

# The Church Answers Back

## Questions on Sex, Sunday, Gaiters, And Communism

THERE was no formality in the CBS studio as the "Brains Trust" of the *Any Questions?* feature in the Campaign for Christian Order gathered together to answer and discuss the questions which had been sent in to the Question-Master. The Question-Master, Howard Wadman, with his lists of questions in front of him, took the end of the table. On either side of him sat the permanent members of the "Brains Trust"; the Rev. A. B. Kilroy, the Rev. H. W. Newell, Harold Miller, librarian of Victoria University College (the only layman of the group), the Rev. David Rosenthal, and the "guest" member, Archdeacon W. Bullock.

"I hope you feel prepared to answer any questions?" the Archdeacon was asked.

"Certainly, I have just fortified myself by dining on lamb's tongues," he replied. "Good," said Mr. Kilroy. "My mind is, if possible, blanker than usual."

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BUT it is time to begin. The microphone has been properly adjusted and the speakers placed at the correct distances. Mr. Newell leans back lest his voice carry too noisily. Mr. Rosenthal leans forward with an alert expression on his face, his pipe comfortably drooping from the corner of his mouth. Mr. Wadman fetches a glass of water for parched throats, and the Archdeacon is saved in time from using it as an ash tray.

At first they are a little strained, for after all it is a long time since any of them were at school. Gradually the anxious look of one determined not to make a hash of his Latin verbs fades, and as the discussion gets going real interest takes its place. Perhaps they do not rush the questions as full-bloodedly as one might have hoped, but they all have plenty to say, and after all, a paltry half hour for eight questions and five professional talkers is not very much.

### Solemnity or Joy?

The Question-Master leans forward with his first query. "Why does the Church appear to lay more emphasis on solemnity than on joy?" Mr. Newell takes up the challenge. Are solemnity and joy so very different? He thinks that the most solemn moments are often the most joyful, and he recalls an instance of the happy faces of children whom he watched in France as they went up the aisle of a church to worship. Mr. Miller would agree.

"I find church services at least as stimulating as the common room of a university college," is his verdict.

"Let services be brief and brotherly," interjects the Archdeacon.

### Does The Church Teach Equality?

The next question has a popular challenge. What is the Christian teaching on that part of the American Declaration of Independence that declares all men to



ZB's "BRAINS TRUST": Left to right—Rev. David Rosenthal, Archdeacon Bullock, Howard Wadman (Question-Master), Harold Miller, Rev. A. B. Kilroy, Rev. H. W. Newell

be equal? The Archdeacon believes that equality can only apply to basic rights and that with inequality of capacity there will be inequality of contribution, and there must also be inequality of reward. Mr. Rosenthal cites the parable of the labourers at the harvest to support the other point of view, while Mr. Miller explains that after all the American Declaration of Independence was drawn up by a bunch of people who were thinking only in terms of political rights, not economic equality.

This leads on to the next question: whether the cause of our present troubles is misalignment with God or economic causes.

While Mr. Rosenthal says that social conditions are bad because they are tolerated by people who are in misalignment with God, Mr. Miller asks "Must we then wait until everyone is religious before we do anything about urgent social evils?"

"It's no use doing anything for hungry men but feed them," says Mr. Newell.

### No More Gaiters

The next question was less serious: "Why does a Bishop wear gaiters?"

"So that he can ride a bicycle without using clips," says Mr. Rosenthal. The others agree but suggest that this habit, which began in the days when a bishop had to do the rounds of his diocese on a horse, should be abandoned. "Archdeacons can do without them, too," somebody added with a glance at the archidiaconal legs under the table. But they were not gaitered.

### Church or Blue Dome?

"I'm all for birds and forests," says Mr. Miller when the question is put whether it is not as good to worship out in the great open spaces as in the church. "At the same time, what is religion? Is it just a hobby like tennis or golf, or is it the real life of man? In church you are in touch with ultimate reality."

"I don't see why the two shouldn't be combined and the Blue Domes come into church before they make for the open spaces," says Mr. Rosenthal. This led to some discussion as to whether

"Blue Domes" really did worship God on the hills or merely enjoyed themselves on a day's outing.

"It seems appropriate," says Mr. Miller, "for a layman to be the first to introduce the word Sin. After all don't we also go to church to review our lives and confess our sins?"

### Sex Questions

"Is the Church Hush Hush on sex questions?" the Question-Maker asks.

Mr. Newell thinks No. After all there are few franker books than the Bible and many branches of the church do admirable work in the prevention of the spread of venereal disease.

Mr. Kilroy on the other hand believes that there is something to be said for the Victorian attitude, and that the greatest protection against sin is to be shocked by it.

### Opinions on Communism

So the discussion goes on through all the eight questions, the speakers forgetting as the interest became greater that this is not just a talk over the dinner table but something that will reach listeners all over New Zealand. When one question touches the Communist attitude to life all have opinions to give. Here are some:

"Communists have an exalted idea of the form the community should take," says Mr. Miller. "Lenin's ideal makes enormous demands, that people should act rightly by instinct and habit, but I'm blessed if I can see how people will do this without religion!"

"The greatest experiment of modern times is in Russia," said Archdeacon Bullock. "I would argue that it was religious fervour that inspired the Bolshevik Revolution."

Time is running short and the Question-Master hurries on to the next question. "Why are there so few women ministers in the Church?"

Before this can be fully answered the half hour is up and listeners are left with Mr. Rosenthal's words — which surely would have provoked an argument—that whereas most women will listen patiently to men speaking, there are few men who will listen to women!

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