

1: OUHG poster

. . . FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT . . .

Two-thirds of its people suffer from malnutrition.

Cancer, typhus & malaria kill millions every year.

Earthquakes, floods & other natural disasters cause untold misery.

It takes some credulity to believe in a god both omnipotent and loving. Especially when his existence runs counter to all observed facts and scientific knowledge. Humanists are not that credulous. They believe in solving the problems of life on this planet not by prayer and blind faith but by a rational elimination of "man's inhumanity to man" and by a scientific campaign against disease and a hostile environment.

President- Leonard Evans. Secretary- Josephine Newcombe.

2: OUHG leaflet

DO YOU LIKE MISSIONS?

Every three years, there is a Mission to the University. But it does not attempt to convert unbelievers; it prefers not to admit that an opposition exists. Instead it assumes you are either a Christian in need of encouragement, or a poor morally mixed-up kid, in need of enlightenment.

We respect Bishop Huddleston for his courageous stand against some equally devout Christians, the Afrikaner Nationalists. But an attempt to link decent behaviour to Christian faith will do more to discredit decency than to propagate faith. Some people could well decide that concern for others is as absurd as the Trinity, the Resurrection and the Atonement.

Religion has been the justification not only for Apartheid, but for every kind of viciousness. The slogan "The end justifies the means" was from the first a Christian slogan, an inevitable corollary of the belief in Heaven and Hell.

It is deplorable that official support is still given to Christian propaganda.

3: Cherwell, 9 February 1963

THE MISSION

Father Trevor Huddleston has done a lot for the oppressed in South Africa. He merits our congratulations for his work in the streets of Shanty town. But he is wasting his time among the self-satisfied, principle-waving regulars at the Northgate Hall.

We may not be as bright as we are cracked up to be, but we deserve a more intelligent critique of our atheism than the type of Salvation Army hysteria that Mission Week entails. We respect Father Huddleston, but here he brings us naught for our comfort.

Dragging a man of this stature down to address such a gathering of kid-Christians shows how much the God-squad boys are out of touch with the rest of the University. If they could associate themselves with something of more humanitarian concern, like JACARI* and the rugger players, they might gain a little more respect. But at present we can happily let them stew in their own self-righteous juice, and hope it satisfies them more.

** the Joint Action Committee Against Racial Intolerance*

4: Oxford Mail, 11 February 1963

HUDDLESTON MISSION UNDER NEW ATTACK

THE Mission to Oxford University, led by Bishop Trevor Huddleston, which was criticised in the undergraduate newspaper Cherwell on Saturday, yesterday encountered new opposition, this time from a university society.

Oxford University Humanist Group produced a large quantity of leaflets and posters printed on the group's own printing press in the room of a Magdalen College undergraduate, for distribution among members of the university.

The leaflets said the mission did not attempt to convert unbelievers. "It prefers not to admit that an opposition exists. Instead, it assumes you are either a Christian in need of encouragement or a poor morally mixed-up kid in need of enlightenment.

"We respect Bishop Huddleston for his courageous stand against some equally devout Christians, the Afrikaner Nationalists. But an attempt to link decent behaviour to Christian faith will do more to discredit decency than to propagate faith."

Official support

The leaflet adds: "It is deplorable that official support is still given to Christian propaganda."

The group's president, Mr Leonard Evans, explained: "When I inquired on behalf of the Humanist Group last term I was told that under no circumstances would the Schools be available to us."

The Cherwell criticisms were contained in an article by Mr. John Folliard, a theology student at St. Edmund Hall, and in an editorial comment.

Mr. Folliard said the mission was far too unsophisticated to do any good in the university. The editorial said: "We deserve a more intelligent critique of our atheism than the type of Salvation Army hysteria that Mission Week entails."

Critics answered

Bishop Huddleston replied to his critics at the opening meeting of the mission in the Examination Schools last night.

Speaking in the room where, in 1934, as a Christ Church undergraduate, he took his final examinations in history, he told his large audience that whether the mission was an intelligent critique or a type of Salvation Army hysteria could only emerge during the week itself.

"And we ought to be a little careful about linking the Salvation Army with hysteria," he added. "I have seen a lot of the Salvation Army in South Africa, and all I can say is 'thank God for it'.

"If some of those who criticise the Salvation Army were doing some of the humanitarian work they are doing in South Africa we would have less problems in the world today," he said.

Of the aims of the mission, Bishop Huddleston said he was speaking to the 60 per cent who on Cherwell's estimate had no use for God or religion, not to the 40 per cent who were either for God or on the fringe.

Photo caption:

Bishop Trevor Huddleston (left) discusses final arrangements for the Mission to Oxford University with three members of the mission committee (left to right) Mr. P. Selby (publicity member), the Rev. A. A. K. Graham, chaplain of Worcester College (secretary), and the Rev, D. E. Jenkins, chaplain of Queen's College (chairman).

5: Oxford Mail, 14 February 1963

OPPOSITION TO MISSION IS WELCOMED

The Rt Rev. Trevor Huddleston, Bishop of Masasi, said in Oxford yesterday that he welcombed *[sic]* the humanist opposition to his Mission to Oxford University this week.

He was speaking in the Old library of the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin at one of the question-and-answer sessions which form part of the week's programme. In dealing with the questions many of which came from humanists and atheists, he was supported by a scientist, Dr. Paul Kent, Tutor of Christ Church, and a philisopher *[sic]* Mr Basil Mitchell, Tutor in Philosophy at Keble.

"It is interesting to see that there is such a strong humanist group in the University, said the Bishop.

(It was the Oxford University Humanist Group which on Sunday issued leaflets attacking the mission and complaining that by letting it use the Examination Schools, official support was being given to Christian propaganda.)

Healthy thing

"It is a very healthy thing," he said, "that the Church should be up against such a strong body of sincere and well-informed people. The Church has got to be outward-looking and able to answer their arguments.

"The humanists have been perfectly fair in their approach and have used no underhand means. I am glad there is some opposition: in fact, I like opposition."

He told one such questioner "I found in South Africa that many Marxists and humanists were more passionately concerned about doing something to improve race relations than were many Christians.

"I have said this before, to Christian audiences, and I would say it again to any audience. It is a terrible criticism of the Church but it is true."

Every evening this week he is giving an address in the Examination Schools. Other members of the team - 23 from various denominations - are holding discussions in most of the colleges.

He said yesterday that it was difficult to estimate the success of the mission. The audiences were surprisingly large in view of the weather, but, of course, he could not say how many were non-Christians.

At least the mission had become a talking point in the colleges. He did not expect it to produce visible results within one week.

"What is happening now is that we are sowing seeds," he said. "Perhaps in five, ten or 20 years we shall see some of the fruits."

Asked yesterday his views on disestablishment or disendowment of the Church of England, Bishop Huddleston said he could answer the question the more readily because he did not belong to that Church.

"I would find it extremely hard to live within the establishment," he said. "I am aware that there are many arguments for maintaining it but I believe the disadvantages outweigh the advantages."

It Works

"I know disestablishment works. I have lived and worked for 20 years in churches that are disestablished.

"I think the reasons that prevent such bold steps in this country are very often the wrong reasons."

He agreed with another questioner that the established Church tended to be conservative. "I am by nature not conservative," he said.

"A sense of history and tradition can be a very valuable thing in a society. But in the case of the Church of England, this seems out of all proportion to the value of the thing defended. We are long past the time when the conservative forces should be overthrown.

"I am only echoing what many leaders of the Church have said for many years."

6: The Times, 11 February 1963

OXFORD CRITICS OF BISHOP'S MISSION

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

OXFORD, Feb. 10

Organized opposition marked the opening in Oxford tonight of an eight-day mission to the university led by the Bishop of Masasi, Dr. Huddleston.

Oxford University Humanist Group distributed leaflets and posters produced on the group's own printing press in the room of a Magdalen College undergraduate. The undergraduate newspaper *Cherwell* yesterday carried an article by a theological student and an editorial, both critical of the mission.

The humanist leaflet said the mission did not seek to convert unbelievers. While respecting Dr. Huddleston for his stand against the Afrikaner nationalists, it said that an attempt to link decent behaviour to the Christian faith would do more to discredit decency than to propagate faith.

The *Cherwell* article, written by Mr. John Folliard, of St. Edmund's Hall, said the mission was far too unsophisticated to do any good in the university.

Dr Huddleston replied: "While I would welcome very much any constructive comments and criticism I think the critics ought to wait until they see what the mission actually does before attacking it."

7: The Guardian, 11 February 1963

Mission to Oxford runs into opposition

By our Correspondent

An eight-day mission to Oxford University led by the Rt. Rev. Trevor Huddleston, Bishop of Masasi, opened last night in the face of organised opposition. The university Humanist Group yesterday distributed leaflets and posters, and the undergraduate newspaper "*Cherwell*" carried a highly critical leading article.

The Humanist leaflet declared that an attempt to link decent behaviour to the Christian faith would do more to discredit decency than to propagate faith. "It is deplorable that official support is still given to Christian propaganda."

The "Cherwell" article said: "We deserve a more intelligent critique of our atheism than the type of Salvation Army hysteria that a mission week entails."

Told of the article, Bishop Huddleston commented that Salvation Army methods certainly would not be used, and at the mission's opening meeting last night he said it seemed to him a little unintelligent and, perhaps, slightly hysterical to pre-judge the issue.

"I have come to you straight from Africa. Inescapably, I get the impression, looking away from Africa to Europe, of a civilisation which is haunted by the sense that life is meaningless, a farce, a dirty joke - and I don't think that this assessment is true only for intellectuals. I think the ordinary man, the ordinary undergraduate, perhaps, is conscious of being the victim of forces only half-understood, of movements within society over which there is no control."

8: The Guardian, 15 February 1963

The churches

BY CHRISTOPHER DRIVER

THIS week's mission to Oxford University, conducted by the Bishop of Masasi, is said to be running into "organised opposition." Splendid. What with this and the admission of women to the Union, the dreaming spires are clearly losing some of the bats from their belfries.

Of course the bishop - better known as Trevor Huddleston - could probably teach "Cherwell" and the O. U. Humanist Group a thing or two about organised opposition to Christianity. But never mind, it is a start, and I blush for my contemporaries of ten years back, who listened to their own missionary (one Dr Ramsey, since called up higher) with such unnecessary docility.

It is hard to tell what would happen if the people of this country, or the ruling authorities, suddenly decided that the claims and presumptions of Christians were outrageous and not to be borne another instant.

Alas, the prospect is remote. As with Santa Claus, or Mr Macmillan, so with Christianity: it is so much easier not to make a fuss when you have decided that they are no longer either credible or useful. You simply find something else to do on your spare evenings rather than the Young Conservative dance or the chapel youth club.

This is presumably why the case against Christianity is nowadays so incompetently put that Christians are having to do the job themselves. Here are the Oxford humanists expecting "Salvation Army hysteria" from their visiting bishop - a crisp Mirfield Anglo-Catholic. (Not that there is even much hysteria in the Army these days: a noticeably sober lot.) And there was Margaret Knight in the "Spectator" last week, piling up damaging quotations against Our Lord by use of an exegetical technique borrowed straight from Jehovah's Witnesses and the illiterate evangelical half-world. Nor are humanists obviously more effective, as they might be expected to be, when it comes to practical matters.

(They have been so busy inveighing against the admittedly preposterous religious tests applied by adoption societies that it has not occurred to them to establish an adoption society of their own.) Churches, like governments, collapse not when the Opposition moves a vote of censure but when their own supporters lose interest.

Someone recently devoted an entire book to the insults heaped on the early Methodists, but Methodism was then a better "life," as insurance agents would say than it is now. It is a mistake for the outside observer to suppose that the destructive criticism now being aimed from within not only at the Church - that flourishing Society for the Preservation of Victorian England - but at the whole apparatus of religious speech and practice, indicates a total collapse of the supporters' club. Rather, it shows Christians becoming freshly aware of the gap between the open-ended, world-involved life in grace to which Bible and sacraments point, and the closed circle of contemporary church life.

It is a period in which we find it embarrassingly difficult to tell friend from foe. Which, for instance, is the best friend of Christianity in Oxford today? Is it the fabric of the place, the proliferation of clergy and services of all depths and altitudes, the tradition which brings a busy bishop posting home from Tanganyika to set the

historic faith before yet another generation of privileged adolescents? Or is it the sceptical, ruthless climate of the university, which tries all things and puts Christian theologians in exposed positions, where they risk a sniper's bullet if they relapse for a moment into text-grubbing or irrelevant attitudinising?

At least in universities there are usually enough Christians available to hold and patrol this line, but there are whole areas and frontiers of the national life where the Church's true enemies of complacency at the top and degradation below have a virtually clear run.

The prison service is a case in point. Which is the best friend of those who lie in British gaols: the institutional Church and its prison chaplaincies, good, bad or indifferent; or the nuclear disarmers whose first hand report on our prison system, "Inside Story," was published this week? Unwillingly perhaps, the writers of this document became, as it were, suffering servants who have earned the right and now enjoy the freedom to say "This was how it was . . . this and this should be done." It is surely significant that this report, expressing Christian insights on every page, is as silent about the role of the Church in prison as the Church, by and large, is silent about the situation to which the report is addressed.

Do the humanists, then, win hands down after all? Not quite, for it is clear that behind the concern represented by "Inside Story" there stand - as there have stood for three centuries - members of the Society of Friends. But as long as there are Oxbridge-educated Christians at the Treasury and in Parliament who see nothing extraordinary in packing prisoners, heterosexual and homosexual together, into unheated cells and feeding them on 13s a week, all those missions to the University may be deemed to have come to grief.

9: Yorkshire Post, 11 February 1963

Humanists oppose mission week

Organised opposition by humanists greeted Bishop Trevor Huddleston at Oxford last night when he opened a Mission to the University week. This follows strong criticism in the current edition of the Oxford undergraduate newspaper *Cherwell*.

Members of the Oxford University Humanist Group printed thousands of leaflets and posters during the week-end and distributed them throughout the university yesterday. The leaflets said:

"We respect Bishop Huddleston for his courageous stand against some equally devout Christians, the Afrikaner Nationalists. But an attempt to link decent behaviour to Christian faith will do more to discredit decency than to propagate faith."

When he spoke at the first meeting of the Mission last night Bishop Huddleston referred to the *Cherwell* criticism as "entirely legitimate." He added: "Whether the Mission is an intelligent critique or a type of Salvation Army hysteria can only emerge during the week itself but it seems to me a little bit unintelligent and perhaps slightly hysterical to pre-judge this issue."

9: Birmingham Post, 11 February 1963

University Mission Week Resisted

Spirited opposition from humanists and the Oxford undergraduate newspaper *Cherwell*, marked the opening at Oxford last night of a mission to the university, which is being supported by most denominations and is due to last for a week.

Members of the Oxford Humanist Group, using a printing press belonging to an undergraduate, printed thousands of leaflets and posters during the week-end and distributed them throughout the university.

Referring to the fact that the mission meetings were being held in the Oxford Examination Schools, the leaflet said:

"It is deplorable that official support is still given to Christian propaganda." The leaflet also said: "We respect Bishop Huddleston for his courageous stand against some equally devout Christians, the Afrikaner nationalists. But an attempt to link decent behaviour to Christian faith will do more to discredit decency than to propagate faith."

'Out of Touch'

The mission is being led by Bishop Trevor Huddleston,

and *Cherwell*, in an editorial article in its issue printed on Saturday, said: "Dragging a man of this stature down to address such a gathering of kid-Christians shows how much the God-squad boys are out of touch with the rest of the university."

The article says that undergraduates deserve something more intelligent than "the type of Salvation Army hysteria that Mission Week entails. We respect Father Huddleston, but here he brings us naught for comfort."

Cherwell also gives considerable space to an article criticising the mission, which says: "Many feel that a fruitless task is ahead of the Bishop because the very idea of a university mission serves merely to stir up the Christian community to a frenzied panic and to increase the determination of the non-Christian to be unmoved by the Church's latest propaganda venture."
