

THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

held at the Parish Hall on Wednesday, March 15

It was obvious from the beginning that the organisation of the Arrangements Committee for this occasion was first class. One entered the Hall and was presented with a wad of papers setting out the Agenda and written reports of the various church organisations. Around the Hall were the excellent charts prepared by Mr. Jackson; many of them had been shown at the Annual Review of the Stewardship Committee, others added—and very interesting they were. The enticing smell of coffee led one to the kitchen where the ladies of the P.C.C. had obviously been working very hard to provide us with delicious snacks and cakes to take with our coffee. People soon rolled up and were happily chatting in this informal atmosphere.

In due course we took our seats for the business of the meeting and we said prayers led by the Vicar, remembering particularly some of those workers of the church who had died during the past year—Miss Lush (whose story has recently been told in this magazine), Mr. Stephen Forrow who, amongst his many good works, had been Parochial Church Council Secretary for 15 years, and Mr. Cornish who had also served as Churchwarden and on the P.C.C. After a prayer for God's help in our work for the parish we all joined in the Lord's Prayer.

At the Vestry Meeting which precedes the A.C.M. Messrs. Rockliffe (unavoidably absent on work for the Admiralty at sea) and Mr. Robinson were re-elected as Churchwardens and appreciation of their work was expressed.

The lack of a secretary to the Church Council meant that the Vicar had a great deal to do and say, reading the Minutes, presenting the Electoral Roll which showed an increase of 10 over last year. In giving a summary of the proceedings of the P.C.C. over the last year he pointed out that at the meetings there was an average attendance of 21 out of a total of 28 members, and that 7 members had achieved a 100% attendance record—next year the membership would be 22 in accordance with the resolution passed at last year's A.C.M.

At the first meeting of the new Church Council officers and committee members would be elected. How many committees?—and how much power should committees have?—these were considerations that had to be faced, said the Vicar, whether committees were to act and come back to the Council for the rubber stamp of approval; or to allow committees to make only recommendations reserving the final decision to itself—often the same decision was reached in the end. As we had been told the new Church Council would be a smaller body, 5 or 6 fewer than last year—often the smaller the group the easier the discussion and the coming to a common mind. It had been the aim in recent times for the Church Council to try to reach decisions by consensus rather than put into operation schemes by a majority vote.

The Time and Talents Scheme had produced many willing helpers who throughout the year had given of their abilities—to this end purchases had been made such as a second-hand typewriter and duplicator—written Minutes were distributed before meetings thus saving valuable time which had been taken up by the longer route of giving them verbally. The Vicar expressed his appreciation of the work put in by what he called “the backroom boys and girls,” a group of very hard working people, and it is to be hoped that a new secretary might be found at the first meeting of the new P.C.C.

The Vicar pointed out that the Church Council takes very seriously its financial responsibility and how best the church's money should be used.

Reference was made to the testing and challenging times in which the Church today had to carry on its work, and to what the Vicar called the "statistics of decline"—e.g., the fact that, throughout the country as a whole, for every 5 people who attended church regularly or occasionally in 1959, only 4 did so in 1966, whilst the falling off in the numbers of those attending Sunday Schools had been much sharper still. On the other hand there were the "statistics of increase" in fields such as crime and juvenile delinquency and the number of those taking drugs.

The Vicar concluded his review by saying: "We have to commend Christianity, in all its grand and glorious aspects, not just as a medicine for social and individual ills, but as a life wonderfully worth living in itself, and as a faith which brings well-being and gives a purpose and meaning to existence as drugs and other means of escape can never do. We all have our part to play in this, and we must see the work of the Church, even in its duller aspects, such as Annual Meetings and Business Committees, as having an essential relationship to the overriding objective of the Kingdom of God The Church is there to serve men and women in every possible way—'with no strings attached'—but we know that one of the best services we can give, when people are ready to receive it, is to help them to come to a knowledge of God and of His will and purpose for human life and for them."

Nominations for the Ruri-Decanal Conference were approved and the following elected:

Mrs. J. Jackson, Mr. J. Gilder, Mr. L. Melville, Mr. F. E. Peel,
Mr. A. Taylor.

After a ballot the following were elected to serve on the P.C.C. for the forthcoming year:

Mesdames J. Bellingham, C. H. Brunt, I. Gilder, M. Heaford,
I. Milns, I. V. Rockliffe, D. E. Warwick.

Messrs. R. E. Bridges, R. M. Brooks, J. L. Ford, J. W.
Gostling, D. W. K. Leatherdale, D. E. Nunn, H. E. Severn.

Mr. Severn then presented the Accounts, as written and distributed, and a vote of thanks passed to the Treasurers—a copy of these accounts will be available in the church for anyone who may wish to see them.

Mr. Robinson gave a report on the church properties, and in particular gave the view that Wayside is now in an excellent state of repair and well decorated. Much had been accomplished in the church, but there were still some items calling for attention. Mr. Dafforne, our worthy and enthusiastic organist, was anxious for some work to be done on the organ; the bells and the tower required inspection from time to time; a start had been made on the inside of the roof inside the South porch by Mr. Nunn. This brought Mr. Robinson to the acknowledgment of the considerable voluntary work that was accomplished. The steady improvement in the churchyard and, it must have been observed, the considerably tidier appearance there—due mainly to the valiant work of Mr. Leatherdale and Mr. Brooks—Mr. Leatherdale is, particularly, to be congratulated. What would be appreciated is additions to the regular voluntary helpers—plus voluntary helpers from time to time. The hedge in Park Road, so long in need, had been well trimmed back by Mr. Thompson and his helpers. The lych

gate in Park Road had been repaired by stint of long and patient work by Mr. Nunn. Grateful thanks are due to the group of ladies who spend time every Friday morning working very hard in cleaning and decorating the church. There are so many people, too many to mention all by name, who CARE for the church in one way or another.

The question of the election of sidesmen (and sideswomen) was then discussed and a list passed round for people who wished to serve in this way to put their names and the service they preferred to serve at. If there is anyone else who would like to serve in this way they should communicate with Mr. Rockliffe (who is at present away, but who will be returning shortly). The Vicar and Churchwardens were given full discretionary powers to appoint sidesmen and arrange their times of duty.

As has been mentioned, written reports were distributed from the various committees—much of which you should have already read about in this magazine, but the Stewardship Committee stated their intention to continue the parties for newcomers to the parish, also parties for new members of the church. Membership of the Stewardship Scheme was reduced for one reason or another, but the Committee hoped to put in hand a full-scale visitation in the Autumn. It was also mentioned that the setting up of a scheme was under consideration for Area and Street Wardens.

Other reports were to hand from the Sunday Schools, the Young Wives' Group, the Young People's Fellowship, the Mothers' Union, the Choir, the Social Committee (who had arranged many enjoyable functions throughout the year for everyone) and the Scout Cub pack.

A chart of Church committees had been displayed for anyone interested to add their name, and Mr. Gostling said that these might be put up in church next Sunday for anyone not present to add their name. Mrs. Lewis, who has been washing the church linen, mentioned that she would be going abroad for a few months later and a volunteer for this work would be welcomed during her absence:

The Vicar closed the meeting by inviting us all to join him in the Grace at 9.55 p.m.

Footnote:

I am in the habit of reading a passage from the Bible with the guidance of the Bible Reading Fellowship booklet before going to sleep at night—when I returned home after this meeting I found it was the parable of the talents and the quote from St. Matthew 25, which seemed apt in respect of work being done by many people for the church that we had heard about that evening, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And then the short prayer at the end of the reading also seemed to fit—"Grant, Lord, that we may be faithful stewards of whatever talents Thou hast entrusted to us."

D.E.W.

EXHIBITION "TASK 6"—AN IMPRESSION

An unexpected visit on Tuesday, March 14, to a sister in London, who lives in the Parish of St. Matthew's in Wandsworth Bridge Road, Fulham, led to a most interesting visit to the "Task 6" exhibition displayed at the church. An explanatory brochure bought for 2/- helped one to see and understand, and appreciate, what the exhibition,

so very unique in its presentation, means to convey—i.e. the work being done by nine Anglican Missionary Societies, in six Continents, to bring Christianity and the message of hope through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ to those whose minds are open to receive it. At the beginning of "the journey," to use the phrase from the brochure, which took us over an hour and a half, stands the figure of Christ, beautifully sculptured in polystyrene, and very impressive indeed! Then through 14 different scenes and finally you were invited to take a Dedication Card, should you have been stirred to undertake "a Mission," and any pamphlets displayed on a table, and so out into the world again to bear your Witness—an afternoon well spent!

C.M.

THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR

During Lent between sixty and seventy people from this district took part in the study course. "The People Next Door" programme was designed on an ecumenical basis by the British Council of Churches. The Roman Catholic Church also took part, although it is not a member of the B.C.C. It was estimated that over the whole country some 150,000 people would be taking part in this scheme.

It was devoted to looking at the world around us and trying to see ourselves as the non-churchgoing majority see us. To do this each person was asked to talk over with a non-churchgoing friend the points raised in discussion at the meetings and, if possible, to take the friend to church in order to see the service through an outsider's eyes.

Each week activities included filling in a number of questionnaires, visiting a church of a different denomination and visiting a place where people gather together which one had not previously visited, such as a Magistrate's Court, Betting Shop or Youth Club.

At the final meeting held at All Saints', Hampton, on March 9, several suggestions were put forward for the promotion of unity between the churches, but not uniformity. The most important, on a national level, was Inter-communion between the Anglican and Non-conformist churches. On a local level there were several ideas put forward—the most important of which was a Sunday evening service to be held, at different churches quarterly, at the normal time and with the usual type of service, to which the other churches would be invited instead of attending their own church. It was considered that this idea could be put into practice soon—a longer term project was the idea of setting up a Coffee Bar run by the churches for the Young People of the district. Already in Hampton and Hampton Hill there are several ecumenical undertakings, notably Christian Aid and the United Service held on Good Friday.

It is hoped to produce a fuller report in a few weeks time which will be circulated to all those who took part in the course. We shall have to wait until next year for the British Council of Churches to produce their report.

H.T.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR MAGAZINE?

Is it really worthwhile?—something more than a gossipy little news-sheet mainly concerned with the "hatch, match and despatch" of our fellow parishioners?—does it truly reflect the vigorous Christian outlook of St. James'?

We think it is something we can be proud of, a vital part of Christian Mission in our parish, with its inset "Outlook" to increase our knowledge of the needs and social problems of parishes and parts of the world less fortunate than our own.

BUT—it does cost quite a lot of money to produce and we have to ask the P.C.C. for a very considerable subsidy each year. What is the answer? Shall we charge for it? We would rather not do this for we want it to go into an ever-increasing number of homes—a very important part of our mission in the parish.

Many of us do feel, however, that it is well worth a voluntary contribution towards the cost, and for those who think as we do there is a box, plainly labelled, at the West end of the church, facing the bookstall, for contributions—two half-crowns dropped into the box by everyone who reads "The Spire" would mean that we should not have to ask the P.C.C. for that subsidy.

Thank you.

F.E.P.

TWELVE ANGELS FROM HELL

This book is a sequel to *The Cross and the Switchblade*, the author of which is the Reverend David Wilkerson. Both books are American paperbacks, and both are available in this country.

Mr. Wilkerson is a young evangelistic minister of the Assemblies of God church. *Twelve Angels from Hell* tells a story in biographical form of twelve men and women redeemed from drug addiction. It is a sad book about sadness, written by an inspired healer of sadness.

Although Mr. Wilkerson is an amateur writer, and this characteristic is far less observable in the first book, he writes with a compulsion and a stark sincerity that brings tears. His writing is shot through with black and white fundamentalism which, perhaps, is a little old-fashioned. It would, perhaps, find less favour in the eyes of the modern theologian and doctrinaire than it did 100 years ago. Nevertheless, it must be judged by its results.

As a result of supreme courage, rare compassion and an unswerving belief in the constant nearness of the Holy Spirit, it has saved many souls from destruction and set a permanent light in the windows of many lives doomed, apparently, to a complete darkness.

Reading the book one gets a vivid impression of looking through a letter box at the inside of a house. The inmates pass and re-pass before the observer without being seen in full. One of the inmates of this book, Rose Martinez, is described in these words:—

"Rose was dying of malnutrition and I doubted that she could remember the last time she had eaten. She had forgotten food. All she wanted was a fix and when she got one she began to think about the next one. I could see that she was in a terribly weakened condition."

There are eleven more men and women of this type written about in this book, so that there is nothing romantic about it.

Not, therefore, for its literary quality, nor for its prose style, but for the unbelievable story it tells, I would recommend the purchase of the book. Don't read it in a cursory way. Read it and stop and think about what has been read, and then read a little more in the same way. When you have read *Twelve Angels from Hell* go back to the beginning and read the parent book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*.

You will find that the country preacher has added something to the human story, and with his own pen and his sword of faith, has helped to establish a sense of God in lives which have lost it—or even, possibly, never known it.

J.H.M.W.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- Apr. 4.—The Annunciation: Holy Communion at 10.30 a.m.
.. 5.—8.0 p.m. Film Evening—a pictorial record of parish events and outings since 1962.
.. 6.—2.30 p.m. Mothers' Union (W). Speaker: Mrs. Brown.
.. 10.—10.30 a.m. Editorial Board (52, Park Road).
.. 17.—8.0 p.m. Hampton Council of Churches: Open Meeting in preparation for Christian Aid Week (Congregational Church Hall).
.. 19.—8.0 p.m. Stewardship Committee and invited representatives (W).
.. 22.—Annual Stewardship Conference in London.
.. 25.—St. Mark: 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion; 8.0 p.m. Stewardship Committee (106, Park Road).
.. 26.—8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group: First Aid (W).
.. 27.—2.30 p.m. Mothers' Union Deanery Festival Service (All Saints', Hampton).
- N.B.—The Parochial Church Council will meet in April, but the date has not yet been fixed as we go to press.
- May 1.—SS. Philip & James: 9.0 a.m. Holy Communion; 7.30 p.m. Inter-Church Meeting for Councillors and Leaders—by invitation (All Saints' Hall).
.. 3.—8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group: Home Nursing (W).
.. 4.—ASCENSION DAY: 7.15 and 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion. 2.30 p.m. Mothers' Union (W).
.. 7.—After Evensong, the film "Tibetan Story" will be shown in church as preparation for Christian Aid Week.
.. 14.—WHITSUNDAY: Sunday Services as usual, with the addition of Holy Communion at 12.10 p.m. Sunday Schools will combine in church at 11.0 a.m. for a service to which parents and friends are invited. At 8.0 p.m. there will be a united open-air service in the forecourt of the Methodist Church (Percy Road) in the course of which the collectors for Christian Aid Week will be commissioned.
.. 15 - 21.—CHRISTIAN AID WEEK.
.. 20.—Parish Outing to Rochester by coach, leaving church at 9.30 a.m. (Adults 10/-, children under 16, 7/6—tickets from members of the Social Committee).

MARRIAGES

On February 4: Cecil Roy Timothy Donovan to Susan Palmer.
On March 18: Alan Paul Judge to Diane Jeanette Cole.

CREMATION

On March 16: Martin Henry Moore, 15, Seymour Road, aged 70 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium).