

Non-Aryan Christian Refugees

A Pastoral Letter to be Read in all Churches in N.S.W. on Sunday,
7th May, 1939, at Morning and Evening Services

The persecutions in Germany and Central Europe have reduced hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children to utter misery and hopelessness. Hitherto, the majority of those who have suffered most severely are of the Jewish race, but there are also large numbers of Christians who (on account of their ancestry or simply because of their Christianity) are equally victims of these persecutions. They, too, are denied the elementary rights of citizenship. In fact, so long as they and their children continue in their native land, they have little to hope for in life.

All the world over, Jewish communities have been co-operating to help their fellow Jews to emigrate and start life again in lands where they can be free from fear and ill-usage. Surely we, the members of the Christian Churches, should feel it a duty to bring similar aid to those of our faith.

Here in Australia, the Commonwealth Government has agreed to admit 15,000 refugees during the next three years. But to admit them is not enough. It is essential that they should be helped to build up their lives anew and to feel that they are among friends. The Australian Jewish Welfare Society is caring for the Jews. Among the Christian Churches in New South Wales it was, until recently, only the Roman Catholic Church which had an organisation for giving help to the "Non-Aryan" Christians who have come out here. Now a Committee has been formed representative of the other Christian Churches to assist in this important work. If, however, this Committee is to be effective in its work, it must have financial support. We ask you therefore to make an effort to give as generously as you can to bring relief to these unfortunate brethren. Some of these will need to be assisted in finding employment and provided with sustenance until they get into work.

In certain cases, guarantees will have to be given that the refugee will not become a charge on the State Charities for a period of five years; while in other cases the Committee would like to be able to help approved refugees in providing their landing money, the minimum so required in each case being £50.

This is no sectarian appeal: it is the call of humanity. We should be constrained to do all that in us lies to bring new life to those who are suffering so terribly. It is our high privilege in this way to do something to give expression to the Love of God, and not only to save human bodies, but to restore courage and faith.

(Signed)

HOWARD SYDNEY

E. NORMAN McKIE

E. E. HYNES

W. G. SANDS

W. H. WINGFIELD

W. R. AVENELL

WILLIAM R. DALZIEL

R. de V. KIDSON

HILDA N. LYONS

T. E. COOPER

(Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of the Province of N.S.W.).

(Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly of N.S.W.).

(President of the Methodist Conference of N.S.W.).

(Chairman of the Congregational Union of N.S.W.).

(President of the Baptist Union of N.S.W.).

(President of the Churches of Christ, N.S.W.).

(Commissioner, The Salvation Army).

(General Secretary, Y.M.C.A.).

(President, Y.W.C.A.).

(Clerk, Society of Friends).