

PRESS RELEASE -- Thursday, March 23, 1978, 10:30 a.m.

A STATEMENT BY THE CHRISTIAN CLERGY OF SKOKIE (Members of the Niles Township Clergy Forum) REGARDING A PROPOSED NAZI DEMONSTRATION IN THE VILLAGE.

People in Skokie and in the surrounding areas have been asking "What are the Christians doing with reference to the intended Nazi demonstration?"

Recently, twelve members of the Niles Township Clergy Forum gathered to discuss plans for offering a Christian witness at this time. These plans now include:

- (1) An open air worship service led by Christians and Jews to be held on Sunday, April 16th at 3:00 p.m. at Niles West Stadium, Oakton and Edens Highway.
- (2) Encouraging the wearing of arm bands with the Star of David as provided by the National Conference of Christians and Jews on the day a Nazi demonstration might take place.
- (3) Simultaneous prayer and worship in churches and synagogues in Skokie and elsewhere coinciding with the time of a Nazi demonstration.
- (4) Clergy presence at first aid stations and jails in the event of injuries or arrests.
- (5) Publicizing a series of Christian-Jewish Bible studies to be conducted April 2nd through April 23rd on successive Sunday evenings with participation of as many Christian-Jewish lay persons and clergy possible (to be held at St. Peter's United Church of Christ).
- (6) Cooperation and participation in "Remembrance Week" (April 15-22) as proclaimed by the Mayor and Village Board of Skokie recalling the events of World War II and the Holocaust and the loss of 13 millions of lives during that war.
- (7) ... and the following statement:

It is our feeling that we must respond as a people of God, concerned for the physical, mental, and spiritual need of all. We especially are committed to identifying with the Jewish residents in their deep distress occasioned by the Nazi presence and exercise of un-American and irreligious free speech. We are aware also that a Nazi presence would be distressing for a variety of reasons to thousands of non-Jewish residents as well.

Therefore, we want to share visibly and invisibly in a manner that will honor God and all of His children. We will help to prepare the open air worship service noted in (1) above in cooperation with local religious leaders of each faith. We will encourage people in and outside of Skokie to be in prayer in their own communities on a day when the Nazis might march. And we respectfully ask other communities not to complicate the already formidable problem of local authorities to deal with a multitude of people.

In the meantime, we truly appreciate the deep concern of people everywhere who have expressed a resolve to be of the greatest help in encouraging us to meet a community challenge in a manner befitting people of God.

Coordinating Committee: Rev. Harry Conner and Rev. Louise Mahan (673-1311)
Rev. John Mittermaier and Rev. Richard Schlupe (673-8564)
Rev. Warren Thummel (676-1300) The Rev. Dr. Lee Gallman (673-7077)
Rev. Thomas O'Connor (673-8166)