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# Pastoral Letter

— from the —

ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF  
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN  
AUSTRALIA AND TASMANIA

— to the —

FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS

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A living Church must be a missionary Church — that is a growing, active and aggressive Church. Life proves itself by growth and action. If there is no growth, there is no advance. Failure to grow is a symptom that life is waning. Stagnation indicates sickness and the approach of death. Are we a living Church to-day?

Our Lord Jesus Christ said to His Church, "Go ye into all the world," and He promised that His Church should triumph, in His name, over every form of evil; that even the gates of hell should not prevail against her. A loyal Church will "go" and she is certain to prevail; a doubtful, hesitating Church does not "go", attempts no venture, and sinks into weakness and isolation. If we would see victories we must "go" to win them.

The Church of Israel in our Lord's time was making no advance. She was self-absorbed and stagnant. She was not trying as Isaiah had hoped, to make a third "with Egypt and with Assyria" (Isa. XIX. 24); that is to make the salvation which Israel was tempted to claim as her exclusive prerogative wide enough to include other nations of the Gentile world. Israel wished to be alone; was content with her own privileges—wanted to keep them to herself; positively insisted on her exclusiveness. Those were symptoms of approaching death—such a Church deserved to die. She refused to be saved and sealed her fate by killing the Prince of Life.

The Church in North Africa again, though possessed of a Cyprian, an Athanasius and an Augustine, was not a missionary Church. It grew feeble and was submerged beneath the advancing tide of Islam.

The great revivals of Christianity, on the other hand, have always been marked by outbursts of Missionary activity. The Franciscan movement ran like fire through Europe. Movements within recent times such as the Methodist, the Evangelical and the Tractarian Revivals went out into all the world. The Holy Spirit in each of these movements awoke a self-complacent or somnolent or moribund Church, stirred it into life, restored its brightness, and sent it out conquering and to conquer.

The Church in Australia needs a missionary revival at this time. Our comparative feebleness is due to the fact that we are keeping the Gospel far too much to ourselves. Christ says to us to-day as at the first, "Go ye into all the world," and we are doing but little to obey His great behest. We cannot send the men and women who want to go in His name because we are timid and niggardly. Anglicans in Australia give only some £60,000 a year for missionary work abroad and only a few thousands for missionary work at home. Tested in that way it is plain that our Church is suffering from low vitality.

She declines to reach out for the fulfilment of new tasks, refuses invitations to enterprise, is slack and self-distrustful, fails to believe in the powers that she possesses, does not know how to renew the life of her people, and is more than half afraid of the evil that is in the world.

To this depressing picture there are bright exceptions, found in those parts of the Church that are at least trying to fulfil their missionary obligations, but the sum total of our efforts is poor. Work abroad is stinted and starved, as is shewn by the facts that the grant to New Guinea was reduced by £3,600; that another £10,000 is needed for the extension of work in the West of Tanganyika; and that, out of 60,000 Aborigines in Australia, our Church is in touch with only some 9,000, and spends only £10,000 a year on the work. At the same time the ministry of the Word and Sacraments to the people of the Bush is only half fulfilled.

There is a cure for this state of things, but it can be found only in a renewal of our faith which we must seek of God in prayer.

St. Andrew's-tide is approaching and we ask the Clergy to lead their people, and the people to follow and support their clergy in a fervent effort of prayer at this time, that there may come to us "a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and that we may be able to go out and help the world in its great need. For the world is in sore perplexity and is threatened by increasing fears. We are daily told that our civilization is in danger of collapsing.

In the midst of trouble and apprehension Christians possess the secret of hope. It is given to them to see the power of the Spirit breaking forth again under new conditions and in fresh surroundings, and producing once more glorious examples of Christian life among primitive peoples; and, no less, it is given to them to see the revitalising of the old civilizations that had become stationary and unfruitful.

We know that there are still to be found in some quarters those who would deny this hope, who deprecate "sending money out of the parish" fearing we have not enough for ourselves; but in fact a missionary parish or diocese has always enough for its own needs. The more they give the more they have and the more they give again. Let there be a self-forgetful effort of generosity. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to poverty" (Prov. xi. 24). Let us begin again to prove the promises of God, and see if He will not "open the windows of heaven and pour out such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. iii. 10).

If we believe that the Christian faith is able to save the world there is plainly no time to be lost. The human race would seem bent on destroying itself, if it were not for the fact that Christian Missions go on all the time building up Islands of peace out of a sea of turmoil. Only what is being done on a small scale ought to be done on the grand scale, and it **can** be, and it **will** be, if we go to God in prayer, ready to do whatever He may ask.

HENRY PERTH (Primate).

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