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Register Staff Reporter

A total of 215 persons—black and white, young and old, representing many religious faiths—signed a pledge in opposition to nuclear weapons Monday night in a Spanish Plaza ceremony.

The ceremony was the climax of a two-hour program that also included a religious service at Government Street United Methodist Church and a peace walk from the church to the plaza.

The Rev. Jerry R. Turner, pastor of the host church and organizer of the entire peace program, estimated 300 persons participated in the opening worship service.

In their peace pledge, the Mobilians committed their "future labors toward the goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating the threat to humanity of nuclear annihilation so that future generations of Mobilians will inherit the opportunity of growing up in a secure environment."

Those gathered in Spanish Plaza had carried with them from the church lighted candles, symbolic of light that God gives to "quicken our consciences that we may feel the sin and shame of war."

In the church service 12 community leaders spoke, several of whom voiced concern about future generations.

Dr. Abe Hammons, superintendent of the Mobile County Public School System, said youths must be freed from the fear of a nuclear holocaust so that they "may prepare for the future with full faith that the future will, indeed, be there."

Dr. Hollis Wiseman, professor of pediatrics at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, explained that since 1970 "I have been administratively responsible for the care of over 30,000 babies and have spent over \$30 million in these efforts to insure a good start for all of our babies.

"What a travesty it all becomes in the face of a nuclear holocaust which will destroy us all. So I see for myself an extended responsibility to join with others in an effort to turn aside such obscene foolishness."

Dr. Edmund Tsang, a member of the engineering faculty at the University of South Alabama who is president of the Union of Concerned Scientists, a local group expressing concern about nuclear weaponry, talked to the audience in the downtown church about the effects of the nuclear-arms escalation. The most harmful effect, he said, is what the escalation does "to the human spirit."

Tsang elaborated, "Nuclear weapons fool many of us into believing that they are good for our security and economy. The fact is, the more nuclear weapons we possess, the less secure we are."

The Rev. Milton A. Williams, pastor of Big Zion African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, talked about another effect nuclear arms have on the human spirit.

Williams said the "horror of nuclear war is so great that many people choose to deny it exists," thus voicing no concern about it.

Rabbi Steven L. Jacobs, spiritual leader of Spring Hill Avenue Temple, read to the audience a resolution which he and other American Jews have signed in opposing nuclear arms.

In his statement the rabbi did not categorize potential nuclear conflict as "war" but as a "thermonuclear world catastrophe" in which there will be no winners.

The Rev. Thomas D. Walker, pastor of Central Presbyterian Church, gave his view of the possible catastrophe by saying that talk about nuclear-arms escalation by modern political leaders of the world is exceedingly more serious than threats of 17th-century pirates such as Blackbeard, who is said to have sought to "make a hell on earth to see how long we can bear it."

Tuesday, June 1, 1982

# 215 sign peace pledge

Said Walker, "I say as reverently as possible that it scares the hell out of me when we make a hell of God's beautiful earth."

Mobile Catholic Archbishop Oscar H. Lipscomb challenged those gathered in the church to turn their words into deeds.

The archbishop quoted from the Bible: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares.... One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again."

Dr. Stephen F. Dill, minister of Dauphin Way United Methodist Church, described a practical way in which some Americans are trying to turn "swords into plowshares."

Dill asked Mobilians to support "a current proposal in Congress to create a United States Academy of Peace," which will have the aim of "creatively managing conflict."

Jay Higginbotham, a local author, historian and staff member of the Mobile Public Library, noted that because members of the world community are beginning to take seriously a commitment to peace, words of hope can be spoken.

Higginbotham said, "Out of the depths of our dismay we sense for the first time in history the beginnings of a genuine crusade for peace—a global awakening."

Dr. M.P. Harrison, pastor of First Baptist Church of Mobile declared, "Today I want to light my lamp for peace and add my voice to others all over the world to say, 'Enough is enough.'"

Dr. Yvonne Kennedy, president of Bishop State Junior College, said, "I pledge my support to work with all witnesses for peace and achievement of that goal."

Finally, Wade B. Perry, a local attorney who is president of Symphony Concerts of Mobile, said, "May we all allow ourselves to be instruments of God's peace in order that the tensions of our lives might be used to preserve and create rather than to destroy."





**MOBILIANS FOR PEACE** — In the left photo, a line of Mobilians, walking four abreast, stretches the length of a block during a march called "Memorial Day Witness for Peace" Monday night. The peace marchers walked from a religious service at Government Street United Methodist Church to a second ceremony in Spanish Plaza. About 300 participated in the opening service, but not all of them walked

to the plaza. Among those pictured in the march are Dr. Edmund Tsang, a member of the engineering faculty at the University of South Alabama and president of the Union of Concerned Scientists, a local group focusing on peace efforts, and the Rev. Albert S. Foley, director of the Human Relations Center at Spring Hill College. In the right photo, participants in the peace program line up in Spanish Plaza to sign a pledge

to work for peace on behalf of future generations. A total of 215 signed. Shown giving his signature is Mobile Catholic Archbishop Oscar H. Lipscomb. Persons in the background include the Rev. William Cantwell, pastor of Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church in Plateau, and Dr. Stephen F. Dill, minister of Dauphin Way United Methodist Church. (Mobile Register photos by J.P. Schaffner)