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HALSALL PARISH MAGAZINE



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My Dear Friends,

Last month we thought together (that is if you read your magazine) about the corporate meaning of the Eucharist, the ideas which underlie its position as the centre of the family life of the Christian community. This month we think of some practical results which follow from those ideas.

To begin with let us call up in imagination the Eucharists of the early Church of the New Testament when the corporate sense was strong. In the second chapter of Acts we read of it as an integral part of the family life. 'Fellowship' and 'the breaking of the bread' appear side by side, with the 'eucharistic' note of praise and gladness running through the whole. It was into a society of this kind that fresh members came through Baptism.

In the Epistles of St. Paul, which are earlier documents, we get more valuable glimpses of Christian life as it was being lived. In I Corinthians we get a very realistic glimpse of the Eucharistic meals. The idea of fellowship again is integral to the Sacrament. St. Paul uses the fully realised fact of the unity created by the common meal as the basis of his argument against sharing idolatrous feasts (Ch. X 14 ff). In the following chapter (XI 17-34) the worst abuse he has to correct is that of splitting the Christian fellowship at the Lord's Table by introducing divisions of class and wealth. In order to recall them to truer and better conceptions, he records the traditional account of how the Sacrament began in deeds of Christ at the Last Supper, and was hidden by Him to be continued—an act to be 'done'. From the act, theories and theology arose, but sacramental practice was the starting-point, and that practice consisted in a corporate meal of the Christian society.

Actual references to the Sacrament in the New Testament are not frequent. We must remember that the Epistles are 'occasional' works, arising from particular circumstances, dealing for the most part with controversial matters; to the calm and regular habits which were unchallenged they refer as little as do the daily newspapers to the normal flow of happily married life.

The Eucharist is very closely associated with the Christian institution of Sunday. The Lord's people ordained the Lord's Day for the Lord's Service. It is certain that the marking of the first day of the week was to commemorate the central fact from which the Christian religion sprang—the Resurrection of the Lord. Its distinctive character was marked by its being the occasion of the weekly family gathering, late at night or early in the morning.

Of those gatherings the principle feature was the Eucharist itself at once the family meal and the Sacrament of the Lord's appointment. For more than three centuries the Lord's Day was not the day of rest, but the day of Eucharist. The institution of Sunday as a weekly day of rest made worship easier but it obscured the original character of the day. The time now is surely ripe for a restoration in teaching and in practice of the primitive custom of weekly Sunday Communion as the normal and expected habit of every faithful churchman. A restoration of

the Eucharist to its original place as the principle and central feature of the normal Sunday morning service is much to be desired. We have it on the authority of the early days of the Church's fervour when she realised herself as a body with a distinctive membership and distinctive witness; on the evidence of the New Testament, and with the desire behind it of the Reformers.

To English Church people the intentions of the Prayer Book are evident, if for long they have not been carried out in practice. Every Sunday has its special Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, for use at the Eucharist. These are printed in the Prayer Book before the Eucharist, which stands central—all else grouped round it—not only for symbolic reasons, but for the practical purpose that the book should open and lie easily where it would be naturally most used. Matins and Litany are preparatory. The New Testament lesson at Matins on Palm Sunday, Good Friday, St. Thomas and St. Mary Magdalene is arranged to introduce the Eucharistic Gospel. At the Eucharist alone do the rubrics (prayer book directions) order a sermon to be preached, alms to be collected, notices of 'family' concern (such as bans of marriage, objects of almsgiving, matters of discipline) to be announced. The Catechism and the Confirmation prepare and equip the young for full participation as communicants. The 'convenient' (that is fitting) conclusion to the marriage of two members of the Christian family is the Eucharist. The mother newly 'churched' will 'conveniently' give her thanks in the congregation by receiving Holy Communion.

The greater functions alike of the Christian State and Christian Church are performed at the Eucharist deeply concerning, as they do the whole body of the faithful. The coronation of a Christian king has always been with the framework of the Eucharist. The various Orders of the Christian ministry are given in the setting of the Eucharistic service—deacons after the Epistle, priests after the Gospel; bishops after the Creed—higher orders by stages nearer to the centre of the service.

Such a brief recapitulation makes clear how far we have diverged both in thought and in practice from the intentions of the Prayer Book, which reflects the primitive tradition. It is surely a matter of great encouragement to us all at St. Cuthbert's, to see how successful our efforts have been to restore the Eucharist to its rightful place. It now stands out clearly as **the family service**. It is given all the dignity consistent with the time at disposal, hymns and simple music for the sung parts with simple ceremonial. It is the regular and expected meeting place of the whole Christian family in the parish and it has done much to revive, as well as to express, the sense of corporate membership in the Church. Individualism has been allowed to creep so far into our whole conceptions of the Eucharist that we need all the outward help and expression we can find to aid us in this re-orientation of our thoughts and habits.

Some will say they prefer the plainer or quieter 'early service'. Certainly provision must be made for an early service in the interests of some who cannot be present at the central Family Service. But such services are clearly extras, to meet special or exceptional needs. Family loyalty demands our presence at the family gathering, and no personal or individual

preference can be rightly admitted as an excuse for attendance at another. To sink our personal preferences, even what we may imagine to be our spiritual profit, will be an act of sacrifice to the community which will not lose its reward. The 'weaker brother', the younger fellow member in the body, must not be given the chance to ask, 'Where is so-and-so?' and to receive the answer, 'He or she is setting his personal preferences before his loyalty to the family.' That in fact is both selfishness and (probably) pride. Certainly it is a lack of that care for the brother which is an essential ingredient in the virtue of Churchmanship which the New Testament calls 'love of the brethren'. In ordinary home life, the son or daughter who is constantly absent from the family table or expects meals at his or her own times, does not gain a reputation for being a good member of the family.

In closing I once again pay my tribute to many of the young people of our parish and their parents who have remained faithful to their Family Communion. Let us hope that our newly confirmed members will establish the habit of a regular attendance at this service supported by their parents.

God Bless you all,

Your sincere friend,

HERBERT BULLOUGH

THE CALENDAR

The Transfiguration of Christ. (6th August).

In St. Mark chapter ix. verse 2, St. Matthew, xvii. verse 1, and St. Luke ix. verse 28 we read the account of the Transfiguration of Christ in the presence of the disciples Peter and James and John.

"And He was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was as the light."—St. Matthew.

"The fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening."—St. Luke.

The Transfiguration has from the beginning been fixed upon as the central moment of Christ's earthly life. In that moment the three disciples see with their eyes what they had come to believe in their hearts—the Divinity of Jesus. What they see is the Divine shining through His humanity, transfiguring and transforming it. It is a symbol of the truth that the Divine can illuminate and transfigure all men.

In men the divine shines through. In our best moments we too are transfigured by kindness, by self-sacrifice, by worship, by love. Divinity shines through our words and actions. It shows in our faces. In the Gospel story the transfiguration of Christ is momentarily perfect and complete—the Divine wholly breaks through and the humanity pales. We never see that perfection. But there are occasions when we may glimpse in someone we know the struggling radiance of an other-worldly beauty and perfection, to remember and to keep for life-time.

This Gospel story then, brings before us the whole mystery of our religion. God is man. It brings to our notice a beautiful and essential truth about ourselves.

The day set aside by the Church for the especial worship of God for revealing this truth in the Transformation of Christ is August 6th.

Ninth Sunday after Trinity. (7th August).

The Collect is from the Sacramentary of Leo (451 A.D.). Its subject is Grace, and it is a prayer that we may be able to think and do what is right, the reason for this petition being that we may be able to live according to God's will.

The Epistle refers to the Israelites who sinned in **thought** when they murmured against God, and in deed when they forsook the commandments of God and lived in evil ways.

The Gospel contains the parable of the Unjust Steward, the teaching of which is consistency in thought and deed. The characters in the parable are all shady characters, but they were consistent in thought and action in their striving after this world's goods. We must copy their consistency in our service of God in our thoughts and deeds.

Tenth Sunday after Trinity. (14th August).

The Collect is from the Sacramentary of Leo —. Its subject is successful Prayer. In asking that God may hear our prayers it also asks that we may be guided to ask such things as shall please God.

The Epistle teaches us that we must look to the Holy Spirit for guidance in our prayers. The people at Corinth tended to ask for such things as pleased themselves rather than for things which pleased God.

The Gospel shows the danger of not asking for those things which belong to our peace. The City of Jerusalem committed this error in its rejection of the spiritual glory offered to it by Christ.

Saint Bartholomew. (24th August).

One of the twelve Apostles. He is mentioned only in the Synoptic Gospels, Mark, Luke and Matthew, and in Acts. The name is a patronymic, meaning "son of Tolmai", so that he may have had another (personal) name, and he is some times identified with Nathaniel. According to Eusebius (260-340) Bishop of Caesarea, when Pantaeus of Alexandria, visited India between A.D. 150 and 200 he found there the Gospel according to St. Matthew in Hebrew, left behind by Bartholomew. Bartholomew was flayed alive at Albanopolis in Armenia.

NEWS FROM U.S.P.G.

Diocese of Jesselton

Roland Koh, Bishop. Clergy, 13 (8 U.K., 2 Australian, 1 Chinese, 1 Philipino, 1 Dayak). Lay missionaries, 15, also from U.K., Australia, and Philippines.

Area: Sabah and part of Indonesian Borneo.

Population (Sabah): 455,000. Christians: 76,000; Roman Catholics: 55,000; Anglicans, 12,000.

The diocese works from fourteen urban and rural centres, and has sixteen churches and chapels, four secondary schools, and a kindergarten. Pray for more indigenous ordinands and the means to pay for their training, for more expatriate priests and their support, for more nurses for rural work, and for more highly trained teachers for secondary school work.

OPPORTUNITY UNLIMITED

The Ven. Archie Briggs, Archdeacon of the Interior in the diocese of Jesselton, tells the exciting story of the Sabah Interior Mission.

When in 1957 the request came from an Orang Tua (headman) to start a mission among the Dusuns

(or Kadazans) on the upper reaches of the Kinabatangan River, it seemed impossible. Tongud, the place suggested, was 300 miles by river (90 as the crow flies) from Sandakan, the nearest centre on the coast.

We had no boats, no money. Fortunately we had faith.

From a humble beginning with one Dayak priest and one Dayak catechist the Sabah Interior Mission has now grown to four centres, and, given the tools to do the job—priests, teachers, nurses, agriculturalists—we will grow yet further, so great is the desire of the people to hear the Word of God.

Four Centres

From our four centres—Tongud, Sapi, Telupid, Segama—the Church seeks to serve the indigenous peoples by regular pastoral work, visiting of kampongs (villages), personal contact, and school and medical work.

The pastoral work is greatly hindered by lack of priests.

At the moment we have only one priest in the interior, and he is on loan from the Church in the Philippines.

Most of the teaching of those being prepared for baptism is done by the laity, and on a visit to Tongud last year I baptised 103 adults in the river.

There are over a thousand people being prepared for baptism in this district alone, and with the shortage of staff it is difficult to maintain regular visitation during their two-year course.

Thus Miss Florence Martin, head of the Mission at Tongud, wrote recently:

'People in Mangku Agu kampong were overjoyed to see us as they had heard of Fr. Puntang's visit two years ago and had been waiting for a visit ever since . . .

'Some complained that they thought the Mission had forgotten them. We explained that we had no "Father" at present, and they thought that was very strange. Could we bless their houses, babies and sick people, and tell them what to do about the ghost who came at night stealing the heads of their chickens?'

Shortage of Nurses and Teachers

TB, malaria, internal disorders, are very evident in the interior, and our clinics minister to many types of sickness.

Always it is our hope to have two nurses together—one to run the clinic and one to visit the kampongs with emphasis on simple hygiene and preventive medicine. We never reach this point, but a 'skeleton' staff remains very cheerful.

Schools in the Interior, too, are greatly hindered by lack of permanent teachers, and every term brings new staffing problems. At one time one of our schools was down to the Headmistress, and our old sarang (boatman) turned teacher and did a good job with Primary I and II.

There are, however, lots of encouragements. Paul, one of the first of our children in the Interior to go to school, is now a qualified teacher.

Having married a local girl, he is now in charge of the school in his kampong. Lawrence, a Dayak who has given faithful service in one of our schools since 1958, hopes to prepare for the priesthood.

Better Agriculture

The Mission seeks to serve the people by improving methods of agriculture and introducing new livestock and new crops. It seems no time since we were sending rubber stumps up the river, and now they almost ready for tapping.

The Mission is financed as far as possible by assessment on the parishes of the diocese, but we still depend very much on gifts from overseas. But perhaps one can best sum up the 'feel' of the Mission by two quotations. First, from a priest visiting the Interior for the first time:

'The short period of eighteen days spent in the Interior have meant more to me than all the ten years of my ordination as a priest. Never have I seen such a yearning for the Gospel. Never have I seen a harvest more fit to reap.'

And from Bishop Roland Koh, writing in the Sabah Anglican Observer:

'The number of Kadazans wanting to be admitted as catechumens and subsequently to be baptised and confirmed is most inspiring. On the other hand, their desire to know Christ and to follow him is presenting the diocese with a very serious challenge — Where do we find the priests to help them and to minister to them?'

C.M.S. REPORT

SPOTLIGHT ON SIERRA LEONE

Small-scale and Progressive

Sierra Leone does not hit the headlines—in fact many people tend to forget its existence. This country a little smaller than Scotland, has for years been spared the kind of troubles which make news. Sierra Leone has been a self-governing member of the Commonwealth since April, 1961; its government is democratic and stable, the Press is uncensored and the judiciary independent. Furthermore, there could be no spectacular economic advance in so small a country, though there has been continuous progress. Diamonds and iron ore are the main exports. Industry is still on a small scale but is expanding: cement, oxygen, tobacco and palm oil are among the main products. Timber is a valuable asset, and furniture has been manufactured for many years.

Progress in all its aspects affected the coastal people first, and began to spread inland much later. The Creoles, in the coast region, are people of mixed descent, from slaves who were released and brought there by the British from all over West Africa. The Creoles quickly became united among themselves, but remained generally aloof from the inland tribes who were the original inhabitants of the country.

In administration and education, this disparity is now being remedied. Roads and railways have opened up the country, and mobile cinemas have helped to bring the outside world to the inland villages. As well as primary education, there are now about 30 up-country secondary schools, and several training colleges of various kinds. Some students have also gone to Freetown, the capital city near the coast, and entered Fourah Bay University College. However, about 70% of up-country children still have no

education at all. Now that the majority of Government members are up-country people, the development of the hinterland is likely to proceed rapidly.

The history of the Church shows a similar pattern. Early Anglican missionaries worked among the Creoles first, hoping that Creole Christians would then join with them in evangelising the interior. Christian churches, schools and colleges soon abounded in the coastal area; but efforts to persuade Creole evangelists to penetrate inland failed again and again. Nevertheless there have always been a few exceptions—Creole pastors and evangelists who have been ready to leave their familiar surrounds and work up-country.

The Gospel up-country

A number of Christian agencies are at work among the indigenous tribes: the American Wesleyans have a large membership among the Temnes and Limbas in the north; the United Brethren in Christ are in the south; the Evangelical United Brethren all over the country; the Methodists in the east among the Mendes; and Anglican work is among both Mende and Temne tribes. The Literature Bureau produces vernacular Christian books and runs literacy campaigns. Work is co-ordinated through the United Christian Council. At Bunumbu, 5 denominations share responsibility for Union College, where students from many tribes are trained as teachers.

There are Mende and Temne people who have responded to the Gospel; and there are a very few who have been ordained in the Christian ministry; but on the whole, up-country work has been hard and unrewarding.

The latest CMS enterprise is a project in the Port Loko district of the Temne country. This was begun ten years ago, and at present the team consists of two missionaries (one nurse and one pastoral worker) and a Temne evangelist. In all these ten years, the team have not seen one single convert to Christianity. The people have been listening to the Gospel amiably enough, but keeping to their own religion—a mixture of Muslim and heathen beliefs.

Nancy Mahy runs three village clinics; Jean Drinkwater and Mr. Adikoli Tamara have until recently been presenting the Gospel to the patients by words, pictures, flannelgraphs and tape recordings. Finding no response they have changed their method, and now they go to some of the villages where the patients live. In these villages they are starting literacy classes; the New Testament has been translated into Temne, and they hope that when people can read they may hear the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures.

Latest news is that five classes are in progress, with over 60 people learning to read. Two men have asked for New Testaments to read; and the team are hoping that Pa Ali Bunduka and Abdulla Fofana may come to Christ and then lead some of their relatives and neighbours to him.

Danger!

There is a potential danger here. In other areas it has often happened that people have become aware of the material benefits they may gain through education, and then, because the Church was the only agency providing schools, they have professed Christianity just to be "with it". In many countries

the Africans' way of saying "I am a Methodist, or Anglican", is "I read with the Methodists", "I read with the Anglicans".

In Sierra Leone, with the acceleration of development in Temne country, the Church may soon have to face a sudden influx of "reading Christians". It is vitally important that, before that day dawns, there should be at least a small group in the Port Loko area who have been converted through genuine conviction. And CMS is so short of personnel that only two women missionaries can be spared to work there.

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

Aug. 7—	a.m. J. Heaton, J. Banks.
	p.m. E. Grimshaw, E. Gawne.
14—	a.m. H. Huyton, A. Grimshaw.
	p.m. T. Swift, T. Hunter.
21—	a.m. R. Gaskell, R. Hunt.
	p.m. R. Dutton, T. Grimshaw.
28—	a.m. E. Serjeant, D. Swift.
	p.m. C. Shacklady, J. Balmer.
Sept. 4—	a.m. H. Baldwin, W. White.
	p.m. W. Robinson, E. Blackhurst.

SERVERS' ROTA

Aug. 7—	8.00 a.m. John Davies.
14—	8.00 a.m. John Gaskell.
	10.30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw, Roger Dutton.
21—	8.00 a.m. Jim Heaton.
28—	8.00 a.m. Brian Heaton.
	10.30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw, Tony Gaskell.
Sept. 4—	8.00 a.m. Peter Balmer.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Aug. 7—	Mrs. Moorcroft and Mrs. Sephton.
14—	Mrs. Stopforth.
21—	Mrs. McCoy.
28—	Mrs. Crook.
Sept. 4—	Mrs. Taylor.

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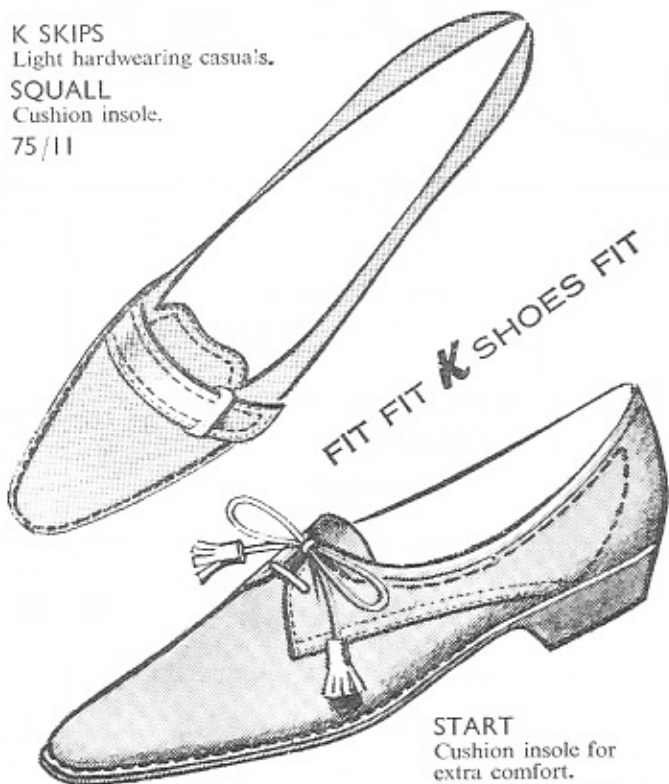
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