

Each year in London an appeal is launched entitled 'Crisis at Christmas', a good title intended to make us aware that for many Christmas is not a season of good things and warmth and family happiness but is exactly the opposite. It is a time of utter deprivation, cold, shut shops and hostels, loneliness on a massive scale, hunger. Although the focal point is London, none of the big cities escape the rigours of Christmas and this year the numbers of unfortunates will be even larger than ever before with unemployment and lack of housing still rising. Most of us feel powerless to help in any way to check the misery which is all around us. This autumn we have been given a massive jolt by the dramatic television films of the mass hunger in Ethiopia, and, to their credit, many people have responded sacrificially. At the moment of writing there seems to have been a slight dent in the hunger, the number of deaths from starvation is slowing down. The danger is that shortly we shall all forget the terrible scenes we have witnessed and sink back into our previous torpor. It will need years of sacrificial giving of all kinds to go anywhere near solving the problem and we often forget that Ethiopia is not the only country where hunger is rife. There is a band across Africa from East to West where drought is a constant problem — the Sahara desert did not arrive by accident.

It is at times like these that we are challenged deeply by what our Christian Faith means to us. Is it just a matter of words put together in a Creed several hundreds of years ago and now feeling the strain of changing thought-forms? Is it just a matter of traditions of worship with which we feel comfortable, adapting them to our circumstances as the centuries pass? Is it just a matter of 'good works' following in the example of the Good Samaritan but not necessarily with the same background of faith? Is it just a matter of saying our Prayers' and keeping on the right side of the Almighty? Is it just a matter of living peaceably with our neighbours and not causing any fuss in the community? Is it just being honest, clean-living, decent people?

The *event* (not story) of Christmas should jolt us into a massive awareness of what God has done already for us, whether we acknowledge it or not, and it is this which gives the Christian Faith its distinctiveness. It is an account of God Loving His creation so much that He is prepared to identify Himself completely with it, become part of it, live in it, suffer in it, die in it. Our God is not one of theory or philosophy; He is one of Active Love and those who choose to acknowledge Him are called to do all the things mentioned above, pray privately, worship publicly, believe trustingly, work positively, live peaceably. Being pragmatists we tend to find 'doing' easier than 'being'. At Christmas above all other times we need to weld the two strains together, and find joy in so doing.

Nicholas Chubb

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, SHARE

This course of lecture-talks, arranged as part of the Hampton Deanery Lay Training Programme, has been held on alternate Thursday evenings recently, from September 27th to November 22nd. They have been well attended.

They have been designed to confront people with the almost insuperable problems which afflict our neighbours, most of whom live in acute poverty, in the Third World, and to get people to say to themselves: why does this happen, and is there anything which we can do about it?

We considered the inequalities inherent in 3/4 of the world's population consuming 1/5 of the world's resources. We were asked to guess how these were shared: and then we were told the bleak reality: there are –

30% of cereals and grain for the 3/4 70% for the rich 1/4.

6% health expenditure for the 3/4 94% for the 1/4.

18% export earnings for the 3/4 82% for the 1/4, and so on.

We thought about some of the causes of these inequalities, these injustices. The taking advantage of countries because commodities produced are cheap because of low local wages. Exploitation by bleeding lands to exhaustion of one particular product, eg bauxite from Ghana. Trading costs: we shan't forget the outsize Banana exhibit, cut into pieces to indicate profits all along the line, from the picking off the tree to its arrival on the tables of the West; the retailer gets the largest share, the poor provider of the crop a negligible amount. Over zealous exporting of baby foods, and unscrupulous advertising, not legally permissible in this country, exaggerating the benefits to be derived as an alternative to breast feeding. This has led to widespread infant mortality.

To the question: why can't Europe send its surplus to the starving countries? We learned that in many areas it was the wrong sort of food. Also excessive imports can affect local prices and ruin local farmers who have to leave their farms and seek employment in the already over-crowded cities. This leads Christian Aid to direct much of its funds to concentrate on irrigation and help for local farmers.

Simon Barrow lectured on "Am I my neighbour's keeper?". So often we blame ignorance and natural disasters. We were asked to recollect the 1976 earthquake in Guatemala City, with high loss of life; the city is surrounded by ravines. In the earthquake it was the poor who suffered: their flimsy dwellings just slipped down the ravines, most of the better built houses of the rich withstood the tremors. The rich could afford to pay for medical aid, the poor couldn't. One aid worker described this apparently "natural" disaster as a "classquake". In Bangladesh, 40 million people are "landless"; 65% own less than 1 acre. The power is in the hands of the absentee landlords and the money lenders. The underlying problem is powerlessness.

Simon concluded: "It is essentially a question of power and the lack of it". Another word for this is "politics". Christians, who are called to share in the work of extending God's kingdom of love, justice and peace cannot avoid this. To love people is to take their plight seriously – and to take evil, as a personal and structural issue seriously. The Good News calls for re-made people and a re-made society. For this reason, Jesus took the side of the poor. Will we follow him ? *(to be concluded)*

Hannah Stanton

HAMPTON COUNCIL OF CHURCHES TALKS

The last two of these talks differed enormously. Dr. Zaki Badawi, an Egyptian who is Principal of the Muslim College in London, gave us a fascinating insight into the thinking of Islam. Perhaps the most striking thing he said, apart from writing to Ayatollah Khomeini and telling him that the Shi'ites were not interpreting Islamic Law correctly, was that Muslims saw no need for a Saviour or Redeemer. So Jesus was just one of the prophets, albeit a great one. He also mentioned in how great esteem most Muslims held the Virgin Mary and how on a practical level they were just beginning to have full-time paid clergy, having up to now relied on the equivalent of Non Stipendiary Mullahs! There appeared to be no such thing as 'The Church' so each person and group could go their own way (and did). This was one of the reasons for the continuous warring attitudes of many tribes and individuals. There was no evangelising as such but the message of the prophet was carried by the life and example of the Sufis, the Holy Men.

Archbishop Trevor Huddleston told us of his experiences in Mauritius where he had spent five years after retiring from being the Area Bishop of Stepney. The island was a microcosm of world faiths living harmoniously side by side. He felt that the way forward was in dialogue under God, not by one group giving up their faith, but rather by each group being firm in its beliefs, thereby coming to respect more deeply the tenets of the others. It was a healthy lesson he felt to have lived in a minority church. Plainly he was much respected during his comparatively short time in the Indian Ocean. A large crowd filled Percy Road Methodist Church for this worthy finale to the talks. We are grateful to the Hampton Council for having organised such a series and trust that all who attended will think much more deeply about the issues raised.

P.C.C.

Apart from the routine matters and reports of our committees four major issues were discussed at some length. First was 'What should we do in future about the disposal of Harvest Goods?' While some of them found good homes and were much appreciated others appeared to be not really received in the spirit in which they were offered. We discussed whether or not to sell 'surplus' canned foods, to encourage worshippers to bring money instead of gifts (but would the children feel they had given anything?), or to look for real cases of hunger and hardship further afield than our own parish, (for instance parts of London). Eventually we decided to form a small committee to look into all the proposals and possibilities and report back with concrete suggestions before we had forgotten all about the idea.

Then we discussed the question of the Choir – should we, shouldn't we have one at the morning Parish Communion Service? You will have been able to read the cases for either point of view in the last copy of the magazine. The differing attitudes were reflected in the discussions and it became obvious to vote on the matter would have been divisive and harmful. We decided to end without a vote but to air the matter some more with friends and perhaps come to a common mind at a later date. One very good aspect of the debate was that strong feelings were expressed without tempers flying as happens in some situations!

Thirdly we discussed the amount of money we should give away to Charities both at home and overseas. You will see the results tabulated below. It is very good to be able support those whose case is so much worse than our own. Each year we try to bring in some new cause while recognising that some are now better supported from elsewhere or no longer need our help so much. We are always open to suggestions, preferably about those works which do not receive national publicity.

Lastly we approved the new format for the Stewardship Review. An account of this will appear in the next edition of the Spire.

One matter from the last P.C.C. was omitted. We decided not to ask for a central section of the new Communion Rail, to be made. First of all there is no reason at all why people should not stand; secondly there is the symbolic point that we do not want to feel that the altar is 'fenced off' from the worshipping congregation.

DONATIONS TO CHARITIES

CHARITY	1981 Actual	1982 Actual	1983 Actual	1984 Proposals	
Church Army – General	100	100	100	100	
Church Army – Audrey Shilling	200	200	250	300	5
SPCK	150	—	200	200	1
Church Missionary Society	150	150	200	200	
South American Missionary Society	—	—	—	100	
Bishop Wand School	100	100	100	100	
Helen House	100	—	—	—	
Cranmer Kalinder School, Uganda	—	—	100	—	
St. Christopher's Hospice	—	—	100	—	
Elmbridge Hospice	—	—	100	125	
Spitalfields Crypt	100	—	125	150	
Whitechapel Mission	—	100	—	—	
Mission to Seamen	100	—	—	—	
St. Catherine's College (Lesotho)	100	—	150	150	
Strathmore Hydrotherapy Pool	100	—	—	—	
Welcare Assessment	256	460	392	400	4*
Tanzanian Hospital	—	500	275	275	2
Uncommitted Funds	—	290	258	100	3
Miriam Dean Refugee Trust Fund	—	—	—	300	
TOTAL	£1,456	£2,000	£2,250	£2,500	

1. For Feed the Minds
2. We recommend an ongoing commitment to give at least £200 per annum for 5 years from 1983 to 1987
3. As in 1983 we recommended leaving a proportion of funds uncommitted to meet opportunities as they arise during the year
4. Welcare assessment only provisional
5. Proposal to send money direct to the Community Centre

FAMINE

When Archbishop Hume was asked recently on his return from a visit to Ethiopia what he saw when he shut his eyes, he replied 'the eyes'. We may not have been to Ethiopia but we have seen enough on the television to share that experience of 'the Eyes' with the Archbishop. We have also seen the matchstick thin legs, the sunken faces the awful flies but most of all we have seen the appealing eyes begging us in the west to help them.

We look at our own families growing up strong and fit and then we look at these people and I at least wonder how they have survived so long when we hear, for example, that they have not had any appreciable amount of rain for ten years, and so no substantial harvest in that time either. I find it very hard to imagine how these people live in normal times, however they do live, it is clear, that it is a very meagre existence with no proper water supply and very little in the way of medical facilities. Add to that catalogue, war, civil unrest, refugees from other war torn countries nearby, a government that really does not seem to care whether you live or die and you have the blackest possible picture.

The warnings of what was happening in Ethiopia have been around for a long time but they have largely been ignored. It was the television pictures that really aroused people to the true plight of these starving people, and for that we must be grateful. While we all dip into our pockets and send what we can as individuals it is much more important that we make sure our own Government and those of the other rich nations do the best they can not only in Ethiopia but also in the many other countries which are suffering from severe drought in Africa, Mali, Mauretania and the Sudan for example. Bangladesh is another place where there is extreme poverty and a desperate need for aid, and one could mention many other places as well.

The talks in Teddington entitled 'For Christ's Sake Share' about which there is a report elsewhere in this magazine have been about this very thing. When there is enough food in the world to feed everyone adequately, if the distribution is equitable, then we must be sure that in the future better ways are found of making certain that everyone gets enough to eat and a proper water supply. The population of the world is set to double before the end of the century, these problems are going to get worse unless we have the will to do something effective now. These are very complex problems with no easy solutions but the west has the expertise to help in this matter, and the money too, what it lacks is the will.

GRAND SALE

As a result of the hard work and enthusiasm of the Tuesday Keep Fit Group, the 'Grand Sale' held in St. James's Hall on Saturday 13 October raised £330.20 for Cancer Research. The goods left over from the Keep Fit stall were sold in a Garage Sale at the home of Jennifer and David Lloyd and a further £57.47 was realised making a grand total of £387.67.

We much appreciate the efforts of all the other groups who joined with us to make such a happy and successful day and are delighted to hear they also benefited their chosen cause.

Thank you all.

Pat and Eila

DAVID BONNER

As reported in the last Spire, on 18th October the Rev. David Bonner was licensed by the Archdeacon the Ven. Timothy Raphael as Priest in Charge of the Parish of All Saints Twickenham. The licensing took place within the framework of a communion service and proved to be a very impressive occasion indeed.

The large and lofty church was filled to the very last seat; many visitors from St. James's, All Saints Hampton and St. Marks Teddington, where he had been helping as the need arose over the last few years, joined David's new congregation, demonstrating how much he has been valued in all these churches. We were all very happy to give David this sign of our appreciation and witness the solemn ceremony which gave him the "cure of souls" in his new parish. A strange term this – as beautifully old-fashioned as much of the language of the licensing service; it describes a daunting responsibility which David will shoulder in all humility, and with the help of God. Looking after a parish must seem even more of a challenge to him because he still holds his full-time secular job. But as the Area Dean, the Rev. Robin Rogers pointed out in his address, having an ex-stipendiary priest in charge of a parish is a challenge not only to the priest, but to his congregation as well. It enables them to recognise more clearly something which is true for every congregation: every single Christian is a part of the body of Christ and the laity together with the priest have the joint ministry of showing forth Christ to the wider community around them.

This thought-provoking address, solemn hymns, the ringing voices of oaths taken and promises made, a stately procession with crucifer, churchwardens' staffs, and numerous clergy in flowing gowns, the harmonies of the choir sparkling as they passed through the aisles, together with David's warm and simple greeting to his new congregation – all these added up to a very lovely occasion which we will long remember. And once again we wish David very well in his new post.

Hilde Bucknell

FOOTPRINTS

This is a lovely story that I was sent when the going was tough. I hadn't heard it before but maybe you have.

An evangelist had a dream and saw two pairs of footprints along a path. On closer inspection he saw that the path was his life and the two pairs of feet were his and Christ's. But intermittently there was only one set of footprints and this occurred at times of particular hardship or distress in his life. In his dream he said to Christ angrily "You promised you'd be with me through thick and thin. What happened when the going got tough? Why is there only one pair of footprints?"

And Christ replied "Because I carried you".

Alison Thompson

PERCOLATING THROUGH "By popular demand the Tuesday afternoon club has become a coffee morning and in future will meet on Wednesdays".

From Parish Magazine for Aston Abbots, Berks.

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

Italians, I am told, say that a very busy person "has more to do than the ovens in England at Christmas". But a quick survey of a few people from other countries living in our district, asking them how Christmas was spent at home, shows that we are not the only nation with its ovens going strong.

In West Germany's Lutheran church, Christmas Eve is the most important time of the Yuletide season. There are family services in the afternoon and evening of December 24, with carols and a tree in church — on which it is important to have real candles. (There is a popular story that Martin Luther first put candles on a Christmas tree to remind people of the star that shone in Bethlehem when Christ was born). After the service, everyone comes home and gives and receives their presents. Some people may have an elaborate meal, which will include carp. For others, it is cold meats and cheeses, attractively arranged. Christmas dinner is on Christmas Day, and goose is usually the main dish.

In Poland, the emphasis is also on December 24. Before midnight Mass, each family has a meal containing 12 dishes, all meatless. On Christmas Day, gifts are exchanged; meals may include smoked ham. Although now many shops may be empty, the people still try to enjoy themselves as they have in times past.

Christmas in Spain is particularly a religious occasion. Its focal point is Christmas Eve (La noche buena) when a family is likely to have its Christmas dinner and then go to midnight Mass. Christmas Day, by comparison, is not particularly commemorated other than as a day for the family to spend together. Most families will have their own crib arranged in the house. Gift giving takes place on January 6, Twelfth Night, or as the Spanish say: "El dia de los Reyes", Day of the Kings. Many towns will have processions by "kings" often on camels, to commemorate the men who gave gifts to Jesus.

Late risers would not appreciate traditional events in Sweden. On Christmas Eve, one "eats a lot", we are told, and again there is the Christmas tree with lighted candles. But at four or five a.m. it's off to church for the Christmas Service. Christmas Day, celebrated quietly, is called the Red Day. The Danes do things similarly; candles on the tree on Christmas Eve, dances around it, and a traditional pudding, similar to rice pudding, with one almond hidden in it. Whoever finds the almond wins a small prize. Gifts are opened on Christmas Eve and there is roast goose or duck to eat.

Before their Christmas Eve church service, the French celebrate Le Reveillon. This Christmas Eve dinner is a rich one, with snails (of course), turkey and a Yule Log. As in every other country, the emphasis is on a family atmosphere as people get together to celebrate a very special time.

Chris Richards

WANTED — For Archives

Photographs of the Induction of Nicholas Chubb as Vicar of St. James and of the celebration following — to be placed in the appropriate album.

Thank you.

M. Orton

H.H.A. ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION

The Twentieth Anniversary Exhibition was the best yet, and that's saying something! More people attended than ever before, programmes sold out and the flow of people never stopped from before opening time until closing time. Each demonstration had its interested groups of spectators – the potter's wheel, the flower arranging, the model Boats (Major Turvey this year included his new "White Lady" a magnificent "10 rater radio controlled racing yacht"; there was intricate egg decoration, lace making, beautiful embroidery and collage, spinning and weaving (new this year), patchwork including a really lovely display by Pauline Leggatt, calligraphy – Dick Waltham provided each child and some grown ups, with a name label created "while you wait". There was smocking being done amidst beautiful examples on a stall telling the history of this ancient craft; corn dollies took shape under the skillful fingers of two newcomers of Hampton Hill operating under the name Alma Cottage Craft; another new exhibitor Wendy Worthy made her debut with Christmas crackers, decorations and paper flowers. The Will and Way Group showed a wide variety of the skills of their members. There was marquetry to admire and attractive soft toys by our Amy Hamilton (I loved the Snowman), the Beekeepers Society were in evidence, young Mr. Moody's models were being created on the spot; there was poetry, sculpture, richly decorated china, even chess players.

Artist Maurice Franco painted in oils an excellent likeness of our own Mrs. Casey "before our very eyes", and later posed for a press photograph with his model flanked by Mr. Toby Jessel, Don Smith (Chairman) and Joyce Doughty who masterminds these wonderful exhibitions.

As usual the model railways drew a fascinated audience. There was so much to see – so many pictures in embroidery, oils, pastels, pen and ink and pressed flowers – so much excellent photography. Justice cannot be done in a short write up.

The Host School's art displays were of high standard, the Creation was eye-catching and work by Lewis and Carr-Hill strikingly original. In the "instant Artists' corner" four year old James had depicted "My favourite Star" as a round green face, hair like sparse grass and a smile of prodigious proportions entitled "My Dad". Nice! This year Rectory School were displaying pottery; an amazingly high standard of work. I never realised the humble leek could be a work of art, or inspiration found in eggs, chips and sausages! The model houses were delightful but one piece, a lifelike composition of toadstools struck me as being brilliant.

There were many exhibits I much admired but one I actually coveted, an exquisitely painted wooden egg – a Watteau-like background against which posed elegantly gowned most beautiful ladies, meticulously and intricately painted, perfect to their elegant finger tips – a lovingly made present for her father by the talented Lucinda Ganderton.

The 20th Anniversary History of the Association was on sale "hot from the press", collected from the printer the day before, and the Local History Exhibition proved of fascination to many as did the H.H.A. records and photographs of past events. Gratifyingly and not surprisingly, the Association achieved a good few new members during the afternoon bringing the membership to well over the thousand mark. There was so much to delight the eye, and the ear in the musical performances, that although I made copious notes shortage of space must over rule enthusiasm. Congratulations to all concerned and many thanks once again to Joyce Doughty for organising this really splendid local event.

Margery Orton

AROUND THE SPIRE

By the time this magazine appears many of you will have already heard of the sudden and tragic loss suffered by Mark and Janet Robinson. Their younger daughter, Nell was killed in a road accident on October 25th near Reading. Nell was born on August 11th 1966 and was christened here in St. James's Church on November 6th the same year. Later on she went to school at Bishop Wand and after spending a year working on a farm she had just began a course at an agricultural college near Basingstoke. She was a popular and lively girl who was very fond of animals, especially horses and was a gifted cook, having been a finalist in the Tricity Junior Cook of the Year a few years ago. Her death will make a large hole in the Robinson family which will never really be filled. We all send our love and our prayers to Mark, Janet and to her older sister, Kate and they know how very much we feel for them at this time.

There will be a Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for Nell's life at St. James on Saturday 24th November at 2.30 p.m. Janet and Mark have been well known and respected in Hampton and Hampton Hill for many years and already they have been overwhelmed by people's response to the news of Nell's death, by prayers, thoughts, letters, flowers and also by money. They have therefore decided to donate any money they receive to two charities, the Ethiopian Famine Relief Fund and the World Wildlife Fund.

MOTHERS UNION

Hampton Deanery Day was held at All Saints Parish Church on October 29th. The vicar, the Rev. David Vanstone celebrated Holy Communion and preached the sermon. He was assisted by Deaconess Frances Foster. Five branches of the Mothers Union members made a good congregation, we had a procession of banners and the ladies choir from St. James sang a very delightful anthem "These are the Lovely Things".

The speaker at the afternoon session was Mrs Rachel Nugee, J.P., a former central president of the Mothers Union. She told us of the work of the committee for Social Concern and encouraged everyone to inform people of that work and also of the help available to people in need.

To end the day, the vicar, Mothers Union members and some of their husbands from All Saints were thanked for their hospitality. We went home with plenty to think about.

J.W.

FROM THE REGISTERS

WEDDING

10th November William Quain and Deborah June Cooper

FUNERALS

25th October	Maude Minnie Masters	2C Seymour Road	aged 89
7th November	Maggie Patricia Tocher Darling	32 Windmill Road	aged 90

FROM THE REGISTER OF SERVICES

Date	Communicants	Attendance	Pledged Giving	Other Giving
21st October	97	127	126	42
28th October	100	133	131	7
4th November	102	132	188	15
	By Banker's Order for October		479	
	For Ethiopia			105
11th November	104	142	304	12
	For Ethiopia			17

CHRISTMAS

Sunday 23rd	NO evening service in Church but we hope to lead Carol Singing at Laurel Dene before their evening meal. Exact time of meeting will be given out in the Church Notices			
Monday 24th	CHRISTMAS EVE	4.00 p.m.	Carols round the Crib	(Especially for parents and young children)
		11.45 p.m.	Midnight Eucharist	
Tuesday 25th	CHRISTMAS DAY	8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion	
		9.30 a.m.	Parish Communion	
Wednesday 26th	St. Stephen	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion	
Thursday 27th	St. John	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion	
Friday 28th	Holy Innocents	6.30 a.m.	Holy Communion	
Sunday 30th	Christmas 1	Morning services as usual		
		4.30 p.m.	Lessons and Carols	
Sunday 6th Jan.	Epiphany	Morning services as usual		
		4.30 p.m.	Christingle Service	

Leading up to Christmas please see the details in the November Spire.



ONLY ON SUNDAYS

MORBUS SABBATICUS is a peculiar disease.

1. The symptoms vary but never interfere with the appetite.
2. It never lasts more than 24 hours.
3. No physician is ever called.
4. It is contagious.

The attack comes on suddenly

felt on Saturday night. The patient awakes as usual, feeling fine, and eats a hearty breakfast.

About 9 am the attack strikes and lasts until noon; then the patient is much improved and is able to take a ride, visit friends, watch TV, work in the garden, mow the lawn, or read the Sunday paper.

The patient eats a hearty supper, but the attack comes on again and lasts through the early evening. Patient is able to go to work on Monday as usual.

The ailment is often fatal to the soul.—St Andrew's, Poughkeepsie, Diocese of New York