

# worldview

A JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## THE TIME OF CHANGE

Whatever had been the result of the election, new beginnings, increased activity and change would have marked the next administration. This fact was obscured somewhat by the "debates" of the campaign, but all the time it was inevitable, not only because of the demands of the new decade, but also because of the capacity and vigor of the two young candidates. The real question before the voters was how many new beginnings, how much increased activity and change they wanted. By choosing John F. Kennedy over Richard M. Nixon (by however slim a margin) the voters indicated that they wanted a good deal.

The point here is that Mr. Kennedy achieved his victory largely by telling the nation somber things. This would be an impressive achievement at any time; it is remarkably impressive in a time when the incumbent administration enjoys great popularity among the people and the people themselves enjoy "peace and prosperity." In this situation Mr. Kennedy said that America's prestige and strength were declining while the prestige and strength of its enemies were advancing. He declared that a decade of hard challenges and possible sacrifices lay ahead. He offered few comforts and only hopes that must be hard fought for. We can expect his administration, therefore, to make significant and sometimes radical departures from the past.

In the immediate aftermath of the election it is impossible to predict exactly what these departures will be. A reading of the present course of history, however, indicates what some of them should be — and indeed what some of them must be. These are all related to the rapidly changing power structure of the world.

Since the end of World War II this nation's attention in foreign affairs has centered on Europe, and the major instrument of its foreign policy has been its European alliances. This was as it should be, and American-European cooperation must continue to be a major concern of the new administration. But the continents of Asia, Africa and South America have not, in the past, received the attention and, in many instances, the sympathy

which they rightfully demand. One of the most encouraging signs for the future is Mr. Kennedy's great interest in the new nations and his determination to bring the economic power of the United States to their aid. The real, the determining struggle between Communism and democracy will probably be fought out in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America. It is inevitable, then, that American foreign policy must increasingly be directed toward these too-long neglected continents — not in an attempt to win the new nations for "our" side, but in an effort to assist them toward progress without joining the Communist side.

It seems likely, in fact, that during the next few years Americans will be forced to make profound readjustments in their views of the power realities of the world. And this readjustment may be the cause of psychological shock unless the leadership of the United States educates the people in the changing facts of international life. This nation passed quickly from the premises of isolationism and a "fortress America" to the acceptance of world responsibility. But in the role of world leader we have tended to take it for granted that we would always have our own way, that what we wanted we could largely will.

This situation is changing. America will remain the leader of the free world's alliance, but shifting structures of power in the world make it increasingly unlikely that this country will triumph in every contest. Will our people be prepared to accept occasional defeats without succumbing to the temptation to pull back and sulk in their national tent? The new administration must prepare the nation for such reversals and this preparation must be part of a larger effort in education — education in the leadership of a world that is changing at a dizzying pace.

But times of change can be times of hope. New beginnings can be great beginnings. The best wishes and the prayers of millions will be with John Fitzgerald Kennedy as he enters into times of trial both for him and for us.

volume 3 number 11

NOVEMBER 1960