On World Populations

One of the interesting aspects of the clash between India and Red China is that such a war pits the one country which must be the world's two most highly populated countries against each other.

Red China contains approximately 700,000,000 persons. India's population is estimated at 438,000,000 as of 1961. Thus today's accurate figure for India might be nearer 450,000,000.

Neither of these great nations have the territory, or anything like as much as that now occupied by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, by contrast with either India or Red China is sparsely populated. The estimate of Russian population is 220,000,000. And because Russia contains many times the total area of either, there are many geopolitical experts who say Russia is come a target for future expansion by one or both of these countries.

The military distribution of power today is the only reason Red China is not already invading Russia, though as Red China obtains nuclear weapons and breaks with the Moscow Communists, possible conflict between the two countries draws more likely.

The study of world populations and the resulting pressures are often the key to tumultuous events, as was the case in Asia in World War II. Eventually, too, United States population, now expanding at an unprecedented rate, will require all the resources at our command and this fact should be reflected in our governmental decisions.

Spies Do Spy

The latest spy drama involves Mrs. Sheila Wynne, a British wife of her business man husband whom the Soviets have arrested for spying in Russia.

Mrs. Wynne quite naturally and commendably doesn't think her husband would spy on anyone and she is hoping to see Premier Nikita Khrushchev and expects to tell him that, as other wives have told him on other occasions. Mr. Wynne just could not be a spy, she says.

Washington, of course, has denied the whole thing, and always does, as governments must do.

If you are interested, therefore, in spying, get in the foreign service in a legitimate job. The civilian spies without diplomatic immunity, such as business men, end up in jail when they are caught or, in wartime, in the execution chamber.

All of us should remember, in these unprecedented times, too, that we have many spies in every corner of the world and sometimes they are, inevitably, going to be caught.

Time flies over us, but leaves its shadow behind.
—Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Indulging deceit is like the defendant arguing for the plaintiff in favor of a decision which the defendant knows will be turned against himself.
—Mary Baker Eddy.

Sunday School Lesson

International Sunday School Lesson for January 13

Memory Selection: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."—Luke 4:18-19.

Lesson Text: Mark 1:14-45.

The purpose of our study today is to show how Jesus began his work and to indicate the need for disciples to carry on his ministry today.

The Gospel of Mark is an attempt to proclaim the message that Jesus is the Christ. Our last lesson introduced Jesus' public ministry with the stories of his baptism and temptation. Now we move quickly beyond these events and encounter Jesus as he preaches, invites men to become his disciples and heals those who are sick.

As Jesus began his ministry in Galilee, he spoke the same message that John the Baptist had spoken earlier . . . "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15).

What is this Kingdom? What are the signs of its coming? The kingdom of God means, primarily, the reign, or the rule, of God. There can be no kingdom without a king. Where God reigns, there is his Kingdom.

Let us note how Jesus' Kingdom mission is unfolded in the Gospel. First, Jesus preached that the Kingdom was at hand. Then he invited some fishermen to become his followers. Finally he showed that the motive behind the Kingdom's coming and the meaning of its coming was the grace of God, which heals and restores men to wholeness.

Jesus called his first four followers using a personal invitation: "Follow me." But note that Jesus did not at this point ask who they thought he was. This same later. He asked only that they go with him, to be with him in fellowship and service.

To be called to discipleship is to be called to a life of discipline. To be a disciple is to be disciplined for some cause. Thus discipleship is always the centering of life around some dominant conviction. Jesus called for commitment to the Kingdom. This was to be sought first, above all else. And with his disciples, Jesus proceeded to his Kingdom tasks. He preached and he healed. The people were amazed at the authority with which he preached, and were astounded at the wonders he performed. The Kingdom was breaking into their lives, and awe and wonder were the only appropriate responses.

Jesus' mission and achievement stand as continuously important events. He announced for all time the kingdom of God. He forces us to decision and calls every man—even men today—to follow him. Christ does not ask first of all: Who do you say I am? He asks primarily that we come and go with him, that we be with him. Perhaps through this living, personal relationship we shall come to know who he is and can confess with the disciples, "You are the Christ."

To say this is all that Christ asks of us is to understate matters, for this is to ask a great deal. This invitation caused the early disciples to leave their homes, families and jobs. One who reads the New Testament is often surprised to see that, of the great multitude who came to watch and listen, only a few really followed. What Jesus demands is difficult to give, and only a few respond.

And yet Christ comes to us and calls for disciples. We may be required to leave our past—our old ways of thought and action, our cherished idols, our own personal ambitions. He asks us to acknowledge the kingship of God; to say, "Jesus is Lord," and to follow him resolutely. Indeed, perhaps one of the great failures of the church today is that we do not present Christ with the true radicality of his demand. We do not want to offend people. We make it easy for them to become "Christians." We want to present a Christ who is acceptable to everyone.