

first calculating the consequences has made all the difference, for I do not think my involvement would have happened any other way.

How can I explain the process through which I've come? I grew up believing that the definition of violence could be reduced to the use of guns or other direct physical attack. I now see that the limited options for change, violent or nonviolent, for most of the peoples of the world is directly related to the unlimited options offered me as a North American—in terms of health, education, food, shelter, meaningful work, a life basically free of fear. I must come to grips with the fact that my freedoms have not been acquired without struggle. The blood and suffering of native peoples, slaves, immigrants, and people of other colors from around the world have paid for our "liberty." They continue to pay, and as a Christian I must admit that reality and work with it.

I came to the Nicaraguan liberation struggle with all the academic and theological lessons down pat: thou shalt not kill; violence always breeds more violence; the oppressed historically have overthrown evil powers only to become oppressors themselves; those who live by the sword will perish by the sword; means must be consistent with desired ends; all life is equally sacred; one single life is too great a sacrifice for any cause.

My perspective on the writings of well-known proponents on both sides of the question has been altered: Christ; Gandhi; M. L. King, Jr.; Ellul; Helder Camara; Camilo Torres. I am different from the white, middle class, concerned North American, Brethren-educated Christian who two years ago came to a new job from Manchester College. I've been moved by the life, the struggle, the spirit and vision of the poor of Central America, moved to examine my own life and attitudes critically, to examine the priorities and intentions of my

government. I have to begin to live those changes within me here in the city.

I came to support the Sandinista armed struggle. I understand why the Salvadorean people have resorted to armed struggle, and I support them. It is still hard for me to write that on paper, especially to be published in the *Peace Studies Bulletin*. I cannot at this point in my life say lightly, without stumbling, that I am a pacifist. But I do say more humbly and more confidently that I am seeking to be a disciple of Christ, and understand the hard choices required of me as a North American.

The classical principles of nonviolence I quoted earlier are still important to me; they still hold their truth. But there are many supplemental "truths" which have acquired great significance: peace and justice are inseparable; be wise as serpents but gentle as doves; greater love shows no one than the one who lays down her/his own life for another; real change comes from the bottom up; the rich will not listen even to one who has risen from the dead.

Even if I had not had the personal involvement with the Nicaraguan struggle, as a Christian and a believer in nonviolence it would be important to study and analyze revolutionary Nicaragua today and look for evidence of the development of new forces for constructing a changed Nicaragua. The Gospels tell us time and again to "look for the signs" that proclaim the coming of the Kingdom. We must get beyond the rhetoric of "marxist Nicaragua" fed us by the U.S. press and look for the signs in Nicaragua.

Everyone who holds high the values of social and economic justice, of people-before-profits, of basic inalienable human rights for all, should be excited about Nicaragua today.

The promise of genuine change for workers and peasants has gone far beyond rhetoric in Nicaragua. "The poor will inherit