

My dear Friends,

I see that in last month's letter, written before Christmas, referring to our Christmas services, I said - "A report will appear next month". They seem a long time behind us now, and I will simply record the fact that all the Christmas Services were very well attended and we had 190 communicants at the Midnight service. The Church was beautifully decorated and the Crib of Christmas and the Tree delighted the children.

On 20th December our M.U. and friends presented a Nativity Tableau with readings and carols. This was well supported and a collection for "Shelter" realised £6. 15s. Od. The carol-singing near the Christmas Tree in the High Street produced another £2. 15s. Od. for "Shelter". Our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on 29th December was very well attended in spite of the wintry weather and I am grateful to everyone who helped to make the Christmas services such happy ones.

The Stewardship Supper on 17th January was attended by 85 people in spite of a hail storm with thunder and lightning for a good half hour before the event. After the supper we heard speeches on "Worship" by Mr. Walford; "Service" by Mr. King; and "Giving" by Col. Ashton. Mr. Minty explained how the Covenant Scheme helped the Church, and Mr. J. Harland, the Diocesan Stewardship Adviser summed up with a speech which made clear to all the basis of Christian Stewardship. Again, I would record thanks to all who played their part in a very enjoyable, and I hope useful evening.

On Sunday evening, 19th January, the Church was full for our Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service. The Rev. Charles Brock of the Wheatley Congregational Church took part in the service, and lay members of the Congregational and Roman Catholic churches read Lessons. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Canon B. McKenna, Roman Catholic Priest of Headington and Wheatley. The large congregation included members of the Congregational and Roman Catholic churches as well as our own, and after the service refreshments were served by members of our M.U. in the School Hall.

As the preacher pointed out, we still have a very long way to go before organic unity can be achieved. Our beliefs on many important matters are still very different. But the fact that he had been invited to preach in the Parish Church (an unheard of thing in past years) and the gradual working together in social and relief work in the world was evidence of progress in the right direction. He called upon us all, including the Roman Catholics, to repent the sins of the past which caused division, and to pray for a spirit of understanding of each other's beliefs.

When one sees the problems, difficulties and opposing convictions and opinions encountered in the effort to bring about unity between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, the final result of which is by no means certain, one realises what a very long way we have to go before there can be unity with the Roman Catholic Church.

In the meantime we must seek to understand one another more and to pray that God's will may be done.

Yours sincere friend and Vicar,

BRIAN L. GANDON.