

Vicar's Notes

I am sorry that I have not been able to give priority to the preparation of this month's magazine, and so the date of publication will be at least a week late. There have been several extra calls on my time which have had to come first, and now I am getting down to it, I think I should use the bulk of the space to reprint the more important portions of a booklet sent out by the Church Commissioners which they wish as many people as possible to read. (I have 10 spare copies for those who would like to read it in full). It is amazing that otherwise well-informed folk should still go on thinking that the Church of England is an exceedingly wealthy organization—but very many do. Sometimes they believe that the Church must be financed by the State, because it is said to be "established"; but when this mistake is pointed out to them, they say, "Anyhow, everybody knows that the Church Commissioners have pots of money. Why can't they pay for whatever needs doing?" This booklet makes clear why they can't, and shows what they use their money for. By very careful management they have increased their income considerably, and as a result members of the clergy get more on paper than they have ever done before. But owing to the steady fall in the value of money, they are in actual fact worse off than at any time since the days of the first Elizabeth. Many middle-aged parsons to-day receive in relation to the real purchasing power of money less than they did as single curates with no family responsibilities. And out of this not-too-large stipend (average £13-6-11 a week) they have to meet many "expenses of office" (usually at least from £2 to £3 a week) which in the case of business-men would not be included as part of their salary at all, but paid for out of a separate expenses account. I hope you will take the trouble to read carefully the Church Commissioners' statement—you will then be thoroughly equipped to meet the "Church of England is rolling in money" argument.

THE WELLS ORGANIZATION

It is now time for the parish to be informed of the results of the discussions which have been taking place between the Standing Committee and the Church Council and representatives of the Wells Organizations Pty. Ltd. As well as these interesting and informative talks, I have been in touch with eight parishes which have had Wells-conducted planned-giving programmes. One result is that we are convinced that Wells can bring a new spirit and zest into this matter of giving. Their principles are sound and good, and clear to grasp. They stress the blessing that giving brings to the giver, and the creative energy released when the Church ceases to beg and becomes a giver too, ceasing to ask for its own needs. The Church must be primarily a giver and only secondarily a receiver. When the new spirit comes into giving, the amount available for the Church to use and to give is also greatly increased—Wells again have convincing evidence of this, and they felt confident they could raise the £1000 which passes through our Church funds here each year to something between £3000 and £4000. From their achievements in other parishes they have good reason for this confidence. One vicar to whom I wrote said in the course of a long reply: "If you do have the faith and the courage to go ahead with a Wells programme in your church, I can almost make a guarantee of my own, based on our experience here. It is that you will experience three things:

- (1) The programme will be more successful than you dare believe when you begin.
- (2) You will enjoy taking part in such an adventure.
- (3) It will make the most telling spiritual impact upon your parish that you have ever seen."

His remarks are borne out by others to whom I wrote, including one who ended his letter with these words: "May you be guided aright. I would say to you and your Church Council: PRAY for spiritual strength to go forward with Wells."

From the reports that came in, it was obvious that strength to face and guide a great stirring-up

in the parish if Wells came in would most certainly be needed.

A DIFFICULT DECISION

The Council had a difficult decision to make. The two main problems were: The fee and expenses for an effective programme here would be about £2250—how could a parish with barely anything in hand, and with a number of loans awaiting repayment, raise such an amount? If things didn't go as planned, the Wells guarantee would bring about the repayment of this sum at the end of the first year—but to get it even for a year seemed a formidable task. Then again—was it right to spend so much on the running of the scheme? Even if an outlay of £2250 should bring a return of £10,000 in 3 years—still, this was a large sum for administration. Why not try ourselves in a more limited way? So that is what we decided—to try ourselves.

THE ST. JAMES'S SCHEME

Admitting a great debt to Wells for their challenge and inspiration, and for showing us what can be and ought to be done, we are going to make a start ourselves. Further details will be given in next month's magazine. The main intention is this: That we call up

on you all who have a loyalty to your Church to pledge yourself to give a fixed amount for 50 weeks in 1958. We invite you to offer this pledge in your Parish Church, Sunday, December 15th, our Dedication Festival, which instead of being a Gift Day as in past years, will now become a Pledge Day. Large attractive envelopes will be available by January 1st. No money on December 15th (apart from the normal collections!)—only pledges. It would be good if the pledges could represent a combined family effort—but some will prefer to make them personal and individual. People who undertake this way of giving will not be expected to contribute to collections and any special appeals for Fêtes, Renovation Fund, and Christian good causes within the Parish and beyond. Their pledge will take into account what they feel they ought to give to the work of the Church and its agencies at home and abroad, and they will not be asked to give more. The members of the Church Council have been asked to give a lead by making their pledges first, and it is hoped to be able to announce the total amount they promised shortly. Think and pray about this important and urgent matter as you have never done before!

AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about
people, activities & organisations

THE MOTHERS' UNION

Dear M.U. Members,

Our next meeting will be the Quarterly Service in church on November 6th at 3 p.m. and our Vicar will talk to us. Tea will be served in the Parish Hall. I felt that the A.G.M. was a very hurried one—this was entirely due to lack of time—however, we now welcome several new members to our Branch Committee and trust that we shall work together as a very happy and sincere team.

I hope you will all support the Jumble Sale on November 2nd at 2.30. Please let us know if you have anything we can collect. From some of the proceeds we hope to provide a large mat for the church porch.

I have booked a coach for a

Branch visit to Mary Sumner House on December 9th, leaving Windmill Road at 1.30. This visit will give us an opportunity to buy our Christmas cards from the usual good display. If you cannot be at the November Service and wish to come on this visit let me know quickly as I have only booked a small coach.

It was encouraging to see more of our members at the Communion Service last month—please do try and support the Church Services whenever you are able. The Church Council are faced with big financial problems as are most churches these days; it is so often left to a few to bear the burden and these difficulties can **only** be met as we learn to share. As a Council we have been praying for guidance, and it seems "direct

personal giving" is the real solution. It is a privilege to have a share in God's work: so may our giving be sacrificial and therefore sufficient. Let us seek to be regular worshippers and learn to give for God loveth a cheerful giver." May God's richest blessing be upon our Branch and may He so guide that we shall face our commitments with liberality.

M. J. BECKETT

M.U. Speakers Training Classes

First class to be held at All Saints' Vicarage on November 13 at 7.30. Any member will be welcome. The Vicarage is in Campbell Road, Twickenham.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- Nov. 3.—6.30 p.m. No Service here, but United Service at St. Mary's, Hampton, sponsored by the Hampton Council of Churches.
 Nov. 5.—6.30 p.m. Bonfire Party (W).
 Nov. 6.—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union Service.
 Nov. 10.—Remembrance Day.
 N.B.—Morning Prayer begins at 10.55 a.m. in preparation for the Silence at 11.0 p.m.
 Nov. 11.—7.30 p.m. Ruri-Decanal Conference: Social Evening (St. Mary's Hall, Twickenham).

Nov. 12.—8.0 p.m. Standing Committee of P.C.C. (W).

8.0 p.m. Scout Group Committee (W).

Nov. 19.—8.0 p.m. U.P.W. Committee (89, Connaught Road).

Nov. 22.—8.15 p.m. Sunday School Teachers (V).

Nov. 27.—8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group (W).

Nov. 28.—8.30 p.m. Men's Meeting (St. Mary's, Hampton).

Nov. 30.—St. Andrew.

Holy Communion 7.15 a.m.

Dec. 1.—First Sunday in Advent.

Dec. 4.—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union (Hall). Speaker: Mrs. Stevens.

Dec. 6.—7.30 p.m. Magazines ready (V).

Dec. 15.—Dedication Festival and Pledge Day.

BAPTISMS

- Oct. 27.—Lorraine Christina Maughan, 116, High St.
 „ 27.—Dawn Rathborn, 70, Hampton Road.
 „ 27.—Patricia Jane Offord, 58A, High Street.
 „ 27.—Wayne Beaver, 59, Rectory Grove.

MARRIAGES

- Oct. 26.—Christopher Brian Powell to Ann Royston.
 „ 26.—Martin Frederick Olive to Diana Watkins.

FROM BEYOND THE SPIRE

The CHURCH COMMISSIONERS FOR ENGLAND

Some Points from their Recent Booklet:

1. The Commissioners' Duties

The Commissioners' primary duty is to make better provision for the "cure of souls." Within this phrase, and under Acts of Parliament and Measures of the Church Assembly, are included:

I. Financial Duties. (a) Additions to the stipends of the clergy, (b) The payment of pensions to retired clergy, (c) Help in providing for the clergy more suitable houses than some of them have at present, (d) Help in providing churches, church halls and houses for the clergy in the new housing areas to which the population is shifting, (e) Making grants of capital to particular livings to match gifts by lay benefactors.

II. Administrative Duties. Decisions, after considering the views of all concerned, on: (a) Uniting parishes, and arranging for two or more to become the responsibility of one clergyman, (b) The formation of new parishes, (c) The alteration of parish boundaries, (d) The demolition, or the appropriation to other uses, of churches which are no longer required for regular services, and where necessary the sale of the sites.

The Commissioners' duties and their powers to make grants do not include: (a) The upkeep of the fabric of churches and cathedrals (with a few special exceptions), and the running expenses, including lighting and heating, (b) The training of the clergy, (c) Missionary work, at home and abroad. Indeed, although the Commissioners pay for all pensions, and about 6/7ths of stipends, it is probably

true to say that they pay only about half of the total annual expenses of the Church of England. The other half comes from the laity. It is to be emphasised that no part of the Commissioners' income comes from the State by way of grant or in any other form, so that no taxpayer or ratepayer is making any contribution unless he does so directly out of his own pocket.

2. Assets

The Commissioners' capital assets, producing the income from which they carry out their financial duties, come from various sources. The most important are ancient church endowments, the former possessions of the bishoprics and cathedral chapters, and funds of particular livings of which they are trustees. These assets have accumulated over the years and gifts from the laity are vitally necessary if they are to be materially increased in future. (The value of these assets does, of course, in common with other funds, appreciate or depreciate according to the economy of the country.)

3. Income and Distribution

(summarised)

In the financial year 1956/57 the total income from their various investments was £11,765,096.

The main part of this income was distributed as follows:—

	Amount Spent £
Stipends of rectors and vicars	6,739,058
Stipends of curates	423,846
Stipends of bishops (including expenses), suffragan bishops, and archdeacons	316,700
Stipends of deans, canons and cathedral servants (and payments to cathedral bodies)	414,144
Pensions for retired clergy, and provision for future pensions	1,432,242
Parsonages	529,952
Church buildings in new housing areas	217,506

4. The Problem

It is often supposed that if the clergy are badly paid that is due to the meanness of the Commissioners, out of whose large income adequate stipends ought to be pro-

vided. Why is this supposition based on a fallacy? There are 11,362 rectors and vicars in England, each looking after one or more parishes. Last year the Commissioners paid out to them collectively in stipends a total of £6,739,058—as shown above. This total may appear substantial, but does not give the true picture until divided by 11,362. Only then emerges the amount on which the individual clergyman has mainly to rely for all the necessities of life. If the sum were equally divided—though for many reasons it is not—it would represent an average of only £11 8s. 1d. a week to each rector or vicar in the Church of England. Similarly, the sum of £423,846 paid by the Commissioners to 2,628 curates represents an average of just over £3 a week.

5. Stipends

In 14 out of the 42 dioceses the minimum stipend for incumbents from all sources now exceeds £600 a year, plus a free house. In the other 28 it is £600 a year or below. The average stipend for all clergy of the Church of England is £694 a year, or £13 6s. 11d. per week, plus a free house. These figures show a substantial improvement on those of a few years ago, because of increased giving by the laity and because the Commissioners have been able to increase their income by reinvestment of capital, and by modern commercial methods. But stipends today are not nearly enough in relation to the purchasing power of money.

6. The Remedy

The only permanent remedy is for all parishioners to give to their Church Council, for the stipends of their parsons, sums of money realistically based on 1957 values, and not on 1939 values. This means about £3 now instead of £1 in 1939. Only when this is done will the combined efforts of the laity, the dioceses and the Church Commissioners secure a fair remuneration for the clergy of the Church of England.

7. The Need

The funds of the Church Commissioners look large and are large, but alone they are nothing like sufficient to pay for all the needs of our Church.