

Vicar's Notes

As I write, Hannah Stanton has just returned, and it was good to see her again—even if only at second-hand on T.V.—looking so vigorous and gay, so undefeated and full of faith, answering all the questions put to her so charmingly and well. We see many advertisements on I.T.V.—here, for a change, was an advertisement of a different kind, and a fine one at that; an advertisement for Christianity. St. James's was represented at the airport by Mr. and Mrs. Rockliffe, who had also been present two days before, when a message from South Africa wrongly stated that she was due to arrive. Despite the happiness of having Hannah back, there is sadness that it had to end like this, in deportation and rejection, instead of in a fair and open trial or unconditional release.

TWO LETTERS

I have just received, by the same post, two important letters. The issues they raise cannot be shelved. The first one I opened was from the firm which looks after our organ. It stated again what we have been told many times in the last five years, that our organ, mishandled in 1951, was in a bad condition. But it went further—it told us we can no longer postpone, as we have been doing, a major overhaul and repair without serious results. Deterioration is now cumulative and rapid—to put matters right “we fear that a cost exceeding £1000 may be involved.” (A few years ago the figure quoted was £250, but we could not face it then. If action is not taken now, the amount needed will undoubtedly continue to increase in the same rapid way).

The second letter was from a group of young priests, challenged as we all have been by the situation in South Africa, but proposing to meet that challenge in a way which might not have occurred to us. They say: “Our hearts and minds have been deeply moved by the suffering of the peoples of South Africa, but we are deeply ashamed that it has taken Sharpeville so to stir us. We are certain that if we now pray without being prepared to share the price that the sin of Apartheid exacts, we pray to our own damnation. We have therefore decided to put such proportion of our income as we are able

at the disposal of the Archbishop of Cape Town for as long as the need persists. By making this more than a once-only-gift we can, at least in some measure, continue to live with the sinful situation that has arisen, thereby—as by our prayer—helping in some measure to redeem it.

“The Archbishop has . . . expressed his deep gratitude for any help he may receive in his struggle to relieve misery and to create a more just society.”

THE DILEMMA

These two letters provide an example of the dilemma with which we are constantly faced. How much attention should we give to our own local needs when confronted with pressing and urgent calls for wider service? We can imagine the various ways in which different people would try to solve the problem. Take Mr. A. He says: “Of course local needs should come first. We must have a strong base before we can do anything on a larger scale. It is our duty to see that we have a well-maintained and beautiful church, with everything in order, inside and out: sound roof, repointed brickwork, first-class organ, fine carpets, a well-planned colour scheme, the best in hassocks and hymn-books, and so on. You will find that people will gladly give for such a purpose—if necessary (though I doubt that it will be) over many years, because they can see what their money is being used for, the results are before their eyes. Then, when everything here is in first rate condition, you can begin to talk to them about the needs of the Church overseas, and other such such things.” Then Mr. B chips in: “Yes,” he says, “I agree in part. Local needs must be met first. But I would put the priorities differently. Men before buildings and equipment. A parish of this size obviously needs a curate, and perhaps a lady worker too—why should ours be one of the few parishes in the Deanery without such help? Get the parish adequately staffed first, I say: then put the buildings in order and repair the organ; and when this is done—well, then the world can become our parish.”

But Mr. C has misgivings. “Aren't Mr. A and Mr. B in their enthusiasm advocating a rather pernicious form of parochial selfishness and spiritual debauchery? What are we here for?”

Why should the parish come first like this? A curate may well be desirable, but there are not many to spare—and in other parts of England there are parishes two and three times the size of ours without one. Should we not work and give to make it possible for them to have the additional help they need before we think of ourselves? I know we are doing something towards this through our contributions to the Additional Curates Society and the Ordination Candidates Appeal—but are we doing enough? And then—you can't put off facing the great needs overseas—in South Africa, for instance—till some indefinite future. If you do, there may not be any future at all, for any of us. To put it at the lowest level—what about the beautiful church and the fine organ, if the Communists take over?—as they will, if Christians as a whole adopt the policies advocated by Messrs. A and B. Better dead than red—but better still to be realistic now, and send your help to the places where the issues that will decide the future are being fought out. I would challenge the parish to do this: Give to the hilt for the conversion of the world to Christianity—be content to go on locally with some discomfort—a leaky roof perhaps, a piano instead of an organ for your music, somewhat threadbare equipment and inadequate manpower, so that men and money may be poured in where they are most needed. Surely that is Christ's call to us to-day?"

Is more money the solution?

So Mr. D. thinks. He has listened unmoved to most of what has been said. Now he can remain silent no longer: "I think you chaps are raising quite unnecessary difficulties, making it all seem much more complicated than it really is. If only you would all concentrate on persuading more people to give more—to give in a worthy fashion, not just token gifts as most do at present—then you could all have what you want. Mr. A. could see his well-maintained church, with nothing shoddy inside or out; Mr. B. could rejoice in the fact that the parish was adequately staffed, and everything functioning as it should; while Mr. C's conscience would be set at rest by knowing the large sums that were going to centres of great need and

causes of righteousness every month. Yes—an intensive planned-giving campaign is all we need to put everything right."

But Mr. E. has still not spoken. Can he add anything? He is rather diffident, but feels that he has a point no one else has yet made. "I think Mr. D. has got something—but by no means everything. He thinks that a large income will solve all the Church's problems, whereas in fact, it may increase them. If we give money as a substitute for personal service, we haven't got very far. I feel we often fail in offering service we could well do. Again and again I have heard calls for volunteers, and no one has responded! This has meant that if the job has been done at all, it has been done by the Vicar or some other already over-burdened person. Yes—I am not excusing myself—I have looked the other way. But, you see, money spent for example in buildings will bear fruit, only if the numbers using them increase because the outsider is being drawn in. But this cannot be done by money; only by my—and your—being willing to offer our time and spiritual gifts. Perhaps we should speak of Christian stewardship rather than of Christian giving, for the idea of stewardship is not tied to money alone. We are stewards of our time and talents as well as our money and should be using them all to the glory of God. I think if this idea of Christian Stewardship could take root amongst us, we should have a solid base from which to tackle the problems before us."

What do you think? What would you add to all this, if you were the next speaker, Mr. F?

A NOTABLE OCCASION

On June 27, Mr. and Mrs. William Thomas celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of their marriage. We congratulate these two grand old people, not only on the length of their married life, but on its happiness and deep Christian quality.

Stop Press.—Owing to pressure of space, an article giving details of the different stalls at the Summer Fete, cannot be included this month. These particulars will be found in the Church porch, and further information can be obtained from Mrs. Orton, 30, St. James's Road.

THE MOTHERS' UNION

At the May meeting Mrs. Stevens gave a very interesting talk on "Jehovah's Witnesses." There is much much that we, as Christians, can learn from these earnest folk. They know very clearly what they believe, and are able to argue in favour of these beliefs, (quoting chapter and verse). They are willing to work hard to further their cause. We need to be very sure of our own beliefs when arguing with them.

It was pleasant to hear the Mothers' Union acclaimed by that forthright speaker, the Bishop of Coventry, at the Annual General Meeting of the Additional Curates Society. He pleaded that this band of "praying mothers" should pray continually that their sons should find their vocation in the priesthood (a full report of Dr. Bardsley's address will be published in the next edition of "Home Mission News").

Ten members attended the Diocesan Festival Service at St. Paul's, when we shared a coach with St. Mary's, Hampton Branch. It was fitting that our banner was carried by Richard Palk, the son of one of our members.

Unfortunately we have several sick members, though all are making progress. Mrs. Childs has returned to St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington after a short stay in Teddington Hospital, Mrs. Christie is at home again from Richmond, Mrs. Ward from West Middlesex, whilst Mrs. Broady is now a patient in Soho Hospital and Mrs. Button is confined to her room. We wish them all a speedy recovery.

THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

The meeting of the Young Wives' Group on 27th April had a very large attendance, no less than 95 members and friends being present. Miss Eve Collyer, from the Consumers' Advisory Council of the British Standards Institution, gave an account of the work of the council in establishing satisfactory standards of quality for goods normally used in the home.

She first outlined the work of the B.S.I., explaining that when the Institution was first set up over 50 years ago, its immediate task was to standardise screw threads, but since

then its work had expanded enormously to cover most manufactured products. Since the war the now familiar B.S.I. "Kite mark" has been used to denote to the purchaser that the product has been made to a certain minimum standard of quality approved by the Institution. Also the Consumers' Advisory Council has been set up to test and issue reports on a variety of domestic goods. These reports were issued to those interested on payment of a small yearly subscription and undoubtedly were of considerable value to the shopper.

The meeting terminated with a "Quiz," the results of which showed that it is very unwise to judge a product on its appearance alone.

It was evident from the spiritual discussion that the subject of the talk was of keen interest to those present.

The Theatre outing originally arranged for May has been postponed until the Autumn, owing to booking difficulties. M.E.N.

THE YOUTH CLUB

In the spring, a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of . . . St. James's Youth Club. So it appears from our increasing attendances at both Friday and Sunday meetings. In addition to these regular events, we have been able to turn our attention to a broader horizon during May. On the Saturday before Christian Aid Week, a large number of members gathered outside the Congregational Church in the High Street, armed with cans, dustbin lids, corrugated iron, sheets and chains. Much to the surprise of passers-by these materials were transferred into what went under the name of a Hong-Kong refugee hut. During the week, many people must have passed this shack and we await to hear how much money was collected there to aid refugees.

The club participated in a number of events sponsored from Twickenham Youth Week. On Friday, May 20th, we closed the club and we all went to a Tramps' Supper. The following day, plenty of members were keen to extort money for us on sideshows at a Garden Party at Heatham House. We also had representatives on a float at the Youth Tattoo and at the Commonwealth Youth Sunday service at York House.

We meet as usual each Friday at 7.30 p.m. at Windmill Road School Hall and each Sunday at 8 p.m. at Wayside throughout June. If you are between 15 and 25, why not come and join us?

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP

The week after Easter, the Fellowship organised a collective migration to the wilds of Norfolk, separating ourselves from civilisation for seven glorious days. While the holiday proper began on Thursday, some formed an advance party, travelling with most of the luggage on the day before. On Thursday after lunch we boarded our fleet of three yachts and a motor launch, with various tenders, and spent the afternoon on Wroxham Broad (not without mishap) getting the feel of our craft. That night we moored early, and with varying degrees of success each crew prepared its evening meal. After disposing (?) of the washing up, we held a short meeting on the launch, and then returning to our boats, we turned in, swathed in anything warm and wedged into all available spaces. The next morning the company was rudely awakened by two big splashes, the causes of which soon climbed out again, repenting of their decision to pioneer early morning dips. On later occasions others were to immerse themselves intentionally or otherwise in the freezing waters, and the record stands at thrice, fully clothed. On Sunday we attended communion at All Saints, Horsey, and on returning found the fleet blown onto the reeds. During salvage operations a rope was wound round the launch's propeller, and though one stout soul dived into the freezing depths with a knife, it defied all attempts to remove it. Abandoning the task, we packed lunch and walked overland to the sea. The next morning when the winds had subsided our largest yacht towed it into a boat yard, where the trouble was dealt with. The holiday was a great success, largely due to the Organiser—Admiral Dr. Rodney Bishop, and to Miss Ann Jennings who very efficiently tackled the supply situation, and it helped greatly in strengthening our sense of fellowship. We hope that it may be possible to tackle a similar project next year when we shall be able to utilise our latest techniques in getting out of the mud.

S.D.H., R.H.S.

STANDING MATTER ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS

Magazine Secretary:

Mr. C. W. Smith, 9, Carlisle Road, Hampton. Tel.: Mol. 1956.

Organist and Choirmaster:

Mr. C. G. Welling, A.R.C.O., A.R.C.M., 16, Clive Road, Twickenham. Tel.: Pop. 5958.

Addition to Advertisement

Messrs. E. & B. Horne, 143, Uxbridge Road, are now on the 'phone: Mol. 2744.

SOME DATE TO NOTE

- June 5.—**Whitsunday:** 8.0, 9.0 a.m. & 12.15 p.m., Holy Communion; Matins and Evensong as usual; 9.45 a.m. Children's Service.
- June 12.—**Trinity Sunday.**
- June 14.—8.0 p.m., Prayer Group (Vestry).
- June 15.—3.0 p.m. Garden Party for mothers and children baptised during the last twelve months (Vicarage).
- June 20.—7.30 p.m., Ruri-Decanal Conference (St. Mary's Hall, Twickenham).
8.0 p.m., Concert by St. Paul's Cathedral Choir (Royal Festival Hall).
- June 24.—Nativity of St. John Baptist, 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
- June 29.—St. Peter. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group—talk on Indoor Gardens (W).
- July 2.—3.0 p.m. Summer Fete and Garden Party (Laurel Dene).
- July 3.—6.30 p.m. Confirmation at St. Mary's, Hampton (Evensong will be said at St. James's at 5.30 p.m.).

All copy for the July magazine should be sent to the Vicarage by Tuesday, June 14. It is hoped that magazines will be available to distributors on Friday, June 24th, or early the following week.

BAPTISMS

- May 22.—Andrew Stewart Bull, 51, Bishop's Grove.
„ 22.—Hilary Annette Judge, 53, Uxbridge Road.
„ 22.—Debra Karon McCormack, 1, Wolsey Road.
„ 22.—Lynn Macdonald, 27, Windmill Road.

MARRIAGE

- May 14.—Robert David Alexander Frow to Dinah Mary Mills.

BURIAL

- May 18.—Amy Louise Uncles, 16, Windmill Road, aged 60 years.