

"THE IMITATION OF CHRIST"

INTRODUCTION

There is in most human beings a strong impulse to copy the best they know. Master pieces have a way of casting a spell over people. We're told that Beethoven, in his early days as a composer, lived under the spell of Mozart. We're told, too, that Perry Como, in his early days as a singer, lived under the spell of Bing Crosby. The spell bound person is tempted to copy the work that he admires so extravagantly. Beethoven, for instance, copied Mozart. Perry Como copies Bing Crosby. In so doing, they lost neither their independence or their integrity. They were practicing the art of imitation. Few people, however, are content to remain imitators. As they mature, as their own powers develop, they catch the spirit of their master and they recreate it in some new form of their own. So Beethoven caught the spirit of Mozart and recreated it in symphonies of his own never before dreamed of. And so Perry Como caught the easy, graceful singing style of Bing Crosby, and recreated it in new forms of his own.

DEVELOPMENT

In something of the same fashion, there have been people who have had an irresistible desire to imitate Jesus of Nazareth. Limited as their own human proportions are, high above them as he is in holiness, they instinctively reach out to Him with their powers of imitation. Quite literally he casts a spell over them. His words have a strange music which they find difficult to forget. His movement has a gracefulness and a graciousness that they cannot cease to admire. His spirit has a comprehension that they cannot escape. No matter how often they may fail him, his spell never quite loses its power over them.

We need not be surprised to find ourselves consciously, deliberately and clumsily, to be sure, trying to copy Jesus. Indeed we might be surprised that we do not copy him more continually. He prayed, so we pray. He cared for the common man, so we try to care for the common man. He was calm and confident in a storm, so we try to be calm and confident in a storm. He made a foreigner the model man of good will, so we let down the barriers to foreigners and men of other races. He forgave his enemies, we try to follow him more and more in that forgiveness. We're never proud because we fall that short but neither are we discouraged because the more sincerely we copy Him the more our habits of thought and action are controlled by Him. Like all imitators there are times when we can get only his mannerisms, but there are other times when it seems perhaps only for a moment, Christ was alive within us.

TO COPY IS NOT ENOUGH

However, to simply copy is not quite enough. It doesn't allow the creative spirit of a person enough room. It doesn't provide for the time when the circumstances are so different that no exact copying is possible. Jesus, for instance, did not work in a coal mine, but Vincent Van Gogh did. Van Gogh could not copy Jesus, but he could catch his spirit and recreate it in the hopeless lives of the miners. Jesus never lived in a slum, but Kagawa did. Kagawa could not copy Jesus line for line,

he could only catch the spirit of His love and recreate it in terms of tenement houses and families of faith. Jesus never lived in a jungle, but Albert Schweitzer does. He cannot copy Jesus line for line, but he can catch his spirit and recreate it in remedies for tropical diseases. Jesus never served as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, but Dag Hammarskjold did. He couldn't copy Jesus for the situations he faced were unlike any that Jesus ever knew. But Dag Hammarskjold caught something of His spirit and lived and worked in such a way as to move the entire world, and by moving it, take away some of its sin.

CLIMAX Now to bring this brief meditation to a sharp edge, and to make it as personal and meaningful and relevant as possible, let me say this. The world in which Jesus lived was different from our own. He never had to contend with the difficult personalities involved in office routine. He never had to deal with the responsibilities of rearing a family. He knew nothing of the cut-throat competitive ways of the business world. He never had to face the issue of integration in the schools of Nazareth. He never dreamed of global war nor ever contemplated the complexities of an international peace. We cannot copy Him as we try to find our way through these difficult waters. All we can do is catch the spirit of love and goodwill and recreate it in the new forms that our age and our own personal situations demand. It was a love so strong that it made men good. It was a love embracing compassion, understanding and trust - a love that could transform lives and situations. That spirit of love is reproduceable. First - self-consciously, deliberately by imitators, and then spontaneously and creatively and to the degree that it is reproduced in us, to that same degree can it be said of us - they are real Christians.

The closing prayer was written by Francis of Assisi, one of the great Christians of the middle ages, a man who in his early days made a conscious effort to copy the style and mannerisms of Jesus, but went on from there and in his own way and in his own time, caught the spirit of our Master's life and reproduced that great measure of love. May I ask you to bow your heads and enter into an attitude of prayer as I read the prayer to you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

It is the custom of this church to observe the sacrament of Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month. We invite all of you to come forward to the altar rail and receive the sacrament, and trust that the time for you may be an occasion of spiritual dedication and reconsecration.

Hardly a Sunday goes by that we do not have visitors in our congregation, friends not only from other parts of our own country, but also from other countries of the world spending this hour of worship with us. We hope you find the hour helpful, and find our church to be a place of great faith and good fellowship. May we call upon you to introduce yourself to us either at the door or the coffee hour following the service, and also to leave with us a record of your visit by signing our Guest Book.

The announcements are listed in the bulletin. I would encourage you to review them on your own before you depart.

JESUS SAID: "It is more blessed to give than it is to receive"
In this spirit let us worship God with our tithes and offerings.

PARK AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH

106 East 86th Street
New York 28, N. Y.
AT 9-6997

CHURCH DIRECTORY

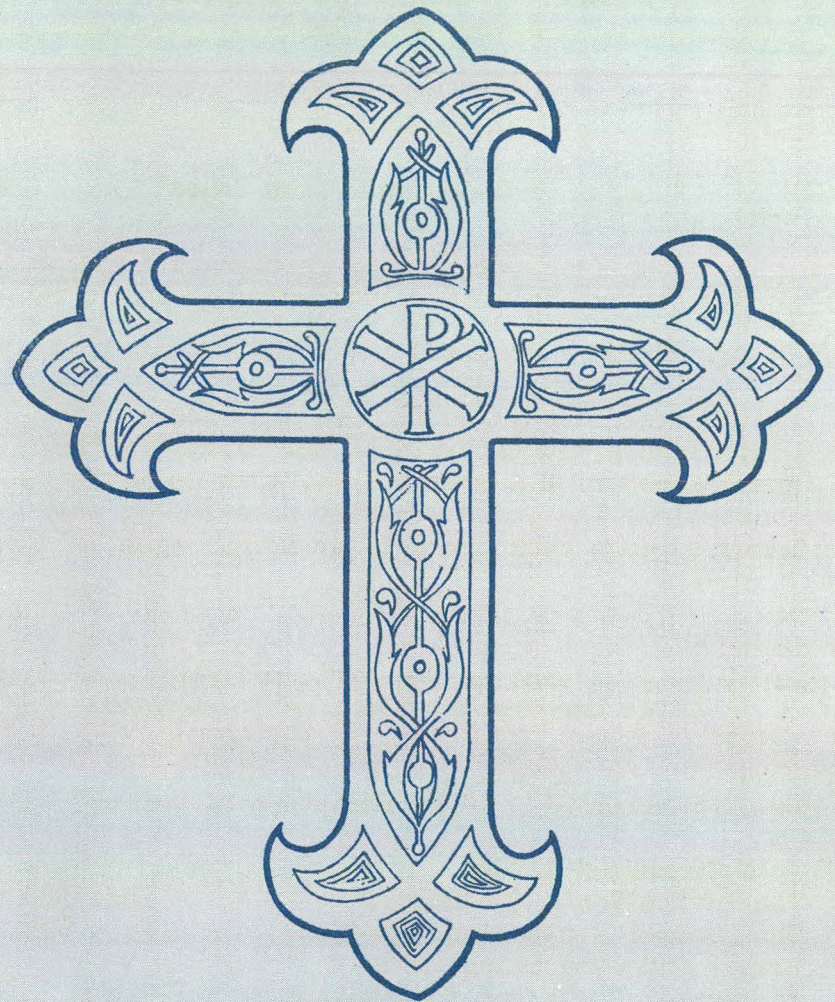
Rev. Philip A. C. Clarke.....Minister
Dr. Harold C. Metzner.....Associate Minister
Miss Mary C. Hedman.....Deaconess
Mr. Mark A. Else.....Choir Director
Mr. J. Earl Weatherford.....Organist
Mrs. George Leech.....Nursery School Director

GENERAL OFFICERS

Lay Member, Annual Conference.....Mr. Paul R. Russell
Lay Leader, The Church.....Mr. Mark A. Else
President, Trustees.....Mr. Paul R. Russell
President, Woman's Society.....Miss Allene Ford
President, Young Adults.....Mr. Pat Baker
President, Choir.....Dr. Charles W. Kim
Education Commission Chairman.....Miss Marion Hosmer
Finance Commission Chairman.....Mr. Richard Robinson
Membership Commission Chairman.....Miss Marion Garnsey
Missions Commission Chairman.....Dr. Charles W. Kim
Social Concerns Commission Chr.....Mrs. James McDonald
Worship Commission Chairman.....Miss Dorothy McCleary

STATED MEETINGS

Sunday Services: 9:30 a.m.....Sunday School
11:00 a.m.....Morning Worship
12:00 noon.....Fellowship Hour
7:00 p.m.....Young Adults
(2nd and 4th Sundays)
Commission Meetings.....First Tuesday, 7:15 p.m.
Official Board.....First Tuesday, 8:15 p.m.
Woman's Society.....Second Monday, 8:00 p.m.
Fisherman's Club.....Second Tuesday, 6:15 p.m.
Choir Rehearsal.....Every Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.
Weekday Nursery School.....Every morning (9-12)



PARK
AVENUE
METHODIST
CHURCH

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
November 4, 1962

ORDER OF WORSHIP
11 A. M.

ORGAN "Choral Preludes on 3 Hymn Tunes" Noble

SCRIPTURE SENTENCES

HYMN NO. 1 "Holy, Holy, Holy"

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (Standing) Page 523

GLORIA PATRI

PRAYER FOR PURITY (Seated)

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open,
all desires known, and from whom no secrets are
hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the
inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may per-
fectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy
Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY SOLO "Like As The Hart Desireth" Allisten
(Miss Margaret Wheeler, mezzo soprano)

PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING WITH THE DOXOLOGY

HYMN NO. 259 "O Master, let me walk with Thee"

COMMUNION MEDITATION "The Imitation of Christ"

PRAYER

THE HOLY COMMUNION RITUAL

The Invitation (Standing) Page 528

The General Confession (Seated) Page 529

Prayer and Comforting Words

The Sursum Corda and the Sanctus

Prayers of Consecration and Humble Access

The Agnus Dei (The Choir)

The Partaking of the Elements

The Prayer of Thanksgiving Page 531

The Gloria in Excelsis (Standing)

HYMN NO. 179 "Spirit of God, descend upon my heart"

BENEDICTION Choral Response

ORGAN "Sortie"

*** Interval for ushering

AN INVITATION

An invitation is extended to members and friends
to come to Fellowship Hall after the service where cof-
fee and cookies will be served by Miss Ford, Miss Grip-
man, Miss Pittwood, and Miss Newbegin.

USHERS

The ushers for today's service are Mr. Bowater,
Mr. Montanelli, Mr. Merget, Mr. Paech, and Mr. Tower.

NURSERY AND KINDERGARTEN AT ELEVEN

While we worship in this place, our youngest
church goers are meeting on the fourth floor. Mrs.
Pauline Levy is in charge of the infant care service.
Mrs. Kim, Mrs. Cummings, and Mrs. Yim are in charge
of the Nursery Program (ages one through three). Mrs.
Will Hussung is teaching the kindergarten class (ages
four and five) which meets in the fourth floor lounge.

TUESDAY EVENING - NOVEMBER 6th

The Official Board will convene at 8:15 pm for
its monthly meeting. The following Commissions meet
at 7:15 pm: Education (4th Floor Lounge), Finance
(Church Office), and Membership and Evangelism (Base-
ment Lounge).

ANNUAL FAIR OF THE METHODIST CHURCH HOME

The Annual Fair of the Methodist Church Home
will be held on November 15th and 16th. Tickets are
available (\$2.00) and may be secured through Miss
Boice.

COPIES OF THE "UPPER ROOM" ARE AVAILABLE

Copies of the November - December "Upper Room"
may be secured in the narthex following the service.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP NIGHT - NOVEMBER 11th

The second Church Fellowship Night of the fall season is scheduled for next Sunday evening.

The refreshments and the program are being provided for through the joint efforts of the Young Adult Fellowship and the Christian Social Concerns Commission. Representatives of NAACP and CORE will be present to offer colorful accounts of the aims and ideals of their respective organizations.

These "fellowship evenings" are worthwhile for the content of their program. But they are doubly worthwhile for the opportunity they give to each one to mix and mingle with all members of the church irrespective of age or special interest.

Tickets will be on sale this morning at the coffee hour. They cost fifty cents. Circle this date, and plan to attend.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SING

"The Great Day of Methodist Singing" will be celebrated locally in our New York Conference at Christ Church, Methodist (Park and 60th St.), this afternoon at five o'clock.

WOMAN'S SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

The Woman's Society of Christian Service will hold its monthly meeting on Monday evening, November 12th, at eight o'clock.

"What Shall We Tell Our Children?" is the subject of the talk to be given by Dr. Dora Chaplin of General Theological Seminary. Dr. Chaplin is one of the outstanding persons in the field of religious education today. She is a popular speaker and writer. Her latest book, "Children and Religion" will be on sale at the meeting.

All women of the congregation are invited to attend.

BISHOP WELCH TO BE HONORED

On Tuesday evening, November 6th, there will be a dinner in honor of Bishop Herbert Welch to celebrate his one hundredth birthday anniversary. Bishop Welch worshipped with us two weeks ago. If you would like to send a birthday greeting to him his address is 520 West 110th Street, New York 25, New York. The dinner will be at the Waldorf Astoria.