

Religieux Pensees  
Reflection Two: On Peace

Over a quarter of a century ago, The Reverend Dr. Clinton Marsh was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA. At the close of the assembly, he dismissed the commissioners with this moving blessing and benediction. This benediction was not only appropriate for the time he was Moderator, but is very much needed today in our cruel and ragged world. It is beneficial for us to meditate upon these words on an occasion such as this; at a time we are reflecting on the gift of love in the death of Jesus of Nazareth, whom we call the Christ. Read these words carefully, thoughtfully, and prayerfully in their paraphrased form.

Dr. Clinton Marsh said:

And now, I am supposed to say to you, "Go in peace." But how can I say, "Go in peace," when you are going out into a world where you are insecure, whether at home, or on your neighborhood street? Out into a world where race is set against race and ethnic cleansing is a name for genocide?

Out into a world where people are hungry and homeless, while their governments squander millions of dollars (today, perhaps billions) on instruments of destruction that they dare not use?

Out into a world where every night millions of mothers watch their children sink into a hungry slumber, only to awaken (if they awaken) to another hungry tomorrow?

With a world like that out there, how can I say to you, "Go in Peace?"

But I dare to say, "Go in peace," because Jesus says "I give you my peace."

But --- remember --- the one who says, "I give you my peace, also says, "If you would be my disciple and [thereby] have my peace, take up your cross and follow me!"

So I say, "Go, in peace!" --- If you dare!

These were powerful words for the 1970s. These are powerful words for us today in the first decade of this twenty-first century. Not much has changed, except, perhaps, to worsen. There are many wars over this planet; there is yet much corruption in politics, in the corporate world, in our societies in general and

those who are poor, weak, or disenfranchised still go to sleep at night hungry, have poor housing, medical care, and little opportunity for growth and education. And yet, these words of Dr. Marsh are still true: "...remember--- the one who says, I give you my peace, also says, "If you would be my disciple and thereby have my peace, take up your cross and follow me!"

Our God of love and compassion challenges each and every one of us who claim him as "our" God to be the hands, feet, eyes, of God in this world to help reconcile people with people, race with race, and nation with nation and create a world of opportunity, love, and joy for all of God's people. Think on these things, as you reflect on God's gift to us in Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.

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