



## *From the Pector*

At the time of writing the miner's has been going on for nearly two months. Already the railmen and the steelworkers are becoming implicated; and as time goes on, others will undoubtedly be sucked into the vortex. No strike is a good strike; but this one is particularly sad because unionist is in conflict with fellow unionist, violence is increasing, and the police are bearing the brunt of the battle.

What has the Church to say in this situation? Some people would say - nothing. This is a political matter, and the church should keep out of politics. Mr John Butcher M.P. proclaimed a few months ago that clergy should give up commenting on political matters for Lent and concentrate on their real job which, he considered, was 'saving souls and filling their churches'. Mr Enoch Powell, with his usual razor-sharp logic, has slashed the Archbishop of York for supporting the Durham miners in their attitude to pit closures, maintaining that the Archbishop was not qualified to comment on this subject and should therefore keep his mouth shut.

Of course individual clergy should not speak about matters which they do not understand. But the proposition that the church should keep out of politics cannot be accepted by a community whose source-book is the Bible. The great Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament were in no doubt that a right relationship with God was associated with social justice as well as personal integrity. Their outspoken denunciation of those who exploited the poor, or who denied them decent housing by buying up property to make mansions for themselves inevitably involved them in political conflict.

True worship of the God who is revealed in the Bible leads to concern for social issues; and that inevitably leads to political involvement. Whenever the Christian church has been alive it has been concerned about social evils and therefore concerned to change the conditions which have brought about those evils. A century and a half ago, William Wilberforce was deeply concerned about the evils of slavery. He could not be content to alleviate the slaves' suffering: he had to abolish the institution of slavery; and that involved a long political fight.

"The church", Archbishop William Temple once said, "is the only human institution which exists for the benefit of those who are not its members". In the purpose of God the church is only a means to an end; to bring the whole world into conformity with his will. Jesus said, 'I have come that they may have life and have it in all its fulness'. The clergyman's function is not ultimately 'to save souls and fill his church' but to lead people inside the church or outside it into fulness of life. We used to

have a notice outside St. Thomas' which read 'Your need - our concern'. The church's concern is the world. The most important issue in this country at the moment at the present time is the miners' strike; and so the miners' strike must be at the top of the church's agenda.

So what is the church to say? It is true that ill-informed clergy should not make critical statements; it is also true that wise comment must be made from a Christian point of view by those members of the church who are competent to do so. But the local minister has a duty to point out some of the issues that should be of concern to Christians. To put it another way: how should we pray about this industrial conflict?

First and foremost we are not to condemn. Jesus said that he had come not to condemn but to save. As individual citizens we shall all have our own opinions about the rights and wrongs of the situation. As a church our function is to help redeem the situation - by our prayer and actions to bring love to bear on all who are involved.

We must remember the miners and their families. Most of them are not in this predicament through their own deliberate choice; and many are not only very hard up but also experiencing deep personal problems. Especially we need to be concerned about those miners and their families in villages where the pit is to close and where there is no other employment.

Next, our concern should be for the police. We have the best police force in the world. With a very few exceptions, the police are neither corrupt or violent; and they are unarmed. We should do all in our power to keep it that way. In Britain the policeman is still the citizen's ally - how long can he remain so? There is a grave danger that present events will change the attitude of policemen and the character of the police force.

Finally we must pray for the leaders on each side in this conflict, Ian McGregor and Arthur Scargill; the one determined to create a profitable coal industry, the other seeking to preserve the miners' jobs. Neither is a saint. Each speaks and acts from a mixture of motives. Christians must pray for some measure of reconciliation between them, without which our whole nation will suffer irreparable harm.





# Who is disabled?

There is a great deal of sympathy about for people who have a disability, but sometimes that sympathy is misplaced. There are lots of able-bodied people who are wanting to help their less capable fellows but sometimes this attitude of helping can be more handicapping than a physical disability itself. People who have a disability are, in most instances, quite capable of being active and useful in the community but they are sometimes not given the chance to show themselves. Everyone has something to give to others and we all need the help of others at times. 'Giving and taking' was the key theme at a recent conference that I attended looking at the spiritual needs of handicapped people. This 'reciprocity' to use a more technical term, is an important part of life for everyone and those who consider themselves to be 'normal' should not expect that they should do all the giving when they meet with the disabled. At the conference there were many people working in Christian life with disabled people, there were hospital chaplains, workers in residential homes and day centres, social workers, and ordinary parish clergy concerned about the handicapped in the community.

The speakers on the course came from many fields; theologians, teachers, researchers, social workers and chaplains and, of course, people who have a personal experience of handicap. Although each speaker told us of the specialist work of their own sphere of activity the over-riding theme was the same - the handicapped are people first, handicapped second.

There is often a tension in accepting this amongst church people, for deep in our Christian conscience there is a desire to help others. When we see a disabled person that desire comes to the fore and often we rush to their aid. The help that we offer may be needed and most welcome, however, that help may, too, be unwanted and unnecessary. Some 'helping' people find it difficult to accept that their aid is not required, in some instances they press harder. The handicapped person may, just to keep the peace, acquiesce, and let the other person do the job. How would you feel if someone rushed to help you in and out of your car whether you needed the help or not. Frustrated probably.

Able-bodied people need to understand that they can often be the greatest handicap that a disabled person has. Their attitudes, their 'help' and often their fears of disability conspire to prevent the disabled person from being a person at all. Sometimes not to help is the best help that we can give.

Misunderstanding able-bodied people also erect physical barriers that hinder disabled people. Just look at our three churches, how easy is it to negotiate them in a wheelchair? St. John's is crowded with fixed chairs and has three steps to the altar rail. St. Thomas' has an access ramp more dangerous than helpful and is filled with pews that force wheelchair-riders to the front or back of the church. St. Peter's comes out well - it is level throughout but still has those dreaded banks of pews.

We should try to share our whole lives with everyone. The Christian faith calls us to live in community with others - giving and receiving, knowing that all people are created by God, not to live independent lives but to live INTERdependent lives.



On Sunday, 13th May a full church enjoyed the presence of Bishop Cecil Warren and the fourteen candidates who were confirmed during the parish communion service. The new full members of the church were Annette Eshelby, Angela Maloney, Christine Scotchmer, Janet Dale, Debbie Martin, James Pogson, Anthony Walters, Stephen Lenthall, Rachel Gibbons, Sandra Slone, Amanda Blanksby, Kathryn Turner, Janine Syder and Andrea Parsons.

The Bishop admitted that his accent betrayed his origins in the other side of the world, but really Australia was not his immediate home since he only comes from next door, our neighbouring parish of Old Brampton. The warmth and sincerity of his comments made one wonder if all bishops are good talkers - or if that is why they are made bishops? It was certainly a day to remember for the people confirmed, from St. Thomas' and St. Peter's, and for the friends, relatives and regular members of the congregation who were privileged to share the service with them.

# SCARGILL

NOVEMBER 23rd to 25th 1984

In November there is to be a parish weekend visit to the conference centre at Scargill House, Kettlewell, North Yorkshire. Scargill is a place of contrasts. The conference centre is run by a Christian community amidst beautiful countryside, providing excellent accomodation and food.

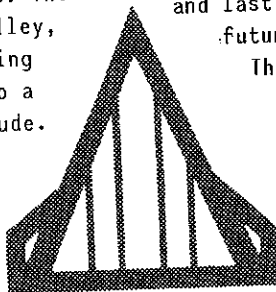
A weekend at Scargill reflects the contrasts of the place. The rolling hills and wide valley, the greenery and the grazing sheep bring the visitor to a time of peace and quietitude. The vitality of the community and thier sense of mission awaken new spiritual depths as one lives amongst them.

Such are the benefits that one reaps from a time at Scargill, a chance to get away from it all, to relax and reflect to learn and be inspired, to be close to God.

A weekend at Scargill is a time of Christian growth for here we see new aspects of the Spirit in our lives. The theme of our weekend is 'Growing Together' - an evocative phrase that has two

meanings; as a church family we grow together in fellowship, love and service: and, as one, we grow in the spirit - together, each contibuting to and recieving from the other.

The weekend will be shared with fellow Christians from Bilton, in Harrogate. Some preliminary plans have already been laid for the weekend as planning groups from both churches meet to share the needs and hopes of the two congregations. A spirit of friendship is building up between our two churches and we very much hope that this will increase over the Scargill weekend and last for a long time into the future.



The whole of the conference centre has been booked for the weekend and the allocation for St. Thomas' parish is forty places.

As this is intended as a family weekend the places will be quickly

taken up and so early booking is a very good idea. A £5.00 deposit is required to reserve a place and payments may be made in installments. The full cost of the weekend will be £23.70 for adults, children's rates will be announced later.

Ruth Nicholls is dealing with the money side of things and she can be contacted at 144, Manor Road, Brimington, (Tel. 78910) or at St. Thomas' church on Sundays.

The parish magazine for July 1933 said "As all Brampton knows, Brampton Feast depends for its date on the Sunday which falls nearest to St. Peter's Day (the 29th June), the pastoral festival of the ancient parish of Brampton". All Brampton fifty years ago may have known that, but I wonder how many now remember Brampton Feasts of years ago. The celebration was designed to relate 'holy day' to 'holiday'; in ancient times after great Church festivals, when the people had attended morning mass, the rest of the day was devoted to sport and personal enjoyment. The Church in this way obtained a 'holiday' for the common people - who had very few of these!

Here in Brampton such a holiday was associated with St. Peter and St. Paul, and since the ancient church in Brampton can be traced back to the 11th Century, Brampton Feast can be said to be about 900 years old. The rector, Rev. H.J. Sillitoe, was pointing out in the magazine that upon the whim of Chesterfield Borough Council, the Feast Day was under threat. He reminded parishioners that Brampton was a place and a community, not just a word used in 'town'. Its industries of pottery, iron and surgical dressings, as well as agriculture, provided employment for Chesterfield people, and the Borough did well from Brampton taxation. Mr. Sillitoe thought that Brampton paid more than its fair share considering the dubious benefit it got from being part of the Borough. Were we going to let a 'little clique rob us of our ancient feast day?'

"Well Brampton people, will you submit to daylight robbery or resist it now, and then in November emphasise your will at the Elections?"

The rector maintained that when a local community parts with its local customs, it parts with a piece of itself, and is to that extent impoverished. Brampton would be poorer if it let its Feast go, and should retain its customs, and maintain its identity and individuality.

Fighting talk! Whatever happened to Brampton Feast? Has Brampton lost its identity? Answers please to the Editor.

# looking back

# SHARING

## THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE DIOCESE OF DERBY AND THE CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA.



On Sunday, 5th May, two members of St. Thomas' congregation accepted the invitation of the Association of Bakewell Christians to meet Bishop Anand Chandu Lal and his wife Amrit, to see slides and to hear him talk about the life of the church in his Diocese of Amritsar. This Diocese includes the northernmost part of India, and borders on to Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tibet.

The Church of South India was the first of the ecumenical churches in that continent, and it was surprising to learn that talks were initiated in 1919! The Church of North India was formed later in 1977, and includes all the major denominations, except the Roman Catholics.

No more than 8% of the people are Christians, and they have always been mainly from the underprivileged of the former caste system in India. With the encouragement of the church, they are being motivated to try to remedy their landless state, and become responsible for their own lives. They need education to combat illiteracy, and to train them in improved agriculture and crafts.



The church has also made itself responsible for the care of the many Europeans and Americans who travel to Tibet searching for 'spiritual enlightenment', and so often find themselves destitute and ill.

The Church of North India uses the language, music and customs of the indigenous people in its liturgy. It is truly a church of, and for the people. The pastors and evangelists are enthusiastic, but require training, encouragement and transport - one man having oversight of many Christian communities, at distances of 10 to 15 miles. Most have bicycles the lucky few a moped. It is a young church, vital, relevant; and we have much to learn from the Christians there.



# MISSIONS

Frances Tindall.