

# Editorial

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## *More on Nairobi*

LIKE the July-September number last year, this is a 'Nairobi' issue of *The Churchman*. There are two differences however. First of course the Assembly of the World Council of Churches is seen in retrospect rather than in prospect, and not everything happened in the way that many predicted it would. Secondly, whereas in the first issue all the contributors were critical of what appeared to be 'official' WCC policy, in this issue one of the two contributors is on the staff of the British Council of Churches and was formerly on the staff of WCC. We are happy to print these long articles by Martin Conway and Tom Wright together and believe that they complement each other.

## *Relations with Roman Catholics*

ONE of the most important issues facing the church worldwide is the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to the other Christian bodies. It is no longer feasible to think of there being two entirely separate camps and all responsible church leaders are well aware of this. The appointment of Dom Basil Hume, the Abbot of Ampleforth, as Archbishop of Westminster, has been widely greeted by progressive Roman Catholics and by many non-Romans who wish to enter into serious dialogue with their church in this country. The new archbishop seems to be a refreshing character who, we pray, may be able to 'do a Pope John' in England. It is to be hoped that a man bred in the middle-class intellectual tradition will not be out of touch with his own flock and will be able to lead them in the way that the Spirit is moving today. Our prayers and good wishes go with him.

It is gratifying that Evangelical Anglicans have now become fully involved in discussions with Roman Catholics. The Oxford Conference of April 1975 was an important step forward in this respect and

its papers have now been published as a supplement to *The Churchman*, under the title *Agreement in the Faith* (Church Bookroom Press 1976, 118 pp., £1.50). A follow-up conference has been arranged for September 1976.

It is important in all these ecumenical fields not to be naïve. There are still major differences which cannot and should not be swept under the carpet. Any real ecumenical advance may also lead to further breakaway movements. But it is good that Christians are being forced to see things in a larger perspective. I write within a fortnight that has seen Solzhenitsyn's broadcast warning of doom on Western civilisation, a vicious IRA bombing campaign beginning in London, one million abortions performed since the 1967 Act, and the resignation of Harold Wilson, who despite many faults has helped to provide some stability in a troubled age. The troubles of Britain pale beside the appalling possibilities of war in Rhodesia and the strife and violence which has become endemic in so many parts of the globe. The world situation demands that Christians should not be trivial. We have too much in common not to seek to make common cause where this can be done with integrity.

### *The Churchman*

AT the moment we are suffering from an *embarras de richesses*, partly caused by devoting two issues to the Nairobi Assembly. Book reviews have been delayed and there are several important articles to hand. These include contributions on the charismatic movement from Douglas Davies and Vita Toon, articles on our series on modern theologians from Peter Cook on Pannenberg and Richard Higginson on Thielicke, a study by John Rogerson on the use of structuralism in Biblical interpretation and a review article by the Editor on recent literature about the Gospels.

Owing to a misunderstanding in proof-reading, the diagram in John Goldingay's article in the last issue became confused. Discerning readers will not however have missed the thread of the argument! Our apologies.

### *Some Recent Literature*

THOMAS A. SMAIL recently succeeded Michael Harper as Director of the Fountain Trust. It is good therefore to be able to welcome a book from him: *Reflected Glory, The Spirit in Christ and Christians* (Hodder 1975, 158 pp., £2.95). While this is a full-scale treatment neither of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit nor of the charismatic movement, it will be extremely helpful in clearing away misconceptions held

by many both inside and outside 'Renewal' circles. In particular the way in which the author dissociates himself from 'second-blessing Pentecostalism' will reassure those for whom such teaching has been the main stumblingblock. The much more irenic tone being adopted at the moment in discussion of these issues suggests that most Christians are really trying to live with this new movement of the Spirit, but theological discernment is still needed because there is a thin line between some pentecostal thinking and pure subjectivism.

New interest in the work of the Spirit happens to have coincided with new interest in liturgy. Anyone concerned to understand what is going on today in the various new communion services will find a very useful historical aid in *Prayers of the Eucharist, Early and Reformed*, ed. R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming (Collins 1975, 189 pp., £2.50). Jewish prayers, New Testament accounts of the Last Supper, Justin and Hippolytus, the Roman Mass, Luther and Calvin, the early English and Scottish liturgies are all to be found here. This will be an indispensable textbook for the study of liturgy.

Both preachers and browsers will welcome *A Treasury of Quotations on Christian Themes*, compiled by Carroll E. Simcox (SPCK 1976, 269 pp., £5.50). It is very wide-ranging and includes many quotations which will be unfamiliar to most people. The writers most represented are Augustine, Bacon, Chesterton, Emerson, Macdonald, Santayana, Shaw and Temple. The compiler is editor of *The Living Church*, the weekly journal of the American Episcopal Church. R.E.N.

N.B. In this issue the book reviews are in their normal sequence and then begin again with the Bible on page 156.