

OUR COMMENTS ON THE BISHOP'S QUESTIONS

The questions themselves were printed in the April issue, and members of our Church Council spent two interesting evenings discussing them. Then three of us met one afternoon as a drafting committee to summarise our findings and put them together in the form of a short report to be sent to the Rural Dean. He collated the reports from the various parishes—14 out of 15 responded—and presented their salient points at the conference with the Bishop on May 10. He stressed the large measure of agreement there was among the Councils on most matters.

The gist of our reports follows. Several parts of it were quoted verbatim by the Rural Dean as especially worthy of note (anonymously of course—but we felt our hard work had not gone unrecognised!). In the discussion that followed several members of our Council spoke out bravely and well. We hope to mention in our next issue some further points from this discussion and the collated report.

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1. We question whether Baptism as at present administered is an adequate “yard-stick” for assessing Church Membership. We also have grave reservations about confirmation and Easter Communion in this respect.

Restriction of Baptism to the children of regular Communicants and practising Christians might be the ideal, but was felt by the majority to be inadvisable in present circumstances because of the ill-will this would cause, and large numbers of people would be pushed further away from Christianity and the Church than they now were.

We all agreed that many improvements could be made in the Baptismal Service and that Godparents should not be put into the position of having to make promises which they were unable to perform.

We do not feel that Confirmation at an early age is an adequate “yard-stick” in many cases, and would advocate that the norm should be a later age, perhaps 17 or over, and most of us felt that this need not debar younger children from receiving Communion from, perhaps, the age of 6 or 7 or even younger if they came regularly with Communicant parents.

In dealing with people sitting loosely to their Church Membership we took as a basis for discussion “A short guide to the duties of Church Membership” (issued in 1950 by the Archbishops). There is a lessening of social pressures in attending church, and duty no longer takes precedence over inclination. The church is no longer the sole provider of alms, amusements, social intercourse, entertainment. No orator commands large audiences any more. The church by being too stereotyped and hidebound, and not being sufficiently willing to experiment, loses its appeal to the more lively minds, and is in danger of being thought Pharisaical and ultra-conservative.

We thought it might be more pertinent to ask “What action in parish and church at large might be taken to make the church more aware of its responsibilities to others?” We hoped that this might be a challenge to nominal members to take their responsibilities to the church and society more seriously.

Encouragement of **house groups**—to foster understanding and free discussion—rather than obligation of church attendance, which was perhaps too heavily stressed as a duty.

Liturgical reform to make services more meaningful and relevant. Christians to meet outside the church, not only to talk but to work, e.g., to benefit the community, and aid good causes, "with no strings attached". We have found activities such as Stewardship definitely increased the responsibility of a large proportion of church members. Need to improve quality and scope of religious instruction so that a much fuller conception of all that Christianity is about, and what Church Membership means, could be given to young people.

2. The modern world provides a variety of fields for Christian Service other than the Ministry.

There are fewer church members from which the Ministry can be recruited. The stipend has not kept pace with modern living conditions; as a result a clergyman is often deprived of the tools he needs to do his job properly, e.g. car, up-to-date office equipment, etc., so that the work he is especially ordained to do is grievously hampered.

Lack of opportunity for ordained men to develop their own special gifts, owing to an often out-dated parochial system with mini-parishes that demand too little and maxi-parishes that demand too much.

Feeling that the church is not being adventurous enough in developing varied forms of Ministry, e.g. group and team ministries, and Ministries within Industry and Professions.

Encouragement should be given to more men to become ordained whilst continuing their secular employment.

Wider extension of Group Ministries with Central Church at headquarters, thus overcoming loneliness and allowing Ministers to specialise according to their own bent.

More initiative to come from church congregations in encouraging men to offer themselves for ordination rather than letting it be a solitary decision on the part of the individual.

Much more consideration should be given to the ordination of women.

The answer to the second part of this question starts with the attitude of the Clergy. If a Vicar encourages the laity to be actively involved (as is the case in our own parish) and they respond, the administration becomes a partnership. Whereas if he is somewhat fearful and suspicious, the laity feel frustrated and that they are little more than "pew fodder". This encouragement could well begin with young people's groups (as found here), allowing them to manage as much of their own affairs as possible.

We have found that Stewardship, including of course Time and Talents, helps considerably to involve the laity in many spheres of church work. Also the forming and giving of wide responsibility to Committees formed from many people in addition to the Church Council.

Distinctive role — to be as good and honest a workman in one's own sphere of life as possible. To be peace-makers and reconcilers. To have a strong concern for the benefit of the Community at large, and a deep care for the individual. To adhere to Christian principles of truth and love, without being too ready to condemn; and to be willing to cooperate with humanists and other men of goodwill.

3. Our relationship is one of goodwill and desire to cooperate with other local churches. In its practical implementation this presents its problems — some churches are not prepared to go as far as we are. We do feel that the interested laity of most churches feel frustrated

by the lack of enthusiasm and positive leadership on the part of some of the Clergy and Ministers. The Hampton Council of Churches, to which our church belongs, encourages liaison and has done good, if limited, cooperative work, e.g., Christian Aid, Good Friday United Service, Women's Day of Prayer, Women's Meetings, and some joint discussion and prayer groups and youth work and especially there has been a great cooperation in Religious Drama.

To be done separately — of necessity, individual parish business, administration, finance, and customary form of worship.

To be done together — work for charities and missions, Emergency Help schemes, and welcome to newcomers. The development of more youth work, joint mission to new housing areas. Church buildings should be built suitable for sharing by all denominations, saving in space, money and a great help in co-operation and communal activities — the idea might then spread more readily to more established areas when circumstances make existing arrangements impracticable.

To avoid waste of duplication of time and money there should be much more discussion between governing bodies of the churches on fact-finding and with a view to applying joint action, e.g., Coffee bar locally for young people (seriously needed in this particular area). Joint church magazine or news-sheet.

Churches combining in such projects could carry out much needed ventures beyond the resources of any one individual church.

To Work for Unity

Before this question could be answered fully it is felt that "unity" should be more adequately defined.

We felt that the stress should be on **Unity of purpose**, not uniformity of worship. It should not be a reduction to the least common denominator but all that is best from each tradition should be included.

Unity by 1980

We think that it is desirable and possible but not probable. We would like a statement from our own church leaders as to where they stand on "unity"; and on such questions, in particular, as inter-communion.

We felt that we could not foresee the effects on society, we hoped they might be good — but it seems right to try and achieve unity as something intrinsically right in itself apart from any intrinsic results that might follow.

Rider: In conclusion, in regard to questions like this, we felt that there is a great deal of talking about such matters in the Church of England, but a great dearth of action in regard to them.

THE CHURCHYARD

Once again the growing season is upon us and the grass and weeds are gaining on the mowers, despite the valiant efforts of the regular volunteers. So I ask you to repeat last year's successful efforts, and lend a hand (or two) in a MASS ATTACK WEEK — from Saturday, JUNE 15 to Saturday JUNE 22 INCLUSIVE.

Choose your own time, evening or day, with your friends, and HAVE SOME HEALTHY OPEN AIR EXERCISE to the good of yourself and the Parish! FORWARD TO THE TASK YE MEMBERS OF THE M.U. — YOUNG WIVES (AND HUSBANDS) — SCOUTS — CHOIR — Y.P.F. — P.C.C.! ALL WILL BE VERY WELCOME.

As usual tools are available from the shed, but your own shears

may be sharper.

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU.

R.M.B.
Churchyard Guardian.

THE GAMES EVENING

I anticipated the Social Committee's Games evening with an open mind, tinged perhaps with a mental picture of the usual (with due respect) more mature members of the parish entering into the spirit of the thing with characteristic zest. Thus the sudden realisation that over half the people in the room were under 20 was mildly surprising. Quite obviously the local youth, complete with full contemporary garb, were applying as much, if not more, zest to the games than their parents. The objects of amusement included shove ha'penny, darts, bagatelle, quoits, skittles, tiddleywinks. All competitors tried all the games and the final winners were Mr. Harries and Bridget McCauley, with Mrs. Dilys Melville winning a booby prize for the lowest score.

The best compliment to the organisers came from the younger people, who having completed one round of the games, promptly set out on a second round to beat their own scores.

H.J.G.

A **BARBECUE** will be held in the Vicarage garden on June 29 at 7.30 p.m. Tickets are now available, price 4/6d. If it is wet, the festivities will be held in Wayside.

R.M.G.

THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

Anyone who remembers Mrs. Pat Yallup's talk on Modern Art will be pleased to hear that she is coming again. The title has not yet been decided upon, but she will bring illustrations. Mrs. Yallup is an artist herself, and last time she answered a barrage of questions on trends and techniques. This is on June 26.

There will be another Baptismal Party on the afternoon of Wednesday, June 19, for the mothers of babies baptised since January. If the weather is kind it will be in the Vicarage garden, otherwise at Wayside.

Coffee mornings are on June 13 and June 27, and we hope to have a talk on Nursery Schools.

K.B.

THE MOTHERS' UNION

Brief notes this month since space is short.

First, I want to express the thanks of the M.U. Committee to all those who supported the Austerity Lunch so generously. As a result fifteen guineas was raised for the relief of suffering in Vietnam.

Miss K. Dines who spoke to us about her work in Rhodesia proved to be a most entertaining visitor; her account of the Patronal Festival at St. Michael's Church, Rorari, most vivid, and we all hope that she will pay us a return visit, later in the year.

For various reasons it has been decided to cancel the meeting arranged for Thursday, June 6, instead I hope that all members will come to 40, Gloucester Road, on Thursday, 27 June, 2.30 p.m. Last year's garden meeting seemed very popular, let us hope that the weather will be good on that day.

I.V.R.

JUNIOR COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Junior Council's annual review took place on Sunday, May 5 at the Congregational Church at 8.00 p.m. when some fifty members

of the church youth groups heard Roger Nunn, assistant youth secretary of the British Council of Churches and John Bolton from the Christian Fellowship of Sevenoaks School speak on the renewal of the Church and the part that young people can play at national and local level. The talks stimulated interesting discussion, for the local youth groups are aware of the need for examining what they do so that they "do not do separately what should be done together and do not do together what should not be done at all".

The Chairman, Caroline Eustace, reviewed the year's activities, including the sponsored walk in October which raised £1427. This has been donated as follows:

£600 to the Save the Children Fund.

£300 to Dr. Barnardo's.

£300 to the National Children's Homes.

These were the charities named as recipients but, as the target was exceeded, £60 was given to the Church of England Children's Society and £25 to local children via the Children's Department. After expenses there is some £20 in hand which will be used to float the project for this year — a job of decoration in Guildford — and will afterwards be donated to charity.

The J.C.C. would like to thank all those members of the congregations who have given their support in the past year and hopes that all local Christians will take a keen and benevolent interest in their future activities.

AN APPEAL FROM THE CHRISTIAN AID AREA SECRETARY

As you will probably know, Christian Aid is trying to sponsor the World Poverty Campaign in local areas, related to matters of aid and trade and governmental responsibility for the developing countries. The question has to be raised, how is this to be done in the London boroughs?

I have recently met a Roman Catholic layman, Mr. F. Hazard who would be willing to think about how to do this in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. Do you think you could find a person in your area who would be willing to link with him in this matter? We are not asking the C.A. Committee to do this, and we are interested in people who have both economic and administrative experience.

If you feel you could help, please telephone 979-8377.

HISTORIC OCCASION IN UGANDA

In Namirembe Cathedral three young women were commissioned by their Archbishop as workers in the Church of Uganda. After completing a theological course at Bishop Tucker College, Mukono, studying beside men in training for the ordained ministry, they worked for a year in Kampala gaining varied experience. Now they are at work in different towns in different parts of the country. "The importance of the occasion and the significance of the girls," writes a CMS missionary in Uganda, "is that there is no tradition in the Church of Uganda of such workers. They are breaking into a traditionally male preserve. Obviously they will have many difficulties, and it will need vision and care on the part of Church leaders to use their gifts responsibly and wisely, to allow them to make their own contribution and not to be treated as though they were a slightly odd kind of clergyman.

As these three stood in their blue, white-trimmed dresses, the Archbishop expressed the hope of all that their example would create a new understanding of the place of women in the life of the Church."

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- June 6.—8.00 p.m. Quiet Evening, sponsored by the Hampton Council Churches, in the Congregational Church.
- „ 7.—10.30 a.m. Editorial Board (52, Park Road).
- „ 8.—2.30 p.m. Dog Show in support of the Old People's Welfare Committee (Fulwell Sports Ground).
- „ 10.—8.15 p.m. Properties Committee (31, Wellington Road).
- „ 11.—St. Barnabas: Holy Communion at 9.00 a.m.
- „ 13.—8.00 p.m. Newcomers' Party (by invitation) in the Parish Hall.
- „ 14.—8.15 p.m. Liturgical Committee (90, Ormond Drive).
- „ 15 to 22: MASS ATTACK WEEK IN THE CHURCHYARD.
- „ 16.—No sermon at Evensong, but instead of the proposed discussion evening, at 7.10 p.m., Miss HANNAH STANTON will show slides and speak about her LIFE AND WORK IN AFRICA.
- „ 19.—3.00 p.m. Mothers and Babies: Garden Party at the Vicarage.
- „ 20.—Wel-Care: Service of Thanksgiving and Intercession for the Episcopal District of Kensington — 8.00 p.m. Holy Communion in St. Peter's Church, Eaton Square, followed by a reception in the Church Rooms.
- „ 24.—St. John Baptist: Holy Communion at 9.00 a.m.
- „ 25.—8.00 p.m. Stewardship Committee (106, Park Road).
- „ 26.—8.00 p.m. Young Wives' Group: 'Modern Art' (W).
- „ 27.—8.00 p.m. Parochial Church Council (W).
- „ 29.—St. Peter: Holy Communion at 8.30 a.m.; Barbecue in the Vicarage garden at 7.30 p.m.

BAPTISM

- On April 28:
Hayley Georgina Jane Williams, 14, Rectory Grove.

BURIAL & CREMATIONS

- On April 1:
Walter Horace Martin, 200, Uxbridge Road, aged 59 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium).
- On April 18:
Doris Evelyn Rogers, 46, Park Road, aged 63 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium).
- On May 3:
John Henry Fisher, 41, St. James's Road, aged 45 years (at Teddington Cemetery).
- On May 13:
Ellen Kate Ward, 18, Eastbank Road, aged 64 years (At S.W. Middlesex Crematorium).
- On May 24:
James Edwin Wyatt, 26, St. James's Avenue, aged 72 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium).

EDITORIAL NOTE: We are sorry that some items are still held over because of intense pressure on space.