

DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO BELIEVE IN GOD?

A question which most of us would not find easy to answer in a logical and comprehensible way. But not so Dr. John Chamberlayne. On January 13 he gave an authoritative lecture and then led a lively discussion in the first of the series of talks organised by the Hampton and Sunbury Council of Churches.

Dr. Chamberlayne proposed a definition of God as "a supreme personal being - distinct from the world and creator of the world". He then proceeded to give a wide-ranging review of the historical development and the increasing sophistication of a belief in God from primitive tribes to the Eastern and Western civilisations of today.

This was followed by an analysis of the three different ways in which modern man may apprehend God. These he called the "emotional" approach, the "intellectual" approach and the "way of the will".

This was a stimulating lecture by a man of wide-ranging knowledge and deep experience. A fine opening to what promises to be a very interesting series of lectures (one each month from January to June 1977). The next lecture (at the Methodist Church, Percy Road) on February 9 will be by J.L. Houlden, the Principal of Cuddesdon Theological College, Oxford. The subject will be "Does it Make Sense to Follow Jesus?" Let's go along and find out!

P.A.L.

JUBILEE CONCERT

Saturday, 19 February, 1977

Only a few days left to get your tickets for the great Parish Jubilee Concert. The price is only nominal for what promises to be an engrossing evening's entertainment. Humour, drama and music are all included, as is almost everyone connected with St. James's. Come and laugh at your best friends as they stand in the glare of the footlights: they'll do it to you a few minutes later. See off dull winter and welcome Jubilee year with a bang. Doors open 7 pm.

RLB

CHRISTMAS IN GERMANY

We spent Christmas in Germany this year, and although we missed celebrating this great festival within the community of St. James's we really had an "extra special" Christmas again.

The mood is generally quieter over there. It is true, there are office-parties beforehand, but even people who disregard the religious meaning of the festival would feel that paper-chains, balloons, crackers, funny hats and jolly parties don't go together with Christmas at all. Decorations in the home are made of natural Christmas tree branches (incidentally holly is also absent), the tree itself is always a real tree and the lights are kept white. Most people still have only real candles, and if electric lights are used, they are shaped like actual candles. For me the fragrance of fresh firtrees symbolises Christmas more than anything else. Although our own tree is always decorated with silver balls and tinsel (and little chocolate rings for the benefit of a certain small person), there is a great variety of tree

dressings. Many Scandinavian ideas are coming in. A beautiful variation is red apples and gold stars. The tree is never put up before Christmas Eve; other traditional decorations are used during Advent.

Christmas Eve is in fact the most important time of the whole festival. It is the 24th of December which is the red letter day in any child's calendar. In our family the main room of the flat is locked up once the tree is decorated and then all the prettily wrapped parcels are laid out under the tree by Daddy. After we return from church, Daddy goes in and lights the candles; the rest of the family waits outside the door until he rings a little bell - the excitement and expectancy the children feel transmits itself to everybody - and then the door opens, music by Bach or Handel fills the room, the candle-flames flicker ever so slightly in the movement of the air, the children gasp with wonder - oh, I do like Christmas Eve!

As I said, it all starts with a fairly short church service in the afternoon. It consists of the reading of the Christmas story, a short address, prayer and carols. And like all other services that are meant to be special it also features extra music. Church music always is of a remarkably high standard. The choir does not perform every Sunday, it is not robed, and it is probably no exaggeration to say that most churches have a children's choir, a young people's choir and a main adult choir, who all take it in turn to sing at services. Recorder groups, trombone ensembles and possibly amateur chamber orchestras are also attached to many churches. (In this context it must of course be remembered that the organist who is in charge of all these is a full-time paid officer of the church.)

Some churches remain open all the evening for lonely people and those who seek quiet meditation. There is also a midnight communion.

Christmas Dinner on the 25th is usually goose and red cabbage, the latter slowly stewed with goose fat and lots of apples; very rich. Before I came to England and learnt about such "funny things" as Christmas pudding we would not have dreamt of eating more than a little piece of marzipan for our sweet. Mince pies are also unknown.

Colourful paper-chains, funny hats and lead for fortune-telling are brought out on New Year's Eve. The 31st of December is the day for big parties, dancing and champagne. Dinner that night usually consists of carp or some other fish. After the midnight toast to the New Year people let off the most gorgeous fireworks. As everybody saves them for midnight the display is simply magnificent. One can stand (sometimes in deep snow) and watch the most beautiful rockets showering their many-coloured stars all over the sky.

Our Christmas season ended again on a quiet note on Sunday January 2 with a moving afternoon church service. The lofty building was lit only by candlelight; a large choir gave lovely renderings of a Schütz cantata and choral hymn-settings, the congregation did their share of singing and the minister read and preached about some of those descriptive Old Testament prophecies of the Kingdom which fill us with deep longing and which make us rejoice at the fact that God has made such joy attainable for us through Christmas.

H.B.

CHRISTMAS AT ST. JAMES'S

The celebration of Christmas began in its usual and enjoyable way, with the Parish Carol singing. The number of people joining in this event remains fairly constant - about forty; the biggest change this year was in the venue. We started at the church, continued on to Willowbrook and Fairlight

and then, conveyed by a convoy of cars, up to the new houses in Bishop's Grove and Deacon's Walk. Here we were well received, many people coming out to listen to us and a few younger people actually joining in. In this outpost of our parish our effort in going there seemed to be appreciated - next year perhaps we could include Pigeon Lane or Rectory Grove.

The midnight Eucharist on Christmas was well attended and the service itself was very inspiring. The morning Communion was less well attended, of course, but there were those there that others felt should not be there - notably a toy-monkey!

On Sunday there were two special services-the Christingle Service at 4 p.m. and the Carols by Candlelight Service at 6.30 p.m. Both these services saw congregations in the region of 60 to 70 people and the candlelight gave a very soft light to the proceedings. The Christingle Service with its candlelit procession of children whose little faces glow with the light from the candles they carry is especially lovely, as many of you will realise from the cover picture of the Surrey Comet.

The evening service was also enjoyable. The Junior Choir performed very well, I especially liked the Filipino Carol, and all the soloists could be heard clearly. Nor did the congregation fail in their part, everyone sang up and this gives a real feeling of fellowship one with another when all join together to sing in praise of the birth of such a child.

I feel that Shirley and the Junior Choir deserve a special mention for all the work they did before and during Christmas, not only to bring pleasure to those in church but also to the people in Oketon Nursing Home, the Maddison Clinic, Laurel Dene and the Mothers' Union. Thank you Shirley for all your efforts.

The following Sunday saw another Service as a result of much effort - the Sunday school gave us a delightful modern rendering of the Christmas Story - a garage at Wayside instead of a stable, again everyone joined in, the only pity is that these Sunday school services are not better attended as they are such a joy to behold. Many thanks again to Miss Stewart, Dawn and Sue for the splendid work they do.

Once again we have had a very Happy Christmas at St. James's, thanks to the untiring efforts of so many people, cleaners, flower arrangers, musicians and not least of all the Vicar and his Staff for whom Christmas is such a busy time. May God Bless us all at St. James's in 1977 and bring us to a greater understanding of His Love and purposes for us all.

H.T.

THE PARISH CHRISTMAS PARTY

This year it was a Jubilee Party before most of us had given the Jubilee a serious thought! So it was surprising how much red, white and blue our wardrobes could furnish. There were plenty of Union Jacks about, not only on the usual sticks, but as socks and tee shirts, while one Jack came as the Unions, complete with rules, block vote and picket board. So it was a bright and cheerful crowd which gathered under the shining "Crown Imperial".

What a wonderful family party it was, with plenty to watch if we didn't want to join in. The younger generation helped their seniors over wooden stepping-stones, someone with great skill rolled a satsuma right into the middle of the target area, so saving his side, and one man solemnly read the Times in the medée of everyone else sorting pages. There were so many amusing incidents.

The time flew by and all too soon we were thanking the people who had worked hard organising everything to run so smoothly. There were the charming waitresses in their most attractive red white and blue costumes -

surely better than the national costume of Miss Great Britain - who fed us so well. Then there were the barmen and the games "helpers". Last and certainly not least, we thank Reg Thorpe whose genius for devising games and running a party made it another memorable night.
Now, what about next year?

K.B.

ST. JAMES'S BABY MORNINGS

We are now established, and meet regularly, on alternate Thursdays (the first, third and sometimes fifth every month, from 10.30 to 12.00 noon). We all have babies and toddlers, and with varying success, encourage them to play in one room, under supervision, whilst we meet together in the other. Our programme is very varied, and Hilde manages to organize our ideas and suggestions for future meetings in a most effective way.

Recently we were treated to a beautifully-cooked festive meal, and, sharing the cost, we had a "cordon bleu" standard dinner at Wayside. Since then, some of us have tried the recipes at home, most successfully.

Also Penelope Samuels, from the National Childbirth Trust, who lives and works locally, has given us an excellent talk on "Childbirth and how it affects the family". Following this are a number of topics relating to family life, as well as some more light-hearted subjects such as Keep Fit (with a second-hand children's clothes sale as well!).

Newcomers to the district would be most welcome, as would any mother with young children who would like to relax in the company of others, discuss mutual problems, encourage her offspring to play amicably, and of course join in that week's activities. A full programme of the meetings can be found on the notice board in Wayside.

C.R.

BADMINTON FOR YOUNG MOTHERS

Another new venture that is being organised is badminton playing for mothers with young children. It will be held in St. James's Church Hall on Friday afternoons from 2.30 p.m. Anybody-of whatever playing standard-will be welcome, but please bring or borrow your own badminton racket if you can, and some toys for the children (something that could be "pooled" for the afternoon would perhaps be a good idea).

C.R.

PRAYER MEETINGS

This year there will be no Lent study-groups organised by the Hampton Council of Churches, although there will be occasional meetings to discuss the lectures, but both of our regular prayer meetings will meet weekly. On Thursdays, at 69, St James's Avenue, we shall be looking at some aspects of the Epistle to the Hebrews. On Tuesdays, at 75, Burtons Road, the topic will be 'What on earth is the Church?'

We have often stressed in the past that these are open to anyone who wishes to attend and although both have regular followings neither has a membership as such. Lent is a time when traditionally we think of making a particular effort towards growth in faith and either group would welcome any people who feel that they would like to join in.

S.D.H., D.R.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

We think it would be nice to make provision in our magazine for regular contributions by children or items of particular interest to children. We welcome any suitable material. To make a start here are two poems written by members of the Junior Sunday School.

Don't put your fingers on the wall.
Switch the light off in the hall.
Grownups, Grownups, Grownups.
Keep quiet, I'm on the phone.
I'm trying to have my quiet time on my own.
Make your bed.
Did you hear what I said?
Grownups, Grownups, Grownups.
Oh boy!

Frances Harris

God's Creation

Praise the Lord
For his creation
Wonderful and not imitation
He made you and He made me
And all the things that you do see
A tree perhaps or a bee
He made everything
The smallest fly
The clouds floating in the sky
It makes me wonder why
People let Jesus die
Putting him on the cross
Of course not realising the loss
And after God had been so kind
Such unfair things
Make my brain whirl and wind
Praise the Maker of the world
GOD THE LORD

Clare Hewitt

OLIVET TO CALVARY.

You are invited to augment the choir for a presentation of Maunder's "Olivet to Calvary" to be given during Holy Week.

Practices are planned for the following Fridays in the vestry at 8.0 p.m.-
Friday 4 and 25 February, Friday 11 and 18 March, Friday 1 April 1977.

If you would like to take part please endeavour to attend them all.

R.J.C.D.

CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS.

A collection of £31.42p was made at St. James's, over half of which came from an effort by the Y.P.F.; and on December 18 the Vicar and I took this cheque and marched in procession through London from Hyde Park Corner, down Oxford St, Regent St, through Trafalgar Square, down

Whitehall, past Westminster and over Lambeth Bridge to the church just outside Lambeth Palace where shelter and food were going to be given for 4 days over Christmas to homeless people of all ages.

Later, on the 4th day, a young friend from New Zealand and I went up to help and cut up onions for 2 hours:- it took us quite a time later getting ourselves un-oniony at the National Theatre!

I am quite sure that the attention of many people was called to the pathetic conditions under which many of the down and outs live; many of them spend bitter nights out on park benches wrapped up in newspaper for warmth. Anyway for 4 days at Christmas there was a warm welcome, food and entertainment at the church at Lambeth and at other subsidiary centres.

An interesting comment was made by Dr John Chamberlayne, Warden of the Whitechapel Methodist Mission, to the effect that two-thirds of his flock of down and outs left the Mission where they were more or less permanent residents during the winter, and went off to sample 4 days of Crisis at Christmas. The organisers at the Whitechapel Mission were relieved not to have so many to cope with over Christmas, and were also able to give those who remained behind a little extra in the way of eats. I was glad to think that some at least of the Lambeth church hundreds had at other times some alternative to the park bench in the way of accommodation.

But the idea must have occurred to many that possibly more of the money collected at Crisis at Christmas should be spent on providing permanent hostel accommodation. Jeremy Sandford in his book, "Down and Out in Britain", advocates more small permissive hostels, simply and cheaply run. There are many varieties of hostels already of course, Jeremy Sandford enumerates them, but might there not be room for some yet simpler accommodation? and might there not be some among the down and outs who might be prepared to help? I did wonder at the time if any of them would have liked to help cut up the onions!

Hannah Stanton.

TOGETHER IN WORSHIP

The United Service in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is always an occasion of warmth and fellowship and on January 23 in St. James's we were able to experience this once again.

The service gained much from the large congregation's fervent participation in the hymns and canticles. Lessons, read by Mr. Hunter and Mr. Dodd, and the prayers offered by Mr. Brunt, made it a service led by the ministers of all the denominations representable, as this year the Sermon was preached by Father Meehan of S. Francis de Sales and he made it a plea for a joint ecumenical approach to the projected development in the Hampton Nursery Lands. As he said, it is too big a project for one church alone. Anyway, numerous approaches by different denominations will not only antagonise people but will lose the great opportunity to present Jesus to them. Since the Hampton Council of Churches meets only quarterly it is not too early to consider this proposition.

All that mars such a service for me, is the niggling thought that it is only at one service a year that the various churches genuinely worship together and even then S. Mary's Hampton feels unable to close its doors and come to share fully in this ecumenical act.

All of us who are committed to ecumenism feel acutely that it is not truly represented by one service a year. It would be good to share that warmth and fellowship in work and worship more often.

Janet Robinson.

TIMES AND TYPES OF SERVICES

The experiment of using the four authorised forms of Communion service on consecutive Sundays at 8.00 a.m. began in October 1975, and several people have suggested that it is now time to assess and review this, and consider what changes, if any, should be made. The only comments that have been made to me so far are that the 1662 form is not greatly liked, and that 'most people seem to prefer Series 2'. A revised form of Series 1 and 2 has now been authorised and attractively produced in one small booklet, very easy to follow and in particular avoiding the complications which make the unrevised Series 1 so difficult. So it might be good to continue the present sequence for a further period, but introduce the new booklet for Series 1 and 2 on the second and third Sundays of the month. No changes will be made until the PCC has considered the matter at its next meeting on March 23, and full weight will be given to the views that members of the congregation may wish to express.

indebted to Janet Robinson, who has written innumerable letters to holders of copyright asking them if they would grant permission for the reproduction of their material, and if so, on what terms, and she has had many interesting and varied replies. Now inquiries are going ahead with regard to methods and costs of printing, duplicating and binding, and it should not be long before the project is off the ground.

ERRATUM

We apologise for the misplacement of brackets in an article in last month's issue mentioning the activities of the Ladies' Choir. The passage in question should have read 'having....sung at a service in church (promotion

Also at this meeting the PCC will be considering the times of afternoon and evening services, so that if any changes are to be made they can be set up by our printers when they run off the standing-matter for the next 12 issues of this magazine in May. In the autumn and winter, 4.30 p.m. on the second Sunday has proved a very good time, and usually more than twice as many people come then as on the other Sundays at 6.30. When the evenings are light, numbers drop slightly at 4.30 and rise at 6.30. Various suggestions have been made, and we would like further comments. One view is that 4.00 p.m. would be an even better time for many families, and that for half the year both the Welcome service and Evensong should begin at this time. As regards the summer months, many would argue in favour of a later time - and again perhaps the same - for both; say 7.30 p.m., so that people do not have to cut their Sunday afternoon outing short. What do you think?

A ST. JAMES'S HYMN-BOOK

We hope before long to have a hymn-book of our own, to supplement those already in use and to remedy their deficiencies. There is, for instance, a vast range of traditional carols - Advent, Epiphany, Lent and Easter, as well as Christmas-of which we have only single scattered copies, as well as many fine modern hymns which we would much like to use more frequently. When we use them now there is a laborious process of duplication just for one special occasion, and then the papers are thrown away. This is a great waste of time and effort (though Margaret Leatherdale never complains) - and we want to keep them by us in a more durable form. So now the PCC have warmly approved a plan to have a collection of our own, contained in some kind of folder or binder, so that starting with a basic selection of forty already chosen, additions can easily be made from time to time. We are greatly

indeed!) will start meeting again in January 10....'. We are sorry for any confusion caused, but are offering no prizes to those who solved the problem and worked out where the brackets should be!

DEANERY INTERCESSIONS

February	13	Welcare
	20	The Bishop of Kensington, the Archdeacon of Middlesex, and the Rural Deans of the Kensington Jurisdiction
	27	St. John Baptist, Hampton Wick
March	6	All Saints, Hampton
	13	St. Mary, Hampton

SOME DATES TO NOTE

February

- 19 19.30 Parish Concert (Hall)
- 20 14.30 District Guide Thinking Day Service in St. James's.
- 22 20.00 Study Group (63, Park Road)
- 23 ASH WEDNESDAY: 19.15 Holy Communion (and so on every Wednesday evening in Lent)
- 24 SAINT MATTHIAS'S DAY: 19.15 Holy Communion
- 25 07.30 Holy Communion (and so on every Friday morning in Lent); 19.30 - 22.00 Disco at All Saint's, Hampton for young people 12 +

March

- 1 20.00 Tuesday Club : The National Trust (W)
- 2 14.30 Mothers' Union : Lent Meeting (W)
- 4 WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER : Services in the Church of St. Francis de Sales at 14.30 & 20.00
- 8 20.15 Hall Management Committee (18, St. James's Road)
- 9 20.00 LECTURE : Does it make sense to read the Bible? Professor Christopher Evans (Hampton Methodist Church)
- 12 12.00 Mothers' Union Jumble Sale (Hall)
- 15 20.00 Tuesday Club : Green Shield Stamps (W)

Note also that the Prayer Meetings on Tuesday & Thursday evenings meet weekly in Lent as arranged, also the youth organisations, including the Junior Choir Club and the Questers, continue to meet weekly. The Catechumenate meets twice a week under the leadership of Brother Giuseppe as arranged, and the Lades' Choir every fortnight. The augmented choir meets on Friday evenings at 20,00 as specified.

Stop Press: The 'new-look' Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Wednesday April 28 at 19.30 in the Parish Hall. Put this date in your diary NOW*! There will be further details about this very special event in next month's magazine.

BAPTISM

January 23 Kelly Patricia Stuart Shuter, 16, Deacon's Walk

CREMATION

January 28 Edith Kewley, 14, Pigeon Lane, aged 72 years
(at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium)