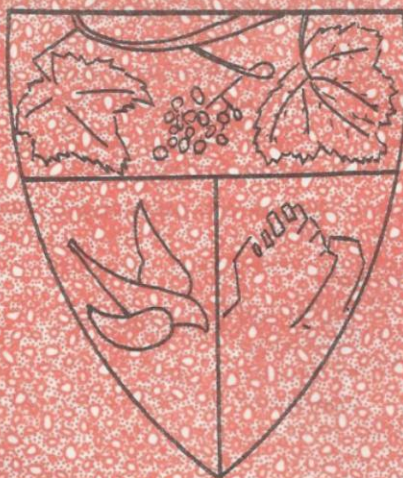


Together in Christ 60p



MAY THEY ALL BE ONE

*Vol 10 No 32
June 1992*

MAIN CONTENTS

- | | | |
|----|---|------------------|
| 1 | Editorial | |
| 2 | A Beacon of Hope (Sermon preached at Milton Keynes) | Cardinal Hume |
| 5 | Crisis Pilgrimage | |
| 6 | No mean feet/feat | Colin Frominge |
| 11 | Having the Mind of Christ | Fr E Sullivan SA |
| 15 | The First Assembly of Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland | Dorothy Morris |

Together in Christ is published by the Christian Unity Commission for the Diocese of Southwark

Copyright © 1992. All rights reserved.

Price 60p per copy, Annual subscription £1.80
For postal subscriptions £2.50

Material for publication and all correspondence to be sent to the Editor: Mrs Una Ratcliff.

(Copy dates: 15 December, 15 April and 15 August for the February, June and October issues respectively)

The opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor nor of the Ecumenical Commission.

Officers of the Area Commissions:

The Rt Rev C J Henderson

S E Area:

Sister Eileen Hewlett (Chair) Mrs. Margaret Moloney (Sec)

S W Area;

Rev. Kevin Pelham (Chair) Miss Mary Hardy (Sec)

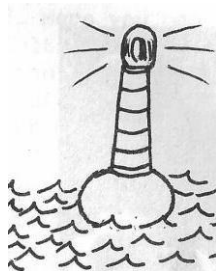
Kent Area:

Mrs Dorothy Morris (Chair) Sr Margaret Mary O'Grady (Sec)

EDITORIAL



"These sufferings bring patience, as we know, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which been given us". (Rom 5:4-5)



Hope, true Christian hope, a hope that will not disappoint us; patience, perseverance, love of God and of one another, and prayer figure prominently throughout our ecumenical material this month.

Cardinal Hume's sermon at Milton Keynes highlights the truth that "God matters": that the church built at Milton Keynes (surely with much patience and perseverance) is a prayer; that it represents many hopes and is itself to be a "beacon of hope"

The absorbing and moving description by Colin Fromings (whom we welcome to our pages) of the Crisis Pilgrimage gives an outstanding example of patience, intense perseverance, hope and caring, and of God's love which motivated the pilgrimage, expressed in practical help for His homeless children.

We give a very warm welcome, too, to Fr. Emmanuel Sullivan, SA, and many thanks for his splendid Unity Week sermon, reminding us that "it is a time of hope", when we are to have the mind of Christ Jesus, empty of self, and obedient to God for whom "nothing is impossible" and that we are to be a sign of hope to the world.

Our deep gratitude goes to our good friend, Dorothy Morris, Chairman of the Kent Christian unity Commission, who has made the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland Assembly come alive for us. Its theme, "What does God require?" and the prophet Micah's answer to that question, are vital to our ecumenical journey. It is a journey on which we are irrevocably committed, whatever suffering may be entailed. No turning back! It is a journey needing that determination to give of one's very best (like little Polly, Sally and the "Crisis" walkers) journey of love and faith in the marvels God works for us, and above all, a journey of prayer in our humble walk with God. Keep going!



A BEACON OF HOPE



Cardinal Hume

A unique and historic event took place on March 13, 1992. The new city church of Christ the Cornerstone in Milton Keynes was dedicated by the four presidents of Churches Together in England — Cardinal Hume, Archbishop George Carey, Dr. John Newton, and Rev. Desmond Pemberton. Her Majesty the Queen was present and the sermon was preached by Cardinal Hume — the first time he had preached in her presence. Christ the Cornerstone is a shared church owned jointly by the Baptist Union, the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and the United Reformed Church.

At the service of dedication, Cardinal Hume preached the following sermon:

"The parish churches and cathedrals of our land reflect the faith of previous generations who understood that the task of worshipping and praising God is the most basic and important activity in all human life.

Are these churches and cathedrals just monuments to a past that is now no more? Have we in this age so grown up and matured that we need look no further than our own achievements and abilities to find the meaning and purpose of our lives? Has a cathedral today no other function than to satisfy the interest of the tourist? Is the village church there only to delight the casual wayfarer?

You have built here in Milton Keynes a church because you realised an important truth. It is quite simply this: that God matters. So today we are celebrating the opening and dedication of this Church of Christ the Cornerstone. This Church is no grudging acknowledgement of the part religion must play in this relatively new and still growing community. On the contrary it makes a clear statement to all those who work and dwell in Milton Keynes: God must not be forgotten. It is right to pay tribute today to a former Bishop of Oxford, Bishop Carpenter, who in 1967 brought together members of different churches. They resolved unanimously "to do as much as possible together in Milton Keynes".

As a community you will come here to worship; here you will learn about Christ, true God and true man; here you will find him who is the way to the Father, who reveals the truth about God and gives to our human lives their true meaning and ultimate purpose. Here you will learn of the dignity that is yours, in virtue of the love God has bestowed on you — "a chosen race, a holy nation, God's own people". Here you can experience his loving touch as he forgives you your faults

and your sins, as he heals your inner wounds, as he stirs your minds and your hearts to experience a greater intimacy with him. Then your task Will be "to declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:8).

A church is always an act of faith - we do not build a church unless we believe in God, that he truly exists, that he is to be adored, and that he demands our obedience and loyalty,

A church is a sermon in stone or brick - it speaks of other values, those timeless ones that are in fact contemporary and relevant in every age. It reminds us that we have here no abiding city.

What of those for whom God is of little or no importance? A church stands as a silent reproach to those who hurry past ignoring both it and what it stands for. Its message is then a silent rebuke, but not unkindly given, for it also pleads for notice, not for itself but for the master for whom the church was built.

A church is a prayer. No music, no words, its very presence gives honour to God. A church is also a house of concern and compassion for those in need, the community that worships here reflecting the love that God has for all of us, and not least for those who are marginalised or poor.

We are pilgrims through life on our way to the promised land, that is to the vision of God face to face. It is for this that we are made, that is for that endless 'now' of ecstatic happiness which is the fulfilment of all our deepest longings.

Building a church is one thing but building up the Christian community is another. You, the Christian community of Milton Keynes, must yourselves be like living stones, stones built into a spiritual house. That means that you are a community in which, because united in his name, Christ will always be in your midst. His example and teaching will be your inspiration and your guide. While we keep our eyes on the things that are above, we have, because of Christ and his teaching, a real and urgent responsibility to our world and its peoples. It is for us as Christians to work alongside others of goodwill and shared purpose to build a more just, peaceful and humane society. We who are members of the Churches have to be at work in the marketplace as well as at prayer in the desert.

The mystery of God revealed in Christ is not just a matter for the Church. What Christ reveals is not only the true nature of God, but also what us as humans can be and achieve. The Gospel speaks to the deepest longings of the human heart, and of what truly makes for human fulfilment. It presents, therefore, a sharp

challenge to our contemporary culture. The kingdom of God poses questions about the meaning and purpose human existence which reveal the underlying confusion and agnosticism in our culture not just about the nature of God, but even more about the nature of man.

The Church, then, has a wider role in presenting the Gospel to society. A very special characteristic of this church, one which reveals in a powerful and practical way the Christian experience of our generation, is that it has been planned and built with the needs of the whole Christian community in mind. This would simply never have occurred to previous generations and demonstrates how far we are now committed to the work of Christian unity. It also reflects the recognition that Christian communion is built on baptism, and that our sharing a common baptism calls for visible and organic unity. Of course this church has to reflect the reality as well as the dream. It marks a stage on the road to Christian; it is a milestone, not yet the destination. Although we no longer walk as strangers but as fellow pilgrims there is nonetheless a long road yet to travel and hazards still to face. Our commitment to Christian unity and to each other gives us a shared responsibility for the future of each of our churches. It would be wrong to follow paths that would make us strangers once again.

The hopes that this church represents must not be allowed to fade or falter. They will not do so if we listen prayerfully and attentively to the Spirit and what he is saying today to all our churches. In a measured, purposeful and yet courageous way we must together follow his guidance and inspiration. May this church in Milton Keynes be a pledge of our common commitment, a signpost to an increasingly shared future and a beacon of hope for the whole community.

"You are God's building. By the grace God gave me, I succeeded as an architect and laid the foundations on which someone else is doing the building. Everyone doing the building must work carefully. For the foundation, nobody can lay any other than the one which has already been laid, that is Jesus Christ.

Didn't you realise that you were God's temple and that the Spirit of God was living among you? the temple of God is sacred; and you are that temple."
(1 Cor 3: 9-11 ; 16-17)

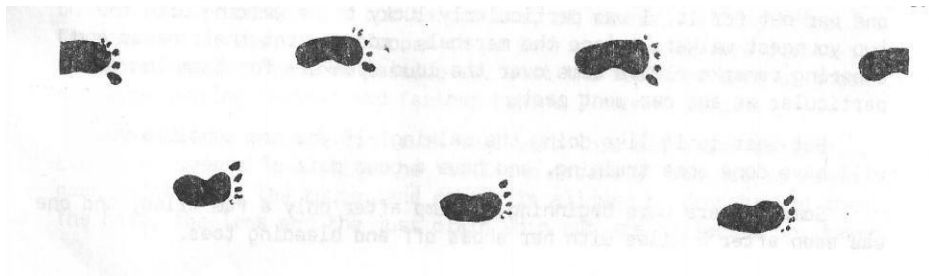
"I have chosen and consecrated this house, says the Lord, for my name to be there for ever." (2 Chron 7:16)

CRISIS' SPONSORED PILGRIMAGE FROM CANTERBURY TO LONDON

A MARATHON FAMILY (as a local Kentish paper described them) were involved last November in the charity walk (of about 60 miles) from Canterbury to London - the CRISIS SPONSORED PILGRIMAGE, to raise funds for homeless people. The "marathon family" embraced four generations. Mrs Maud Humphreys, 80 year old great Granny, a well known and active parishioner of St Stephen's R.C. Church, Welling, gave sterling service in the kitchen at Welling check point, doing washing up for about five hours! Her daughter, Wendy Fromings, with helpers, organised and served meals etc. for 600 walkers arriving at Welling Methodist Church, church of which she and her husband Colin, are members. Colin, with his daughter, Jane Westergaard, and little grand-daughters, Sarah, aged 9, and Polly, aged 6, all undertook the gruelling walk, and were pleased to publish Colin's vivid description of it.

This was a widely ecumenical effort. We know of Sister Claire from St Stephen's, Welling, who was a walker, and there were other Welling Catholics who supported and helped the pilgrimage together with Welling Methodists, but all along the way there were very many Christians involved, too many to mention individually, as well as other supporters for this important and worthy cause.

In advance of pilgrimage, and over its two days - from Saturday 7.30 a.m. to Sunday 7.30 p.m., the effort. was supported by prayer at churches, schools, prayer groups and individually. The organisers, caterers, walkers and concerned were uplifted in prayer, and there hearts full of thanksgiving which turned to God at the end of the event.



NO MEAN FEET/FEAT ...THE CRISIS WALK

In whatever sense you read the title, that is what it is and that's what it takes.

For a number of years I have mopped up for the walkers at the Sunday lunch stop at Welling and seeing so many people hobbling in with looks of grim determination in their faces, I had often wondered what it was like to attempt the 60 mile walk. Last November I had the chance to discover for myself, when my 6 and 9 years old granddaughters, Polly and Sarah, "invited" me to join them on the walk. They were old hands at it, having completed 27½ and 40 miles of the 60 mile walk respectively the previous year.

For them it all started when they saw people sleeping out under the arches in London, and decided that they seriously wanted to help. It is a serious business, and that is amply demonstrated from the word 'go' when, still in the dark, 600 or so people assemble in the precinct of Canterbury Cathedral to check in for the start of the walk.

There is not much noise or laughter, just hundreds of people determined to walk as far as possible to raise as much money as possible to help the homeless.

There is no starter pistol. The mayor was there to kindly see us off, and it just started, soon developing into a long snake of people walking quietly and becoming even more spread out until it is a snake no longer but ones and twos or small groups of friends, or strangers walking together for support and company.

The Crisis organisers do a marvellous job, marshals are at every point for a change of direction, or where a road is to be crossed, and they give information and encouragement all along the route, come sunshine, rain, cold or darkness.

Other marshals continually drive in cars along the route to ensure that no walker needs assistance. One marshal's car was equipped with a loud hailer system, giving out supportive music which could be heard as the car approached from the rear, and you automatically kept one ear out for it. I was particularly lucky to be walking with the two youngest walkers, since the marshals soon learnt their names and cheering remarks always came over the loud speakers for them in particular as the car went past.

But what is it like doing the walking? If you are sensible you will have done training, and have a good pair of shoes.

Some walkers were beginning to limp after only a few miles, and one was seen after 5 miles with her shoes off and bleeding toes.

Everyone has a route description, with mileages indicated and there are several rest and refreshment points along the route.

The goal is always to reach the next check-in point, and I doubt if anyone on the first day seriously is looking to Southwark as the goal. That is put into the back of your mind as a "let's see how we get on" sort of aim.

For some miles one works out, how much your sponsorship will have earned, and how many Christmas dinners that will buy for the homeless people; later on, with the children, all manner of interests have to be discovered to take our minds off the job in hand.



First thing on Sunday morning that wasn't possible, and it was a very quiet Polly who started the walk. She was obviously stiff and recalling that last year she was so stiff that she had to be helped out of bed, and after two or three miles had to give up.

This year you could see her walking with quiet and dogged determination not to be defeated. For the first couple of miles one could hardly get a word out of her, but then after about an hour's walking, some of the stiffness went and she gained her second wind.

Don't think she was going alone through this experience, there were plenty of adults going through the same process - and for why? Was it just to prove to themselves that they could do it? There may have been some of this about it, but all the time there was the consciousness about why we were walking, and a determination to do the best for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Later on, Polly had the stitch on a couple of occasions, and there were tears in her eyes with the pain. "Do you want a lift, or shall we slow down?" came the reply in a rough voice, "I can do it".

We started from Gravesend some 20 minutes later than the main party on the Sunday morning and our target was, of course, Welling Methodist Church, and it was a great boost to us to find that we were overtaking far more people than were passing us.. What the feelings were of those who were getting farther and farther behind I cannot imagine.



Sarah Westergaard

The Crisis organisation even deal with this situation admirably. Everyone knows at what time the "tail-end marshals" are due to reach each point along the route, and nobody is allowed to drop behind them.

The halt, the lame and the just plain worn out are collected up, taken to the next refreshment location, and then on to Southwark if necessary.

And slowly - sometimes it seems very slowly, the miles are ticked off. And still there are the ever present marshals with their encouragement, and a message gets back to friends at Welling, answering the question: "How are the children doing?" to say: "They are looking tired, but walking strongly" . And they were - keeping up a steady 3 miles an hour for hour after hour.

The walkers had covered 30 miles the first day and then 15 miles on Sunday to reach Welling Methodist Church by lunchtime, where a good lunch awaited the 600 odd walkers - and by then some of them were very odd! This year, for my first walk, I was lucky. The weather had been good to us and most arrived in good shape, but in other years, when the weather and the walking were difficult, many reached Welling hardly able to put one foot in front of another.

The variety of food and drink (and people!) and the friendliness of ail concerned is just what the walkers need, and whether fit and ravenous, or half dead and barely able to put one foot in front of another, there is something to suit everyone.

So after a quick visit to the first aiders for the lame, regenerated, the walkers set off to tackle Shooters Hill, the last uphill stretch of the walk.

At the top of the hill we decided that Polly (aged 6) , after 47 miles, and her mum who was having trouble with one obstinate leg, should walk home to Plumstead, and Sarah, being told that I was going to continue, decided after a quick think, that she wanted to go on as well.

The next thing may come as a surprise to some of you, but Sarah said: "Grandad, can we run? my legs hurt and that may make them feel better." So we did, a couple of hundred yards running and a couple of hundred yards walking - just to ease the legs? - and every time we came to a suitable wall, Sarah would walk along the top of it. At least I was sure, in seeing her do this, that her legs were still strong and her balance accurate.

A couple of more senior ladies on the walk who were finding it difficult to retain their balance walking up Loar Hill were heard to remark, as Sarah and Polly ran up the wooded embankment at the side of the road: "Whatever are those girls made of?"

We reached Blackheath with a helicopter circling overhead — but it not for us. It was the day of the evening televised service from Blackheath Church giving thanks for the release of Terry Waite.

Our goal on Blackheath was an old double-decker bus which had been utilised at two previous stops on the walk as a soup kitchen and resting place. As we approached it, and with the knowledge that there were still five miles to walk, Sarah's face lit up and she said: "I know I can do it now".

Up until then there had obviously been a doubt about the possibility, and we had already discussed how much we would raise if we did not reach Southwark.

I suppose we rested at Blackheath for every bit of one minute thirty seconds and by then it was Sarah anxious to get on.

At New Cross Sarah was still walking along the tops of available walls! I am glad that she did not expect me to try particularly the jumping off the end onto sore feet.

From New Cross it was dark and one saw very few walkers, but there were the ever faithful marshals at every point they were needed, to direct or assist.

It was slightly bizarre that all through the country areas, there had been plenty of places with toilets, but once reaching London they seemed to be non-existent and it was with great thanks that an unscheduled church in the Old Kent Road had opened its doors to accommodate the walkers.

Then almost before we knew it, Sarah and I had reached the finish, we would have run the last 100 yards, but somehow to us it seemed more appropriate to walk in quietly and rather thoughtfully into the building to check in.

It takes everyone differently: as we walked those last yards a group of four twenty-year old men raced past us for the honour of being - I don't know, 3 or 4 hundredth to finish.

As at the other refreshment stops, people were draped everywhere, Over tables, lying on the floor, anywhere, they had done their job and all that had to be done was to collect their sponsorship money.

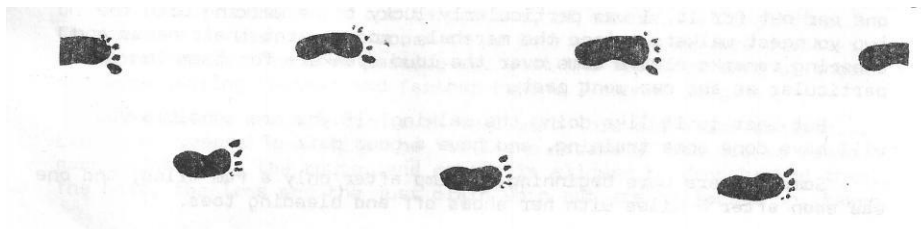
And what about Polly? She cried when she got home — and why? "I could have walked all the way. I'm going to do it all next year".

Polly and her mum came up with Grannie to collect us at the finish, and the marshals had Sarah and Polly up on the platform to receive a well deserved clap for their efforts. Polly 47 miles and Sarah 57 miles. The youngest to attempt the walk, never mind to have done so well.

People having heard the outcome have been generous, and the sum of £650 has just been sent off to Crisis to help the homeless all through the year.

The walk is the biggest money raiser of the year from Crisis, and although we do not yet know what was actually raised, it was anticipated that it could be in the order of £70,000.

Colin Fromings.



The Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement is a monumental ecumenical resource book. Contributors are leaders in the ecumenical movement from every Christian confession and all parts of the world. It contains over 600 entries covering important ecumenical themes and events, organizations and personalities, theological and ethical discussions as well as ecumenism in each region of the world and in the various world communions. It has also been termed "an astonishingly thorough and eminently useful reference book.. I cannot imagine that anyone who has to deal with relations between the churches could do without it." Obtainable from CCBI,

HAVING THE MIND OF CHRIST

(A sermon delivered to the Churches Together in Worthing during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - 1992)

The week of prayer for Christian Unity reminds us once more that we are Christians together, Churches together despite the sad divisions of Christian history and heritage. We come together joyfully, hopefully, anticipating something new that the Holy Spirit is already working within our Churches and in our hearts and minds. It is a time of hope. And this hope will not disappoint us because the promise of Jesus to us is that he will send us the Spirit from the Father to lead us into the fullness of truth and in true charity for one another. This week of Prayer for Christian Unity reminds us that God is doing something new among us. As the prophet Isaiah would say: "Do you not perceive it?" (Is 43:19) This spirit of hope which brings us together joyfully is rooted in the perennial principles of faith in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.



"Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5). so begins the beautiful hymn Paul incorporates into his reflection on the mystery of the Incarnation. Immediately we are caught up in the wonder Of God, Word become flesh and living among us in our very human condition. This mystery contains two great truths applicable to our reflection this evening on our commitment to Christian unity, viz. the emptying of self and utter obedience to God, We know that God's Word remained what he was - divine; he assumed what he was not; our humanity. Jesus is sent by the Father into our world and he responds in obedience, an obedience that leads to death on a cross. Our commitment to seek the unity God wants and for which Jesus prayed the night before his passion and death is rooted in these two aspects the incarnation.

We are very concerned not to surrender what we consider the precious convictions of faith we have inherited in our denominational life. But this does not excuse us from a re-examination of our denominational convictions to sort out what is truly of faith in Jesus Christ from what has become inbred by virtue of an exclusive life style and way of relating to other churches. It means the sorting out and leaving behind what is nothing more than a prejudice, a bad folk memory of others, a bias

towards the practices of others, a wilful ignorance of what other Christian Churches really believe and practice. We have to let go of a lot of preconceptions and misconceptions of what the Christian faith of others embraces. Our motive in doing this is not only a matter of being honest to God; it is a radical act of obedience to God's will. And God's will for us Christians is a unity which reflects the revelation of reconciled love that sent Jesus into our world. "That they may be one, perfectly one, that the world might believe." (Jn 17) Can we really think that our present state of Christian unity sufficiently reflects the prayer of Jesus? Obedience to seek a deeper unity is reflected in what Jesus called a "new commandment" to love one another as he has loved us so that "everyone will know that you are my disciples . (Jn 13: 34-35) We have to keep Christ at the centre of our thinking about other Christians. I once saw a painting in an Essex parish church which had been discovered in the course of refurbishing the church. It reflected what Paul speaks of in the third chapter of his letter to the Philippians (3:12-14). He is looking back at all he is leaving behind. He is not looking nervously over his shoulder.

But he is looking back, taking into account what has to be left behind. At the same time his hand is stretched out toward Christ who is beckoning him forward. He immediately applies all this to the Christian community for he adds (vv.15-16): "Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained".

This evening we have listened once again also to Luke's account of how the mystery of the Incarnation was announced to the one who was to be the *theotokos*, the Godbearer, the Mother of God, the mother of Jesus, the one chosen for a key role, an intimate instrument of God's love in sending the Son of God among us as one of us, really and truly. This account of Luke reminds us that our redemption and reconciliation with God happens on the initiative of God. It is God's love for us that unfolds the mystery of God's love shared among us. God's grace filled love is in everything absolutely prior to any response it evokes from us and in us. "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and since God loved us so much we also ought to love one another and if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us." (1 Jn. 4: 10-12) Yet Luke's account while echoing all this teaches us even more in our search for a renewed sense and experience of Christian unity. It takes into account the initiative of God while it presents Mary as the model of what our faith response ought to be.

Luke notes that Mary was "greatly disturbed" - not because she doubted, but because she could not imagine how the virginal conception could happen. As we look at ourselves tonight in all our denominational variety and differences we feel

an affinity for Mary's query How shall this be done? Will we Christians ever get our act together, how will we ever find that measure of unity needed to make Christ's message of love and reconciliation sufficiently visible and credible in our world? Here Luke's account reassures Mary that God's Holy Spirit will bring it to pass because "nothing is impossible for God". Faith in the Holy Spirit is essential to our faith. The Nicene Creed confesses the Spirit as "the Lord and Giver of Life". Like Mary we must allow the Holy Spirit to become an active and energizing factor of faith, the one who overshadows us, our fears and anxieties, the one to whom we open our lives in utter faith and trust. Luke's account presents Mary as the one who accepted both God's will and God's way. She does so in an act of radical faith and obedience. What happens? The wonder of the Incarnation begins for the life of the world. The Word becomes flesh! No less for us, the prayer of Jesus already is prayed in us and through us by the Spirit - that we be one so that the world might believe. In this decade of evangelism or evangelization we already have begun to speak, perhaps stammer, to the world that God loves it and has redeemed it through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus who remains uniquely the Way, the Truth and the Life. We bring this good news to the world not simply by what we proclaim, but by how we live as one community of loving faith. The ecumenical movement, the movement toward Christian unity already, however imperfectly, is sending out these signals of love and reconciliation.

In these two portions of Scripture from Paul and Luke we chose to reflect on this evening we find those principles of faith which enable us to live and work as Christians and Churches Together. In summary what are these?

- 1 . The courage to empty ourselves of what is not of the essence and conviction of faith and our understanding of authentic Christian tradition and fidelity to Christ.
- 2 . The courage and openness to assume or take on what at first seems unfamiliar and strange, even alien.
- 3 . The courage to question ourselves in our churches about how serious we are in our search and commitment to Christian unity - this is the faith that nothing is impossible for God.
- 4 . A faith that leads us into an act of radical obedience to respond to God's will the Church, an obedience lived by the Holy Spirit who keeps us open to God's way of restoring Christian unity for the life of the world.

Theologians and ecumenical middle-managers will continue to speculate on the various possibilities and models of Christian unity. And this is right. It is part of the responsibility of the Church that some Christians do this. such will continue to explore and discuss and portray the nature of the unity we seek. But in the end all of us must go on praying, indeed let the prayer of Jesus be prayed in us by the Holy Spirit, that we will rediscover the unity God wills for us Christians and the means God chooses to make it visible and credible. This is the unity we pray for this week and throughout the year. In the meantime we must do the best we can even now to live as a community of faith and love, as partners in mission and service to the world, and above all as a sign of hope for that world. Perhaps our commitment to Christian unity could be expressed in the words of T. S. Eliot from his poem Little Gidding:

"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."

Fr. Emmanuel Sullivan SA.

Ecumenical Officer for the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton.

(Emmanuel Sullivan is a Franciscan Friar of the Atonement. Professed a friar in 1949 and ordained priest in 1955 he has been both teacher and pastor. Since 1967 he has been active in ecumenical ministry.

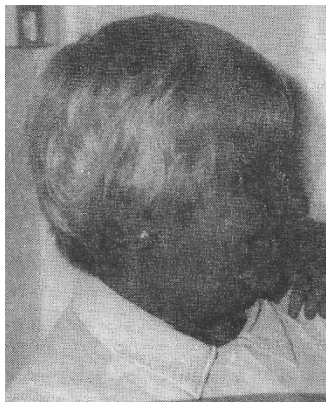
Fr. Sullivan has served as ecumenical officer in England -- for his community in London and later for the diocese of East Anglia. He has served on both national and diocesan ecumenical commissions and worked closely with the British community Council of Churches. From 1974-77 he helped establish an ecumenical centre at Hengrave Hall in Suffolk.

He was visiting scholar at St Edmund's House, Cambridge (1977-78) where he examined mainline developments in Christian life which he felt could help the churches discern their future call to unity and mission. These developments were traced in his book entitled: Baptized into Hope (S.P.C.K. 1980)

The variety and diversity of these movements which he considers to be of the Spirit illustrate the variety and diversity of his ecumenical Interests and experience. In 1984 he became director of the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute.

Central to all ecumenical and inter-faith activity is his commitment to prayer for unity. Prayer for unity is not a pious option. It is an Instrument to make all our ecumenical and inter-faith activity effective).

FIRST ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND, SWANWICK 24th - 28th February, 1992



Dorothy Morris

In the final mailing received from Inter-Church House for the first Assembly of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, I was somewhat mystified to be asked to take with me a stone, no larger than a hen's egg. More than 300 delegates from the 30 member churches attended the Assembly at the Hayes Conference Centre at Swanwick, and the reason for this rather strange instruction became clear when, during the opening worship in the chapel, we were each asked to turn to our neighbour and to say where we and our stone came from; and to add a little more about

ourselves. The stones were then collected and built into a cairn on the altar. A tall candle, made from the wax of candles used at the last meeting of the British Council of Churches, and first lit in the splendour of the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool at the inaugural ceremony of the CCBI on the 8th September, 1990, was relit here, in the simple barn-like chapel of the Conference Centre.

Another link with the inauguration was the CCBI banner, which had been carried in procession from the Anglican Cathedral along Hope Street to the Metropolitan Cathedral where it had been rapturously received, was here draped behind the speakers' dais in the main conference hall.

The main purpose of the Assembly was to provide an agenda for the Church Representatives Meeting to work over the next two years. This work was done in five sections under the headings: Gospel, tradition and culture; Living discipleship; Towards the Reign of God; One Church for one world? and Church as community. I found it difficult to choose which section to work in, but as I have long held belief that true justice and peace cannot come into the world without a "One World Parliament", I chose "One Church for one world?", and found that in this section the issues of justice and peace were to the forefront. For example, Mr. Julian Filochowski, Director of CAFOD, worked in this section. We worked in these sections twice a day, each section dividing into five or six smaller groups to study more closely particular issues raised in the parent section. This

done, the whole section came together again, with a sense of urgency and excitement, to produce its agenda, which was then typed and printed. Altogether the five sections brought a 20 page agenda, hot (quite literally, still warm) from the press, to the Plenary Session on the final morning. There were several points of convergence from the sections, notably the need for adult education training of the laity and the need for good communications.

The theme of the Assembly was "What Does God Require?", and the answer to this was given by Dr. Mary Tanner, who, in talks given over three mornings, brilliantly expounded the courtroom scene, recounted in Micah Ch. 69 between the Lord and the people of Israel; and the subsequent verdict, "to do justice, love faithfully, and walk humbly with God." These talks, which were followed by discussion in small groups, set the seal for all the deliberations of the Assembly.

One evening the Rt. Revd. Tilewa Johnson, Anglican Bishop of the Gambia, representing the All Africa Conference of Churches, and Mr. Josphat Mulyungi, CAFOD Development Co-ordinator from Kitui, Kenya, gave a presentation of the marginalisation of the African countries and the increasing poverty of the peoples, caused by natural disasters, wars and the resulting refugee problems; but most of all by the crippling interest charges that are having to be met on loans made to the under-developed countries. The Bishop and Mr. Mulyungi had arrived with a letter from Africa and returned with a reply affirming the CCBI's intention to ask the Churches to engage the governments of Britain and Ireland and the European Community to counter the marginalisation of Africa.

Another evening the Black-led Churches called a short meeting to explain to us how they consider themselves to be discriminated when they want to purchase or lease, for their own worship, unwanted church buildings. Were they, they asked, equal partners in CCBI? The plea was most sympathetically heard, but there are genuine difficulties in finding an answer to this problem, and these were raised.

The Assembly welcomed the call made by the four Church leaders in Ireland to make Sunday the 15th March a special day of prayer and intercession for Northern Ireland; but I felt heartened by David Bleakley, secretary of the Irish Council of Churches, when he spoke of the spirit of ecumenism being deeply at work in Ireland, and of Belfast being, for him, more the cultural city of C. S. Lewis, Seamus Heaney, James Galway and Barry Douglas, the pianist, than as a city of the terrorist's bomb. But on the Friday morning, the last of the Assembly, the terrorists struck again - not in Belfast this time, but at London Bridge Station. Quite spontaneously it was agreed that a statement should be issued expressing our horror and distress, and our condemnation of all acts of brutal violence. This was signed by all six presidents.

Also during the week there was a great emphasis placed on the care of the environment, (the mountains and hills were called as witnesses in the courtroom scene in Micah) and the Earth Summit which will take place in Brazil at the end of June. We were assured that whichever party is in Government at the end of June, three Westminster M.P.'s will be attending the Summit.

Each morning at 7.30 there was a choice of worship, but also on each day there were services for the whole Assembly to worship together. These included a service led by members of the Church of Scotland at which the emphasis was strongly on "The Word" , and an Anglican Eucharist at which Dr. John Habgood, Archbishop of York, presided. Several liturgies were led by John Bell of the Wild Goose Group of the Iona Community (the wild goose is an alternative Celtic symbol for the Holy Spirit). John made use of music from all sources, and had the ability to take one from laughter to contemplative silence in a second. The most affecting such liturgy though, was one when, in near darkness, we were each asked to light a candle beneath one of four prayers for ourselves or for a friend. I lit mine for a friend who is very ill under the prayer: "Lord, You could make me better." Perhaps the most memorable act of worship together though, was that led by the Black-led Churches, when, fired by their enthusiasm, we found ourselves unselfconsciously moving about the length and breadth of the chapel, singing and shaking hands with each other. All singing at services throughout the four days was unaccompanied, and 300 or so voices sounded like 3,000!

Young delegates were not very numerous. A week is a long time, particularly for tertiary students. But what was lacking in number was compensated by their strength, perhaps reflected in the fact that Miss Rachel Brain of the YWCA was voted on to the Steering Committee together with the Rev. Janet Wooton, Revd. Jeri Jehu-Appiah, most Revd. Alwyn Rice Jones, Revd. Gethin Abraham Williams and Father Michael Jackson, who, from time to time, has contributed to *Together in Christ*.

The four day programme was very hard going with virtually no free time between 7.30 a.m. and 10.00 p.m. , but on the final evening we celebrated with a very lively barn dance at which Cardinal Hume capped the impression he had already made on the Assembly in his Presidential role by his quick but always kindly wit, and his modesty, by staying on the floor throughout the session.

The Assembly ended as we gathered, with some sadness, for the closing worship in the chapel. This was led by John Bell, and as in the Black-led worship, and singing the same hymn, we shook hands with each other, and before leaving, we each took a stone from the cairn to take home.

The bomb explosion at London Bridge station had repercussions for those of us who travel led by train to London and beyond. The Inter-City train in which several of us were travelling terminated at West Hampstead, and I found myself with Sam King - a West Indian gentleman who had first come to England during the war to join the RAF, and a delightful companion - thrown into a maelstrom of frustrated and often angry commuters, travelling on a Thames Link train that became more and more overcrowded until London was left behind us. Both Sam and I alighted at Bromley South, he to go to Bexleyheath and I to a long wait in the cold and damp for a Kent coast train. Swanwick, and the enlightened atmosphere of the Assembly seemed another world away.

Dorothy Morris.

WHAT DOES AIF STAND FOR?

A small, informal association was formed in 1968, which has grown in membership to over 350 couples and individuals, and which, over the years has been able to help hundreds, perhaps thousands, of couples who are not members.

The initials ATF stand for *Association Of Inter-Church Families*. It exists for the help and mutual support of inter-church families - that is, families in which husband and wife are committed to different churches (normally a Roman Catholic and a Christian of another tradition). There are particular problems and opportunities for couples in this situation and for their children. The Association tries to keep the needs and potential of Inter-church families before the churches and their leaders, and supports attempts by the churches to draw closer to one another in unity.

The AIF publishes a Newsletter, and arranges groupings - regionally or nationally, for members and their families, to share together and join in worship.

There may be Inter-church couples among our readers and in our parishes who may wish to consider membership of AIF. The AIF is also launching an appeal for funds needed for its new office in Inter-Church House and for its publicity campaign, so that more and more couples may be helped.

The Co-chairs are: Rev. J. Coventry, S. J., Rev. Canon Martin Reardon, and Rev. Ruth Matthews.
