

Less than a week after its publication it is impossible to obtain a Copy of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission's Report **Faith in the City**. Already the Report is being reprinted! So great has been the impact of this document that there has been an almost hysterical response to it in some quarters. People in authority have felt threatened by the facts it has revealed. And yet reading the first summaries in the Church Press the chief challenge is not so much to the politicians as to the Church itself. In many places it seems the charge is made that the Church of England in particular among christians has failed to reach out to and make contact with millions of ordinary folk. It has been content to remain within its four walls and invite people in. Most have refused the invitation. Very few church congregations are growing. The church is widely seen as irrelevant to life to-day. In a way it seems to echo the understanding of the Victorians who found the situation much the same and attempted the remedy of building churches at almost every street corner! Now we are finding that building churches is not the solution and indeed the buildings themselves are often something of a noose round our necks. (Dare I mention St. Alban's Teddington as a local example of this policy?).

Hampton Hill would not normally be classified as an Urban Priority Area which is what the Report is chiefly about. And yet some of the figures quoted suggest that we are just that! Perhaps our physical condition is thankfully much above the average in terms of amenities. But what about our spiritual conditions? The average church attendance in an 'official' UPA is 90 people. According to our own figures the average number of communicants per service is 85.56 for September and October. For all the services added together it is 49.15.

For the financial side the average giving for an Urban Priority Area is £57 per year per member of the Electoral Roll; for other areas the figure of £52 per each member of the Electoral Roll per year is quoted. Up to now our financial position has seemed to be slightly better than this. On last year's figures the average giving per member of the Electoral Roll was £70. But looking at the demands *now* being made on us it seems that we need an average of at least £323 per week just in order to pay our Parish Share whereas in fact we are producing only about £277 per week. This means that each member of the Electoral Roll could be expected to give £84 per year. This does *not* include anything for the heating and upkeep of the church. (If heating and upkeep are taken into account the expectation would be £120 per year). So perhaps we should be classified as an Urban Priority Area after all.

The sub-title of the Report is 'A Call for Action by Church and Nation'. The Report has been published at the end of the year. I hope that we shall consider this in the New Year and see what we can learn from it. Our Lent Groups were a start in our own self-help. Let us continue in the New Year praying for guidance and action. One of the besetting sins of suburbia is complacency. Let us not fall into that trap any further. For we also have the resolve and energy and resources to find a solution to our problems. For the christian this is done not in our own strength but God's. Let us be as humble as the Kings or Wise Men in the story who were not beneath offering their costliest treasures to the Infant King so that He could use them. Or take our example from St. Paul whose Conversion we remember in January and offer all our skills and talents, our very selves, to God in order that not we but God may be glorified. That means making our whole lives a Priority Area for God.

Nicholas Chubb

STEWARDSHIP REVIEW

All right, I admit it. It was not an evening I was looking forward to. Some of my worst childhood memories, in fact, are associated with cold dark church halls – which always seemed to smell of gas, for some reason – on raw winter evenings. And then, never having been to a Stewardship Review evening before, somehow made the prospect even less inviting.

So take a bow, the team who designed the colour scheme for the church hall – and carried it out. Walking into a warm, welcoming, and I hasten to add, entirely gas-free atmosphere like that most certainly made a difference – even if it made the message Dick Wilde began to unfold no less severe.

For yes, of course, the evening was about money – and a crisis in the parish finances. Even though Nicholas relayed a message from Alan Taylor, laid low by the 'flu, that nothing – not even demands from the Bishop himself, one supposed – nothing would stop St. James's giving some of its cash to people and projects that *it* decided it wanted to support.

The facts are, Dick Wilde explained, that from being a comfortable, well-organised and well-financed group of church people we had become, almost overnight, a Church with a large financial problem. From a situation where roughly half the money given went to the Diocese, and the other half was ours to dispose of as we saw fit – some to those special projects, most on the running of the Church itself – we now had to face a situation where almost all the parish income, at least what we raise now, was needed to meet the hugely increased contribution which the Diocese was requesting.

At which stage, Archdeacon Raphael stepped forward. He's an ebullient, forthright man, our Archdeacon, a sort of ecclesiastical car salesman, I thought. For his pitch was strong, and straight to the point. St. James is a parish which should, can, and must do more to help the Diocese as a whole as it faces *its* financial problems. Put another way, St. James must not only expect to pay its share towards its own Vicar, but it ought to be paying for say half a poorer parish's Vicar, too. Which is where the Archdeacon, almost like his namesake in Barchester Towers, I thought, turned on the emotional heat. "When I'm gone", he told us, "I shall probably only be remembered as the Archdeacon who closed down fifteen churches!"

Perhaps I do him an injustice. It is probably, perhaps even certainly right, that in comfortable Hampton Hill, we simply do not think often enough of those parishes with huge buildings and small congregations, struggling on in a tough area to keep their particular Church going. We should do more to help. The Christian faithful in Kensal Rise, as the Archdeacon reminded us, do have as much right as ourselves to expect a church building and a vicar to run it.

But is that sufficient reason to expect St. James to increase its Diocesan contribution by ONE HUNDRED PER CENT over two years? Yes, I and I'm sure many others, accept the Archdeacon's argument that the facts are not really something we can question or dispute too much – the Church of England as a whole is in financial trouble – and therefore you and I have got to start giving more money now. But that much more, so quickly? It was, as they say, a thought-provoking evening.

Michael Brunson

STILL STEWARDSHIP

What is our prime motive for giving? Is it that "the Church needs the money?" Or is it that we know in our hearts that "giving is good for us?" Everything we have comes from God – He asks us to acknowledge this by giving a part of our possessions back to Him, freely, gladly, thankfully. What we give to Him is never lost; it bears fruit.

As Christians we are asked to share in God's work in the world, which is "putting love of our neighbour into practice". Giving money for various charitable purposes (charity after all means love) is one way of doing that. If the Church finds that Christians are not giving it all the money it feels it needs, could it be that Christians are not 100% convinced that the money they give to the Church is spent on doing God's work? It seems to be lost in a somewhat anonymous grey coffer. Please convince us that it is not.

In the meantime a lot of people probably "give to God" all they can by giving to charity.

Hilde Bucknell

THE BARN DANCE – 22.11.85

The Barn Dance in the Church Hall was a huge success! A thoroughly delightful and happy occasion and everyone danced most energetically throughout the evening. The "Caller" Julie, was excellent and her style of clothing and music set the mood at once. She got everyone on their feet and following her instructions quite well with her skilful "calling". After several sessions on the dance floor with old and young, all taking part, it was very necessary to have a break for "eats". Then there was a chance to talk to friends new and old, as we rested. It was surprising that anyone could dance again after eating hot dogs, beans and pies of all kinds! I had never been to a Barn Dance before and am very glad that my friends persuaded me to come along and join them. I wouldn't have missed it for anything!

Rosalie Meyerowitz

MOTHERS' UNION

The December meeting, held at Wayside, was a very happy and interesting occasion. The speaker was Miss Robina Brand who works at Hampton Court House, which is now the Save the Children's Centre for Vietnamese children. She told us that she was asked to help with the refugees for three months in 1978; it was expected that the work would be done in that time. However, they are still re-uniting families, receiving refugees, and rehabilitating them. It was lovely to hear how this work has been continuing quietly and successfully in the years since the tragedy of Vietnam became an international problem.

On January 8th at 2.30pm in the Parish Hall we will have our Christmas Party. Each member of the Mothers' Union has been asked to invite a friend but any ladies at St. James's are our friends and you would all be most welcome to share our party. As Group Leader I invite you all.

Jean Wilson

WORSHIP IN DANCE

While I've been lazing about in hospitals these last two years it seems that Eila Severn and her Liturgical Dancers have been hard at it raising the already high standard of their interpretations to an even higher level.

It was all so beautiful and the full church was silent in awed appreciation.

It was in the afternoon of Sunday December 8th, that we came to St. James's for this special service, a service of the speaking voice with readings from the Old and New Testaments, the singing voice with hymns from 100 Hymns for Today, and the flowing movements of the dancers interpreting each phase.

The Theme was The Life of Christ, from the Annunciation with Eila seeming to be taller than life as the Angel Gabriel and Hilde as wonderingly submissive Mary. Then Christmas and the joy of sharing including young children exchanging parcels. The quiet dignity of Lesley bearing the Cross very slowly across the Church followed by the junior choir with their pure young voices. The Light of the World was portrayed by a very clever sequence of movements of hands with lighted candles in the near dark, ending with the shape of the cross. Nicholas as Christ teaching and healing stood among the people, the afflicted, the lame and the blind, the too busy and vain, who all when healed took part in joining with many children who came to listen to him, although all was silent for this miming. Then Nicholas quietly left as about 20 children gathered together to give a lusty rendering of Kum-ba-yah with guitar accompaniment. The sobering dance entitled "Nailed to the Cross" was very sensitively created and performed. And so we came to the Mighty Wind and the Tongues of Fire, and I'm sure that no one could imagine it was anything else; I almost felt the wind blowing for me as the illusion was created, and how cardinal red scarves can be so completely turned into tongues of flame was intriguing.

With the closing words of the end of 2. Corinthians there followed the dance of Peace and then the exchange of greetings and Peace among the congregation, and regretfully this beautiful experience was at an end, and we moved to the South Aisle for a good and welcome cup of tea and a mingling with friends and strangers.

Thank you all.

Alison Thompson

NB The Dancers themselves are very aware that their recent service would not have been possible without the help from many other people in the Parish. We would like to say a warm thank you to all the readers and "sound and lighting engineers" who participated on the day, and to those of our friends who put in a lot of hard work before hand with publicity and general support in the production of this offering.

St. James's Liturgical Dancers

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IF YOU'RE PUT on bread and water, it's a punishment. The image conjures up visions of imprisonment and bare survival. In Africa these words mean exactly the opposite; bread and water means freedom — escape from the prison of starvation and death.

TEAR FUND

CHRISTIAN RESOURCES EXHIBITION

On 5th, 6th, 7th February the 2nd Christian Resources Exhibition is being held at the Horticultural Halls in London. It is exactly what it says. All kinds of stalls are displaying the work of the Church in its widest possible sense. Information on almost any activity will be available from ministry to computers, from books to marriage guidance. Missionary Societies, the Salvation Army, all will be there to offer enquirers information. Lunchtime presentations provide a selection of drama, music, dance and poetry.

Last year's exhibition was by all accounts a great success. So successful indeed that this year's will be even larger with a greater number of exhibitors. If you can spare an hour or two, or even half a day, you will find it very rewarding.

Christian Resources Exhibition

Royal Horticultural Society's New and Old Halls

Greycoat Street and Vincent Square, Westminster, London SW1

5-8 February 1986. Entrance £2.

Opening hours: 10am-6pm on Wednesday 5th and Friday 7th
10am-8pm special late night Thursday 6th
10am-5pm Saturday 8th

Restaurant and snack bars. A quiet room for prayer.

LADIES! A Date for Your Diaries

Friday, March 7th, is the Women's World Day of Prayer and this year, 1986, St. James's Church is the host church. There will be two services at 14.30 and 20.00 on the theme "Choose Life". The speakers will be Sister Barbara from St. Michael's Convent, Ham, and Miss Shelagh Phillips of Putney. The latter has recently retired from the Royal Navy where for the last three years she was involved as a counsellor with bereaved families and the men who served during the Falklands campaign. She is currently a counsellor, and a consultant for the Lisa Sainsbury Foundation working with those who care for the terminally ill. More details about the services will follow in the February magazine.

Jean Wilson

HEALING SEMINAR

at St. Stephen's, East Twickenham, Friday, Saturday, 31.1. and 1.2.1986. An opportunity for training and practical experience. All Welcome.

Including: The biblical basis for healing;
Jesus, the model for healing;
The use of spiritual gifts in healing;
Persisting through difficulties and discouragements.

Registration fee 75p, payable at the door.

THE WAYSIDE MONDAY CENTRE 1984-85

It is now nearly 12 years since the Monday Centre was first opened. During that time the helpers, numbering between 10 and 20, have tried to provide a place of care and counsel for all manner of people with all manner of unhappineses. Helpers, mostly with some basic training in counselling techniques, are very conscious of their own limitations. They also firmly believe in the effectiveness of good counselling, which in Jack Dominian's words is "listening with care, being non-judgmental and avoiding offering advice, but instead helping the person to clarify his/her problem and reach an appropriate solution from within their own resources which have now been liberated." Effective counselling is very demanding, but can be richly rewarding.

Some of the first helpers have this year run a series of meetings in which other parishioners interested in counselling have joined. These meetings, which helpers hope may continue from time to time, have the double objective of sharing existing knowledge and of learning more. They have lacked the professional guidance of the first training meetings held in 1974 and 1975, but they have been a modest success in the eyes of most participants.

The Wayside Monday Centre continues to open 10.30am to 1.00pm on Mondays. The regular evening session has been discontinued for the time being, but an evening meeting with two helpers can be easily arranged by asking the Vicar, Ron Bridges or Dick Wilde. The appointment will normally be for a meeting at Wayside on a Monday evening.

Many helpers feel that their involvement in counselling has had a profound and beneficial impact on their lives as a whole. They would also like to believe their work has had a beneficial effect on parish life. They would like to grow in both numbers and understanding.

R.W. Wilde

THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

I have always supposed that the majority of the congregation at St. James' is in favour of the ordination of women to the priesthood (perhaps I am wrong), certainly it is not a subject which I have ever spent much time discussing. During the recent ecumenical house groups in which some people have been participating the subject cropped up. One of the reasons given in the past for not ordaining women is that it would make closer ties with Rome more difficult. It was therefore encouraging to find that the Roman Catholic laity themselves think that women priests will be found in their churches in the future (I wonder whether the Pope thinks this!).

A television programme shown a few weeks ago in the series "The Heart of the Matter" showed two people put the opposing points of view — or some of them at least. One of them was Frances Foster, a Deaconess at All Saints, Hampton. The programme was much too short to go into the subject in any depth, and we certainly did not get to the heart of the matter.

So what is the central objection to the ordination of women? As I see it, it is that some people believe that only a man can exercise the priestly function and administer the sacraments — especially the Eucharist. We know that Christ had no women among his official disciples but there were many women who followed

him, we hear of Mary and Martha far more than we do of Nathaniel or Matthew. At the time of Jesus women were not second class citizens, they were only a notch above slaves and cattle, to have had a woman disciple would have brought ridicule and discredit upon all that Christ was trying to do, and would have hindered his ministry.

If the Christian believes that we are all equal in the sight of God then there should be no obstacle to the ordaining of women to the ministry. Those who say it will be divisive are probably right, but the Church of England has never been an amorphous body anyway. If it is right to go ahead then the fact that it will be unwelcomed in some quarters is no reason for not going forwards as slowly and as prayerfully as possible.

Women have always figured highly in the Church as teachers, missionaries, workers of every kind, indeed the Church of England is largely female, I should think most congregations are about two thirds women. Some of these women will feel themselves to have a vocation to the priesthood. They may go forward as far as being ordained Deacon – but no further. Imagine the scene, there you are in this grand Cathedral, here is the Bishop, your family and friends – the place is packed. Alongside you are your fellow ordinands – male and female – all to be ordained Deacon – but you know jolly well that whereas the men will be back next year to be ordained priest, you will not. Not because they are necessarily cleverer, worthier or have a stronger vocation – no, simply because they are MEN and you are not.

In this short article it is impossible to cover this subject in any real depth and I have had to leave out several aspects of what the ordination of women could mean – a new enrichment of the Church for instance, so I will conclude by quoting the final remarks from the programme mentioned earlier. The interviewer said to Frances Foster "That means everything is up for grabs." – "Good" she replied with a twinkle in her eye – amen to that!

Helen Taylor

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TOP PRIORITY

*I got up early one morning,
And rushed right into the day,
I had so much to accomplish
That I didn't have time to pray.
Problems came tumbling about me,
And heavier came each task,
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered:
He answered, "You didn't ask."*

*I wanted to see joy and beauty,
But the day toiled on, grey and bleak;
I wondered why God didn't show me:
He said, "But you didn't seek,"
I tried to come into God's presence,
I used all my keys at the lock:
God kindly and lovingly chided,
"My child, you didn't knock."*

*I woke up early this morning,
And paused before entering the day;
I had so much to accomplish
That I had to make time to pray.*

ADDIE DODDS

A MEDITATION – “Everything belongs to You”

As we leave Christ's table we pray that the Lord will “keep us in the hope that He has put before us”, keep us in the glory, love, peace and inspiration which we have momentarily glimpsed certainly, but much more deeply, keep us faithful to the hope we are in and possess because we have reached out and grasped the hand of Christ. “Christ” Paul says “belongs to God”. He came from God as do we, He gave himself over utterly and unconditionally to the will of God as we, poor mortals made in His image by the same Father, aspire to do and fail to do. Christ asks of us the same surrender of self – of our wills, our minds, our everything – to Him, in the same measure as He gives of Himself to the Father, and then we will find that everything belongs to us; everything, this means that is accounted as of real value in the wisdom of God, if not in the wisdom of Man. I believe and know this to be true. For each step along the way of seeking Christ and giving oneself over to Christ, in prayer, in thought, in looking for Him in life and in the daily round, for every “sacrifice” of oneself, the giving of oneself, fleetingly as it often is, richness is the reward. One is pleased, naturally, with the things of this world because one is a creature of this world and God has given us senses to appreciate the good things in it, but He has also given us senses to perceive the good things of the Kingdom of Heaven, through Christ His Son, and these are infinitely richer for indeed, they are infinite.

I can dimly understand the happiness and glory of the great saints who came so near to surrendering themselves to Christ and their despair when they felt that for all their will to do this, in some manner they had failed. But they knew, even as the dying Christ knew on the cross, that they had not failed but were going on to glory commending their spirit to the Father in the certain hope of resurrection with Christ.

Oh Lord, keep us in the hope that we have grasped, strengthen our grip on it. Help us to give ourselves over, more and more, to your Son as He gave Himself to you. So that we may, little by little, and ever more surely, walk in His footsteps, accomplishing in His name, things which are beyond our human powers to do, and appreciate true riches which we now only dimly apprehend, to His honour and glory.

SAUDI ARABIA – The Unacceptable Face of Islam?

Parish visits to the mosque have directed our thoughts towards Islam recently. The reports from these visits and discussions I have had with Moslem friends accord in giving a picture of worshipping the Creator of the Universe as a being concerned with his creation, expecting people to care for each other with love and worship him, in humility, from their hearts.

My stay in Saudi Arabia was short and the impressions I gathered are coloured by my position as an “ex-pat” (an ugly, but useful expression for the thousands of foreigners working in Saudi Arabia) unable to be involved in the lives of the Saudi citizens. My own impressions and opinions were added to and reinforced by those of my colleagues who had been living there longer.

One can admire Saudi Arabia for its application of its rigid interpretation of the Qr'aan to its legislation, despite criticism from many outside sources. I know for instance, that the government airline was fined, annually, for its refusal to serve alcohol on flights.

The five times daily call to prayer, broadcast throughout the hospital and compound, was a reminder of the important things in life, however intrusive it

may have been to conversation or a morning's "lie-in" (visiting an American compound nearby, I was grateful for the comparative musicality of "our" Imam). I failed to grasp the rationale that meant that all shops closed during prayer times but seemed to be open much as usual on Fridays — the Moslem holy day.

The TV programmes are interrupted for prayer times, too, but have additional breaks for "Words of supplication" and films of mosque prayers in Mecca etc. Even on the foreign channel (mostly English, some French) all but the last evening prayer was in Arabic. This seemed to me a pitiable waste of an opportunity for "Islamic enlightenment".

The hospital's Islamic Enlightenment Officer was responsible for seeing that the standard of public decorum was maintained and provided classes for those wishing to know more about Islam. There is a special band of men, the "Religious Police" who enforce the laws that seem designed to avoid the temptation of any Muslim. For instance, there are stories of European women having their ankles hit with these men's sticks, because they were not covered. Whether by law or by custom, the Saudi women were completely veiled. Their ankles are covered by their long full skirts and the upper part, including head and face, covered with a loose black garment. The face covering is only reluctantly removed in the presence of a man, whatever his role. Husbands and wives, accompanying sick spouses to hospital must sit in separate waiting rooms when they arrive. "Ex-pats" conformed to the point of covering "neck and ankles" being careful not to display any feminine curves in between. Censorship is heavy. Newspaper pictures are blacked out if they display plunging necklines, a shapely female body, bottles of alcohol etc. Luggage is searched thoroughly at Customs for such pornography, drugs, Christian literature, pictures or symbols. Smoking is the only commonly recognised vice left — perhaps that is why it is so heavily indulged in.

Islam is the only legal religion. A recent new issue of banknotes was recalled and redesigned, because the background building had window frames which made crosses.

I was very privileged to be invited to a Christian service. A major concern for prayer was that other premises might soon be found, as this congregation was getting too large to remain inconspicuous. One long-time resident told me of raids as a result of which leaders were sent home on 24 hours notice. The spirit of joy and fellowship could not have been greater in this congregation whose immediate problems did not prevent its looking outward with love for prisoners, congregations in less fortunate parts of the world and a thousand other concerns. I may say this involved me in another infringement of Saudi law (I think, certainly accepted practice). Women are never issued with driving licences, so I was driven by a gentleman (I assure you) who was *not* a close relative. This put us both at risk with the law.

For the Saudi citizen, the positive effects of living by a religion imposed by law are not very clear to me. Perhaps there is some security in that many decisions open to us, are already made for them. The reported crime rate is low — some would say this was due to the capital and corporal punishment threat. (One of the "sights" I avoided was where public judicial executions and hand removals take place). Family life is warm and supportive. The negative effects are apparent in the form of physical and mental diseases and disorders caused by repression and "in breeding" (It's quite hard to meet someone of the opposite sex who isn't family!). Stories also abound of Saudi residents visiting neighbouring countries for the freer sex and alcohol that are available. Apparently, alcoholism is quite common.

I wonder what life in England was like under Cromwell's "Christianity" or even that of Victoria!

I had not realised how oppressed by the system I had felt, until I arrived in Jordan, another Muslim country, where I felt as if a great weight had been lifted from me. The contrast was amazing. My host and his family patiently answered all the questions I could fit into a mere 4 days. These devout Muslims are proud of their obedience to the Qr'aan's edict to be tolerant of ones neighbours and told me stories about Christian churches being built next door to mosques and the mutual respect. I began to feel that, perhaps there is room for love in Islam. Perhaps we do worship the same "King of Heaven, by whatever name we know".

Ruth Mills

FROM THE REGISTER OF SERVICES

Funerals

Nov.	20	Doris Elizabeth Cleghorn	4 Edward Road	aged 82
	22	Winifred Doris McCreedy	6 Sherwood Road	aged 78
Dec.	5	James Stephen Higgins	37 Myrtle Road	aged 73
	13	Robert Blatchford Hawkins	134 High Street	aged 73

<i>Date</i>	<i>Communicants</i>	<i>Attendance</i>	<i>Pledged Giving</i>	<i>Other</i>
Nov.	3	38	87	28
	10	97	140	56
	17	83	112	21
	24	70	151	11

DATES TO NOTE

Unless otherwise noted all Sunday services are as usual:

0800 Holy Communion

0930 Parish Communion (1st Sunday in month informal Service)

1830 Evensong (1st Sunday in month Parish Communion)

Weekday services are:

Tuesday 0930 Holy Communion

Thursday 1915 Holy Communion

Friday 0630 Holy Communion

January

5th 0930 Christingle Service

7th 1030 Magazine Committee

8th 1430 Mothers' Union Party in Parish Hall

13th 1040 Mothers' Union Wave of Prayer

19th 1630 United Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in St. Theodore's Hampton. NO Evening Service in St. James

21st 2000 P.C.C.

29th 2000 Hampton Council of Churches

February

5th-8th Christian Resources Exhibition in London

8th Deanery Lay Training Day

16th 1830 Shortened Evensong followed by talk and discussion on The Church in the Argentine: Miss Sylvia Seaman

22nd 1000 Mothers' Union Rent-a-Stall

March

7th 1430 & 2000 Women's World Day of Prayer at St. James