

# My Hopes and Prayer for 1961

*The Reverend Rudolfs Krafts*

The basis for meditation and my remarks today is a portion of God's word found in Job 36:11; "If they obey and serve Him they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasure."

Dear Lord, our hope for peace in the world rests on faith. But it can fully be realized only if we seek constantly with Thy help to find the paths of peace. Lead us to seek peace for all men. Change our lives and the lives of world leaders so we may work together and conflict may be replaced with cooperation. Help us to develop a world where mankind can fully realize the blessings of life. Help us make a world unblemished by fear or hate, but embellished with kindness and love.

Dear Lord, we ask Thy blessing on the sick in mind and body, and on the unfortunate. Give them strength to endure their circumstance, and to seek the strength of Jesus Christ, in His name, and for His sake.

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As each year passes we reach another milestone in life's span. today as 1961 replaces 1960 we reach such a milestone. The year has run its course. We have bid farewell to this year with all of its joys and its sorrows, its hopes and its disappointments, its good fortunes and its failures.

The end of the year should remind us of the impending end of our own life, and of the world itself. Sober thoughts should have entered our minds last evening. Uppermost in our mind and heart should have been a prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus!" During the past weeks we should have witnessed and experienced His coming into the world and into our hearts if we opened them for Him. As time hastens on relentlessly to the end of the year, of our life, of the world, we face this prospect with hope and joy. We lift up our hearts and pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!" Come and take away our sins, our sorrows, and silence our fears.

The prophet Isaiah could well have been speaking directly to the millions of Christians today when he wrote these magnificent words: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

Rarely in history have people felt as engulfed in the darkness of fear, hatred, and lust for power as they do at the beginning of this year of 1961. We stand under the power of atomic destruction. The Congo is all but exploding. In Algeria, Laos, Tibet, and the Formosa straits men are dying from bullet wounds or shell fragments. In Berlin and the Middle East the face of war is very thinly veiled. Thank God that there are still those who search for the "everlasting light"; the light of Jesus Christ that brightens our life and encourages us onward.

As we view the recent past, we still have the possibility here in America of building a great civilization based on man. Where the

importance of an enterprise is judged less by financial profit than by the kind of community it creates. We can still measure man in his own character, not his power or wealth. But often today, we still worship wealth, regardless of character. We must maintain the desire to build our civilization as one whose leadership depends on the respect and confidence it instills in others, and whose standard is the quality of life itself.

Time is short. Looking at the destruction already in Algeria, Laos, Cuba, and South America; looking at materialism growing worldwide; at the increasing bitterness and unrest throughout the world; at the tremendous power of our latest weapons; a realist might well conclude that many of us could and will see the start of another war. If it comes our civilization might again end in a new dark age.

There is no materialistic solution, no political formula, no philosophy alone that can save us. Our salvation, and our only salvation, lies in controlling the arm of Western science by the mind of a Western philosophy that is guided by the eternal truths of God.

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Let us pray:

Dear Lord, give us faith. Faith to believe in love, to believe in tomorrow, and to believe in the coming year of 1961. Faith in people everywhere and in ourselves.

Dear Lord, give us tolerance. Tolerance to make us more understanding of different minds, different faiths, different politics, and different ways of life. Give us tolerance and love for our fellow man.

Dear Lord, give us good judgment. Good judgment to use our tolerance wisely. Let us not be tolerant of the wicked, disloyal, or unkind. Give us the spirit of wisdom and prudence that enables us to discern right from wrong, and good from evil.

Dear Lord, give us courage. Courage that we need in these trying days.

Dear Lord, give us vision. Vision to see that we must cooperate for the good of all. Make us helpers rather than selfish individualists. Vision to see that life can not be only for pleasure or for pleasurable things, but that we must share with our fellow man.

Dear Lord, give us kindness. Kindness to be gentle when we wish to be angry. Kindness to care for others. Kindness because Your merciful kindness is great toward us.

Dear Lord, give us laughter. Laughter that is the gift of enjoyment. Give us loud, hearty laughter so that we may show the world that we enjoy life.

Dear Lord, if you give us faith, tolerance, good judgment, courage, vision, kindness, and laughter, the coming year of 1961 will be good. Amen.