

Vicar's Notes

As I write, Hannah Stanton is still held in prison in South Africa, though it seems probable that the conditions of her confinement are now not so harsh as they were at first. This slight improvement may well be due to the many efforts being made by individuals and groups on her behalf. A stranger called to see me yesterday to purchase a number of copies of last month's magazine; he came from Surrey, but felt keenly the injustice of Hannah's imprisonment, and was waging a one-man campaign of his own on her account. He had made a long journey in the hope of gathering a little more ammunition for the fight.

THE NEXT STEP

It seems to me that the time is now ripe for an attempt to be made to band together all those who are concerned about Hannah and her cause. At the moment, the same ground is being trodden many times over, and the same people asked for advice and information again and again. I am therefore putting out the suggestion that a "Hannah Stanton Aid Committee" be formed, to pool ideas, frame policy, and coordinate action. I do not think that the only question to concern us is how best and speedily to obtain the release of Hannah. This might be secured at too high a price. Hannah might be set free in such a way that her cause—the cause of truth—would suffer, and we know what she would think of that. A release with strings attached, or one that could be interpreted as a betrayal of principle or an acceptance of, or submission to, un-Christian policies, would be abhorrent to her gallant spirit.

WHY IS SHE IN PRISON?

She is in prison because she stands for things, and knows things, which those at present in power in South Africa wish to suppress. Hannah has often been referred to as 'the gentle missionary,' and indeed she is. But she is more: she is steadfast, determined and brave. Her gentleness is of strength not weakness: she is one of those who hunger

and thirst after righteousness, and who continue to do so even when they know they run the risk of being persecuted for this. For Hannah the risk has now become reality, and we would not wish her to escape the blessedness of this (see Matthew, chapter 5, verse 10) by having her released as a gentle but misguided person who never meant to cause pain or trouble to anyone. We know that she would not want this herself. It is not just by mistake that she is in prison, or because she needs protection, as has been suggested. She is where she is because she stands for something—for truth, for justice, for righteousness. She would not look on passively when African police used violence against defenceless women: she began to collect evidence with a view to legal action against them, so that some redress and compensation might be given to the victims of their brutality. Her black people looked to her with love as one of the few white people who really cared for them—cared enough to put herself in danger on their behalf. No wonder an African student now in this country says that whenever he feels bitterness in his heart against white people, he thinks of Hannah, and his mood is changed. It is because Hannah means all this and stands for all this that she is in prison, and she would wish for release only if she might be free to continue her work and to bear witness to what she believes and knows. It is for this kind of release that we must strive, but to obtain it might not be possible without a deep change of heart on the part of the South African Government. For this we must continually pray, and especially on May 31st.

NOT ONLY HANNAH

The Hannah Stanton Defence Committee, as I envisage it, would therefore not just limit itself to Hannah's own immediate welfare, but would stand by her in witnessing to the truth for which she fights and suffers. And it would also stand by those who suffer with her, in particular Father Mark Nye, who has received so little publicity—when British citizens have been mentioned, he seems to be left out completely.

(It may be possible, of course, that he has taken out South African citizenship—this I am trying to find out.) He is the brother of an old college friend of mine, who preached at our Harvest Festival some years ago when Rector of Clapham. Mark has been closely associated with Hannah in her work at Tumelong and in the collection of evidence against the police. He was a great champion of unjustly-treated Africans, and gave hospitality to the defendants in the Treason Trial, who have been kept helpless, with their families in poverty, for over four years. For all this valiant love and service he is now paying the price because in the eyes of the South African Government what he did was a crime. His plight is more grievous than Hannah's in that he has on his mind the knowledge that his wife and young children are left unprovided for exposed to serious danger.

Nicholas Mosley, who brings the latest first-hand news of Mark and Hannah, sums up the fine article he wrote about them and other 'front-line Anglicans' in the "Church Times" as follows:—

"In the evil of South Africa these few members of the Anglican Church have come to stand for something essential. They are risking their freedom and the abuse of many of their fellows in order to witness to fundamentals. They are preferring truth to precautions and persons to expediency. The charge against them (often laid by members of their own Church) is that they stir up dissatisfaction: but the dissatisfaction is there, and rightly so, and it is not by airing it that it will get worse. And in the days of real trouble the fact that there have been people like Hannah Stanton and Father Nye, and the fact that many hundreds of Africans will remember them and that they were Christians, may make all the difference between total ruin and the rescuing of sanity out of the chaos."

THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

There has so far been little space in the magazine for an account of this, and there are just one or two points to mention now.

The finances showed a slight decline from the big advance made in 1958: the ordinary and special offerings remained at about the same figure, just over £400, but the money received through the Christian Giving Scheme fell from £872 to £807.

Until now, members of the Church Council have been elected for a term of three years, but in the past some have found that being on the Council is too big a strain, and others lose interest after a year and cease to attend, thus leaving the Council to function with a small effective membership. So the Annual Meeting decided that in future, members will be elected for a term of office of one year only, after which of course, they may stand for re-election if they so wish. This decision will take effect from 1961 onwards. Those elected or re-elected this year (to hold office until 1963) to fill the vacancies on the Council were: Messrs. Ford, Forrow, Hartland, Mortimore; Mesdames Ford, Pyne, Rockliffe, Virgo, Warwick.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS

About eight years ago a poll of the parents of all children attending our Sunday Schools was taken, and this gave a small majority in favour of having them in the afternoon. We have now taken another one, and this time the result is quite different. The overwhelming majority (98%) is in favour of the morning opening. So from May 8th onwards all departments of the Sunday School except the one in Rectory School will meet at 9.45 a.m. instead of 2.30 p.m. There will, as at present, be no meeting on the fourth Sunday in the month, when we expect the children to come to Morning Service at 11.0 p.m. with their parents.

We should like to hear of young people who have recently been confirmed (and older ones, too!) willing to come along as class-assistants with a view to becoming teachers themselves one day. The past year has been one of great strain on the only two teachers left in the Junior Department, Miss Stewart and Mrs. Brunt, and some relief would be very welcome.

WORLD REFUGEE YEAR

After all expenses were paid, the remaining receipts of £38 from the two performances of the York Nativity Play have now been sent to Inter-Church Aid. The local clothing drive has just resulted in the collection of 28 full sacks from Wayside. I am grateful to those who helped in the arduous work of packing and sorting.

We are now approaching the climax of the year with Christian Aid Week, May 9-14. There will be house-to-house collections, covering, we hope, the whole district, as well as the borough, for the first time. There are so many new houses in our parish that it is possible we may not have enough envelopes to go round, or enough helpers to collect, but we shall do our best. There will also be other special enterprises, which will be listed in the leaflet sent round. Most of these will be centred in the Public Hall, Hampton. There will be a concert there on Friday evening, and on Tuesday and Wednesday (Thursday is now out because of the local election) an evening of film-strips, dramatised case-histories, and a moving play—"The Last Battle." Admission on Tuesday and Wednesday will be 1/-, including light refreshments, which St. James's is asked to provide and serve on the latter occasion:

those willing to help should contact Mrs. Forrow or Mrs. Rockliffe.

WELCOME — AND FAREWELL

We welcome as our new organist and choirmaster Mr. Christopher Welling, a full-time student of music, now working for his Mus.Bac degree and F.R.C.O. diploma. We hope that he will be happy with us, and that the choir will flourish under his guidance.

This month we say farewell for a time to Dr. Rodney Bishop as he leaves to take up a post for a year at a hospital in Canada. We are greatly indebted to him for his sterling service as Reader and in the choir, but in particular he will always be held in honour amongst us for all he has been and done as a leader and inspirer of youth. As he now embarks upon a wider sphere of Christian work, our prayers and thoughts will go with him.

STOP PRESS:

The Church Council at its meeting on April 28 whole-heartedly endorsed the suggestion that we should express our appreciation of Dr. Rodney's worth and work in a tangible way, in the form of a presentation. Dr. K. C. Lapworth, 4, Queen's Road, has been asked to organise this on behalf of the Council, and gifts should be sent direct to him.

AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about
people, activities & organisations

THE MOTHERS' UNION

May looks like being a busy month for M.U. members. Apart from the usual monthly meeting, the Diocesan Festival Service in St. Paul's Cathedral, and the 70th Birthday Celebrations of London Diocese M.U. (already mentioned in the April magazine) it has been decided to hold a "Bring & Buy" Sale in "Wayside." This will take place at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25th. Come, and bring your friends with you.

At the April meeting, Mrs. Iorwerth Jones, J.P., gave a most interesting talk on her work as Chairman of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society of Holloway

Prison— a work which she took over from Miss Margery Fry. All those present felt that they had earned a great deal about conditions in prisons, classification of prisoners, and the work done to help those leaving prison. The truth of the saying "One half of the world does not know how the other half lives" was brought home to us in no uncertain way.

On the first Wednesday in June we have invited St. Mary's, Hampton, Branch, to join us. Mrs. Roberts, the Central President, has promised to address the meeting. We look forward to having the President with us, and hope that all members will make a

special effort to be present. Members of the Young Wives' Group will be very welcome, too.

I.V.R.

ST. JAMES'S YOUTH CLUB

The Club is now settling down to a more positive existence, and continues to be well attended at both Friday and Sunday evening meetings.

With the money allocated to us we have bought billiard tables, table tennis tables, indoor skittles and a few smaller games, and these are very well used at the social evenings on Fridays. The other activities still continue, and it is hoped that the club provides something of interest for everyone.

Some extremely interesting and varied topics have been discussed on Sunday evenings, these having been chosen by the members themselves which enables everyone to participate in and understand the discussions. The subjects have ranged from "Can war ever be Christian?" to "Mr. Amory's Budget for 1960." Also on Easter Sunday evening the members listened to a recording of Beaumont's "Folk-Mass," and expressed their opinions about it—mostly unfavourable.

Meetings are held on Fridays from 7.30—10 p.m. in the School Hall, Windmill Road, and on Sundays at 8.0 p.m. in Wayside.

If you are between the ages of 15 and 25, why not pay us a visit?

STANDING MATTER ADDITIONS & ALTERATIONS

Magazine Secretary:

Mr. C. W. Smith, 9, Carlisle Road, Hampton. Tel.: Mol. 1956.

Organist and Choirmaster:

Mr. C. G. Welling, A.R.C.O., A.R.C.M., 16, Clive Road, Twickenham. Tel.: Pop. 5958.

ADDITION TO ADVERTISEMENT

Messrs. E. & B. Horne, 143, Uxbridge Road, are now on the 'phone: — Mol. 2744.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

May 9-14.—**Christian Aid Week.** House-to-House Collection. Meetings with Film-strips and One-Act Play, at Public Hall, Hampton, at 8.0 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday; Concert on Friday.

May 10.—7.0 p.m. Mothers' Union Diocesan Service in St. Paul's Cathedral. Coach leaves at 5.15 p.m.

May 11.—7.30 p.m. The Bishop of Johannesburg reports on South Africa (Central Hall, Westminster).

May 14.—3.30 p.m. Old People's Party (H).

May 16.—7.30 p.m. Christians Plan and Pray for Peace (Royal Albert Hall) on the day that Summit Talks begin.

May 17.—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union 70th Anniversary Celebrations (Caxton Hall).

8.0 p.m. Prayer Group (Vestry).

May 19.—8.0 p.m. Association for Moral Welfare Work: Annual Meeting (St. Mary's Hall, Twickenham).

May 25.—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union Bring-and-Buy Sale (W).

8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group. Speaker: Mrs. Bhaska—"Behind the Iron Curtain" (W).

May 26.—Ascension Day. Holy Communion at 7.15 and 10.30 a.m. Evening Service at 7.45 p.m.

May 27.—6.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group Theatre Party.

May 31.—Day of Prayer for South Africa.

All copy for the June magazine should be sent to the Vicarage by Tuesday, May 17. Magazines should be published on Friday, May 27.

BAPTISMS

Apr. 24.—Gary William East, 26, Myrtle Road.

„ 24.—Susan Ann Roberts, 64, High Street, Hampton.

BURIALS AND CREMATIONS

Apr. 12.—Emily Smith, 45, Wolsey Road, aged 71 years.

„ 19.—James Walter Johnston, 53, Park Road, aged 75 years (at S.W. Middx. Crematorium).

„ 22.—Mary Jane Rattray, 8, St. James's Avenue, aged 88 years (at S.W. Middx. Crematorium).

„ 28.—Edith Mary Denniford, 24, Avenue Gardens, Teddington, aged 84 yrs.

„ 29.—Ernest James Taylor, 42, Uxbridge Road, aged 63 yrs. (at S.W. Middx. Crematorium).