

IF CHRISTIANS DON'T, WHO WILL?

[Walter A. McCleneghan, author of this article, is a retired Methodist minister now living in Scottsdale, Arizona. He was an infantry sergeant in France in 1918, became a pacifist in 1923, and was the Peace Education Secretary of the Des Moines, Iowa office of the American Friends Service Committee in the early 1950s.]

Many people feel that Jesus' teaching about the Golden Rule and loving your enemies are not really relevant to this modern world. If that is actually so, why waste our time and strength and money trying to win people to following Him? Why should they, if we don't -- we who profess to be His followers?

It is said that unilateral disarmament is impractical in a world of nuclear weapons. But is a nuclear arms race, with its ruinous economic cost and the increasing likelihood of a nuclear war -- is that practical?

If the Church, which claims to be the body of Christ, will not challenge the way of overweening military power, who will?

Will the admirals and generals of our armed forces abandon their philosophy, their years of training and experience in the arts of war, and the power and prestige which they have won by long years of faithful and submissive service?

Will the men who govern the giant corporations which obtain their great profits through the development and the manufacture and sale of armaments to our government -- and to virtually any other government in the world which wishes to buy them? Will those corporations voluntarily give up their huge profits and give their support to unilateral disarmament -- or to any disarmament, for that matter?

Will the major veterans' organizations, whose very existence is a commemoration of their "heroic days" of wartime service, take either a leading or a supportive role in a movement to de-glamorize and end war and its peacetime profile of military pageantry and might? Are not preparation for war and participation in it, to them of the very essence of patriotism?

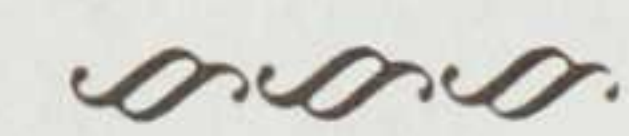
Can we expect the President and the members of Congress, many of whom have

backgrounds of personal military service, living under constant pressure from the lobbyists of corporations with a vested interest in military appropriations as well as pressure from veterans' groups -- can we expect them to consider seriously the implications and the possibilities of unilateral disarmament?

Can we expect support for unilateral disarmament from the laboring man or woman, or the unemployed, who have been led to accept the myth that military spending is necessary to full employment and an acceptable standard of living?

The answer can be "YES" if Christian and Jewish citizens decide to take in real earnest the teachings of Jesus and the great Hebrew prophets, and to make their voices heard in Washington and all across the length and breadth of America.

So the question remains, IF CHRISTIANS DON'T, WHO WILL?



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