Religion on Campus

Peters Tells Origin Of World Neighbors

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Dr. John L. Peters, President of World Neighbors, Inc., was the chapel speaker last Thursday. His theme was the absolute necessity for Christians to shake off their indifference and lethargy and to act against the retreat of Christianity in vast regions of the world.

Christianity Needs Strength
Where Christianity is not strong and active among wretched, starving people, Communism is active. If the Communists succeed, it is because they promise and show the people the possibility of a better life. Christianity offers the same hope, but merely teaching the Word of God to people who are on the verge of starvation is not enough. We must show them that they need not starve nor suffer from disease.

This is a difficult task; sometimes the people's own religion hinders progress. The Hindu religion says that suffering in this life is due to sin in a past life, and nothing may be done to change it. The only hope for a better next life is to endure uncomplainingly. The Christian gospel may change their ideas, but only if the Church shakes off its feeling that to plant corn and dig ditches is not its business. Christianity will be judged not by how it appears, but by what it does.

Decision in World War II
Dr. Peters told of his decision during World War II to try to do something about the millions of people whose lives are stifled by disease and starvation. He preached in an Oklahoma City Methodist Church while trying to decide upon a course of action. A speech by General MacArthur, which mentioned the living conditions of the Asian peoples, precipitated his determination that somehow he must help those people. Dr. Peters told his congregation of his feelings; they said it would back him in whatever he did. The result of planning, study, and persuading others to their cause was the World Neighbors, Inc. It is non-sectarian, private organization whose purpose is to love and help men, not for what they might become but for what they are—as it finds them. World Neighbors collects money and support to send trained Christians to help where their help is needed most. World Neighbors does not just preach; it helps the people with which it deals to raise their living standards. It now reaches over 2000 villages.

One Is Not Enough
But one organization, or many, is not enough. The whole of Christianity must become embued with a zealous desire to convert and elevate the peoples of the world for whom life has no positive meaning. If Christianity does not reach these people and convince them, then Communism very likely will.

Dr. Peters appealed for a "New Christianity," a working Christianity guided by the spirit as well as the word of the Gospel. The urgency is great, for to hesitate at all may be to hesitate too long.