

*"At Christmas play and make good cheer
For Christmas comes but once a year"*

I wonder if you could say where those words come from without recourse to a Dictionary of quotations? I was surprised to find who wrote them when I started to look, for they are not in the *new* Oxford Dictionary but only in the *old* one! They were written by an author whom I had not even heard of, in the sixteenth century, Thomas Tusser. He died in 1580, just over four hundred years ago. They are part of the chapter on 'The Farmer's daily Diet' included in a book called Five hundred Points of Good Husbandry. Which all seems fairly irrelevant to 1983. But the thought of the words is worth considering. Most people could go along quite well with the sentiment but be quite unable to say *why* we ought to be cheerful!

There is something about the timelessness of Christmas which echoes in every heart and which is attached strangely to a very time-centred activity. In an unique way Christmas speaks to us of the eternal dimension of God and the finite boundaries of the life we lead. We are all here on earth for a strictly limited time. In a way which none of us fully understands God chose to link His eternal life with our very short one and so enable us to enjoy His eternity. To enjoy His eternity. That is the key phrase. Joy is quite different from happiness because it has a depth of satisfaction about it which is not dependent on our feelings in the ordinary way. We can be joyful even when our circumstances are outwardly grim and painful.

But there is no reason why we should not try to demonstrate that joy by every means at our disposal. So Christians have, over the centuries, devised all sorts of ways of making Christmas really festive. Special music and parties are very often the main means of showing this joy. Generosity is often present in those for whom it is not a common characteristic! Many people can feel real joy when they have taken part in an extra piece of charitable or good work. But we cannot *earn* joy or be sure that we are going to feel it if we are especially kind or forgiving. It comes to us if we put the ordinary things in their order of priority. This means acknowledging God to be the centre of our lives and the chief means of doing this is to worship. It means setting aside time to do it. (The times of services at St. James' appear in another place in the Spire). I hope all who read this will try to make a special effort either here or wherever we happen to be to attend some kind of worship. It may mean tuning in to Radio or Television for some of you. But do it deliberately and not just by pushing the button to see what is on. If you can do some deliberate act of kindness or generosity for someone in special need. And pray for those whom you cannot help in any other way. We shall all, I hope, be remembering Tom Stanton in his prison and those in a similar position.

Make the most of Christmas in every possible way. You won't have another opportunity until next year. It only comes once in twelve months.

What it means to be a Christian in Iran

It could have been a story straight out of a "Boys' Own" annual. Revolution, looting, a close shave with death, the heroic bravery of a faithful wife, interrogation and final escape. But for the Rt. Rev. Dehqani-Tafti, the Bishop in Iran, it was all too real. It was the story of the past 4 years of his life. As this commanding man spoke in measured tones of how he had woken one morning to find the barrel of a revolver pointed at his head the large audience perceptibly held its breath — and did so again and again as he recounted each fresh terror he faced. Indeed, one felt like raising a cheer when he explained how he finally managed to leave Iran. Yet it was clearly not a moment of triumph but rather of defeat. What of the future of the Anglican Church in Iran — now without a bishop, reduced in numbers, harassed by the Islamic authorities? Dehqani-Tafti appeared pessimistic. Sometimes persecution can strengthen a church. But it can also eradicate a church. Maybe, he said, the pressure will be too great for the faithful remnant.

Christianity has been alive in Iran since the days of the Early Church. We read in Acts 2 v.9 that Parthians and Medes were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and no doubt they took the Gospel message home with them. Certainly by the second century A.D. there was an established church in Iran and it grew and flourished until the rise of Islam forced it to seek refuge in ghettos. Only the Armenian-speaking peoples of northern Iran succeeded in continuing to practise their faith openly and still do so today. Provided the Armenian Church refrains from evangelism it is safe from the wrath of the revolutionary Islamic government. Unfortunately such a privileged status has not been accorded the tiny Anglican Church founded in southern Iran at the turn of the century by CMS missionaries. From the start it worked to convert Muslims and Zoroastrians, set up hostels, schools and hospitals and thereby acquired a position of some power. As a church it is unique in the Middle East — a convert church from Islam. And this explains its present persecution. To the fundamentalist Muslim anyone who relinquishes his Islamic faith in favour of another should be punished by death. How can the Iranian regime allow such a church, whose bishop is one of their own countrymen, to survive?

Since 1906 when Iran's constitution came into being based on civil rather than Islamic law there had been tension between the mullahs and the Shah. The mullahs opposed the modernisation of the country and the Shah feared the mullahs' power. In 1979 this shaky state of equilibrium collapsed. The Shah was overthrown and the Ayatollah Khomeini came to power together with a large following of fanatical mullahs who took control of towns and villages throughout the land. In the first week of the revolution a senior priest, a Muslim convert, was brutally murdered. But despite the now obvious danger to themselves and their work the CMS missionaries and the bishop and his wife refused to run down the church's operations and leave. Surely 100 years of devoted missionary work had not been to that end?

As the weeks passed revolutionaries seized control of the church hospital and other institutions manned by missionaries and appropriated church money. The bishop began to receive increasingly desperate messages talking of the annihilation of the Anglican Church, a church which dared to worship in Persian,

the language of Islam. One afternoon 30 revolutionaries looted his home as he was taking a siesta. Two weeks later, when he had still not been "persuaded" to leave, they returned in an attempt to force him to sign over the church's trust fund. When he refused he was brought before a revolutionary court dressed in his cassock. Fortunately the media began to take an interest and the local governor, fearing reprisals, freed the bishop. The pressure, however, was quickly re-exerted. There were accusations of spying followed by an assassination attempt.

The bishop and his wife finally left Iran to attend a conference in Cyprus. His family of two daughters and one son remained behind. While in Cyprus the staff of the American Embassy in Teheran were taken hostage and it was quite clear that law and order had at last broken down completely. The Dehqani-Taftis decided it would be safer if Mrs. Dehqani-Tafti returned to be with their children while the bishop stayed in Cyprus. He has lived in exile ever since. In 1980 his son was ambushed and killed and this event caused his wife and daughters to join him in England where he is now Assistant Bishop of Winchester. Sometime later the Iranian authorities declared that all the documents implicating the church in espionage had been forged. The church was innocent, only its bishop was guilty.

A remarkable tale, a remarkable man and an equally remarkable wife. For it was she who shielded her husband when the assassin's bullets rang out; it was she who encouraged him before he appeared in court by saying "You stand for truth"; it was she who braved the authorities to see her son christianly buried. Our prayers go out to them both and to the two remaining pastors in Iran that their witness may continue to inspire and uphold the faith.

Lesley Mortimer

THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

The Week of Prayer for World Peace for the Hampton Council of Churches started with a United Service on Sunday, October 16th. This was held in the evening at St. Mary's Church, Hampton, and the members of the Koinonia Youth Group were happy to present some lively peace songs. These were greatly appreciated, and added to the informality and pleasure of this peace service.

Canon Gordon Wilson, the Secretary of WPWP, was the preacher, and spoke of the development of the Week and the world-wide distribution of the WPWP prayer leaflet: as well as being sent all over the British Isles, this now goes to Australia, New Zealand and the USA. He also spoke movingly about peace and the imperative direction of the gospel message concerning peace and reconciliation. Canon and Mrs. Wilson are moving from Crewe to live in Hampton Hill. He has retired from parish work but will continue with energy unabated with his peace activities.

Elsewhere in this issue there is an account of Bishop Dehqani-Tafti's talk on his experiences in Iran; it was held on October 17th, the day after the WPWP service, and served as a painful reminder of the demands made on Christians in a country where reconciliation and peace at the moment are impossible.

The Week of Prayer for World Peace special service was held this year at the Westminster Quaker Meeting House in St. Martin's Lane, on October 22nd, the day of the massive CND march in London, (ignored by most of the papers, was this to order?); again this is described in another article, and it was very good to have representatives from St. James's present at it. The Meeting House was full; people who had marched were present, also some of the Peace People; some Friends came, and the members of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship arrived after their AGM. Representatives of the various Faiths in turn made their witness in contributions about peace in their traditions. The silent Meeting for Worship itself was calming and healing, and the inter-faith dimension a great joy. We had a tea party afterwards, organised by representatives of the World Congress of Faiths and the WPWP London Committee, and a cheerful time was had by all. It had been a good Peace Week.

Hannah Stanton

CHRISTIAN CND — Acts of Witness and Reconciliation

Christian CND assembled at St. Martin in the Fields on St. Luke's Day, October 18th. Health authority, doctors and nurses were represented, and all denominations of Christ's Church were represented by Bruce Kent, Paul Oesterreicher, Lord Soper, and Kenneth Greet. From St. James's, I had the great privilege, during a short service, to lead the Prayer for World Peace. We offered gifts of crosses, flowers and bread to the Minister of Defence, the Prime Minister, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and sang hymns of joy and reconciliation while they were received at the Ministry of Defence and Downing Street. We re-assembled at Deans Yard for another short service led by the Dean of Westminster.

The joyful hymns we sang that day echoed along the Embankment on 22nd. October as Christian CND moved off to lead the National Demonstration, followed by a group of Tories against Cruise. I spoke to a policeman who said: "This lot are no problem — it's peace they want after all". It was a wonderful experience to walk back along the march in search of the Twickenham banner and see folks of all ages marching along in such great numbers.

On November 6th Christian CND returned to Whitehall for the now familiar open air service. We renewed our baptismal vows outside the Ministry of Defence before moving to Downing Street where Christians from all denominations sat in the road to sing our hymns of peace and reconciliation. It was a happy event, conducted in a spirit of joy and hope, and of strong determination that our voice must and will be heard.

Anne Malins

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STOP PRESS:

P A R I S H P A R T Y

14th January 1984

Theme — "Characters" (from books, films, etc.)

Tickets: £2.00 Adults £1.00 children

..... BOOK EARLY



THE OCTOBER PEACE MARCH

It was a bit like the morning rush-hour, but it was a Saturday and the age-range of the travellers was much wider, their clothing less formal and, as I sat down in the train, a complete stranger spoke to me! Was I going on the march too? I was indeed to be one of several hundred thousand CND

supporters pouring into London at that time from many parts of the country by trains, coaches and cars to join in one of the biggest demonstrations London has ever seen. All were converging on the Embankment, and many, like myself, were hoping to enter the gardens there for the Christian CND service which was to take place before the march itself. As one struggled through the crowds, it became apparent that the gates of the gardens were locked, but – no matter – we were able to assemble in the road itself, long since closed to traffic. And there, under a cloudless sky and in warm sun, we Christians from many different churches, groups and communities sang Christian choruses, joined in prayer led by our own Bishop, Mark Santer, and dedicated ourselves anew to the cause of peace with all people, justice for all people and life for all creation: then we broke bread together and exchanged the sign of peace. It was an uplifting start to the day and gave added meaning to the long walk together, when we actually moved off, as part of the huge, quietly strong and slowly moving mass that wound, very impressively, across Waterloo and Westminster bridges and through much of central London on that brilliant October day.

Ron Bridges

Two Prayers for Peace

O God of many names
Lover of all nations,
We pray for peace
In our hearts
In our homes
In our nations
In our world
The peace of your will
The peace of our need.

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.
Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.
Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.

THE QUIET DAY 1983

St. Michael's Convent in Ham on the far side of the River Thames is such a welcoming place so how can one but feel better for a quiet peaceful day spent in its environs.

We leave the world behind when we enter through the unlocked door and go to the Conference Room where we are greeted by Sister Linda Mary, a smiling lively and friendly lady who tells us to help ourselves to tea or coffee and then, starting our day of silence, to come down to meet her in the little chapel.

Those nuns whom I have encountered in my work or other interests have always had an aura of being at peace with themselves and consequently with those around them. This lovely inner peace was the theme which Sister Linda Mary expounded for us on this visit. She spoke to us about the necessity of knowing oneself, of being at ease with oneself and in this way reaching nearer to communion with the Almighty.

We were led through the process of physical relaxation, sitting back against the chairback, of two feet squarely on the floor, of two hands resting together in one's lap, head up and eyes closed and then the soft kindly murmur of Sister's voice to remind us to know ourselves along with our aches and joys and then to open our minds to God's direction and help.

Twice during the day for an amazingly rapid hour or so we practised this meditation in the chapel. We were also invited to join the Sisters for the Middy Office after which we silently found places to eat our packed lunches. For most people there it must seem much stranger than for the few of us who mostly have silent meals, but this is a lovely silence surrounded by friends weaving a strong feeling of community and when it broke at 4 pm I found it difficult to return to worldliness.

Back in the Conference Room, we had tea and home made cake, a little word from Nicholas, a little word from Sister Linda Mary and then in a circle for the Blessing and the Peace. And so home refreshed.

Alison Thompson

CO-WORKERS OF MOTHER TERESA

Dear Friends, I thought it was time I thanked the Co-Workers of St. James's Church, and their friends, for over 500 beautiful little vests they have made for the babies in India who are found abandoned because their mothers have no food for themselves or their children. Thank you too for the lovely blankets and blanket squares that come to me for sending to India.

Mother Teresa feeds 10,000 families every day in Calcutta and if the Sisters do not cook the people do not eat. In the leper homes bandages have to be washed and re-used — old sheets torn up into three-inch strips are always welcome.

In spite of all the poverty in India Mother Teresa said she found great poverty in the West, loneliness being one of the worst. Mother said "I am more and more convinced that the worst sickness there is for a human being is the lack of affection. Medicines have been found to cure leprosy and tuberculosis but unless there are hands that are willing to serve and hearts available to love this lack of affection is incurable".

The Co-Workers give a party for over 500 of London's homeless each Christmas. We never know how many will come but there is always enough turkey and other goodies for all and even some over for the soup kitchen the next day. Each man receives a parcel containing a knitted hat, scarf, mitts, socks, handkerchief, razor blades, towel and soap all wrapped up in gay paper with a greetings card. (Women are also cared for).

It is a wonderful evening with a lot of love given and received. As one old man said: 'I have nothing to give you, love, but I will say a prayer for you tonight'. Some of the contents of the parcels come from the co-workers of St. James' together with mince pies and christmas puddings. We also received last year a lovely bag of scented soap, which went into the parcels for the elderly living on their own in the East End of London where the Sisters work.

Thank you all for your loyal support and God bless you this Christmas and in the coming year.

Violet Woods
London/Middlesex Co-Workers

SCOUT GROUP NEWS

DISTRICT SWIMMING GALAS: At the Cub Scout Gala the results were Gold Pack 9th and Brown Pack 14th. The Scout Gala was held on 4th November the Troop gaining 8th place. Barry Walker was chosen to represent Twickenham District at the County Swimming Gala held at Shell Centre Bath, Westminster. Barry won his event and Twickenham gained 1st place.

BONFIRE PARTY – 5th November: Some 300 people turned out to watch £100 worth of fireworks go up at our 15th Annual Display. This was started in a small way for the Cubs and has grown steadily in popularity each year. Although not run as a fund-raising effort we were able to add to Group Funds. I would like to thank all those who helped in any way – erecting the attractive lights, dealing with the fireworks, stoking the bonfire and not forgetting the refreshment ladies.

OUTING TO GREENWICH: On 11th November 11 boys together with 2 Officers had a memorable day out, leaving the Scout Van at Westminster and continuing the journey by boat to Greenwich.

GANG SHOW: On 19th November a number of Cubs and Scouts, together with parents and friends paid a visit to the Greater London South West Gang Show at Wimbledon Theatre. A number of Cubs and Scouts from Twickenham District were involved in this production.

CUB SCOUT FOOTBALL: So far this season the combined team have done extremely well, having won all matches played to date.

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE: Instead of holding this Service the Sunday before Christmas as usual, this year it will be held on **EPIPHANY SUNDAY, 8th January, 1984 at 4.30 p.m.** and all Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides are invited to attend **IN UNIFORM.**

Michael J. Childs

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

Thursday the 6th October was not only the occasion for the Harvest Supper but also a date which Margaret and I will for long remember. How can I adequately express my feelings to all those kind friends and associates who decided to record their appreciation of my long service as Churchwarden and Treasurer of our Church.

Nicholas had spoken to me early in July and we therefore had plenty of time to think about a suitable present and on arrival in Yarmouth – Isle of Wight for our annual visit we saw in our favourite art gallery just the very thing – an original oil painting, by a well known Marine artist, of Yarmouth I.O.W. as it was one hundred years ago.

We thank you all for this wonderful gift and for the cheque; this will provide for a portable work bench and a garden chair. Which will be used the most is anyone's guess at present. And a special thank you from Margaret for the lovely basket of flowers.

God bless you all.

Bill Robinson

TO ABOLISH CHRISTMAS

Christmas is the true adversary of its eponymous founder's creed: it is the apotheosis of materialism. It focuses the minds of our children not on what they can give but on what they can get; not on how they can help but on how they can profit; not on what it means to the world but on what is in it for them.

It is the moment in the cycle of the year no longer for the accomplishment of grace but for the acquisition of gew-gaws. It is the time for the laying up of precisely those material treasures on earth that the proponent of treasures in heaven so eloquently despised.

(Extracted from an article by Godfrey Smith in the Sunday Times Magazine, December 19, 1982 by permission.)

CAROL SINGING EVENING — Tuesday December 20th at 19.30

Have you thought about it (either as a singer or an orchestral player) and told ALL of your friends about it? It's not too late to decide to come. If orchestra, please give your name (and which instrument) to Olive Hayward as soon as possible now. Come and enjoy lots of carols — and probably an orchestral piece to listen to. Orchestral rehearsal Sunday 18th at 19.30. Please bring music stand.

P.C.C. 8th November

It is impossible to squeeze into a few lines what it took 2½ hours to discuss. What follows is a very short digest of the main points of the last P.C.C. We learnt that the Faculty for the works to the Church was about to be issued after one objection had been withdrawn and that work was planned to begin on 21st November. We agreed to loan £1,000 interest free to the 3rd Hampton Hill Scouts in order to help them supply water and electricity to the hut on the Triangle. We agreed not to have a Stewardship Campaign in 1984 but to form a Committee to look into outreach in the Parish, possibly on an ecumenical basis. We agreed to spend something in the region of 10% of our Income on Charitable causes in this country and overseas. We discussed the christmas timetable of events (details in another place in the Spire). We received reports from all the various subcommittees which handle so much of the parish's business. We do try to give an opportunity for each subject to be fully discussed which is why it sometimes takes so long.

CONFIRMATION 1984

We have just heard that the Bishop of Kensington will come to St. James's on the Feast of Pentecost, Sunday 10th June 1984 for our Parish Communion at 9.30 am. There could not be a better day in the whole christian year. Classes will start in January. Please put your name on the list which is now at the back of the church. This year we have presented 7 adults for Confirmation. Have we the same number or more this next year? Parents of children and adults considering Confirmation should get in touch with the Vicar if they have any questions to ask before entering the names.

AMY LEWIS

Many of you will already know that Amy Lewis went to stay with her daughter Gwyneth in Ormskirk, Lancs., after her accident. Having made good progress she has now made the decision to leave her home in Hampton Hill and live with Gwyneth and family.

I have known Amy for the past sixty years and have been a close friend for fifty of them. I know her roots are very deep in Hampton Hill, especially for St. James's Church where she has worshipped all her life. As well as being christened, confirmed and married at St. James's, her father, Mr. Daines, was Superintendent of the Sunday School. He and Amy's mother are both buried in the Churchyard. Having served on the P.C.C. for many years under different Vicars, Amy can remember the Rev. Job.

We will all remember Amy for her good turns willingly undertaken for one and all, especially her voluntary work for Hampton Hill and our Church. There was a great deal of fund raising carried out at St. James's in the past to assist with the upkeep of the Church. We held Summer Fetes and Christmas Bazaars, etc., and believe me, there was plenty of washing up to be done – no plastic cups, plates and cutlery, it was all china and glass and no detergents. How pleased we were when Stewardship was introduced!

The W.V.S. were pleased to have Amy's help on their trolley at Laurel Dene for many years and she was always willing to help with any function, as well as shopping for the residents. The Mothers' Union had a staunch member in Amy and she was our 'Sick Visitor' for many years.

I know Amy will be very sad leaving all her friends and connections in Hampton Hill and her Church, of which she is very proud, but I can assure you Amy we will not forget you, so please keep in touch with us all and we trust you will be very happy in the years to come.

D.G. Gloyns

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

13th November	Christopher John Ashby	5 Eastbank Road
20th November	Jessica Anne Hayden	169 Uxbridge Road
	Ben Alexander Kenneth Taylor	59 Connaught Road
	Donna Joanne Brown	73 Rectory Grove

Funerals

27th October	Leslie John Brien	6 St. James's Avenue	aged 70
	Eva Alice Martin	Laurel Dene	aged 87
31st October	Henry Charles Sporton	40 Chelsea House	aged 87
1st November	Ruby Poppleton	8 Winifred Road	aged 59
	Harriet Charlotte Treslove	Laurel Dene	aged 94
3rd November	Ethel Leah Cleopatra Brunson	4 Avenue Gardens, Teddington	aged 76
9th November	Elsie May Broome	formerly of Edward Road	aged 83
11th November	Vera Mary Phillips	19 The Wilderness	aged 70
22nd November	May Emma Slade	21 Fitzwygram Cl.	aged 78

ETHEL BRUNSON

I did not know Ethel Brunson intimately until I met her in Teddington Hospital during the last weeks of her life. At her request we prayed together and in the short time left to her we established a close and loving relationship in prayer.

I am grateful that I was privileged to see how this wonderful, gentle Christian lady faced death, placed herself calmly in God's sustaining hands — patient, brave, loving and ever worshipful — looking forward in calm confidence to the time when, as she put it, Jesus was ready to take her to Him.

Seldom can anyone have been as well prepared and ready to face death as she was, knowing that, as a door opens and closes she would pass through death's portals to a New Life with the risen Christ. I shall never forget her and I praise God for her Christian example.

Margery Orton

CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS

Because Christmas falls on a Sunday this year and there are a number of problems related to the overall holiday period we have made some significant changes in the plan.

The **Rectory School** Carol Concert will be on Monday 19th December at 7.30 pm.

Carols for All (see November Spire for details) will be on Tuesday 20th.

Christmas Eve 4.30 pm Crib Service (mostly for the very young)
 11.45 pm Midnight Eucharist

Christmas Day 8.00 am Holy Communion
 9.30 am Parish Communion
 6.30 pm Carols and Lessons

Monday (St. Stephen))
Tuesday (St. John))9.30 am Holy Communion
Wednesday (Holy Innocents))

Christingle Service 8th January 1984. The Epiphany (January 6th) is a most appropriate time to celebrate the Light of the World and we hope that very many people will support this as in previous years.

Chemists Additional Duty Rota (*For January please refer to local papers*)

December 11	Moss, E Ltd, 14 Broad Street, Teddington
18	Martin, F G Ltd, 28b Priory Road, Hampton
25	Kirby, E & R, 53 High Street, Teddington
26	Boots the Chemists, 59 Broad Street, Teddington
27	Boots the Chemists, 59 Broad Street, Teddington