

# FOR CHRISTIAN ORDER

## New Zealand Churches Combine In Nation-Wide Campaign

ON Sunday, March 22, congregations in churches throughout New Zealand and those who are listening in to the services on the radio, will hear the launching of a National Campaign for Christian Order. Briefly what the Church proposes to do is to conduct a campaign throughout New Zealand to "proclaim to the nation the message of the Living God to-day". These denominations are pledged to the enterprise: the Church of England, the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational Churches, the Salvation Army, the Associated Churches of Christ, and the Society of Friends. The need of this enterprise is also fully appreciated by the Catholic Church, and within its own organisation that Church is planning a simultaneous campaign.

The campaign will begin next Sunday with a pastoral letter which will be read in almost every church from the North Cape to the Bluff, and will of course be broadcast by those churches that are on the air. Preachers have also been asked to refer to the campaign in their sermons or addresses. The months of autumn and winter will be spent in preparing the clergy and the churches themselves, and then all the churches will for six simultaneous weeks declare the message to the people. There will be mass meetings in the four centres, and these will be broadcast. The noble Cathedral of Christchurch will echo the same message as the hut in the backblocks which does duty as a chapel once a month. The form of the message will vary according to the special genius of each denomination, and the special needs of each congregation, but in essence it will be the same.

\* \* \*

To get an impression of this project that is not purely the ecclesiastical one, "The Listener" has deliberately asked a Christian layman who is also a business-man to tell us what he thinks about this campaign and its programme. Here is his answer:

### "THE SICKNESS OF OUR SOCIETY"

"I WONDER if the Churches are too late," said a business-man to me, discussing the coming Campaign for Christian Order.

It was Crisis that made the different denominations put their heads together at long last, but the Crisis is running a bit faster than the Churches. Yet that is hardly their fault, for plans take time, and a dominion-wide campaign of the whole Christian Church is new country where the going can't be very fast.

What will the message of the campaign be? I can't say, because the history and spiritual experiences of the next six months will take a hand in shaping it, but I think I know what the ingredients of the message might be.

An Australian bishop has said recently of his country, "We have no passionate ideals—and no enthusiasms to-day, be-

yond those linked with the physical life and its expression. We have no frenzied faiths, and no zeal. Our opposition to the totalitarian powers to-day is based on fear, and hatred of their ideas, not on any passionate convictions of our own."

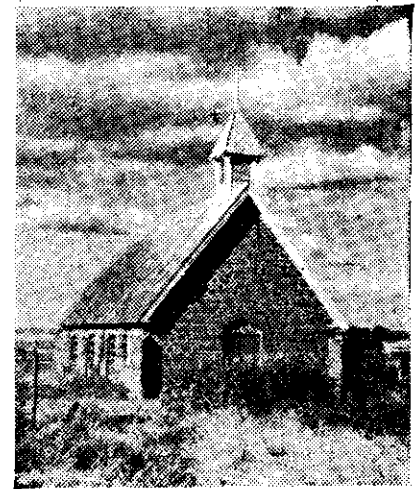
If those are our spiritual resources we are not likely to win the war, much less the peace. How can we defend the Christian Faith unless we know precisely what it is, and unless we are prepared to go the full length of what it implies in our social life?

#### Capital And Labour

We certainly have not been prepared to go that length. Capital has not been prepared to take a step in social progress that has not been forced on it. No amount of Rotarianism and back-slapping disguises the fact that business,



"The noble Cathedral of Christchurch will echo the same message as the hut in the backblocks which does duty as a chapel once a month"



in the last twenty years, has had no aim but profits, obtained by fair means or not-so-fair. Labour as an organised movement has been no better. No amount of portraits of Keir Hardie in committee-rooms disguises the fact that Labour has had no aims above getting as much as it could for as little as possible.

The honour and joy of work well done and service rendered has almost disappeared from our society. The sense of the Community has been lost and we have combined only when we wanted strength against somebody else. While the totalitarian powers have become actively anti-Christian in their mass pursuit of power, we have been passively anti-Christian in our individual pursuit of ease and safety. Democracy has meant for us extensive privileges but no duties. We have no sense of purpose or vocation, and we have missed even the exhilaration of being sold to the Devil like Faust and the Fascists.

#### Where We Begin

To proclaim the sickness of our society is surely the first part of the message of God to-day. I'm no Anglican, but I suggest that we begin at "We have erred and strayed from Thy way like lost sheep." There is no time to make excuses. We must be humbled or we shall be humiliated.

That is where we begin. We shall get no results unless we begin there, and we shall get no results unless we go further than that. Then we have to rediscover the source of all our freedom, the sanction for our way of life—the Christian idea of God and Man, and their relationship. This is Dogma, which scares some people stiff. But Dogma is merely "settled belief on principle".

Faith is meaningless without Dogma. Timid rationalism that believes nothing, but hopes for the best will butter no parsnips. Vague humanism that believes in doing "the decent thing" for no particular reason is wishy-washy stuff with no spiritual vitamins. I hope the campaign will give us some good chunks of Dogma. I hope the churches will declare what the greatest of human spirits have known for certain about God. I hope, above all, they will show us God revealing Himself in the sublime Man of Nazareth and Calvary.

#### The Vital Last Stage

That is where every man comes face to face with the great personal demands implied in the self-giving of God. In such private experiences is found quite literally our salvation. But salvation is like a farm or a gold-mine, it must be "worked out with fear and trembling." Or sweat and tears.

It is that working-out which becomes the vital last stage of this campaign for Christian Order. If God is such, and Man is such, what is the inevitable conclusion we must draw about Government and Industry, about Freedom and Conscience, about Sex and Marriage, about Peacemaking and Immigration — and everything else?

So you see, this campaign can be pretty revolutionary. It can be, in fact, what you and I make it because we are the churches. If it is a mere running about of the clergy rather more busily than usual it will be useless. If it is a mere flopping down on our national knees to ask God to keep the Japanese away, it will be contemptible. If it is an earnest seeking of God's Will for each one of us and for our country it may end in setting the Pacific alight.

That English slogan is quite a good one—"It all depends on God, and God depends on me."

—H.W.

### THE "INDIA ROAD"

(Continued from previous page)

years ago I was investigating getting a baby car through as a "world-beater" reliability advertising stunt, I could not find even a pack-track by which to do it.) And anyhow such an extended road would almost certainly be cut. Even when Japanese planes had to fly all the way from the Chinese coast and back, they made Kunming (says a letter from there that lies before me) look like some Little British city. . . . No, China has no alternative. Any road that is to reach the Chittagong railhead at Sadyia on the Himalayan foothills, must cross direct the Great River Trenches.

#### Centuries of Pilgrims

Nature has allies in holding this region against all comers. The Tibetan lamas have from time to time murdered such few missionaries and Chinese farmers as have established themselves; and been made no friendlier by the conse-

quent Chinese punitive expeditions from Yunnan. But Tibetan Buddhism (so called) has, on the other hand, made roads (of sorts) and even bridges (of sorts) through strips of the area. Centuries of pilgrims, twenty thousand a year, some travelling with their total property in sheep and yaks, have worn tracks towards the Dokela shrine on an eminence of the Salween-Mekong divide. Many indeed, have polished them with their bodies, "measuring" the whole distance, over ice and snow, 'y lying prone, then dragging their feet to the point which their outstretched fingers touched, and repeat the process until arrival. Return traffic is not quite so heavy. The Sacred Spot itself has probably the world's highest suicide rate, since to die on it is to escape all future rebirths, and one step out into space is enough. Maybe these tracks are what the mysterious cable which spoke of two-thirds of the "India Road" as already built was referring to. It did not read "ready for motors".

And the bridges? They are single rope made from twisted strands of bamboo. Each is swung from a tree or crag high on one canyon bank to a much lower support on the other. The traveller ties himself into a sling, greased with yak butter to glide easily, and simply lets go. Over he flies, at 20 m.p.h., over sheer space, amid a burning smell from friction on the unevenly-braided wooden rope—unless, that is, he has the bad luck to be lighter than the "bridge's" own weight expressed as sag, in which case he helplessly slides back from near his destination into mid-air and must painfully pull himself up-hill to shore again, hand over hand. Since such bridges are one-way (without need of traffic police to enforce the rule) another hung on the opposite angle must be somewhere near each for return traffic. They last about three months, except in the pilgrim season when they must be renewed every few days.

Truly Chungking has the obstacle-surmounting courage that deserves to win out.