

M.R.I. OR PRE-M.R.I.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND R. S. DEAN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

THIS is a question that the Executive Officer has frequently to ask as he roams round the world, and all those who are faced with him, and they are many — have increasingly to do so too.

Undoubtedly there is a good deal of misunderstanding here about the whole concept of Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ — that document with the cumbersome title which emerged at the time of the Anglican Congress, Toronto, 1963.

This is plain from the questions that are asked of the Executive Officer, though they take different forms as they come from different quarters, each revealing some kind of misunderstanding.

People in the so-called "requesting" churches are likely to ask much questions as "what will the five years be M.R.I. be over?" Those from the so-called "requesting" churches are still prone to look on M.R.I. as a quick answer to their wants — which are not always the same as their needs. Both kinds of questions spring from misunderstanding.

The questions from some "requesting" churches betray their notion that M.R.I. is a one-off financial appeal for \$150,000 or £100,000 in five years, after which we can presumably all lapse into a state of first step idleness.

FIRST STEP IDLENESS

Yet this is specifically denied in the document itself which says with reference to these figures, "This could not be understood as a once-in-a-lifetime appeal. It is no more than a first step forward, with undue reference to the longer range needs."

The questions from the "requesting" churches betray their notion that this is a wonderful way of gaining things that might otherwise be denied. Yet the document says that the figures referred to are "over and above our existing budgets and engagements, to meet already known needs."

What does all this mean? It means that M.R.I. itself has little or no real reference to a specific sum or a specific time period, and that all efforts are made that sum within that time can only be described as pre-M.R.I., that is to say, what is to be done for M.R.I. to begin to operate at all. The sooner we understand this, the better for us.

Again and again it has to be said that M.R.I. is not a scheme or a blueprint, much less a financial trick, but a description of what the Church — the whole Church — would look like if it really were in

fact what it is in intention — the Body of Christ.

This M.R.I. is on the one hand, nothing new — certainly nothing that began in Toronto in 1963. It is the attitude of the Church as it appears in the New Testament, where one part of the Church ministers to another in its needs and where "if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it," a spiritual as well as a physical M.R.I. does not end in 1968 or whenever the five years are said to run out, but an on-going process that will last till the staff itself ends, or even as long as the Church is called to be the Body of Christ in the New Testament.

Isn't it time, therefore, that we looked again at the Toronto document? Leaving aside (for once) the specifically financial figure and specific time period, what does it really call for?

I have space only for reference to a small part of it. For example it says, "We must

undertake a comprehensive study of needs and resources throughout our communion."

"We know something of the needs (and of wants, too), but what churches in the Anglican communion has really studied them in its needs and wants, has indicated its willingness to share those resources, recognized as the document says that "mission is not the kindness of the lucky to the unlucky; it is mutual, united by the will of our God, for whose mission it is?"

FRESH LOOK

The document goes on to say, "the forms of the church must reflect that? Who does not dare to say that it does?"

Has any explicit speaks of "a parallel commitment as to man-power. Have any church really looked at itself in this light? And if the process that would meet fever points in one part than at present, and more in another, with a

consequent recognition that this must inevitably mean a new look at the ministry of the laity, then that is precisely what the document says."

It is too late for every church, every diocese, indeed every parish, to do this, is it not? It surely cannot be too late, precisely because this is what the ministry of the Body of Christ has continually to do. Thus M.R.I. and we have not really grappled with it because to us it is the only yet.

We are still in the stage of pre-M.R.I. and we shall not get beyond it unless we take to heart the fact that the Toronto document says, "that every church seek to test and evaluate every activity in its life by the test of mission and of service to others, in our following after Christ."

There can be no further delay if we are serious about Christ's mission to the world, in one part than at present. Sometimes I wonder if we are!

THE PILLAR IN THE CAVE

BY JAMES A. FITTINGS

THE ledge on the cliff at nearby Kotzubo is a place to which lovers come at evening. They sit in entries to the caves which line the ledge, watching the evening tide rise and the sun set in the sea.

But the ledge was not always romantically. In 1944 the caves held shore batteries, with turrets of great guns pointing to the horizon. An invasion was imminent, people thought. The guns had been employed to shoot the Americans when they invaded, sailing out of the rising sun on a tide of war.

One evening in that year an American bomber with two of its engines feathered swung toward the sea.

FINAL TAUNT

The bomber had left its squadron when only half-way through the arc of fire and explosion, which blossomed daily in those days between Kobe and Tokyo.

As the aircraft sought to gain safety in the ocean sky the guns tried to lighten the burden on the remaining engines.

The guns had been placed along the cliff, the Americans knew. In a final taunt to Japan they dropped their last stocks of explosives upon the ledge.

Then they flew onward, plunging into the sea within a few miles off-shore. The bombs fell; a gun and its crew were destroyed.

At a distance of 22 years from the two sides of the equation

seem equal; the death of fighting men on the ground for the death of fighting men in the sky.

Today lovers walk the trail along the cliffs. They seat themselves in entries of the caves, holding hands while they look seaward. But in one cave containing the pillar.

Everyday wives of the fishing village place flowers before the pillar, bowing reverently to

seen spirit.

Someone has traced an inscription upon the altar. When bowed to across the pool of language into English the inscription reads as follows:

"To the memory of seven children of the sea who were killed by a bomb as they played volleyball on this ledge, the week the leaves fell, November, 1944."

— *Keyrama Features, U.S.A.*

U.S. LEADERS INDIGNANT ON SHOOTING OF NEGRO

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

New York, June 27

U.S. Church leaders have responded with outrage and indignation to news of the slaying of a young Negro integrationist leader James Meredith in a shooting on June 6 near Hernando, Mississippi, during his "March on Mississippi."

Episcopalian, representing southern churches, called upon all Christians "to work for the creation of an atmosphere in which all men are free to exercise their rights and to move about our countryside in safety."

Dr Benjamin F. Payton, director of the National Council of Church and Commission on Religion and Race, declared that the "treacherous act committed is once again that we have only just set out on our path to a nation of equal justice and equal opportunity."

The United Presbyterian Commission on Religion and Race declared that "the tragic and almost predictable assault upon James Meredith in Mississippi adds upon the congress the urgent responsibility to press quickly the administration's program for civil rights."

Meanwhile the five civil rights groups supporting the March, including the Mississippi Delta Ministry of the National Council of Churches, issued a statement on the occasion of the marching declaring it would be a "massive public indictment" of American society and government in Mississippi for their "failure" in the racial justice movement in the South.

FREEDOM BUDGET

They said they want President Johnson to send Federal money to aid Southern counties and to ask Congress for a "freedom budget" involving "billions" in aid for low-income Negroes.

In addition, they demanded that Congress pass President's civil rights bill, but with sweeping amendments. The amendments would require states and counties to hire Negro law enforcement officers and put Negroes on jury lists in direct proportion to their population ratio.

MINSTER APPEAL

ANGLO-NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY

A £1,500 appeal was launched on June 16 for the restoration of the tomb of the Minister of Walter de Gray, the twelfth-century Archbishop of York, who started the building of the present minster.

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