

A Suggestion-As foolish as the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth

(To be read after church)

For the third time in his life, the pastor of this church feels that the Holy Spirit is irresistibly moving him to do something seemingly foolish and impractical. The first such experience came when he was compelled to give up the profession of law, which he loved, to enter the calling of the ministry, which was then unattractive to him. The second was in accepting the pastorate of this church, a type of field which he did not feel qualified to fill. He now believes that God is directing him to help start a movement to raise funds among Christian people of America for the restoration of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, destroyed by our atomic bombs. This is not to pass judgment upon the rightness or wrongness of this act, which shortened the war and saved many precious lives. Nevertheless, thereby a Christian nation not only killed many thousands of helpless civilians, but destroyed the homes of countless others, leaving them shocked, wounded, terrified and deprived of a means of livelihood. Many of these, especially the women and children, were as innocent of starting the war as are the citizens of Ginter Park. If American Christians were to do something in a big way for these victims of our military might, this would not only relieve human suffering, but it would be a Christian gesture which would impress the pagan world, and would also dramatize, in a striking way, the Spirit of Christ, who taught His followers to forgive and to love their enemies - a command which the world has never taken very seriously. Thus, we might do something to destroy the seeds of future wars and, incidentally, give a powerful impetus to the cause of Foreign Missions.

In the near future, a fuller statement of this idea will appear in the correspondence columns of the Presbyterian Outlook, which you might be

interested in reading, appealing to the Church at large. Under our present policy, public appeals for special offerings cannot be made in this church, and this letter is not intended to violate the spirit of such an agreement. However, there is no reason why individuals should not have their attention called to the proposed plan. Recently, the Men's Club of the First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, N. C. adopted resolutions in regard to church unity which have impressed our whole denomination. Possibly, some organization in this church might care to promote this ideas. It would be thrilling indeed if, in this new age, the Southern Presbyterian Church should stop out of its traditional conservatism and take the lead in carrying out a plan which might influence the whole world to be more Christian.

(Reprint from Ginter Park Church bulletin, Sunday Jan, 6, 1946)

This was the original statement in Dr. MacLean's Bulletin which, without any comment from him to his congregation, started this movement.