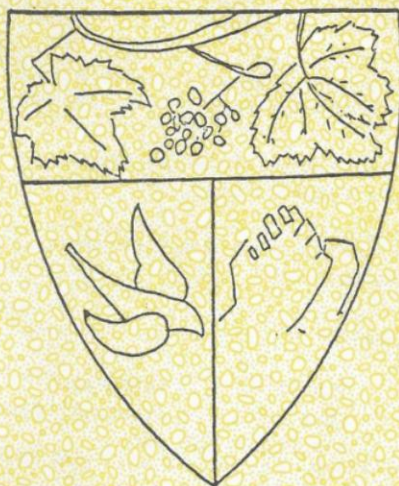


Together in Christ

60p



MAY THEY ALL BE ONE

Vol 12 No 39
October 1994

MAIN CONTENTS

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Editorial | |
| 2. Life in Christ (ARCIC II's Statement on morals) | |
| 3. The Coptic Orthodox Church | Fr Axious |
| 6. The Canterbury Friends | Sr M M O'Grady |
| 7. The Society of Friends | Joan Crosland |
| 9. Bexleyheath Churches "On Fire" Together | Rev Alan Horton |
| 14. Pray for Peace | Creina Foy |
| 15. St Katherine's Offer the Hand of Friendship | Rev Austin Martin |
| 17. National Prayer Breakfast | Kay Weller |

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EDITORIAL

"Glad, merry and sweet is the blessed and lovely face that our Lord shows to our soul. He is ever turned towards us who live in longing love. And he wants our soul to respond cheerfully to him, which is no less than he deserves. In this way I hope his grace will continue to bring our outward expression more and more into line with our inner looks; to unite us all with him and with one another in the true and lasting joy of Jesus. "

That message of Julian of Norwich (in Revelation of Divine Love) could fittingly be applied to our prayer and work for unity, as we try to respond cheerfully to the will and prayer of Jesus "that all may be one" - all united with Jesus and one another in love and joy.

Our bulletin brings you varied ways of response to the call to unity, including:

Praying together: at Meryem Ana, at a Quaker prayer meeting, at a National Prayer Breakfast, etc. Learning and understanding: beliefs of Copts, of Quakers.

Producing an Agreed Statement: ARC IC II on morals.

Co-operating on projects: "On Fire" Bexleyheath.

Appreciation of insights and charity: at St Katherine 's, Orpington.

Warm and grateful thanks to all contributors.

MICHAEL SUCCEEDS MICHAEL IN ROCHESTER

Michael Nazir Ali, chosen as the new Anglican Bishop of Rochester in succession to Bishop Michael Turnbull, will, when he is consecrated in the New Year, be the first non-white diocesan bishop in the Church of England. Among many other positions held he was a former member of ARCIC II - and in the words of the Bishop of Tonbridge, he comes to us "with a world wide familiarity with the work and mission of the Church".

Our good wishes and prayers are with him, as we look forward to continued ecumenical co-operation.

STOP PRESS After prodding his desk calculator for about an hour and a half, our treasurer came to a remarkable conclusion. He discovered that with stamps at 19p each and envelopes at about 11p (which, with the aid of his electronic *vade mecum*, totalled 90p when multiplied by 3), his charge for postage and packing, currently at 70p has not been covering the actual cost for a long time. To the detriment of his ulcers therefore, we will have to start charging the actual cost. Fortunately for his sanity (or what remains of it) no change will be necessary to the charge for the bulletin itself.

Thus, from our next issue, the annual subscription will be £2.70 (£1.80 for the bulletin itself, as before, and 90p for postage and packing).



LIFE IN CHRIST: Morals, Communion and the Church.

ARCIC II (the second Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission) has recently published its Agreed Statement on Morals, Communion and the Church, entitled *Life in Christ*, in response to requests from the authorities of both churches. After an important introduction there is a fine section on "*Shared Vision*" indicating the common faith in God's creation of human beings "to glorify and enjoy God" and to participate in His divine life. Some of the characteristics and implications of this shared vision of life in Christ are presented. "Christian morality is one aspect of the life in Christ", and it would be good to consider our response to the fundamental questions relating to it, as set out in paragraph 11 of the document .

"At this fundamental level of inquiry and concern", the Statement says, "we believe our two Communion share a common vision and understanding . . . it will put in proper perspective any disagreement that may continue to exist in official teaching and pastoral practice on particular issues, such as divorce and contraception".

Agreement and Disagreement - that is the heading of Section E, and it comprises clear explanation.

With the sharing of a common perspective and acknowledging the same underlying values, the authors question "whether the limited disagreement, serious as it is, is itself sufficient to justify a continuing breach of communion".

This is a document to be carefully and prayerfully studied. (published by C.T.S.) The document has been welcomed by Cardinal Maria Montini who made a visit to England in July as guest of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Cardinal is reported to have said that he was particularly encouraged by the call for common witness in the document and hoped that Christians from both Communion would study it.

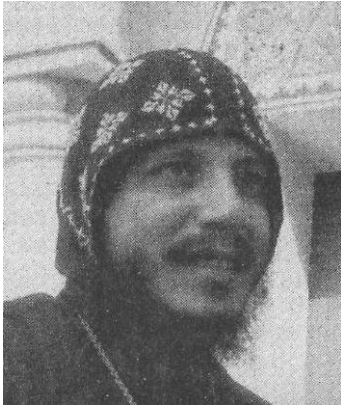
Mgr Kevin McDonald (now back in England after some years at the PCPCU) in his letter in *The Tablet* (9 July 1994) wrote: "The document is really trying to set out convergences and divergences in such a way as to enable readers to see them in context and to evaluate their significance. I am quite sure it will fulfil this role for those who study the text."

We offer our congratulations and thanks to ARC IC II, under their co-chairmen Bishop Cormac Murphy O'Connor and Bishop Mark Santer, for their work on this important topic.

A specific practical proposal ends the document: "We propose that steps should be taken to establish further instruments of co-operation between our two communion at all levels of church life (especially national and regional) , to engage with the serious moral issues confronting humanity today.

Pray that this proposal may be put into effect as soon as possible.

THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH (concluded)



Father Axious is a monk of the ancient monastery of Saint Bishoy, situated out in the Western Desert, somewhere between Cairo and Alexandria.

CHURCH SACRAMENTS A Church Sacrament is a holy rite which should have been instituted by Christ Himself. Through it the Coptic Orthodox Church believes that the believer receives invisible graces under the form of an outward sign, visible or audible (Rev Marcos Daoud *Church Sacraments*, 1975)

There are seven Sacraments: - Baptism, Confirmation, Repentance and Confession, Holy Communion,

Anointing of the sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.

The first four Sacraments are necessary for every believer.

The priest can perform all the Sacraments except that of conferring Holy Orders, which must be performed by a Bishop, who can also perform all the Holy Sacraments. The Deacon can *only help* perform the seven Sacraments.

BAPTISM This is the Sacrament where a person is born again and accepted into the family of the Church. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost." (Matt 28:18,19)

CONFIRMATION This is the Sacrament through which the believer is granted the gift of the Holy Spirit who alone confirms him in the new life given through baptism. This was instituted through the promises which the Lord gave, for example in St John, Ch 14 v 26 and Ch 15 v 26. The Holy Spirit descended upon Our Lord Jesus Christ directly after baptism (Matt 3:16) and that is why the Sacrament of Baptism is followed directly by that of Confirmation in the Coptic Orthodox Church.

PENANCE (Repentance, Confession and Forgiveness). This Sacrament is normally received before accepting the Holy Communion, because it is said in 1Cor. 11: 28, 29: "Let a man examine himself. and so let him eat of that bread And drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself not discerning the Lord's Body". It was instituted by the promise of the Lord in Matt 16 v 19, Matt 18 v 18 and John 20 v 21-23.

HOLY COMMUNION This is the culmination of Christian worship where earnest believers come to share in the intimate communion with their living Lord. (Luke 22: 19, John 6: 53-56) The priests and bishops only can celebrate this Sacrament, the laity are strictly forbidden to celebrate.

All baptised persons have the right to receive the Sacrament of Communion, but the believer must prepare himself beforehand. The body and the blood are given as the Lord expressed that all should drink of it": Matt 26: 27: "Drink ye all of it". The Coptic Church believes that the bread and wine are changed and become the flesh and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and as such must be completely consumed and cannot be dispensed with if there is any left over.

UNCTION OF THE SICK This Sacrament is where the priest anoints the body of the sick, asking for God's grace to cure both the body and the soul. Reference is made to this Sacrament in Mark Ch 6 v 13.

MARRIAGE Our Lord, Jesus Christ, confirmed this Sacrament by attending the marriage feast in Cana and by his teachings with regard to marriage i.e. Matt 19 v 4-6, and it is with reference to v9 in that same chapter that there is no divorce, except for one reason and that is fornication.

HOLY ORDERS This is the Sacrament whereby the priests are ordained to celebrate various Church services. The Lord chose certain people, He gave them special privileges (Matt 18:18, 28:18,19). There are three degrees of Holy Orders mentioned in the Bible and they are the Bishops, the Priests and the Deacons. In the Coptic Church, Bishops are chosen from the monks and as such are single and celibate. Priests can be married but they decide whether they are going to follow the celibate life or get married before they are ordained as they cannot get married after they have been ordained.

PRACTICES

PRAYER From the very beginning the Coptic Church was, and still is, essentially a Church of Prayer. (*Introduction to the Coptic Church* - Iris El Masry)
Firstly there are the prayers of the liturgy, these are those handed down by the early Fathers of the Church and are the Kyrillian, the Gregorian, and the Basilian

and it is the latter which is the most commonly used. The Church members are encouraged to pray at least the morning and evening prayers from the *Horlogion*. or the Seven Canonical Hours. The exact dates of these prayers are not known, but it is known that the desert Fathers used them in the third century. These prayers commemorate our Saviour's Resurrection, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles, the hour of our Lord's Crucifixion, the hour when our Lord commended his spirit into the hands of His Father, the hour when our Lord's body was taken down from the cross, and finally prayers to commemorate the burial of the Christ.

FASTING Fasts are considered spiritual preparation and they precede a feast. Our Lord fasted before the beginning of His ministry and commends fasting as an accompaniment to prayer (Mark ch 9) In addition to the main fasts such as Advent, Lent, the Apostles Fast, St Mary's fast and the one in commemoration of the repentance of Nineveh, Wednesdays and Fridays are observed as fasts by the faithful, because the Jews plotted against Christ on Wednesday and crucified Him on Friday.

With prayer and fasting comes Bible reading and the faithful are encouraged to read the Bible each morning and evening or at least once a day.

These are just some of the beliefs and practices of the Coptic Orthodox Church. It is a Church based on the Bible and Church tradition which can be traced back to the Apostles but which is very much alive in the Risen Lord.

THE PERSECUTIONS The Coptic Orthodox Church is in every age a martyred Church, though the world hears nothing of how Islamic Fundamentalism afflicts her today. Pagan persecutions reached their height under the Roman Emperor Diocletian. Because he came to the throne in 284 AD, the Coptic calendar dates from that year. The worse their persecutions, the more vigorously the Copts flourish, above all, in their spiritual life, because, as St Cyprian observes : "*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church*".

In the mid-nineteenth century Pope Cyril the Fourth led a Coptic revival. He established the first modern Coptic Schools including the first Egyptian school for girls. He founded the second printing press in Egypt. Coptic primary, secondary and technical schools spread all over the country. Until quite recently they were the only modern schools accepting students of all religions, teaching them secular subjects as well as their respective religions. The theological school for clergymen and laymen was re-established in Cairo in 1893, now called the Theological University College, it includes various schools with an evening one for University graduates. In 1954 the church founded an Institute of Coptic studies at Cairo, a post-graduate research centre comprising twelve departments. They are history, language, archaeology, art, theology, canon law, social studies and African studies.

Abroad, many universities have set up chairs, or even departments, of Coptic and biblical studies, given their importance for Pharaonic history and biblical work. The Coptic laity take an active part in the life of their Church. Each church has its own parish council with various sub-Committees, to help the clergy serve the pastoral and social needs of the community. Most of the parishes have ladies' committees as well, for particular needs.

TODAY Today there are about 9 million Copts in Egypt, 200,000 in Sudan, some thousands in Israel, Kuwait etc., and many Coptic families live in Europe, America and Australia. The Holy Synod of the Coptic Church is comprised of 64 metropolitans and bishops headed by Pope Shenouda the third of Alexandria.

Father Axious.

THE CANTERBURY FRIENDS

On Sunday June 19th, two of us, from St Thomas attended the Friends' Meeting House for prayer at 10.45 a.m. After receiving a warm welcome, we entered the spacious Prayer Room where bright sunlight was streaming through the large windows. The chairs, arranged in semi-circular formation, focussed on a small table where three Bibles lay in full view. Already over twenty Friends were quietly worshipping, and within five minutes almost all the fifty chairs were occupied.

As is customary at all the Friends' Prayer Meetings , complete silence was observed. A great stillness and tranquillity filled the room; the atmosphere was completely calm and peaceful. Nobody moved. One sensed that everyone was totally absorbed in communing with God.

Personally, I found myself caught up in the sea of contemplation. The words of Psalm 136, which I find so inspiring, flowed into my mind and provided me with ample material for meditation. Then after about thirty minutes, the silence was broken; one Friend stood up and briefly alluded to changes that a young person experiences as he or she grows from childhood to maturity, and the importance, to that young person, of knowledge of Jesus who never changes, and of prayer, a sustaining factor.

After another interval, a second Friend spoke of the value of "light, peace and joy", in the life of a Christian. Towards the end of the hour's meditation, a third Friend spoke and thanked God for the gifts of experience of God and of belief in God. The words of the three speakers, though brief, provided insights into the spirituality of the Friends.

When two of the elders shook hands, all the participants did likewise. cups of tea were passed round in a totally relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The two of us (from St Thomas') shared and enjoyed the friendly occasion. Then we thanked the Friends for having allowed us to worship with them and we parted,

TALK ON THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS By Maddy Webster and Elizabeth Birmingham

ORIGINS: Elizabeth was introduced as a birthright friend, born into a long standing Quaker family, a Cadbury. Maddy was a Friend by conviction. At Methodist and Anglican services she found that she did not agree with all the words of the prayers and hymns. At 22 she attended her first Quaker meeting and felt that 'this is what I have always been looking for!' At 28 she became a member. Many Quakers are refugees from other religions.

CENTRAL BELIEF : In every person there is an inner light, the seed of God even in the depraved. Elizabeth Fry visited women who swore and drank. Thus there is no need for priests or people with an intellectual framework of theology. There are no sacraments or sacramental rites. There is no baptism with water, but they are baptised again and again with the Holy Spirit. In prayer they speak to Jesus themselves with nothing coming in between.

MEETINGS: can be absolutely silent or anyone may speak as the Spirit moves them with a prayer, a Bible reading, an experience. Sometimes a theme emerges and develops, e.g. 'Unless you become as little children you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' Listening and the way you listen at a Meeting is important. The sign that the Meeting has ended is when two of the elders shake hands.

ORGANISATION: There are elders, appointed for 3 years, and overseers also appointed for 3 years. The elders organise the Meetings and arrange weddings and funerals. Everyone is assigned to an overseer, who befriends them and their families, visits when they are sick etc. Many Friends do not apply for membership for their children.

BUSINESS MEETINGS: At these opinions are shared in order to reach an agreement or decision. No-one is overridden - agreement is reached. The discussion may be about management of property or another local issue. The minutes are written, read back and settled at the time, so there can be no error as to what was said through one-sidedness, forgetfulness or inattention.

PEACE WITNESS: The mainspring is to reach the violence in yourself before stopping violence outside. The Friends are pacifists and involved in the United Nations, where the aim is to stop the roots of war and prevent wars happening. After World War II for example, the Germans were not repressed but encouraged and supported in rebuilding their economy. In Ireland both Catholics and Protestants form the Corymeela Community. George Fox, the founder, considered

it absolutely wrong to fight over forms of Christianity. He would not join in the Civil War on the Parliamentary side nor on the Royalist side. The Friends were persecuted in the mid-17th century. They aim to 'try to walk cheerfully through the world, respecting all men.' When you believe something you show it by your life.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION: These followed the talk and the topics included the fact that they have no rite of election. An application for membership is made followed by a visit by two elders who report back, and then the application is accepted. There are Bible study groups and they have a Book of Christian Discipline, which is reviewed and updated every generation. It was felt that there were similarities between Charismatic Prayer Meetings and Quaker Meetings. Similarly, although there are priests in the Catholic Church, the priesthood of the laity has been emphasised since Vatican II.

The date and attendance at the Friends' Meeting House: It was decided that owing to the nature of the Quaker Meetings, the whole group would not all attend on the same Sunday, but come individually or in small groups at a convenient date over the next few months. The Meetings were held at 10.45 a.m. on Sundays.

Joan Crosland

St Thomas', Canterbury.

THE INITIAL PROBLEM

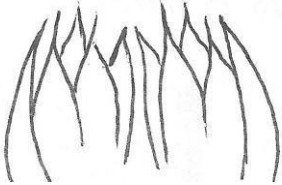
A recently appointed Unity Contact has voiced the concern of readers who want to know what the initials of various ecumenical bodies stand for. (some were, in fact, published in earlier editions of our Bulletin.

So, see If you can say what the following initials represent.

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. C.T.E. | 2. G.L.U. | 3. C.C.B.I. | 4. P.C.P.C.U. |
| 5. W.C.C. | 6. A.I.F. | 7. E.S.B.V.M. | 8. C.C.U. |

(The answers are on the Back page if needed)

BEXLEYHEATH CHURCHES - ON FIRE TOGETHER



On Saturday May 21, the eve of Pentecost, all the Churches in the centre of Bexleyheath joined together to celebrate the 'birthday' of the Church, that day almost two thousand years ago when the Holy Spirit fell upon Peter and the other disciples and enabled them to preach the Gospel of Christ to all in their own language.

What could have been a more appropriate occasion for the Churches to unite, since in many ways it is only our different languages which keep us apart. The only tongues of flame to be seen that day came from the fire eater, but nevertheless much was done and much was learned to suggest that unity is no longer the stumbling block that it once was.

I want to try and tease out those lessons, in the hope that they may give encouragement and guidance to anyone contemplating a similar event in the future, and to see if they point to a way forward in ecumenical relations in Bexleyheath. But first, the background.

'On Fire' was conceived as a national event, not directly evangelistic, but giving local Churches a chance to show the communities they served that Christians could have fun. The central theme of the event was to be a birthday party, outdoors if at all possible, to which local people could be invited and at which they would learn more, about our faith, our lifestyle and our joy.

There were to be special guest services at our Churches the following day where people we had met on Saturday could hear presentations of the Gospel, join in worship and, if they chose to, make a commitment to the Lord. The whole project was to be ecumenical and to involve as many local Churches as possible. That was the theory, what happened in practice?

The project first came to my attention through the fraternal, the regular gathering of local clergy, and for us, it presented something of a challenge. Other local ecumenical events had met with mixed responses, and sometimes suffered from a lack of coordinated planning. There had always been a tension between the local Fellowship of Churches and the fraternal, ministers seemed uncertain whether to attend both, and often didn't and the Fellowship felt unable to make decisions which would bind ministers without first having consulted them.

'On Fire' was obviously going to be a major event, and one in which contributions from a number of Churches would need to be carefully integrated into the overall programme, and a new approach was needed.

We decided to base the whole event on the Anglican parish Church, which had enough space for the outdoor event and a number of indoor ones as well, and to invite the other Churches to send representatives to the steering group which

was set up so that their ideas and concerns could be fed into the developing vision.

Then, as different tasks were identified, these were shared out among the Churches leaving the steering group to coordinate the programme and make sure deadlines were met. After a couple of meetings the content and shape of the outdoor and indoor programmes were decided, publicity material was agreed on and either ordered or commissioned, prayer leaflets were prepared and circulated to all the participating Churches, Individual groups within the Churches were busy preparing their own contributions; a flower festival was commissioned, a huge birthday cake was in the process of being 'built' and iced, a mega Birthday Card was on the stocks and everyone was confident that we had an event.

Notwithstanding the 'party' emphasis in the national brief, the group wanted to include some overtly Christian events on the programme. These included a 'Jesus Exhibition' highlighting and illustrating key Gospel passages, a hand-out listing the participating Churches' services with a contact list of Church leaders and a public Bible reading of Luke's Gospel and Acts. National arrangements included a mass balloon release, and it was decided to use balloons to carry a scripture message to a wider audience.

In addition to the guest services, follow up was to include a half-term holiday club using three Churches on the high street each hosting children of a different age group. Professional assistance with this was engaged in the shape of the 'Fun Factory', a Christian drama trio who between them taught and led games, songs and, naturally enough, drama.

Local schools distributed invitations to take part and the Fun Factory visited a number of them to reinforce the message.

The outdoor programme was designed to make the best use of the space available and to encourage visitors to roam freely. A fairground organ at one entrance and an outdoor stage with a programme of music and drama at another were intended to attract attention and draw people in; other attractions were a bouncy castle, an outdoor café area and a number of sideshows. Catering outlets were to include a Creperie, a hot dog stand outside and a coffee shop inside. This would also serve ploughman's lunches at the appropriate time.

Off site we planned to parade a cardboard model of the birthday cake through the surrounding streets and some youngsters were to dress up as clowns and walk around with sandwich boards to publicise the event. The site itself would be decorated with bunting and a special flag was made to celebrate the day.

During the three weeks running up to the event the local Churches would run a 'teaser' poster campaign: posters declaring "COLD", "WARM", and finally "ON FIRE". A press reception was planned, with representatives of local papers invited, and the local commercial radio station's religious affairs team were to be sent briefing material.

Weather was obviously going to be a major factor in determining the success of the venture and plans were made for re-siting as many activities as possible under cover should the need arise.

Another major concern was audibility of the stage performances, given that the stage was about 30 metres from a busy high street. Although the host Church had public address equipment suitable for choirs and music groups, we needed to augment this to amplify actors' voices and three rifle microphones specifically designed for this task were hired for the week-end. They proved to be a mixed blessing but more of that later!

Last but not least we had to consider site security since the stage and a number of the sideshows would need to be erected the night before. After some searching, a night watchman was procured from the staff of the local Boys' Brigade Company and we were more or less ready for the off.

All this had taken perhaps four or five meetings of the steering group, in all about seven or eight hours work. Many more hours were still to be put in behind the scenes by the people who had volunteered/been pressured into bringing the plans to fruition.

A word about the financial arrangements. The host Church made a provision of £500 to meet the costs of pre-event publicity and materials, but this was defrayed by charging participating Churches for posters and hand bills either ordered or produced centrally. These costs were to be offset by donations from members of each Church's congregations.

So much for the plans, what actually happened?

It rained. It began raining at about ten o'clock on Friday evening, and the forecast for Saturday was for heavy showers and some dry periods. We were scheduled to start putting the finishing touches to the site at seven o'clock on Saturday morning, at which time there was still scope for optimism, but by eight it was pouring and no weather for the PA to be out in.

By nine we had set up the stage in one of the halls and it had stopped raining again, but despite some *gung-ho* advice to the contrary, there was no way the stage crew were going to shift the whole lot outdoors again. In fact, it rained hard and often, and the whole complexion of the day changed.

Notwithstanding a rousing opening display by the Boys' Brigade band in what would have been the arena, we could no longer expect to draw crowds of shoppers onto the site and the mission was now to demonstrate Christian good humour in the face of adversity, and to enjoy fellowship with the faithful from each others' congregations. Spirits were not quenched, and neither was the fire eater who put on a colourful display in the car park while a large audience huddled in the porch of the church hall.

The stage programme ran, more or less to time, with an audience of perhaps a hundred for the first sitting, and about half that number in the afternoon. There was choral singing, juggling clowns, sketches, including one specially written for

the occasion, offerings from a worship group and some thought provoking fillers of the "Peter . . ." "Yes Jesus" variety. There was a rock band, also, courtesy of the Boys' Brigade, who divided their audience neatly into the ecstatic and the exasperated.

The food and drink outlets did a roaring trade, even if the hot dog stand had to operate from the aforementioned hall porch, but the outdoor attractions had a hard time of it and the bouncy castle went decidedly flat for a while. The Church itself was the closest building to the high street and the events there, the flower festival, Jesus exhibition and Bible reading all had a steady stream of visitors.

By three o'clock, when everything had to stop for a wedding in the Church, most of us were ready to pack up anyway, but we did release the balloons and watch most of them avoid getting stuck in the trees.

Clearing up is clearing up, we've all done it and everyone seemed to go away with whatever they'd brought. Time to think about Sunday morning and the guest services, or guest service as it turned out because only the Anglican Church actually held one.

It tried to mirror what had gone before with a reprise of the drama, contributions from both choir and worship group, and short presentations on the love of Christ, the authority of Christ and His power to heal. About sixty people came forward to commit or re-commit themselves and each one of them was contacted within a fortnight to see whether we could be of any assistance to them in their journey of faith. There were, perhaps, ten 'new' people on the list but this was in no way a measure of the success of the service. All present found it very moving, and a fit climax to the On Fire celebration.

Looking back, I suppose the first lesson we all learnt was that "things impossible" can, with planning and co-operation very easily be made possible. I also think that the model of Churches uniting to support an event which one of them is already committed to putting on works better than of trying to build the whole thing together from the ground up. Often we try to be so equal that projects fail through lack of leadership. When it comes to involving congregations, allocating jobs is much more successful than asking for volunteers.

Communication is important, every church leader needs to make sure that his or her congregation knows what is happening and what they are expected to do. I heard of one Church where people thought the 'COOL' poster signified that the central heating had failed!

Publicity is important, and I think we fell short on two counts there. First the 'National Publicity' was not what we had thought it was going to be. There was nothing like the coverage given to, for example, National No Smoking Day or the march for Jesus. secondly ' and perhaps the two are related, attendance at the local Press Reception was nil and there was very little awareness of the event outside the Churches.

Fewer children attended the holiday club than come to the regular summer and Christmas ones organised by the parish Church alone. In retrospect, half term is probably too short to make activities outside the family attractive.

So, where do we go from here?

Building on the Church activities hand-out we produced, we are now committed to producing an ecumenical Christmas card with details of all our festal services, and we are committed to doing it well.

Relationships between the Fellowship of Churches and the ministerial fraternal are being formalised to enable each group to complement the other more effectively, and I think it much more likely that one Church will now be prepared to 'borrow' a music or drama group when it needs one, rather than feel it needs to grow its own.

And finally, perhaps we did not set Bexleyheath on fire with the love of Christ, but we have certainly been left with a warm glow in our own hearts where once there might have been only coolness.

Alan Horton,

Curate of Christ Church, Bexleyheath.



Pentecost 95 is an ecumenical London-wide initiative from the Senior Church Leaders of London and is funded by all the major denominations in the capital. It has the full and active support of Cardinal Basil Hume, the Bishops of London and Southwark as well as all leaders of the Free Churches of London, North and South of the River Thames. There are many aspects to the event, but the focus of the celebration which all churches and groups across London are invited to join is The Great Banquet

the Great Banquet takes its inspiration from the teachings of Jesus about the Kingdom of God in which food and celebrations are at the heart. Pentecost 95 presents The Great Banquet as a practical challenge to the churches of London encouraging them to work in partnership with their community and to arrange celebratory meals. The date for the Great Banquet is Saturday June 3 1995 and the hope is that all over London on that day, meals and banquets of different styles be taking place to which friends and strangers are invited.

An ecumenical service will be held in Westminster Cathedral on Pentecost Sunday June 4 1995. Church leaders are being asked to invite 1000 newly confirmed or baptised members to process with candles into the Cathedral to the sound of the trumpeters of the Household Cavalry. The service will celebrate the whole life of London. Senior leaders from all the Churches will be asked to make an ecumenical act of commitment to this our capital city. We hope that many London churches join in this ecumenical celebration on Pentecost Sunday 4 June

by holding ecumenical services in their own localities reflecting the festival's themes.

Jacqui Christian

PRAY FOR PEACE

Those who look with despair upon Northern Ireland may be cheered to know that a small candle for peace was lit upon the altar of Our Lady of Ephesus during a recent pilgrimage to Turkey.

The pilgrimage, organized by Inter-Church Travel and led by an Anglican vicar from South London, followed the foundation of the Christian faith in Asia Minor, taking as its link the Seven Churches of the Revelation, and included visiting some of the great ancient monuments on its way.

The pilgrimage was entirely ecumenical, comprising Anglicans, Roman Catholics, a few "ordinary tourists" and a large number of Methodists, including a party from Northern Ireland.

There were many blessings and surprises on the way not least the Church at Smyrna, which turned out to be a beautiful early seventeenth century Baroque Roman Catholic Church, maintained by an order of French nuns and priests. On Holy Trinity Sunday the Eucharist was celebrated at Gallipoli and thanks to our guide we had flowers to lay on the *Anzac* memorial: and wherever we went there were children, bright eyed and full of excited interest.

On our last day, Sunday, we came to Ephesus. In the morning we followed the steps of St. Paul through the city, and in the afternoon we came for the final Eucharist to the house of Our Lady, *Meryem Ana*. This house and chapel is a reconstruction of the house to which it is said St. John, the Beloved Apostle brought Our Lady when they left Jerusalem.

Turkey is, by law, a secular country, and the wearing of religious dress and public prayer are forbidden. Nevertheless, there is a permanent stone altar outside where pilgrims of all faiths, Muslim as well as Christian, (the only place in the world where this happens) can worship there. In recent times both Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II, as well as Archbishop Tutu have prayed at *Meryem Ana*.

The shrine is in the keeping of two Capuchins and three sisters of the Order of St. Vincent de Paul, who, if required, supply the pilgrims with bread, wine, sacred vessels and vestments.

Among the other visitors at the House that Sunday was a family of Northern Irish Roman Catholics. They explained that they had not been able to go to Mass while they had been in Turkey, and although it was an Anglican led service they asked if they could join us. They were warmly welcomed, particularly by the other Irish members of the party.

We all embraced at the peace, and then, at the home of Our Lady, in a Mohammedan country, which had once been the heart of Christendom Northern Irish Protestants and Northern Irish Catholics stood and received Holy Communion together, and a small candle was lit for peace.

Creina Foy.

ST. KATHERINE'S OFFER THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

NUMINOUS. It is not a word that meant a great deal to me, but I came across it at a meeting of the ministers of all the local churches which we have here in Orpington every month. There was a time when it was known as the "fraternal", but not anymore. The Priest at whose home we were meeting was inveighing against the ubiquitous folk group and common tendency for charismatic style worship, and felt it important to get back the sense of the numinous. I can best explain it as that feeling that I experienced when I visited the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey in North Yorkshire, and in amongst the soaring arches I could sense the distilled prayers of the centuries that had been absorbed into the stones, dripping down over me. To shout, dance or sing would have been quite out of the question.

Dare I suggest that in many Catholic Churches it is more difficult to experience the sense of the numinous because they have not been there, drenched in prayer for long enough, in this country? On the other hand, when I take part in Mass at St Katherine's CoE church in Knockholt, there is a certain ingredient which I can only put down to the experience of the Numinous. How is it that I experience Mass at a Church of England village church? It is all down to Canon Eric Smith, one time rector of St. Katherine 's. Originally, as long ago as 1950 or before, Mass was said in Knockholt one Sunday in six by the Priest of the Travelling Mission in the Village Hall. Around 1954, the Parish Priest of Holy Innocents at Orpington, some five miles away, agreed to say Mass every other week in the Village Hall and a year or so later, the new Parish Priest, Father Phelan agreed to say a regular weekly Mass. 16 years later Canon Smith first approached his Parochial Church Council, and then his Diocesan authorities to request permission to allow the Roman Catholics to say Mass once a week in the Church, and on Sunday, 2nd January, 1972 at 5.00 p.m. , Father Phelan said the first Mass in St. Katherine's since the Reformation. 5.00 p.m. was chosen as it did not interfere with the normal Anglican services. Mass has been said there ever since.

The Roman Catholic parishioners play their part in the running of the Church, taking their turn in cleaning, decorating for Harvest Festivals, Christmas and Easter and paying for the Church to be decorated during the year of its 700th Anniversary. Now, to go alongside the plaques commemorating past Rectors of Knockholt, Bishop Charles Henderson has unveiled a plaque to commemorate Father Michael Phelan and his ministry to his flock in Knockholt.

The wording of the plaque is as follows:-

"In memory of Father Michael Phelan, Parish Priest of the Roman Catholic Parish of Holy Innocents, Orpington from 1955 to 1984, whose ministry won him the respect and affection of all Christians in Knockholt.

On the second of January 1972 at the invitation of Canon Eric Smith - Rector, and the P.C.C., he began the weekly celebration of Mass in this church for his congregation. This Tablet was erected to mark the 21st anniversary of this occasion.

It was a very moving service, with the new Rector who has only recently been installed, the Rev. David Flagg, present with a number of his Anglican flock, making the church, virtually full. I was contemplating the series of remarkable events that had taken place: firstly the outstanding act of Christian love exhibited by Canon Smith, secondly the extent by which Canon Smith was ahead of his time and had shown great courage, thirdly the continuing nature of the bond so created which had been supported by two subsequent Anglican Rectors and the Anglican Parishioners, and finally, the somewhat unusual and special experience of a Roman Catholic Bishop celebrating Mass in a village parish Church.

Bishop Henderson spoke of his experience earlier in the year beside the late mentioned in the Gospel reading, yearning for full communion with representatives of fourteen differing churches who were present there came into conflict with the current reality that this full union is not yet in place, and the suggestion that Trust is required by all parties if miracles are to take place - Trust is required for the Lord's will to be done — Trust is required if that will is to be done through us individually.

The effect of Canon Smith and Father Phelan working together through St. Katherine's had been to unite the peace of the local community and enable both congregations to grow in their Christian life. The warm glow of this lovely event left me even more hungry for the Unity for which so many of us are working.

Austin Martin.

(Austin Martin is a Deacon at Holy Innocents Catholic Church in Orpington, He is also a member of the S.E. Area Christian Unity Commission) .

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN THANET

At their third "Deanery Forum" in October 1993, the Catholics of Thanet recognised that, in spite of the obstacles to full unity, they could undertake some project aimed at relieving suffering in Thanet, in consequence of which a resolution was unanimously passed as follows : "That we should start raising funds, and call on all the Churches in Thanet to come together with the intention of addressing the needs of the homeless, using the assistance of the existing Christian Housing Trust."

Arising from this, the Churches of Thanet of various denominations, have come together to organise a sponsored walk for the homeless Of Thanet to take place on September 18th starting at 2 p.m. from Minnis Bay and ending at St Anne's Church, Eastern Esplanade, Cliftonville.

All proceeds will be given to the Christian Housing Trust, a national registered charity which has its H.Q. in Margate. The trust at present manages 11 bedsits in

Margate with resident staff who can help residents cope with problems from unemployment, broken marriages, alcoholism, drug dependence or mental disorder.

NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

A bright September morning and a large white envelope plopped on to my front door mat. "The Lord Chancellor and the Speaker of the House of Commons invite you to join them . . . for the National Prayer Breakfast.

Some months earlier my MP's wife had phoned me and asked if I would like to attend, adding that it would cost me: £22 to go to the breakfast itself and a further £23 to attend their seminars in the morning, join in the lunch, and if I wanted to, to stay on for the afternoon time of informal worship and prayer, or quiet meditation. The time of arrival was 7.30 a.m. for 8 a.m. for breakfast; departure time was 4.30 p.m.

I'd never before heard of the National Prayer Breakfasts, I'd guess that the majority don't know of them either - and I was surprised to learn that 1993 was the tenth. Prayer breakfasts originated in the USA and were started by President Eisenhower some 30 years ago. A very small private group started to meet regularly for breakfast, prayer and Bible study, and very soon other groups in different parts of the country took up the idea. It spread to Britain some ten years ago, to Parliament.

There are four prayer fellowships at Westminster one each in Lords and Commons, one for staff, and one for wives. They hold regular meetings in small committed groups with a strong base. They cross all political boundaries and all Christian denominations. The annual National Prayer Breakfast attracts people from all over the United Kingdom, as well as a number from overseas, and in 1993 over 900 attended. There are similar set ups in Wales, Edinburgh and Manchester. and at the time of writing it is hoped to form a group in Kent. the 1993 gathering was under the chairmanship of Stuart Bell MP, and the opening prayer was given by Christopher Brown, Director and Chief Executive of the NSPCC. After an excellent breakfast, we were welcomed by The Lord Mackay of Clashfern, The Lord Chancellor, and Michael Bates MP read a message from Parliament. There followed prayers for Parliament, the nation and the world, given respectively by an MP's wife, a Metropolitan Police Constable on regular duty at Westminster, and the Mayor of Ballymena, Northern Ireland; Bible readings by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Julian Oswald, a former First Sea Lord and Betty Boothroyd MP, Speaker of the House of Commons: an excellent address by Michael Hastings, a political correspondent. with the final prayer being given by Councillor Jeremy Fraser, Leader of the London Borough of Southwark.

We had a short 'comfort' break and then assembled for the seminars on the theme of "Christ and the Family". Before mine began I found myself deep in conversation with a woman who turned out to be the Minister of Education for Malawi, one of the speakers: the seminar speakers had individual views to offer on the theme and feel we all learned a lot from what they had to say. After a break for coffee, we re-assembled into one seminar, which included modern church music sung and played by a guitar group, prayers and several addresses including a very moving one from Ruth Simmons, Director of the Mildmay Hospital for AIDS sufferers, about her unhappy childhood, her faith and how she was led to work at Mildmay.

Lunch was informal and we sat wherever we chose. lunch companions included a Dutch Senator and his wife who were involved in the concept in Holland. This is something which could be started in a small way in different areas, perhaps under the wing of the local Council of Churches. Breakfasts don't have to be big - it is best if they can take place in members' homes in perhaps rotation. What is needed is a small committed group willing to meet together to share the Gospel, to pray together and to offer support to each other. It need not cost a lot of money although there would be some expenses and these could be covered by a charge for breakfast. As the concept gathered momentum in a particular area and groups grew in size, possibly members could break off and start another group. There could be an annual prayer breakfast on the lines of the National Prayer Breakfast — not so expensive as at Westminster as local venues should be much cheaper. We don't share our faith enough with others, and hence we are surprised when we discover concepts such as the Prayer Breakfast. and learn that people in politics abandon their political allegiances in joining together in the greatest allegiance of all to God, our Father, and His Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Kay Weller (Welling)

INITIAL PROBLEM ANSWERS: 1. Churches Together in England. 2. Group for Local Unity. 3. Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland. 4. Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. 5. World Council of Churches. 6. Association of Inter-Church Families. 7. Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary. 8. Committee for Christian Unity

