a kingdom? It is a government. And it is people who administer that government.

Man May Be Born of God

Jesus himself was born to be the King of the coming Kingdom of God. This was foretold in the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6-7. It was announced to the virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, prior to his birth (Luke 1:30-33). On trial for his life before Pilate, Jesus *said* he was born to be a king. But his Kingdom, he said, was not of this world — this society. He explained about the Kingdom of God in parable after parable.

But what about the people who enter into and, under Christ, administer the Kingdom? Jesus struck straight to the heart of that truth in his talk with the Pharisee Nicodemus.

And *that* truth — that part of Jesus' gospel — reveals the answer to our question: Is abortion MURDER and WHEN does human life START?

It was near the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry that the Pharisee Nicodemus came under the cover of darkness to question Jesus. Nicodemus opened by saying that the Pharisees, as a whole, *knew* Jesus was a teacher sent from God. That's how they "*believed on*" Jesus, even though they refused to believe what he taught. Incidentally, the demons *also* believe — and tremble! (James 2:19.)

Immediately, Jesus got to the central point — the Kingdom of God. He made clear to Nicodemus that he could never enter into God's Kingdom in his present unregenerate state.

Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). He was not speaking of being born a human, physical person, but of being born *again* — being born a spirit being, *composed*

of spirit, not of matter. Unless he is born *of the spirit*, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, Jesus explained clearly. He added, "That which is born of the flesh *is flesh*; and that which is born of the Spirit *is spirit*" (verse 6).

Nicodemus and all humans have been born of the flesh — and are flesh — composed of matter from the ground. But when born of the Spirit — born of God — we shall BE SPIRIT — no longer human, but composed of SPIRIT, even as God is SPIRIT.

This biblical teaching of Jesus totally refutes the popular "Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man" fable. Seven times in the New Testament it is affirmed that until conversion, humans are, spiritually, the children of Satan the devil.

A New Father-Son Relationship

God is that Spirit (John 4:24) of which we may be born. God is the Father. Jesus is his son. A father and son relationship is a family relationship. Jesus is the *firstborn* (by his resurrection) of many brethren (Romans 8:29). To enter into the Kingdom of God, we also must be born of God by a resurrection to immortal, spirit-composed life.

But the crux point is that we may, even now in this human life, be begotten sons of God.

Now understand the exact comparison. Our human begettal, embryo-fetus development, and birth compares exactly to our potential spirit begettal, spiritual growth and development, and final birth as immortal *spirit beings* in God's Kingdom.

All physical life comes from an egg. The human "egg" is called an ovum. It is produced in the mother. A new human life starts when an ovum is fertilized — physical life imparted to it — by a male sperm cell entering the ovum.

How does spirit life start? It starts when the Holy Spirit from God enters — gives spirit life to — impreg-

nates a human person. The Spirit of God — from the very person of God — actually BEGETS and engenders SPIRIT life to mortal humans.

Jesus said, "Repent ye, and *believe* the gospel." The apostle Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). One is to be baptized when he BELIEVES. "Repent and believe" are the two conditions to receiving the gift of God's Spirit.

And "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make immortal] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11).

Human physical conception, gestation, and birth are a beautiful picture of the transcendent human potential — the PURPOSE for which human life was put here on earth by a divine Creator — of God reproducing Himself — of spiritual divine birth into the glorious Kingdom of God!

What wonderful good news the gospel of Jesus Christ is! What indescribable tragedy that deceived men have rejected this good news and have HIDDEN that wonderful, wonderful good news from a deceived world!

But see, now, how it ANSWERS the question of this article!

The Bible reveals that this spiritual divine birth is pictured by physical human birth. The Holy Spirit of God entering one who has *really repented and believed* is the spiritual "sperm" from the very spirit body of God, imparting the presence of spiritual, divine and immortal life — though one is not yet immortal until the time of the resurrection.

Repentance, faith, and the presence of God's Holy Spirit in one *changes one into a different kind of person!*

He has not yet been *born* an immortal being, yet divine life from

"It's not a question of whether a human life exists, but a question of whether the mother and her doctor have a right to take that life."

God has been imparted to him, just as the physical life of a human father has been imparted by the sperm cell to the ovum. The truly converted Christian, then, is NOW in the state that compares to the embryo and the fetus in the mother's womb.

The human embryo-fetus is fed by the human mother — protected by her. The Bible calls the Church of God "the mother of us all" (compare Galatians 4:26 with Hebrews 12:22-23). The function of the Church is to "feed the flock" with spiritual food from the Bible and to protect those within it, "for the perfecting of the saints . . . for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [full-grown, spiritual] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13). The begotten Christian must grow spiritually, ready to be born a spirit being *composed of spirit*, just as the embryo-fetus must be fed physical food through the mother and must grow physically, ready to be born a physical being, composed of matter.

When the Unborn Become Children of Parents

The Bible says the Spirit-begotten Christian is already the child or son of God, even while still only an heir — not yet an inheritor — not yet born by the resurrection into a spirit-composed, immortal being.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they *are* [now] the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit [of

God] itself beareth witness with our spirit, that *we are* the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:14-17).

And again: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. . . . Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:1-2).

The Spirit-begotten Christian is now in the spiritual state comparable to the embryo-fetal physical state. We are now, already, the sons of our heavenly Father.

Therefore, the unborn human is, from the moment of conception, the child — the son or daughter — of its parents!

All the human life the father and mother shall ever impart has already been imparted. A new, physical human LIFE has been begotten and is in the gestation stage toward birth. True, it receives physical nourishment through the mother, but that is growth, not the imparting of *life*.

This biblical analogy from the Creator and *giver of life* shows that, though yet unborn, a human life is growing and developing in the uterus of the mother. It is already the child of its parents. From the instant of conception, it is *not* a question of *whether* a human life exists, but a question of whether the mother and her doctor have a right to *take that life*.

Just what *is* a murder? It is the

ending of a human life *prior* to the end of its natural lifetime. The matter of *how much* prior is relative. To deliberately *end* that life one or two months after it started (after conception) is putting an *end* to a human life as much as to do it ten or eleven months after, or 50 years after.

Biblically, in the Old Testament, in the nation Israel, God himself ordered capital punishment by stoning to death or otherwise, for certain capital sins or crimes. This was not considered murder or a violation of the victim's right to live, under the sixth commandment. The victim himself had forfeited his right to live by his own commandment-breaking.

But the sixth commandment of God denies others the right to take an innocent life, and, under divine law, guarantees the innocent the right to continue living.

Unfortunately, though we may print on U. S. currency, "In God We Trust," U. S. lawmakers and judges do not appear to feel obligated to OBEY the God in which they supposedly "trust." But on the day of judgment, they themselves, along with all of us, will ourselves be judged — by the divine laws of God! □

For three eye-opening free booklets on the most important subjects affecting your life, write for *Just What Do You Mean — Born Again?*, *Just What Do You Mean — Kingdom of God?* and *Why Were You Born?* These treat the biblical portion of this article in much more detail. Know the real purpose for which humans were put on this earth. Learn the true values of life. Learn the WAY to peace, success, happiness, and abundance. You'll wonder why this precious knowledge has been withheld from a mixed-up and deceived humanity all these years. If you want understanding, don't fail to read these booklets — the most important reading of your life.

modern world — a world living in the time of the end, the “day of his [Christ’s] coming” (Malachi 3:2).

God continues: “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and *prove me now herewith* [that is, prove me in regard to this matter of tithing], if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there *shall not be room enough to receive it*” (Malachi 3:10).

Here is God’s test — his challenge to you. God says to prove him. Put his promise to the test and see if he won’t bless you in unexpected ways and pour out blessings on you for

your faithfulness. Some of God’s blessings will be tangible, easily discernible; others will be intangible, spiritual, but just as real.

Do you have the courage to obey God? Do you have the strength of character to take him at his word, to accept his challenge, and put him to the test? Can you believe God?

“And I will rebuke the devourer [agricultural pests, such as locust plagues, etc.] for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground,” says God. Continuing, “neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field . . . and all nations shall call you

blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:11-12).

Tithing is a spiritual, financial law that produces dividends, that provides unexpected benefits when you may be thrown out of work. It is guaranteed by the direct promise of the Almighty.

Tithing pays — physically and spiritually. Millions suffer needless financial worries and other problems because they are in ignorance of this spiritual law of God.

God is waiting to fulfill his promises in your life. Will you let him? □

Personal from



(Continued from page 1)

completed, in great confusion, there were many doubts about it being the end of the war. Even weeks before the cease-fire agreement, I continued saying, week after week, the Communists will never stop pushing on. If it is not by open, organized *shooting* war, then it will be by infiltration, propaganda, sabotage, or guerrilla warfare. Prime Minister Lee of Singapore called it an *intermission*. Actually, I’ve said the armistice ending World War I was merely a recess — and that’s precisely what the word “armistice” means. In 1939, Adolf Hitler decided the recess was over — and we had World War II. Now we are in another recess before the final nuclear World War III. Oh, it won’t be the end of the EARTH’S existence — or of human life upon it — but it assuredly *could* — *unless* there exists that all-powerful *unseen* hand from SOMEPLACE, to stop it. There will be a peaceful and happy WORLD TOMORROW, but meanwhile, we’re having our wars in Vietnam, Korea,

the Middle East, and religious war in Northern Ireland, besides some 40 other wars and skirmishes since the end of World War II. VIOLENCE is everywhere. Do you expect me to tell you we’re going to have beautiful PEACE in Vietnam, in such a world? I only wish I could!

Let me give you a quick summary of the condition in Vietnam *as of* cease-fire day. The agreement between Washington and Hanoi did NOT require the Communist North Vietnamese to withdraw their troops that were already in South Vietnam. There has been a question as to whether the South Vietnamese government of President Thieu could survive politically in an election since so many of those Communists are in the villages of South Vietnam and can control village votes.

What Now Lies Ahead?

Here’s what I find over here in the Far East:

The heads of governments in this part of the world — from Tokyo to Canberra in Australia — are all looking at the uncertain political future of the post-war Far East — and I only HOPE it is “post-war.” There has been scurrying to form new plans — new alliances — during this past week, and *it has centered primarily in Bangkok.*

Here in Tokyo, Prime Minister Tanaka, with whom I have had two personal meetings, talked of “a new age” — of a “turning point” — and of a “new chapter” in Far Eastern affairs.

Important meetings have been taking place in Bangkok, where I have been for the past few days. Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and his aides flew into Bangkok to discuss plans for Asia’s future with Thailand’s Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn. Australia’s Prime Minister Whitlam is flying to Jakarta to discuss a bilateral defense agreement with President Suharto of Indonesia. I had a personal meeting of about an hour with President Suharto some six months ago. He is very much concerned with combatting Communism from *within his* country.

Last Wednesday morning, in Bangkok, the newspapers announced that Henry Kissinger, President Nixon’s personal envoy and Assistant National Security Affairs adviser, would be arriving at Bangkok airport in the second of the presidential jets — *Air Force II* — on Thursday night with a contingent of 14 U. S. government officials. He was scheduled to have a meeting at 7:30 Friday morning with Thailand’s Prime Minister Kittikachorn,

prior to his visit to Hanoi and Peking, trying to wind up this Vietnam war. Three U. S. ambassadors from that area also came there to confer with Mr. Kissinger.

But I had an important personal meeting (by invitation) with Prime Minister Kittikachorn less than 24 hours *before* Mr. Kissinger's meeting with him, and I consider this meeting, for that reason and at this critical time, of great import. Because, after this meeting with Thailand's Prime Minister — and being already acquainted with His Majesty Bhumibol Adulyadej, Thailand's king, I feel that I can tell you that the main bastion of defending the free world against Communist inroads in Southeast Asia is due to shift from Saigon to Bangkok.

Accompanied by Mr. Stanley R. Rader, our Ambassador College Chief Counsel and Mr. Osamu Gotoh, chairman of our Department of Asian Studies, we were met at the entrance to the official residence of the Prime Minister by his aide, an army colonel, and were ushered into an antechamber. In a minute or two, the smiling but serious Prime Minister greeted us in his living room. We were introduced to his son-in-law, who was trained and educated in the United States.

Immediately, we began to discuss the problems of this crisis moment in Southeast Asia. First, I asked him his opinion about whether President Thieu would survive in South Vietnam in the wake of the cease-fire. He had recently had a talk with an emissary and confidant of President Thieu, and told me that he has concluded that President Thieu may now very likely survive a political test at the polls. The South Vietnamese government is now stronger and more stable than at any time during the war. However, as I said, the Communists were NOT required by the cease-fire agreement between the United States and Hanoi to remove their troops from the northern portions of South Vietnam — and

the Communists control many small villages here and there throughout South Vietnam. And, of course, they can vote. Their propaganda will continue, and perhaps sabotage and even guerrilla warfare.

The Senior Leader in Southeast Asia

But the Prime Minister of Thailand reminded us that he is the *senior leader* in Southeast Asia. He has been in office longer than any other head of state in the entire area. And he has relentlessly and vigorously opposed Communist inroads. He served as Prime Minister for the first time in 1958 and has been Prime Minister continuously since 1963. And he has been singularly SUCCESSFUL in resisting Communist advances.

Just as President Suharto of Indonesia told me *his* problem in holding off Communist inroads was primarily that of combatting *internal* subversion, so it has been in Thailand. To grasp the strategic significance of this, you'll have to remember that Thailand, formerly called Siam, is bordered on the northeast by Laos — into which North Vietnamese troops had infiltrated — during the war. Vietnam is just beyond, so that at one point, Thailand is only about 65 or 70 miles from North Vietnam. Yet the North Vietnamese have not attempted to invade Thailand.

Prime Minister Kittikachorn pointed out that other leaders in the area — Prime Minister Lee of Singapore, President Suharto of Indonesia, and President Marcos of the Philippines — have all adopted his long-tested and successful approach of vigilant and inspired national efforts and education to oppose Communist inroads. He admitted the infiltration of Communists (civilian — not military) in the northeastern area of Thailand — where they are only some 65 miles from North Vietnam, but he said the situation there was under control.

We turned, then, to a discussion of domestic problems within Thailand. Education and birth control are two MAJOR problems. Thailand is rated as 80% literate, but that still leaves close to one in five — mostly in outlying and mountain areas — who can neither read nor write. I explained to the Prime Minister about our own Ambassador College cooperative participation in the program of His Majesty the King in bringing education to the mountain tribes, and he expressed his appreciation on behalf of the people of the country.

He said the birthrate in Bangkok is in excess of 3% per annum, and in the outlying areas, over 7% — much too high — and creating great pressures.

Black September Commandos in Bangkok

Incidentally, in talking with the Prime Minister, I received some interesting details regarding a world-news headline at the year's end. You may remember reading of some "Black September" Arab commandos taking Israeli Embassy employees in Bangkok hostage. A number of Arab governments voiced open opposition to this political act of the Black September group. Both His Majesty, King Bhumibol, and Prime Minister Kittikachorn were personally involved.

It was on December 28, 1972, and it was a national holiday in Thailand for the investiture of His Majesty's son as Crown Prince. It was a most important day for the royal family and for the government. Israeli Ambassador Amir did not go to the embassy on that day, but six of the embassy staff did. Four members of the "Black September" movement, with machine guns, entered the Israeli Embassy, taking all staff employees as hostages. They demanded the release of 36 Arabs held in prison in Israel.

The Israeli Ambassador immedi-

ately received an answer from Jerusalem: "NO RELEASE of prisoners. Absolutely NO NEGOTIATION with guerrillas." There was absolutely nothing, from that moment, that the Israeli Ambassador could do for the hostages.

At that point, the Thai government took over. They did not want a mass slaughter on their hands on the day that meant so much to the King. I was told by friends close to the King, including a princess, that the King himself played a leading part in devising the strategy, and Prime Minister Kittikachorn saw that the plan was carried out.

They knew, since the Israeli government at Jerusalem refused to give in, or even negotiate, that the Arab guerrillas realized that if they did not kill the two women and four men hostages, the guerrillas themselves would certainly be killed. The Thai government promised them safe passage to any Arab country if they would free the hostages. The Arabs, knowing how most of the Black September commandos at Munich were never allowed to escape alive, feared they would be shot instead of given safe passage. To reassure the Black Septemberists, the Thai government offered *Thai* hostages, in exchange for the Israeli hostages. The Thai government offered the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and the Egyptian Ambassador to Thailand. The Arab guerrillas agreed. A Thai aircraft flew the guerrillas and hostages safely to Cairo.

True, this maneuver allowed the commandos to get away, but it prevented any bloodshed from marring the day of the investiture of the Crown Prince. For 19 tense hours, the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand remained with the Israeli Ambassador during this emergency. This Prime Minister himself spent 15 hours with the Ambassador, and the King made several personal in-

quiries about the progress of the negotiations.

The Coming Shift of Power

Following withdrawal of U. S. troops from Vietnam, look for the United States to shift headquarters for all U. S. air operations to some point in Thailand.

Let me give you the reasons why I think it inevitable that Thailand will *now* become the free world's new bastion against further Communist invasion in Southeast Asia.

Thailand has a stable government that has been in office longer than any of the others. If the Communists were able to take over South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia politically, or by military force, they still would be stopped cold at Thailand's border — as long as the Thais could hold them off.

At this point in time, it is probable there will be no further fighting by major conventional military units in Vietnam — for the present, that is. Actually, the war *will not stop*. The Communist thrust to the south in that area will continue, but it will now shift from organized conventional military war to **POLITICAL** war — which is propaganda — accompanied by sporadic guerrilla fighting here and there, and occasional terrorism.

North Vietnam is not in position to mount another major military offensive against South Vietnam, unless the U.S.S.R. would load them up, as they did in 1971 — and guarantee North Vietnam sufficient financial and military backing to keep going. There's every evidence that Moscow is not inclined to do that for the present. China probably is not in *position* to do it now. Besides, there is still rivalry between the U.S.S.R. and Communist China.

The administration in Washington is not going to want to reduce its forces in Southeast Asia right now, further than getting the soldiers out of South Vietnam. To do that would weaken Mr. Nixon's and Henry

Kissinger's hands in carrying the cease-fire negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion. So, I think you'll see the main bulk of U. S. power in Southeast Asia *shifted* into Thailand.

Thailand not only has a tried and competent leader in Prime Minister Kittikachorn, but the country is also held together by its King, who is actually revered by his people. He is very popular, especially in the outlying regions and mountain areas, because he has done so much for his people, and is so deeply concerned for their welfare. He has very definitely revealed that to me, in the hours of visits I have had with him personally. As an example, on my arrival in Bangkok on this visit, I was escorted to the hotel by one of its young lady representatives, in a car supplied by the hotel. I mentioned the **CONCERN** I knew the King had for his people, and she said, almost fervently, "I would lay down my life for him." And her eyes filled with tears so that she could not talk further for some minutes.

Yes, the fighting will now shift to political propaganda warfare, primarily, in Vietnam. President Thieu probably will win if there is an election. The South Vietnamese government will remain — for the present. The United States forces in the Southeast Asian sector will shift to Thailand, which will now become the new bastion of defense against Communist aggression in that part of the world.

For the **PRESENT** — that is! But the war is not over. War is not over in the Middle East. Violence is increasing **WORLDWIDE**. And it **WILL** increase, until that "unseen Strong Hand from Someplace" does intervene and usher in the *peaceful* world tomorrow — when nations really will, finally, beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and men shall learn war **NO MORE**. *Then*, for the first time since **MAN** was placed on this earth, we shall have **WORLD PEACE** — *permanently!* □