

SOME POINTS FROM THE VICAR'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING, 1966

I was going to speak about our reluctance to attend meetings, and the reasons for this, but the gathering this evening seems to show that we are breaking through this. Annual Meetings are of course considered dull: "mainly business", and business and dullness are thought of as synonymous, even when the business is, we hope, not entirely unrelated to the business of the Kingdom of God. It may be that we are not yet awake to the important issues that confront the People of God. Here we are, engaged in a life and death struggle against the forces of ignorance and selfishness and all kinds of evil which spoil the whole of life for millions. We profess to believe that God can overcome all this evil, and we are here to serve under Him in this great campaign. That is the reverse of dull.

Looking back, we ask — have we done our part in the past year? Have our bells rung? Has the clock been regularly wound and told the right time? Have organist and choir taken trouble with their music and singing, and the congregation responded in whole-hearted praise and worship? Have the Church leaders led us, the sidesmen welcomed us, the teachers taught our children, the youth leaders trained our young people? Have we had our parish magazine every month, and has it been worth reading? Have our organisations for older people been efficiently run? Have our socials and outings been enjoyable and well-planned? Have our buildings and the churchyard been kept in good order? Have newcomers been welcomed and made to feel at home amongst us? Yes, a great deal has been done in these and many other ways of service, mostly by voluntary labour freely offered, and we ought at least to thank the people who have devoted their time and energy, too many to mention by name.

Was it wrong to spend so much on cleaning and beautifying our place of worship, so that now we have that large overdraft that greatly worries so many people? Was it rather not a good investment? Well, at least we can now feel delight when we come to church, instead of having to fight to rise above depression at the drabness and dinginess of the surroundings.

All this is just the bread and butter of the Christian life, and man does not live by bread alone, not even if you add the butter.

We must go deeper. Are we manifesting the power of God to a needy world: the power of God to overcome evil, the power of God to nourish and increase love, the power of God to bring healing, the power of God to change people and transform their lives, the power of God to create vital personalities, the power of God to promote fellowship? These things largely depend upon the quality and depth of our prayer life, our own individual relationship with God—and then upon the quality of our fellowship with one another which springs from this.

Are we playing the part we ought to play, in prayer and giving, in the work of God outside the parish? Are we trying to plan, like any business-man, for the business of the Kingdom of God, or are we just drifting along? Well, we are getting on, but still fall short of where we ought to be.

Change or Decay. Now as we approach the seventies there is something more. Are we facing the situation as it is **now**? It is no use just being prepared for the last war. The situation is different from what it was 15 years ago when I first came to the parish, and far different from what it was 30 or 50 years ago. Now it is **Change or Decay**. "The Church that lives for itself will die by itself." We are called to meet the challenge of the present situation, not the situation that we would like it to be: to find out from God what changes are necessary—and then put them into effect. A new and exhilarating era is opening out before us—and we go out, like Abraham, not knowing where we shall be led, but trusting in God.

The Work of Ministry. One thing seems clear. More and more, as time goes on, the burden and the delight of the Church's ministry will fall upon the **unordained** members of the laos, the people of God. The number of full-time commissioned ministers and workers is getting less and less—and very seriously so. The number of candidates recommended for training for the ministry of the Church of England last year seems to have reached an all-time low—a 40% decline from the average for recent years. Parishes like ours can now never hope for a curate for as far ahead as we can see, however urgent the need.

But as has been pointed out, it needs only a dozen people giving four hours a week, to do one man's weekly work. We have people like this in our parish, regularly giving this time and more—but there are not yet enough to meet the growing need. And the work to be done is not just administrative and practical—'serving tables'—important as that is and steadily increasing; but personal and pastoral, apostolic and prophetic, spiritual and intellectual and much else as well, according to the gifts which God has given us, and His call to us. It seems that in the future, the pattern will be for the vicar to be the coordinator and helper of a large team of ministers, both men and women, his job being, as St. Paul says of the ordained men of his day, "to equip God's people for work in His service", that is, to help to train the unordained members of the laos for the work of ministry in the widest sense and fullest range.

THE BOOKSTALL

As this is a general article about the Bookstall it will not be possible to review any particular book in detail, but will only endeavour to show the different categories of books available.

Firstly we have two sets of "Series." There are those on Baptism, Marriage, Confirmation, Suffering and Bereavement. All these are by well-known authors and have been selling steadily since we started the Bookstall last September. This is recommendation in itself.

The other series "The Christian's Guide to . . ." such things as Daily Work, Prayer, Church Membership, etc., have not sold at all well, which seems such a pity as all contain good basic, practical advice about how the Christian life should be carried out in the everyday world.

The other main section covers those which tell of an individual's work for God in a particular sphere, and includes several excellent books more thrilling than any "thriller." "God in the slums," written some thirty years ago, but still going strong; "Within a yard of Hell" whose subject, Sister Gemmel of the Church Army, was first inspired

by "God in the slums"; "Green leaf in drought" and one of the most recent and still not published in this country—"The Cross and the Switchblade" (flickknife to us). There are several others.

We have two copies of the NEB, one of which is paper-covered and costs the princely sum of five shillings. This would make an excellent present for some young person and that could be the best five shillings the buyer ever spent! We also have a Commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel but this costs twice as much and is therefore likely to be with us for some time yet, I fear.

There are several children's books and in fact the Ladybird book on "The Lord's Prayer" has been our best seller so far. This series of books at half-a-crown a time are unequalled in value for not only is the text large and uncluttered for small children but there is a full-page coloured picture on every other page.

There are still quite a number of books I have not mentioned, but they are such a motley collection that in the space allocated I could not hope to do them justice. Two, however, do stand out and both are by men who set out to prove that Christianity was unworkable and who, as they delved into it, were themselves converted. One is C. S. Lewis's "Surprised by Joy" and the other Frank Morison's "Who moved the stone" the minute by minute account of the resurrection.

Suggestions for the Bookstall are always welcome and so are orders for such things as Prayer Books, Bibles and Hymn Books, several of which we have already obtained for people. While the Bookstall has not had a resounding success most weeks have seen the sale of at least one book so we hope that gradually our turnover will increase as people become more book-conscious.

H.T.

A HERO OF FAITH

One recent Sunday evening some members of the Y.P.F. set out for All Hallows' Church, Twickenham, to attend Evensong and listen to the guest speaker, Pastor Richard Wurmbrand, a former Jewish atheist, tell of his fourteen years as a political prisoner in Rumania. During his talk he told of his life in Rumania and how he had been arrested for "counter revolutionary activities". After the service he spoke to us again and when he had finished we were asked to question him on anything we wanted to know. One of the many points made was about how, when in prison, he bargained with the guards to let him preach the Gospel to his fellow prisoners for a beating. This he was allowed to do regularly and many were converted, even some of the guards.

Although fourteen years of his life was spent in this way he never gave up hope, and when all the Bibles were confiscated and other religious belongings he kept on praying all the time so that he should not forget God.

He did not hate his captors, and believed that God was with him, even in the prison. Through many hardships—which he did not admit to—he was finally released last year and went to Paris where he is working in the Faith in which he believes.

J.W.

HISTORY SOCIETY

As we go to press the first anniversary of the issue of our book "The Birth and Growth of Hampton Hill" has just passed and we announce with pride that only 25 copies remain out of the original

750 and can congratulate everyone concerned on the success of this venture. M.O.

THE MOTHERS' UNION

The M.U. Diocesan Festival will take place at St. Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday, April 26, at 7 p.m. This year a warm invitation is extended to husbands and children to attend our great annual service with us.

Our own Deanery Festival will be held on Thursday, May 26, at 2.30 p.m. in All Hallows' Church, Twickenham.

The Deanery M.U. and Y.W. party is planned for Tuesday, May 10 at 7.30 p.m. at All Souls' Church Hall, St. Margarets-on-Thames (where the last Deanery Festival was held). We have been asked to perform the mime we did at the Parish Concert—our fame is spreading! Please make a note of all these dates and make a big effort to come to them where possible.

By an oversight our May Branch Meeting was omitted from our printed programme. Miss Elder, who has spent many years working in St. John's Diocese on the S.E. Coast of South Africa, will be speaking about her work in the Transkei on Wednesday, May 4, illustrating her talk with photographs.

Mrs. Gilder, who has recently come to us from a Norfolk branch, has offered to organise a Cheese and Bread lunch during Holy Week—all profits to be given to Christian Aid. Further details will be given later. V.R.

THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

The Beetle Drive in February was a cheerful social evening. This month Mr. Stevens is coming to talk about the four main Religions of the World. It is a vast subject so he will discuss two religions at the April meeting, and has kindly promised to come on May 11 to discuss two more, so please make a note of this date.

The meeting on May 25 will be preceded by an Extraordinary General Meeting to elect new committee members.

K.B.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP

In the last two months the Y.P.F. has had quite a closely packed timetable, mostly due to the arrangements which had to be made for our highly successful party.

In February about thirteen of us went to the Central Hall, Westminster, to a Scripture Union rally "Hit or Miss—the Christian viewpoint on success." It was extremely well presented by the Rev. David Sheppard, and the "Joy Strings" (the Salvation Army "pop group") provided the musical side.

Of course the most important feature in February was the Y.P.F. party, held to raise money to help pay transport costs for the Y.P.F. holiday at Easter. The cake competition was very successful and there were some delicious entries—we should like to thank Mrs. Stewart for undertaking the very difficult task of judging them all. Wayside was considerably brightened up by posters and maps—some of which, I believe, were taken from their usual places in Peter Orton's bedroom—and many people of the parish ate, listened, and bid their way through an enjoyable evening. We raised £21 10s. 0d. and we cannot sufficiently thank all those who came and supported us.

The next few months promise to be equally exciting and interesting what with the holiday and our Easter programme. This includes our Open Meeting on Palm Sunday to which all parents of members and anyone interested are welcome, especially young people who wish to join the Y.P.F.

The programme for the next two months on Sunday evenings at 8 p.m. at Wayside is as follows:

- Apr. 3 Palm Sunday—Open Meeting.
- „ 8 Good Friday: Discussion.
- „ 10 Easter Sunday: Discussion.
- „ 17 The Y.P.F. on holiday.
- „ 24 "Prayer"—Guest Speaker: Dr. K. Lapworth.
- May 1 Guest Speaker: Mrs. Brunt.
- „ 8 Bible Study—Matthew 5, v. 11-16.
- „ 15 The Beatitudes.
- „ 22 The Beatitudes.
- „ 29 Whitsun—Guest Speaker: The Rev. A. E. Hunter.

L.Y.

OUTING TO WHIPSNAD ZOO

The Social Committee is arranging a visit to Whipsnade Zoo, near Dunstable, on Saturday, May 21. The coach will leave the church at 9.30 a.m. and return for 6 p.m. The coach fare is 8s. 6d. for adults and 5s. 6d. for children (under 16). Reservations should be made early through the Social Committee.

Further details of the outing will be given in the May magazine.
R.B.

HOME MISSION: ADDITIONAL CURATES' SOCIETY

A.C.S. is to-day playing a vital part in the work of the Church in England and Wales. Our own country, still nominally Christian, has become a mission field; an overwhelming majority of the population find no room in their lives for the worship of Almighty God. The front-line troops in the struggle to win people back for God are the priests; and they are lamentably few for the task, because their work must always be pastoral, loving and caring for individual souls. The town priest to-day finds his day entirely filled by the care of those who come to church, and he has no time left for the outsiders, who are equally his responsibility.

In this missionary situation, the work of A.C.S. is two-fold. Firstly, a continuous chain of prayer is maintained for vocations to the priesthood. Secondly, with the money contributed by its supporters, A.C.S. tries to maintain assistant priests where they are most needed; pioneer work is being sponsored in the new towns and new housing areas, as well as in depressed down town parishes. £65,500 has been promised in grants in 1966. Every year the friends of A.C.S. increase their generous giving, but it still is not sufficient to answer the many urgent calls for help.

A.C.S. asks YOU to give generous support, in gratitude for all that YOU have received from your own clergy.

Gifts may be sent to the Secretary of A.C.S. for this parish, Mrs. Rockcliffe. (Last year we sent £12 9s. 6d. from St. James's).

CONFIRMATION

At the Adult Confirmation in St. Paul's Cathedral on February 26, Mr. Ronald J. C. Dafforne, Mrs. Nellie Watson and Miss Barbara Watson were presented from this parish and confirmed by the Bishop of London. Hugh Roberts and Timothy Tallent were also confirmed by the Bishop of London at the St. Paul's School Confirmation in the Cathedral on March 9; and Michael Sly was confirmed by the Bishop of Bedford in the Chapel of the Royal Masonic School on March 20.

Classes have been started at the Lady Eleanor Holles School in preparation for a Confirmation which it is hoped may be held in the School Chapel of St. Anne in the autumn, and I should be glad to hear of more possible candidates for our own Parish Confirmation to be held here on our Dedication Festival in December—perhaps the last one to take place in our church for some years.

R.H.B.

BURIAL AND CREMATIONS

- Feb. 26.—Elsie Edith Moses, 21, Longford Close, aged 82 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium).
Mar. 1.—Martha Jarvis, 25, Cranmer Road, aged 75 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium).
.. 10.—John Charles Bennett, 121A, Uxbridge Road (at Teddington Cemetery).

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- Apr. 12.—10.0 a.m. Editorial Board (52, Park Road).
.. 13.—8.0 p.m. Hampton Hill Association: Public Meeting (Hall); 8.15 p.m. Properties Committee (36, St. James's Road).
.. 17.—5.15 p.m. St. James's leads service at Laurel Dene.
.. 18.—8.0 p.m. Hampton Council of Churches: Prayer and Discussion Group (W).
.. 20.—8.0 p.m. Stewardship Committee (106, Park Road).
.. 24.—5.15 p.m. Y.P.F. leads service at Laurel Dene. Immediately after Evensong (at about 7.30 p.m.) it is hoped to show (in church) the striking film about the work of Christian Aid—"THE LONG MARCH" (showing time about 35 minutes).
.. 25.—St. Mark's Day: 9.0 a.m. Holy Communion; 8.0 p.m. Hampton Council of Churches: quarterly meeting of Committee (St. Mary's Church).
.. 26.—7.0 p.m. Mothers' Union Diocesan Festival Service (St. Paul's Cathedral).
.. 27.—8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group: "Religions of the World," the first of two talks by the Rev. G. Stevens (W).
May 4.—2.30 p.m. Mothers' Union: "South Africa" (W); 8.0 p.m. Newcomers' Party (by invitation).
.. 6.—8.0 p.m. Inter-Church Social Evening (St. Margaret's Hall)
.. 14.—Christian Aid Local Competitions: After judging (10.0 a.m.—12 noon) the entries will be on view to the public from 2.30 p.m. onwards (All Saints' Hall).
16.—CHRISTIAN AID WEEK BEGINS.