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# A study of the attitudes and activities of the Church of England in the Illawarra during the First World War

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A Study of the Attitudes and Activities of the Church  
of England in the Illawarra during the First World War.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the award of the degree of

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by

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The First World War was a period of great change and upheaval for Australians. The Church of England, however, presented an air of stability and normality in the parochial ministration of its duties. The clergy interpreted the war as having a spiritual meaning, rather than a mere affair between hostile nations. Scriptural attitudes to war were examined by the clergy and they believed that the 1914 war was a call from God to them, to turn the nation from its national sins to righteousness, so it could be used by God for His purposes. In this study of the Church of England during the war, the clergy's attitudes and activities will be examined - to the daily ministry of the parish churches, to the ministry to war needs, to the recruiting campaigns and conscription referendums, and to the Germans and the war itself.

Historians have had a tendency to disregard or treat in a cursory manner the parochial ministry of the church during the war. Yet the normal peacetime activities of the clergy and the churches were maintained as much as possible throughout the war years. Clergymen believed that the everyday life of the parish was a source of comfort and order in a world of change and despair.

Throughout the war, the clergy defined their ministry in spiritual terms rather than material, and

were thus only supporters, not initiators, of the charitable war organisations. Comforting the bereaved and convincing the people of the need to turn back to God was regarded by the clergy as their specific war ministry. By 1917 some of the clergy believed that the nation should be prepared and repentant for the second coming of the Lord.

The recruiting campaigns were supported enthusiastically by the clergy, for they believed that a willingness to volunteer was a test of a man's faith in God. Although the clergy encouraged so many young men to volunteer for duty, the majority of ministers stayed behind and endured much soul-searching and public opposition because of this. The two conscription referendums held during the war were supported by the clergy, yet they were strangely silent in publicly voicing that support. The clergy may well have preferred their male parishioners to willingly volunteer for a just cause rather than be forced.

Clergymen accepted that the war was from God, sent as a warning and judgement on a sinful and unrighteous nation. The clergy believed that it was their duty to try to reveal to the people their national and individual sins, and to aim instead for righteousness. The national sins were vigorously denounced from the pulpit. These sins were the main moral issues of society, such as intemperance and sabbath desecration. As victory seemed far off, the clergy began to turn to varieties of

millennialism for solace. Throughout the war, the clergy's sustaining belief was that the war was a call from God for righteousness and that blessings would be granted to the nation and its people.

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### Abbreviations

A.C.M. (P.C.)	Austinmer Church Minutes (Parish Council)
A.C.M. (V.M.)	Austinmer Church Minutes (Vestry Meeting)
A.S.F.O.	All Saints, Figtree, Offertories (Unbound)
B.C.M. (A.V.M.)	Bulli Church Minutes (Annual Vestry Meeting)
B.C.M. (C.M.)	Bulli Church Minutes (Churchwardens' Meeting)
B. & F.B.S.	British and Foreign Bible Society
C.C.M.	Corrimal Church Minutes
Chapter Minutes	Rural Deanery of Wollongong, Chapter Minutes
C.M.A.	Church Missionary Association (Australia)
C.M.S.	Church Missionary Society
C.N.	Professor Cable's Notes
C.P.C.M.	Corrimal Parish Council Minutes
G.F.S.	Girls' Friendly Society
H.C.M. (P.C.)	Helensburgh Church Minutes (Parish Council)
H.C.M. (V.M.)	Helensburgh Church Minutes (Vestry Meeting)
R.S.A.S.	Register of Services from All Saints, Austinmer
R.S.C.H.R.	Register of Services from the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Helensburgh
R.S.E.C.	Register of Services from Emmanuel Church, Clifton
R.S.M.K.C.	Register of Services from Mt. Kembla Church
R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L.	Register of Services from the Osborne Memorial Church of St. Luke
R.S.S.A.B.	Register of Services from St. Aidan's, Balgownie
R.S.S.A.C.	Register of Services from St. Alban's, Corrimal
R.S.S.D.	Register of Services from St. David's, Thirroul
R.S.S.M.	Register of Services from St. Michael's, Wollongong
S.M.A.V.M.	St. Michael's Annual Vestry Meeting
S.M.P.C.M.	St. Michael's Parish Council Minutes



## Introduction

'Either this war is God's call to the nations to repentance, or else the greatest event of all history has no spiritual meaning'.

Rev. Dowe

( *Parish Gazette*, November, 1916)

The First World War affected every aspect of Australian life between 1914 and 1919. Never before had Australians been confronted by a major war as a nation. Only small contingents of soldiers had been sent to the Crimean and Boer Wars under British command. During the Great War, Australians fought as Australians to defend the Empire, and their own nation, whilst clergymen sought to defend the nation from national sins and unrighteousness.

Throughout the war, clergymen of all denominations displayed an amazing consensus of opinion about the war. Passivists were rare among the clergy. The majority of clergymen believed that the war was part of God's divine plan for the salvation of the Empire and the world. The need for repentance and righteousness had previously been expounded by the clergy before the war, but the war was interpreted as a warning to the nation as a whole to turn from its national sins to God. The nation would then be used and blessed by God, as He had done with the nation of Israel in Biblical times. Towards the end of the war, some of the clergy began to preach that rather than national repentance, individual repentance was required, to prepare for the second coming of Christ. The basic attitude and response of the clergy towards the war remained unchanged and never altered: it was a holy and righteous war, sent from God with a purpose and that it would ultimately bring blessing.

A detailed study of the main Australian churches during the war and their relation to Australian society

has been written by Michael McKernan in *Australian Churches at War*.<sup>1</sup> It is an invaluable work, providing much of the background material for this study and gives a clear perspective of the attitudes of all the churches during the war. There appears to be only one study (*Methodist Militant*) that examines a particular denomination during the war.<sup>2</sup> The author, however, only deals with the attitudes expressed in the South Australian Methodist weekly paper, rather than the attitudes and activities of the circuit minister and his churches. A major study of one denomination in England is *The Church of England and the First World War*.<sup>3</sup> This work is a comprehensive study, but as yet, nothing similar has been attempted for Australia.

Although there was no established church in Australia in 1914, the Church of England professed to have the greatest number of adherents in the country, according to the census figures. The same church, however, also had the dubious honour of having the greatest number of non-attendants. Many Australians, whose imperial feelings were often as strong as their national ties, felt an allegiance to the Church of England which was the established church in the 'mother-

1. M. McKernan, *Australian Churches at War, Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches, 1914-1918*, (Sydney and Canberra, 1980).
2. A.D. Hunt and R.P. Thomas, *For God, King and Country*, (Salisbury, 1979).
3. A. Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War*, (London, 1978).

land'. In many ways, the Anglican church was also the dominant social church in Australia. The popular press more frequently reported the speeches and sermons of the Anglicans than those of other denominations. At the parochial level, Anglican clergy were always appointed as chairmen at combined Protestant gatherings and were often the spokesmen for the Protestant clergy in a township.

This study attempts to examine the Anglican church and its activities during the First World War, but not at the level of its leadership, as has been more commonly done by historians. The clergyman in his parish, struggling with his everyday parochial business, has often been neglected. Yet it is he who interpreted any utterances from the hierarchy to the people; it is he who maintained the normal ministry of the church under stress of war, and it is he who comforted and reassured in days of bereavement and despair. The clergy and the lay people truly reflect the attitudes of the church, and how it affected them in their daily life, for they are the Church.

Although one is limited by examining the parochial ministry of the church, other areas can be treated in a more intensive manner, which previously have only been cursorily mentioned. Four country parishes in New South Wales have been chosen for study. Helensburgh, Bulli, Wollongong and Dapto. Country parishes were left very much on their own by Sydney Diocesan officials. The Archbishop visited once a year for confirmation services,

and only one other Bishop visited the area at irregular intervals. The clergy were much more isolated than today, with no radio or television to keep them informed of church activities and national affairs. The local newspapers consisted of little information beyond the district. Diocesan news from Sydney in particular, was rarely reported.

The Anglican parish of Helensburgh in the north of the Illawarra region was a large mining district. As was common in many of the country parishes, the minister was in charge of a number of churches, including those at Waterfall, Heathcote, Otford and Stanwell Park. Services were also held monthly at the Waterfall Tuberculosis Sanatorium. The congregations at Bulli also consisted largely of miners. Attached to Bulli parish were two conventional districts, each with their own curate-in-charge who was fairly autonomous in his ministerial duties, but still responsible to the rector at Bulli. The conventional districts were centred on Austinmer, which included the smaller mining townships as far north as Clifton, and at Corrimal, which included Bellambi and probably Tarrawanna. The rector at Bulli was also responsible, with the help of lay-readers, for the ministration of the churches at Thirroul and Woonona. These parishes and those as far south as Nowra, were part of the Rural Deanery of Wollongong, and the rector of Wollongong parish was appointed as Rural Dean. The parish of Wollongong was very large, and the minister was assisted by two curates. The second of whom was not

appointed until 1916. The parish consisted of the mining communities at Mount Kembla, Figtree, Balgownie and Keiraville, the more rural Fairy Meadow, and the new industrial area at Port Kembla. The parish of Dapto in the south, included the townships of Albion Park and Marshall Mount. These were primarily rural areas, consisting mainly of dairy farms. One can not help but be amazed at the way these local churches maintained their ministry in war time, whilst also responding to the demands of war.

A glimpse of church life during the war is available through church records and papers. The thoughts of individuals can be examined thus avoiding the need for generalisations about the clergy or lay-people. Some of the local parish papers are still obtainable, even though most of the churches stopped printing them due to war restrictions and strained finances. The *Wollongong Parish Paper* contained mainly church social news and coming events in the parish. A parish letter was written by the rector of St. Michael's, Wollongong, each month. Unfortunately, only six of these parish papers remain. The church at Bulli published an irregular *Parish Gazette* which is almost complete for each month from December, 1913 to January, 1918. These were written solely by the rector, and besides the social news of the church, he included articles on current affairs and interesting topics. The individual church records are not as extensive as hoped. Some have been lost or destroyed by fires and

floods, and many of the church minutes have large gaps for the war years. Parish councils and church committees also met irregularly. In 1917, the recently appointed rector at Austinmer recognised the importance of keeping church minutes, and 'called attention to the fact that there were no minutes to be found of previous meetings and urged that minutes of all meetings held, be in future kept'.<sup>4</sup> Service registers can be either a very helpful source or very frustrating, depending on each individual minister and the amount of information he recorded. The two local newspapers were very valuable sources of information, often reporting on local church activities and sometimes publishing a church sermon or special service. Although one must be careful dealing with press reports for bias or exaggeration, they are often the only source of information available for the time. The Anglican church periodicals, such as the *Church Standard*, were irrelevant for the activity of country parishes, although the local clergy may have read them.

The normal ministry of the church, maintained throughout the war, is examined in the first chapter. Clergymen participated in, and thus encouraged, many peacetime activities that continued during the war. Church fund-raising socials and concerts were regularly held, and the clergy continued to be involved with some of the secular committees and organisations,

4. All Saints, Austinmer, Vestry Meeting Minutes, 6 December, 1917.

such as the Schools of Arts. Youth work and religious instruction in the schools were supported and maintained, as was missionary work. Clergymen did not neglect to contribute to the war effort, as examined in the second chapter. Although the clergy praised and supported war organisations like the Red Cross, they believed their war ministry was to tend to the spiritual, rather than the material, wants and needs of the people. Thus clergymen were very active organising prayer meetings, special services of intercession for the war, combined church services for the war effort, comforting parishioners who had lost sons, husbands or brothers, and conducting memorial services for the deceased. One secular area where the clergy was active was encouraging men to recruit. Clergymen believed that a test of a man's faith was his readiness to volunteer to defend his country. Perhaps for this reason they were strangely quiet, compared to the rest of the country, in campaigning for a 'yes' vote in the two conscription referendums held during the war. The clash in priorities of the clergy's support for encouraging recruits whilst they remained in the parish, was never truly resolved by them. The fourth chapter examines the clergy's attitude towards the war, towards righteousness and the abolition of national sins(intemperance, sabbath desecration, pleasure seeking and selfish pursuits), and towards the German people and the Kaiser. Clergymen's attitudes to the war affected every aspect of their response, as a



spiritual meaning was placed upon the war. It was regarded as a righteous war, sent from a just God as a warning to repent.

It is very easy for the historian to be overly critical of the church during a time of national and unprecedented crisis. This study argues, however, that the Anglican clergy, not only at the level of leadership, but also in isolated country parishes, reacted to a situation that they were not prepared for nor had ever confronted before, in the only manner they understood: by placing a spiritual meaning on the war. From a study of scriptural attitudes to war the clergy derived their own convictions. The great Old Testament Biblical battles of Gideon, Moses and David were referred to, and there the clergy found that when the people of Israel repented and prayed to God for peace, it was granted. Many of the clergy believed that the Empire and the Australian nation were now God's chosen people and the instruments for the working out of His purposes on earth. In 1914, the clergy believed that they, and the nation, must do as Israel had: turn to God and worship Him as a nation and the blessing of victory would be granted.

## Chapter 1: 'Business as Usual'

'It is very nice to feel that one can just rest without fear of disturbance by the insistent call of the telephone to some special and immediate duty; or the need of preparation for some service pressing home on one's consciousness, and the necessity of grasping quickly every available moment to fit oneself for the duty lest a number of unexpected calls arising, the hour of duty arrives and finds one unprepared'.

Rev. Stubbin (whilst on holiday)  
( Wollongong Parish Paper, February, 1916)

Throughout the early months of 1914, the Anglican church in the Illawarra underwent a period of expansion. New churches were opened at Stanwell Park and Figtree; at Corrimal the foundation stone of a new and larger church was laid. The church at Woonona was enlarged, and renovations were carried out on the Fairy Meadow church. Although nominalism was always a problem, there was some evidence that within the church there was growth. In April, 1914, at St. Michael's Annual Vestry Meeting, reports indicated an 'increased interest in the church's affairs, both in attendances at church and in offertories'. The Sunday School was also said to have 'gone well' and 'increased in attendance'.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the war, church attendance figures continued to increase in all of the Anglican churches in the Illawarra. The faith and the support of parishioners continued under the strain of the war, even though many became very active with the numerous war organisations and funds. For the four years of actual warfare, and until the official peace was signed in July, 1919, the clergy attempted to maintain the normal ministry of the church as much as possible. Amidst the trauma of war, they conducted services, held weekly prayer meetings, ministered to those in need, encouraged interest in missionary activities, and worried about the holiness and righteousness of their

1. St. Michael's Annual Vestry Meeting, 1872-1946, 23 April, 1914 (hereafter S.M.A.V.M.).

parishioners.

The majority of Australians regarded themselves as belonging to the Anglican denomination. The census of 1911 revealed that 38 per cent of the population were Anglicans, compared to 20 per cent of Roman Catholics. By the end of the war, the percentage of Anglicans had risen to 43 in 1921, while the Roman Catholic figure had not changed. Yet within the same period there may have been some disillusionment with religion, for the percentage of 'no religion' figures had increased by almost 50 per cent from 0.22 per cent to 0.38 per cent.<sup>2</sup> Even so, the figures are very small and indicate that the majority of the population still liked to adhere to one particular religion, if only at census time. The Anglicans were most prominent in New South Wales with 45.46 per cent of the population, and this dominant trend was noticeable in the Illawarra. The 1901 census revealed that 41 per cent were Anglicans, followed by the Roman Catholics with 26 per cent, 14 per cent were Methodists, 12 per cent were Presbyterians, and 4 per cent were Congregationalists.<sup>3</sup> One must be careful in interpreting these figures. Even though the majority of Australians had some contact with the church, it was usually only for services of baptism, marriage

2. *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, (Part 16), 1933, (Canberra), p. 1023.

3. *Results of a Census of New South Wales, 1901*. (Sydney, 1904), p. 246.

and burial, and on special occasions such as Empire Day which attracted a greater attendance than Christmas and Easter services. McKernan believes this allegiance to one church reflects 'the extended community that the churches represented'.<sup>4</sup> This may be doubted, and the fact that people did adhere to one religion was probably more a case of convenience than allegiance. The life of the church was foreign to the lives of a great many Australians, to whom it had little relevance. More people probably listened to church leaders than today but would have given them no more of their attention than they gave to civic leaders.

The dual problems of nominalism and non-attendance concerned and worried the clergy, prior to and during the war. One local clergyman warned his congregation against 'joining with the hundreds who despise both God and His worship'.<sup>5</sup> The extent of the problem nationwide was revealed by a leading Anglican lay authority, L.V. Biggs, in 1913. He told the Church Congress in Brisbane that four out of every nine Australians described themselves as Anglicans, yet he doubted if 5 per cent of them were regular churchgoers, or attended church at all.<sup>6</sup> The

4. M. McKernan, *Australian Churches at War*, (Sydney & Canberra, 1980), p. 8.

5. *The Parish Gazette*, (St. Augustine's, Bulli), July, 1914, p. 4.

6. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

President of the Wollongong Protestant Ministers' Association, Rev. Olver, echoed these thoughts in 1914: 'probably 4,000 people don't go to church even once on any given Sunday, and a large proportion of them don't go at all from one year's end to another'.<sup>7</sup> Non-attendance was not a modern problem for the clergy. In 1898, Rev. Elder, the then rector of St. Michael's, Wollongong commented that the average attendances on Sunday for the past year had only been sixteen: 'it was very small and should have been much better'.<sup>8</sup>

In an attempt to overcome the problem and encourage people to attend services, 'Go-To-Church' Sundays were organised by the Protestant churches. The Anglican church was not alone with the problem of nominalism, and in the Illawarra, the churches combined to organise such a Sunday. Advertisements placed in the local press in September, 1914 urged the people to 'give your soul a chance' and encouraged them to 'experience the duty and privilege of attending the Public Worship of God'. The readers were told that 'the Ministers preach the ordinary Gospel, but the ordinary Gospel contains AN EXTRAORDINARY MESSAGE OF LIFE, AND HOPE AND JOY. Make no mistake this is for YOU'.<sup>9</sup> The response by the people was not as great

7. *Illawarra Mercury*, 28 August, 1914.

8. *Illawarra Mercury*, 16 April, 1898.

9. *South Coast Times*, 18 September, 1914.

as hoped, but the effort was regarded as a success by the organisers. Although it was held just after war was announced in August, no mention of the war was made. Instead the sermons were based on the necessity of public worship and that it 'was a training of the soul for the life to come'. The clergy believed that the basic reason why people did not attend church was 'found in the materialistic view of life that possesses the people'. They attempted to answer this by preaching 'that nothing this world gave could satisfy the human heart'.<sup>10</sup> The answer of a more spiritual life may also have been an attempt by the clergy to prepare their congregation for the months ahead when the human heart and mind would be troubled and distressed.

The clergy who ministered in the Illawarra region would probably have adhered to the evangelical position within the Anglican church. Sydney diocese, of which the region was a part, was traditionally evangelical and would have attracted clergy of that leaning, particularly those who were trained in the theological college. Except for three, two of whom were English and the other born in India, the clergy in the Illawarra were Australian born, which obviously gave them the advantage of understanding their parishioners.<sup>11</sup> However, the training of Australian clergy was

10. *South Coast Times*, 25 September, 1914.

11. Professor Cable's Notes (hereafter C.N.).

criticised by some. Lewis Radford, the Bishop of Goulburn, complained that many of the graduates of the theological colleges were 'barely educated sufficiently to enable them to teach with authority'.<sup>12</sup> The training at the Sydney theological college, Moore College, would have produced quite different results. Two of the Illawarra clergy, C.A. Stubbin, and O.G. Dent, were trained there. Both gained third class in the Oxford and Cambridge Preliminary Examination for Holy Orders, Stubbin in 1906 and Dent in 1908.<sup>13</sup> This examination was accepted by most of the bishops in England as a standard examination for ordination. In 1907, the College became officially affiliated with the University of Durham and this enabled students to obtain the Licence in Theology (L.Th) from the university if they passed two examinations in Theology.<sup>14</sup> Dent received his L.Th in 1909. The Rev. O'Neill obtained his Th.L. from the Australian College of Theology in 1900, and Rev. Reed obtained his training from St. Columb's Hall, Wangaratta in 1904.<sup>15</sup> Three of the region's clergy possessed university degrees.

12. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

13. *Sydney Diocesan Directory*, (Sydney, 1918), pp. 156 and 127.

14. M.L. Loane, *A Centenary History of Moore Theological College*, (Sydney, 1955), pp. 99-102.

15. *Directory, op.cit.*, (1917), p.141 and (1918), p. 150.



Smee and Dowe both obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from Sydney University. However, Dowe was refused ordination in Sydney by Bishop Barry because he had no college training and was later ordained in 1894 by the Bishop of Newcastle for Sydney. According to Dowe, Moore College at the time was 'too narrow'. This was the period when Bernard Schleicher was principal from 1891-1897. He was said to have been a 'High Churchman of the old school, one who held and taught Baptismal Regeneration'. His successor, Nathaniel Jones, who was there until 1911, was 'a convinced churchman in the finest school of evangelical thought'.<sup>16</sup> The only English trained clergyman was W.E. Godson. He gained a Bachelor and a Master of Arts from Oxford University, and received his theological training at Wycliffe College. Two years after being ordained, he joined the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) and was sent to Lagos in the Diocese of West-Equatorial Africa for a year, and then to China for nine years. He came to Australia in 1907 as superintendent of the Chinese Mission in the Sydney Church Missionary Association (C.M.A.).<sup>17</sup> Only three of the clergy appear to have had no theological training before they were ordained, and one was a lay reader for fifteen years previously and another was a catechist for a number of years.

16. Loane, *op.cit.*, pp. 92 and 98.

17. C.N.

Arguably then, the clergy in the Illawarra were well-prepared for the maintenance of parish life.

Both before and during the war years the church was an individual community, maintaining many of its regular activities and social affairs, and organising new ones. There was little social entertainment for people prior to the war and the churches provided many an opportunity for enjoyment with their gatherings and socials. The Rev. Stubbin of St. Michael's hoped that they would 'bring the members of the church together so that they might know one another better'.<sup>18</sup> Often these socials were to raise finances for church projects. Concerts and bazaars were often held in conjunction with sales of work by the ladies' guilds, 'enabling us to do much needed repairs'.<sup>19</sup> When it was found that the Parish Hall at St. Michael's was 'now inadequate for the accommodation of the Sunday School' and there was a need for a 'proper vestry in the church', the Parish Council suggested a Continental 'in order to obtain funds'.<sup>20</sup> Other fund-raising activities were held, not only for building and maintenance costs. Churches held socials 'to supply new floor covering for the church', to buy or repair organs, and towards the end of the war to pay the debts incurred by the installation of electric

18. *Illawarra Mercury*, 1 October, 1915.

19. S.M.A.V.M., 17 April, 1917.

20. St. Michael's Parish Council Minutes, 14 May, 1908-14 August, 1919. Not dated, 1917. (hereafter S.M.P.C.M.)

lighting and the telephone. The clergy were eager participants in these socials and concerts. At one fund-raising concert at Coledale the rector, Rev. O.G. Dent, 'fairly brought down the house with a song of his own composition, entitled "Sparkle Up Coledale"'. The Rev. Stubbin won the gent's prize at a church social at Port Kembla for 'blowing out candles from a stipulated distance'.<sup>21</sup> But not all of the clergy were such keen supporters of these fund-raising methods. The Rev. Dowe and the Bulli churchwardens asked for 'Special Gifts' in 1917 'to take the place of the sales of work, which now for several years have happily ceased to be an annual feature of our Church life'.<sup>22</sup> During the war, the wisdom of holding concerts was questioned by church officials as 'so many families were suffering bereavement and anxiety', but they were usually held, and the concerts were well patronised and 'much enjoyed'.<sup>23</sup>

Prior to the war the clergy in the northern suburbs often gave public lectures, but they appear to have ceased after 1914. They were well attended and the topics ranged from 'An All Fool's Day and Fools' by Rev. King-Brown of Corrimal, to 'Water' and the quite controversial lecture, 'Genesis and Geology' by the Rev. Dowe. The latter was said to have 'proved to those present the truth of the Word of God'.<sup>24</sup> The clergy

21. *South Coast Times*, 12 May, 1916 and 29 October, 1915.

22. *Parish Gazette*, March, 1917, p. 1.

23. *Illawarra Mercury*, 9 November, 1917.

24. *South Coast Times*, 8 May, 1914.

attempted to further the spiritual life of their parishioners through bible study and prayer meetings. At St. Michael's a Family Circle was held on Friday nights and parishioners were reminded that 'If those who have any difficulties or troubles of any kind will write down a request for prayer and hand it in at the Rectory, intercession will be made'. Individual family devotions were also encouraged: 'it is very largely because parents failed in their duty to their children in the preceding generations that we see the great falling away from God today'.<sup>25</sup>

Weekly prayer meetings were also held at the other churches, most were nightly like the Helensburgh meetings held on Thursday nights at 7.30p.m. Bible study was encouraged. A branch of the Young People's Scripture Union was formed at Thirroul in 1915 with about thirty members, a sizeable number for that church. Parents were urged by Rev. Dowe to 'ask their children each day whether they have read the allotted portion of Scripture, and question them about it'.<sup>26</sup> At the same time an official from Scripture Union gave a Lantern lecture to the adults on 'The Making of the Bible'. At Wollongong, there was an auxiliary branch of The British and Foreign Bible Society (B. & F.B.S.), in which all the Protestant clergymen were actively involved. For men only there was a systematic study of the Bible at Bulli each week, and 'a bit of study in Church history'.

25. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, October, 1916.

26. *Parish Gazette*, April, 1915, p. 4.

Those who attended were asked to bring with them 'the difficulties and objections and questionings that you and your friends meet with, and let us look into them together'.<sup>27</sup>

The church was not limited to its own parish boundaries and looked beyond to the work being done throughout Australia and the world. Special offertories were often taken for various causes such as the Home Mission Society, the Australian Board of Missions, the C.M.A., the Church of England homes and various other church groups on a lesser scale. The churches' interests sometimes went beyond financial assistance as at Austinmer in April, 1918 the Anglican church hosted 'over forty children from the Church of England Home at Marrickville, and another lot from the School of Industry at Petersham'.<sup>28</sup> However, beyond the parish the chief concerns were missions. The Rev. Dowe was one clergyman who was zealous in reminding his congregation of the times of the Napoleonic Wars, when 'our greatest religious societies were founded'. He condemned those people during the present war who said, 'Times are too hard to support missionary work', arguing that he did not notice 'any particular difference in the amount spent on drink, tobacco, picture shows and luxuries generally'. 'Shame on us, Christian brethren, if any of us try to economise on Missions while our

27. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1915, p.3.

28. *Illawarra Mercury*, 3 May, 1918.

personal luxuries are untouched'.<sup>29</sup> By 1918 the clergy's tone had changed to one of urgency: 'One thing we must do if we would be ready for our Lord - we must be engaged in spreading His Kingdom'.<sup>30</sup> To encourage a missionary interest, subscriptions were collected for the C.M.A. paper, *The Gleaner*, and a Gleaners' Union was held monthly in the churches. The Young People's Missionary Union, or the Sowers' Band as it was commonly known, held weekly Missionary Study Circles in the individual churches. The groups aim was to 'aid the advancement of Christ's Kingdom'. The children of the clergy also took a keen interest in missions: Rev. Stubbin's daughter was Secretary of St. Michael's Sowers' Band for many years, and Miss Dowe who was in England, gave 'a good deal of time to C.M.S. work in Salisbury Square'.

The clergy sometimes gave lectures on missions or missionary work, but more often visiting speakers were attained. The rector at Bulli, Rev. Dowe, gave a lecture on the 'Life and Missionary Work of Francis Xavier' (sic), for the Gleaners' Union in 1914 and another on 'James Hannington, Bishop and Martyr', a year later. Dowe believed that 'the lives of great men should be an inspiration to us all'.<sup>31</sup> Visiting missionaries included Rev. Canon Burns and Miss Jackson, both from East Africa, Mr. Hodgson from South Africa, and the Rev.

29. *Parish Gazette*, December, 1914, p.4.

30. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1918, p.2.

31. *Parish Gazette*, July, 1914, p.4.

E. Gore of the Sudan Mission. Representatives from C.M.S. were most common, but there was also a visitor from the China Inland Mission to St. Michael's and Dapto, and a Mission for Lepers overseas with special offertories taken, was held at Dapto in 1919. Missionary giving was very generous. At Dapto, the offertory from the monthly children's service was given for missionary work and a special day of Missionary Intercession was held in all the churches in 1917 with appropriate offertories. In early 1914, Bulli Parish donated an extra £10 to the C.M.A. 'as a thank-offering for the successful year just passed'.<sup>32</sup> On Good Friday, 1916, a special offertory was taken in the Bulli church for the Palestine Missions. The Bishop in Jerusalem wrote that the Germans and Turks had 'taken all our mission schools for barracks, and have filled our mission hospitals with their wounded ... our doctors and teachers have had to escape to Egypt. The Bishop appeals to all Christendom for help to restart the work as soon as the war is over'. The total amount raised was £ 8.5s. 3½d., 'a splendid response'.<sup>33</sup> Even the weekend after the Armistice in 1918, a special missionary Sunday was held in St. Michael's.

The annual C.M.A. Summer School was held at Austinmer throughout the war. The Anglican church was made available 'for all religious meetings' and the

32. Bulli Church Minutes (Annual Vestry Meeting), 1911-1931. 20 April, 1914. (Hereafter B.C.M.(A.V.M.) ).

33. *Parish Gazette*, April, 1916, p.4.

church officers 'were asked to do all that is possible to help'.<sup>34</sup> The surrounding churches had guest speakers from C.M.A. during the period and in 1916 St. Michael's held a Special C.M.A. Summer School Week with services every day for the Association. Missionary organisations were very popular and prior to the war, volunteers were not difficult to find. During the 1914 Summer School there was 'an enthusiastic subscription of money and also twenty volunteers for the Foreign Mission Field'.<sup>35</sup> The great desire of the clergy in regard to missions was expressed by Rev. Stubbin in 1916:

We shall surely have realised the urgency of the Missionary call and the duty of obeying it ... May we hope that before very long we shall at least have and support our own parish representative in the Mission field to carry the message for us to the other sheep whom our Master seeks to gather in.<sup>36</sup>

The life of a minister throughout the war years was 'occupied in simply doing the things which must be done in the ordinary routine of parish work'.<sup>37</sup> This was not always 'simply' done. The local parishes, particularly Wollongong, were very large and the motor car was not in use by the clergy until 1916. Even then, some of the clergymen preferred the traditional horse and sulky:

34. Austinmer Church Minutes (Vestry Meeting), 1917-1937, 20 October, 1919 (hereafter A.C.M.(V.M.) ).

35. *South Coast Times*, 23 January, 1914.

36. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, February, 1916.

37. *Illawarra Mercury*, 5 May, 1916.



the latter plus a harness was given by the church but the rector 'provided his own horse'.<sup>38</sup> At Helensburgh, a car was not used until 1924, and in other centres also an effective ministry was often restricted because of the distances involved. This, combined with lack of clergy caused concern. In 1915, the Rev. Stubbin declared at a vestry meeting 'that more visitation was needed, but it was impossible in so vast a parish with only two clergymen'.<sup>39</sup> A second curate was eventually appointed in May, 1916 to help alleviate the difficulty. Other churches had various ways of coping. At Austinmer, a 'rest-down-home' was established for clergy in 1918, and the visiting clergy sometimes took local services, 'thus doing away with the necessity of securing a layman when the resident minister is officiating at another church within his parish'.<sup>40</sup> The Parish Council decided in 1919 to 'have a curate to live at the northern end of the district' as a help for the rector on Sundays.<sup>41</sup> The Lay Readers were a valuable assistance to the work of the church. The Rev. Dowe praised the work of these men: 'we have some good local preachers ... and we shall try hard to get the best men from Sydney'.<sup>42</sup> All the churches had the assistance of Lay Readers, and parishioners were involved

38. *South Coast Times*, 5 May, 1915.

39. *South Coast Times*, 3 May, 1915.

40. *South Coast Times*, 30 August, 1918.

41. A.C.M. (Parish Council), 11 November, 1919.  
(Hereafter A.C.M.(P.C.) ).

42. *Parish Gazette*, December, 1913, p.4.

in entertaining them or 'driving out the lay readers to take services'.<sup>43</sup> The Lay Readers' Association was severely hit by the shortage of men during the war, and this in turn affected the ministry of the churches in the Illawarra. The situation that occurred at Bulli was not unlike that in the other parishes. At Bulli the number of visiting preachers was reduced to two each month, rather than three: 'Out of eighty-four services to be conducted this quarter, the Sydney lay readers will only help with twelve; leaving seventy-two to be conducted locally'. The Rev. Dowe added an appeal for 'one or two more young men to come to the help of those already working'.<sup>44</sup>

The ministerial life was not without its hazards, particularly with the amount of travelling throughout the parish for visitation and other duties. One of the curates at St. Michael's complained to two Municipal Council's about 'scores of vehicles without any lights which were to be encountered on the roads at night, also cyclists. These, and straying stock, took all the pleasure out of driving'.<sup>45</sup> The Rev. Dowe had a rather different type of complaint connected with his ministerial duties in regard to 'the fragrance from which has often been wafted across to me when officiating at the cemetery. But the dead do not mind it, and the

43. S.M.A.V.M., 19 April, 1915.

44. *Parish Gazette*, August, 1917, p.3.

45. *South Coast Times*, 16 October, 1914.

living are only occasionally there, so that it is a very suitable place for the sanitary depot'.<sup>46</sup> An interesting request came from Rev. Smee who appealed to Parish Council that 'the nuisance existing in the back chimney of the Rectory be remedied as early as possible'.<sup>47</sup> Bulli Parish instructed their Secretary 'to write to Miss Moore to discontinue throwing tins or any other rubbish on the allotment at the rear of her residence' which the Church apparently owned.<sup>48</sup> Bulli also endured the problem of 'horses straying in the churchyard', but a year later it was decided to put a number of sheep in the yard to 'keep the grass down and kill the blackberries ... there is practically nothing else to be injured'.<sup>49</sup> These incidents and problems which are amusing to us now, allow an insight into the daily life and activities of the various parishes during the war years.

The church was an integral part of the wider community in which it belonged. One church lay official described the people in the northern mining communities as 'of the working class and they give what they can afford and can give no more'.<sup>50</sup> Due to uncertain

46. *South Coast Times*, 8 May, 1914.

47. Helensburgh Church Minutes (Vestry Meeting), 1914-1927. 20 April, 1915. (Hereafter H.C.M.(V.M.) ).

48. B.C.M. (Churchwardens' Meeting), 14 May, 1915. (Hereafter B.C.M.(C.M.) ).

49. *Parish Gazette*, April, 1915, p. 4.

50. Meeting of the Church Lands Committee, St. Albans, Corrimal, Land Sale Ordinance, 22 July, 1914, p.10. (Unbound).

working conditions and the prevalence of strikes, the churches in the north were not as financial as the more southern ones. Helensburgh Parish Council decided to hold a meeting in October, 1914 to 'place the financial position before the congregation' and in March, 1917, Bulli officials sent circulars to the parishioners

'appealing for funds'.<sup>51</sup> Strikes affected some of the parish activities, particularly in 1916. At a bazaar for Coledale church, 'the strike was responsible for a lot of people not turning up'; every effort was being made at Fairy Meadow 'to get funds for a new building, and once strike losses are made up we hope to raise a substantial sum; and at Corrimal the strike postponed the Bazaar until 'work is resumed in the mines'.<sup>52</sup>

The strike in the mines was for the granting of eight hours work to the wheelers. Commenting on the strike, the Rev. Dowe hoped that a victory would be gained:

'personally we could never see the object of having front and back shifts'. However, he added that 'strikes are always bad and injurious to the district' and he was sorry to see that the strikers were spending 'their spare time around the pubs'.<sup>53</sup>

During another coal strike two years later, the Wollongong Benevolent Society

51. H.C.M. (Parish Council, hereafter P.C.), 22 September, 1914; and B.C.M.(C.M.), 2 March, 1917.

52. *South Coast Times*, 10 November, 1916 and 15 December, 1916; and Corrimal Parish Council Minutes, 1916-1930. 6 November, 1916. (Hereafter C.P.C.M.).

53. *Parish Gazette*, November, 1916, p.3.

of which Mrs. Stubbin was president, came to the assistance of some of the distressed families. The clergy were actively involved with other community affairs. A benefit concert was held in 1915 by the Corrimal Church of England on 'behalf of a widow whose husband recently lost his life in the Coalcliff Colliery'.<sup>54</sup> The Rev. Dowe wrote on the cruelty of the Devil in the Parish Paper. He believed that it existed in some of the mine wheelers because of their treatment towards the ponies. He warned them that 'every act must bring its exact consequences' for God is a Righteous Judge. The rector then related a story of kindness in the local mines by a mine boss and concluded that the man would have his reward in heaven.<sup>55</sup> When daylight saving was introduced in 1917 the Rev. Dowe praised the scheme but also recognised that 'a great many of the miners do not like it'.<sup>56</sup>

The 'daughter churches' in the parish of St. Michael's, Wollongong consisted mainly of mining or farming families, depending on the area. The congregation at St. Michael's Parish Church were mostly town people and thus there were quite a number of prominent businessmen and civic leaders who attended the services each Sunday. The Town Clerk, Mr. T. Ayling,

54. *South Coast Times*, 3 September, 1915.

55. *Parish Gazette*, March, 1915, p. 2.

56. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1917, p. 3.

was a member of the Parish Council in 1918; 'Ald. J.A. Mayo, the Mayor of Wollongong in 1917, was also on Parish Council and was Auditor in 1916, a Synod representative and a Church Warden; Ald H. Vidal was also a Church Warden, elected in 1918; S.R. Musgrave, editor and owner of the *Illawarra Mercury* was on Parish Council for at least four years during the war. Among other businessmen were W. Smart, general grocer; J. Lindsay, dentist; A. Brickwood, jeweller; A. Parsons, hardware shop owner; and H.E. Harrigan who owned a motor garage. The more southern parishes were predominantly rural, although there was some industry at Port Kembla. Harvest Festivals were annually held at St. Luke's, Dapto and in 1915 there was a special thanksgiving service held for 'the present bountiful season'. The Rev. Stubbin preached on the text:

'If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;  
Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit'<sup>57</sup>

The text was certainly relevant for a Jubilee Fair in 1917, when over £90 was realised from an auction sale of young stock, pigs, poultry and firewood.<sup>58</sup>

In all the parishes, the Anglican clergy enjoyed a good relationship with the leaders of the other Protestant churches as demonstrated by the combined

57. *South Coast Times*, 8 February, 1915; Leviticus 26:3 and 4.

58. *South Coast Times*, 2 February, 1917.

effort for 'Go-To-Church' Sunday. During the war the churches regularly combined to hold special war services for intercession. The Protestant ministers participated in the celebrations of Anzac and Empire Days, on the Anniversary of the War and at the Peace celebrations in 1918 and 1919. The Protestant Ministers' Association was formed in Wollongong and then Bulli 'for the purpose of united effort in the advancement of Religion and Morality'.<sup>59</sup> At Bulli the Association held a monthly United Divine Service in one of the public halls. They also conducted open-air preaching and had a campaign against 'immorality and intemperance'. The Wollongong members opposed the running of Sunday trains to Wollongong and wrote to the editor of the *South Coast Times* arguing that if it did occur it would 'be a matter of regret to us and to many residents'.<sup>60</sup> In 1915 the Association forwarded a petition to Council 'in opposition to a structure in Keira Street being licensed for boxing tournaments, prize fighting, etc.'. <sup>61</sup> The members also wrote to the *Illawarra Mercury* in 1917 questioning a circular that urged ratepayers to vote for certain candidates to the exclusion of others 'who have always stood for the progress and morality of the town'.<sup>62</sup> Not only did the Protestant clergy associate but they

59. *Parish Gazette*, December, 1917, p.1.

60. *South Coast Times*, 26 November, 1915.

61. *Illawarra Mercury*, 24 August, 1915.

62. *Illawarra Mercury*, 29 June, 1917.

were also concerned about various 'social ills' of the day and did not hesitate to protest or to draw attention to them as a united body.

The same relationship did not exist with the Roman Catholic clergy. Although it was the second largest denomination in Wollongong, little was reported of its activities in the local press. The fact that the editor of one publication was a staunch Anglican may have contributed somewhat. The Catholic priests were usually absent from the special services that the Protestant clergy organised during the war. In many regards, Catholics in the Illawarra would have seen themselves, as did the majority in Australia 'as an aggrieved and persecuted minority surrounded by the dominant Protestant society'.<sup>63</sup> The Protestant clergy were not always hostile. The Rev. Dowe praised Archbishop Kelly in 1915 on his recent trip to Bulli for taking 'the opportunity of administering Temperance Pledges to many of his Confirmation candidates'.<sup>64</sup> Few Catholic priests would have shared the vision of one Wollongong priest, Rev. Father Dunne who longed 'to help all other denominations, to scotch out all forms of bigotry ... and to establish a communion of good will and peace amongst all classes and sects'.<sup>65</sup> Unfortunately, he was not to see his vision achieved in Wollongong. The

63. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.5.

64. *Parish Gazette*, July, 1915, p.4.

65. *Illawarra Mercury*, 15 Dec ember, 1914.



Roman Catholics experienced no direct criticism from the Anglican ministers in the area; it was a rather more subtle form of disregard and disinterest.

In their effort to maintain the normal ministry of the church, the Anglican clergy continued to engage in various peacetime activities that continued in the wider secular community during the war. The ministers from the three churches at Dapto, Corrimal and Helensburgh were all on the committee of their respective Schools of Arts. The Rev. Hall, a curate from St. Michael's, offered to address the Wollongong branch of the Australian Labor Party which accepted. The branch also issued an invitation to Rev. Godson to speak. As already mentioned, the clergy were actively involved in the annual celebration of Empire Day. One modern Australian historian has written that the 24 May was 'the closest approximation Australia had yet found to a national day'.<sup>66</sup> The largest attendances at St. Luke's, Dapto during 1913 and 1914 were on Empire Day, the figures being 185 and 173 respectively. In 1913, the other large congregation of 137, was at the Confirmation Service and, even the first service after war was declared in 1914 had only 102 worshippers.<sup>67</sup> A military church parade was held at St. Michael's on Empire Day in 1914 and the rector, Rev. Newmarch,

66. G. Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo* (Sydney, 1976), p.109.

67. Register of Services from the Osborne Memorial Church of St. Luke, (4 April, 1907-29 July, 1918), 1913 and 1914. (Hereafter R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L.)

expounded the day 'as a monument of the greatness of the British Empire'.<sup>68</sup> Empire Day provided an opportunity for Australians to demonstrate and proclaim their dual emotions of imperialism and nationalism. They were ideals that the clergy highly commended.

The younger members of the parish were not neglected. At a Rural Deanery meeting in 1918, a discussion arose about the possibility of the church establishing a hostel in Wollongong 'for the benefit of children travelling to Wollongong for educational purposes'.<sup>69</sup> But it was not until after the war in 1920 that definite arrangements were made to provide accommodation for twenty to thirty girls. At a Vestry Meeting in 1918, the Rev. Stubbin raised the matter of 'difficulty experienced by boys and girls in securing tuition in shorthand and typewriting'. He mentioned that he had been 'in communication with some of the Sydney Business Colleges with a view to the establishment of a branch here'.<sup>70</sup> No other reference is made to this proposal, but a few months later the rector donated 5/- towards the purchase of a typewriter for the District School.<sup>71</sup>

Like their contemporaries in England, the Anglican.

68. *Illawarra Mercury*, 26 May, 1914.

69. Chapter Minutes of Rural Deanery of Wollongong (1900-1920), 20 March, 1918. (Hereafter Chapter Minutes)

70. S.M.A.V.M., 17 April, 1918.

71. *South Coast Times*, 5 July, 1918.

clergy in Australia played a leading part in the Scouting Movement which had been formed in 1908. The Rev. Smee founded a troop at Helensburgh when he arrived in 1914. The clergy were active participants in many of the scouting activities. Rev. Smee took a large group of boys to Bulgoa Beach for a camping holiday in 1917, and in March, 1918 there was a Special Scout Church parade at Helensburgh. The Rev. Hall conducted a 'party of nine boys on a walking tour to Kiama' from Wollongong.<sup>72</sup> The troop at Dapto, led by Rev. Godson helped some returned soldiers at West Dapto, and members were reported to have 'acquitted themselves admirably in the way of potato planting and scrub clearing'.<sup>73</sup> Rev. Godson also accompanied the St. Luke's choir boys to Katoomba for a week's holiday in January, 1918.

The spiritual ministry to youth was largely through Sunday School and Religious Instruction in the public schools. In 1916 a second curate was appointed to St. Michael's to assist in the church work, primarily with religious instruction. In explaining why, the Rev. Stubbin believed the instruction was necessary and 'constructive, which will show its fruit

72. Register of Services from the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Helensburgh (30 March, 1917-31 December, 1924), 24 March, 1918. (Hereafter R.S.C.H.R. 1917-1924); and *South Coast Times*, 28 December, 1917.

73. *South Coast Times*, 7 December, 1917.

in the future'.<sup>74</sup> At a Deanery meeting in 1916 a series of examinations were introduced for use in the schools and the 'various parishes were encouraged to take part advantage of these arrangements' when they conducted religious instruction.<sup>75</sup> During the war, the work of the Sunday Schools was maintained and flourished in some churches. In 1917, St. Michael's Parish Council discussed at length the 'pressing need for more accommodation for the Sunday School'.<sup>76</sup> An indication of the size of the combined Bulli and Woonona Sunday Schools can be gained from the food order for their annual picnic in January, 1915 which included: '3 dozen single compressed loaves of bread, 3 hams, 12lbs butter, 12lbs fruit cake, 6lbs plain cake, 4lbs seed cakes, 15 dozen fancy cakes, 5 dozen assorted pastry, 12 qts milk, and the other items as usual'. There were either a lot of them or they were very good eaters! The picnics continued throughout the war, for they were 'the children's annual treat' and the people of the congregation were asked to 'try and maintain their usual liberality'.<sup>77</sup> The war also affected the Bulli Sunday School at the annual prizegiving. In 1917 the rector wrote that books were given to many of the children, 'but not as many as in previous years, owing

74. *Illawarra Mercury*, 20 April, 1917.

75. Chapter Minutes, 10 April, 1916,

76. S.M.P.C.M., 16 October, 1917.

77. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1915, p.4.

to the fact that books cost now far more than they did before the war'.<sup>78</sup>

An active youth group in some of the churches was the Girls' Friendly Society (G.F.S.). It was founded in 1875 in England and had a large following at St. Michael's. During the war new societies were formed at Bulli in October, 1914 and at Dapto in January, 1918. Miss Wright, sister of the Archbishop of Sydney, visited both parishes to help form the new branches. Seven new members were admitted to the Wollongong G.F.S. in 1916 and special admission services were held in the church. Two of the activities that were taught to the 'band' were stencilling and pen painting.<sup>79</sup> Money was donated to various missionary groups and in 1916 the group 'forwarded eighteen dresses and many other useful gifts for children to the Burwood Orphanage'. The news reporter commented 'that considering the many calls on the public purse at the present time it is pleasing to note that the orphans are not being forgotten.'<sup>80</sup> The youth in the parish were not always as receptive as these girls to the clergy's call for holiness. In 1916 a group of boys were brought before Wollongong Court charged with 'throwing stones on the roof of Tarrawanna Church of England during a service and otherwise misbehaving themselves'. They were released after a few stern words

78. *Parish Gazette*, August, 1917, p.2.

79. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, January, 1916.

80. *Illawarra Mercury*, 27 August, 1915.

from the Judge and an apology offered to the minister.<sup>81</sup> Another incident occurred at Bulli when two boys were seen 'interfering with graves and removing marble pebbles therefrom'. The Churchwardens decided a stern letter to the parents would be sufficient action.<sup>82</sup>

In 1917 the Rev. Dowe led a group of Bulli citizens who complained to the Council about the 'horrible odour from the slaughteryard'. In a letter to the editor of the *South Coast Times* he wondered how they would 'escape septic complications if that vile smell is allowed to continue' in the area that is 'the Potts Point of our little town'.<sup>83</sup> Other community affairs concerned him. Through the pages of the Parish paper he discussed whether smoking causes heart disease and concluded that it was best 'to leave tobacco alone'. He questioned the purity of water in the new pipes that had just been laid in the Shire in 1917. He urged his readers not to 'get rid of your tank of good wholesome rain water' and to use the 'iron pipes' only for the 'purposes of combating fires, of washing and of watering the gardens'.<sup>84</sup> As already mentioned, Rev. Dowe, approved of Daylight Saving, mainly because it meant 'a saving in health and kerosene'. The other clergy also contributed to the community, but were probably not as outspoken in their views as Rev. Dowe at Bulli and Rev. Godson at Dapto.

81. *South Coast Times*, 15 September, 1916.

82. B.C.M. (C.M.), 9 July, 1915.

83. *South Coast Times*, 6 July, 1917.

84. *Parish Gazette*, March, 1917, p.4.

In many practical ways the clergy assisted. While visiting Kangaroo Valley in 1916, the Rev. Stubbin 'promptly conveyed to Bowral Hospital per motor car a resident who was seriously injured on Monday'.<sup>85</sup>

Figtree Church of England donated 'jellies, biscuits, pumpkins, cauliflowers, jam, cake and flowers' to the Wollongong District Hospital in 1915.<sup>86</sup> At the opening of the Illawarra Cottage Hospital at Coledale in 1917, Rev. Dent was one of the guest speakers, and in 1918 St. Michael's choir entered the Church Choral competition in the Wollongong ~~Esteddfod~~ and won first prize.

Sporting activities were very popular during the war, particularly tennis. In 1915, the Mayor, Ald. Lance, officially opened St. Michael's tennis court, and a few years later a court was built at Coledale by the church. Interdenominational tennis matches were not uncommon; in 1918 the Wollongong Church of England boys convincingly defeated the Woonona Methodist boys. Austinmer churchwardens praised Rev. Dent for taking 'a place on the cricket field (for he plays with the Bulli XI), and also on the football field, and we will go so far as to say that there are very few people between here and Coalcliff who would say anything detrimental to his efforts to extend the Christian

85. *Illawarra Mercury*, 11 August, 1916.

86. *South Coast Times*, 19 March, 1915.

faith'.<sup>87</sup> This defence was because a football club meeting had been held in the church during the week which was objected to. A keen cricketer was also to be found in Rev. Godson, who helped to reform the Dapto Cricket Club after the war. The Rev. Smee was President of the Helensburgh and Stanwell Park Lifesaving and Surf Club which proudly boasted that 'since its formation in 1908, not one case of drowning has occurred in the area under the control of members'.<sup>88</sup> The clergy must have been eager supporters of water-safety for in 1918 Essie Stubbin was awarded a bronze medallion after undergoing a 'lifesaving examination at the ladies' baths'.<sup>89</sup>

The normal peacetime activities of the Anglican clergy were maintained as much as possible during the war. The daily administration of the parish, visitation, missionary zeal, interest in community affairs, church fellowship, praying, and preaching the need to turn to God, were upheld by the clergy under stress and anxiety. Church attendance figures rose as the people responded to the air of normality and stability presented by the churches. At Dapto Church of England in 1914, the average Sunday attendance was seventy-one, and by 1918 this had risen to one hundred and three. Clergymen believed that the everyday life of the parish was a source of comfort and order, in a world of change and

87. *South Coast Times*, 8 May, 1914.

88. *South Coast Times*, 29 September, 1916.

89. *Illawarra Mercury*, 10 May, 1918.



despair. Throughout the war, the clergy strove to heed the words of Archbishop Wright, who said that their first consideration 'should be the maintenance of religious life'.<sup>90</sup>

90. *Illawarra Mercury*, 30 May, 1916.

## Chapter 2: War Ministry

'... the war will be long and costly,  
both in money and in lives; and we  
must be prepared to share the loss'.

Rev. Dowe

( *Parish Gazette*, December, 1914)

'Let the world offer them its material  
things, but let us offer them our  
spiritual things'.

Rev. Stubbin

( *Wollongong Parish Paper*, June, 1919)

As early as October, 1914, the Rev. Dowe noted that 'Directly or indirectly the war is affecting us all'.<sup>1</sup> He and his fellow clergymen were compelled to examine their attitude to war in those first few months and work out where their specific contribution to the war effort should lie. Most of their effort was indirectly through the normal ministry of the church as they came in contact with bereaved relatives and those enduring privation because of the war. However, the clergy themselves believed that their foremost ministry was to convict the people of their need to turn to God and righteousness, and repent of their sins. The chapter is presented in a chronological order within this basic theme of righteousness. Other issues concerning the clergy such as prayer, memorial services, civic celebrations, support of patriotic funds and combined Protestant services are also considered. The work of the church in recruiting, and the clergy's attitude to conscription will be dealt with in a separate chapter. The presentation of this chapter in a chronological manner, gives a clearer understanding of the churches' overall war effort within the context of everyday parish activities.

### 1914

The announcement of war on 4 August, 1914 was marked by the Protestant churches in Wollongong with a United Patriotic Church service to 'offer prayer to

1. *Parish Gazette*, October, 1914, p.3.

Almighty God for the welfare of our Nation in the present crisis'.<sup>2</sup> The local press reported that about 1,250 people had attended which they believed was 'striking evidence of the community in a common cause ... a spirit of faith in a true and just cause'.<sup>3</sup>

Clergymen responded to the 'cause' by establishing services of intercession for the war and the soldiers, and prayer meetings. At St. Michael's two services were held weekly for intercession and on Thursday night after Evensong, a prayer meeting was conducted. These were maintained throughout the war and were usually well-attended, although next to one entry for 11 January, 1918 there was the comment: 'Too wet - no one came'.<sup>4</sup>

Prayer meetings with 'special reference to the War' were held at Bulli on Monday and Wednesday evenings, and many churches incorporated a war litany into the normal Sunday evening service.

The clergy exhorted the people to pray and to expect sacrifices to be made, but they were basically reassuring and encouraged the congregations to remain steadfast. In December the Rev. Dowe wrote to his parishioners:

2. *South Coast Times*, 7 August, 1914.

3. *Illawarra Mercury*, 11 August, 1914.

4. Register of Services from St. Michael's 1914-1925, 11 January, 1918. (Hereafter R.S.S.M.(No.2) ).

'We thank God that the tide of war is slowly flowing in our favour. The Germans are being slowly but steadily beaten back from the soil of France and of Russia; and their losses are terrific ... But the war will be long and costly, both in money and in lives; and we must be prepared to share the loss'.<sup>5</sup>

He continued to urge the parishioners to 'give voluntarily for our boys' well-being. The Red Cross which had been launched in Australia on 13 August was praised for 'doing a good work in supplying ... warm clothing and all sorts of comforts'.<sup>6</sup> The local Red Cross societies were formed fairly quickly after the initial one, and the clergy's wives were often active workers. The Austinmer branch was inaugurated in late August, with 'a fair attendance', and Mrs. O.G. Dent, the rector's wife, was appointed Secretary.<sup>7</sup>

### 1915

The new year of 1915 was greeted by large congregations in the churches for a day of intercession for His Majesty's Naval and Military Forces. St. Michael's extended the service of intercession for the whole week. At all of the special services in the church the offerings were donated towards the expense of the Archbishop's Soldiers Tent at Holdsworth army camp.<sup>8</sup>

② Helensburgh offertories were for the Red Cross. The

5. *Parish Gazette*, December, 1914, p.3.

6. *Ibid.*,

7. *South Coast Times*, 28 August, 1914.

8. R.S.S.M., (No.2), 3 January, 1915.

Rev. Dent quoted as his sermon text Philippians 4:6 and 7: 'Have no anxiety about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God'. In all the churches prayer was offered for the King and all in authority; the soldiers and sailors; the sick and wounded and for all who ministered to them:

'Almighty God, the only Giver of all Victory, look down in Thy Mercy on our Empire, and on our Soldiers and Sailors engaged in this War. Give wisdom to those who command in the State, in the Army, and in the Navy. Give courage to those who have to fight; and strength to those who have to endure. Grant Victory to our Arms if it be Thy blessed Will, and in Thine Own good time, restore to us the blessing of Peace. Hasten the time when all the kingdoms of the world shall be the Kingdom of Christ. Pardon all our National and individual sins: implant Thy Faith and Fear in our hearts; grant to us a revival of National Righteousness, and make our Empire Thy instrument of blessing and evangelization to the World.

Bless especially ... who have gone to the Front; and bring them back if it be Thy gracious Will. We ask it all in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.'<sup>9</sup>

In his New Year's Greeting, the Rev. Dowe hoped that God would grant His grace upon them 'to forsake our sins' and that they would 'return to Him with true repentance, and to seek Him again in public and private Prayer and Worship. Then indeed, 1915 will be a blessed

year to the Empire and to us all'.<sup>10</sup> The local churches began to become actively involved in the war effort. In January the Helensburgh Church of England held a concert for the Red Cross and 'donations of tobacco and jam for the use of the troops' were willingly given.<sup>11</sup> The following month the Church choir and Sunday School 'scholars' of St. Alban's, Corrimal also held a concert in aid of the Red Cross, and Mrs. King-Brown, the rector's wife, was mentioned in the patriotic column as helping the movement by 'sewing, washing and ironing two shirts for their Base Hospital in Egypt'.<sup>12</sup> Higher prices through the war, and 'the necessity for helping our Red Cross Fund and the Belgian Relief Fund' were causing some in Bulli parish to feel the effects of the war. But the Rev. Dowe noted that although there had been a decrease in church giving there was 'no evidence yet of any shrinkage in the amounts spent on luxuries and amusements'.<sup>13</sup> Particularly during the early months of the war, the need of the Belgians was eagerly responded to by Australians with generous donations. The editor of a Sydney newspaper wrote that the 'lively sympathy universally felt in Australia for Belgian and French civilians under the German heel was a national reaction of horror and disgust at a ruthless policy of

10. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1915, p.4.

11. *South Coast Times*, 22 January, 1915.

12. *South Coast Times*, 23 July, 1915.

13. *Parish Gazette*, March, 1915, p.2.

frightfulness'.<sup>14</sup> The churches contributed through special offertories, and the children of the parish were also involved in the war effort. Balgownie Sunday School donated 10s. to the Belgian Refugee Fund and Brownsville children collected the admirable sum of £5 from a concert they held.<sup>15</sup> The Bulli and Woonona Sunday School gave their prize money funds of £3 towards the Relief Fund and were congratulated for showing 'an excellent self-denying spirit'.<sup>16</sup> During the Children's Service in March at St. Michael's, a special offertory of £1.15s. 9d. was taken for the Babies Kit. This was a children's fund organised to help 'all destitute children of Britain and her Allies who come under the notice of the guardians of refugees in England'.<sup>17</sup> A letter to the Editors explaining the work of this fund was published in both of the local newspapers, and children were encouraged to help the fund in any way possible, but especially through Sunday Schools.

A Military and Church Parade were held in St. Michael's in May to celebrate Empire Day, the offertory to be donated to the Belgian Relief Fund. The *Illawarra Mercury* reported the success of the day: 'nothing like the crowded services of Sunday last have been witnessed before'. Presumably referring to church attendance the

14. E. Scott, *Australia During the War, Volume XI of the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918.* (Sydney, 1940), 6th ed., p.728.

15. *South Coast Times*, 30 April, 1915.

16. *Parish Gazette*, March, 1915, p.3.

17. *South Coast Times*, 5 March, 1915.



news reporter believed the day was 'a clear index to the change in public sentiment brought about by the war'.<sup>18</sup> Strangely though, at Dapto Church on Empire Day, the low attendance figure of 143 was recorded, thirty less than in 1914. The local press may have been using some propoganda to encourage and reassure their readers of the united community feeling about the war. The report also clearly reveals that the local press fully supported the war. In St. Michael's, the text on which Rev. Stubbin preached was Numbers 23:23 and 24. The last verse has obvious allusions to England and the victory the clergy believed would be hers:

'Behold, a people! As a lioness it rises up and as a lion it lifts itself; it does not lie down till it devours the prey, and drinks the blood of the slain'.

At Bulli, special offerings were held to enable the B. & F.B.S. to supply the troops with pocket Testaments and over £1 was raised. Rev. Dowe wrote 'that there is great spiritual work going on in the trenches, which must react on the whole country when the war is over'.<sup>19</sup> In June, Bulli parish paper contained a letter from John Salisbury who had enlisted and was at Meadi Camp, near Cairo. He gave an exciting account of his adventures: 'The trip through the Canal was rather exciting at first; but the fun died out when no Turks showed up ... I have seen the Pyramids and the

18. *Illawarra Mercury*, 25 May, 1915.

19. *Parish Gazette*, June, 1915, p.4.

Sphinx, and both are truly wonderful, well worth travelling across the world to see'.<sup>20</sup> The number of men who had gone to the front or into camp were listed for the first time and the prayers of the parishioners for them were asked. There were forty-three men in all, seven of whom were wounded. In July the number of wounded had risen to eleven, and 'the first of the Bulli men to give his life for the Empire' was recorded. 'We shall record his memory with especial honor' wrote Rev. Dowe. 'Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends'.<sup>21</sup> The men who had gone to the front were prayed for at almost every service held at Bulli, and a list of names was also attached to the church door. This was probably common practice at the other churches as well. The Rev. Dowe reminded his parishioners that 'Prayer cannot be lost. It must bring down blessing. Not always, perhaps, as we ask and expect; but in some way, and always it is heard and answered by our Heavenly Father'.<sup>22</sup> The rector of St. Michael's also believed that prayer was 'not lost'. The church bell was rung every day at noon from July onwards. Rev. Stubbin said that it was to remind people 'to pray for the speedy termination of the war and success of the allies, whilst those that do not pray, at least can think for a few minutes of the war and those

20. *Parish Gazette*, June, 1915, p.2.

21. *Parish Gazette*, July, 1915, p.2.

22. *Parish Gazette*, July, 1915, p.3.

fighting for their country'.<sup>23</sup>

In August, 1915 the reality of the war was brought closer to the hearts of the Stubbin family when their eldest son volunteered for active service. A younger son followed a year later. The same month Rev. Stubbin wrote to the Department of Defence about an idea he had of neutralising the effect of the poison gas fumes used by the Germans in trench warfare.<sup>24</sup> The matter was referred to the Munitions Committee but unfortunately there was no further mention made of it. During October the Naval Chaplain, F. Rilray, visited Helensburgh and preached to the congregation there, and later that month Rev. Snee participated in a recruiting march through the town.<sup>25</sup> A memorial service at Dapto for the late Private Neaves was held in October; the church was crowded with over two hundred attending.<sup>26</sup> It was the first of such services to be held at Dapto, but regrettably not the last, as only two months later another memorial service was held for Private J. Muir. The *Illawarra Mercury* reported that 'the church was beautifully draped, and the flags of the Allies were hung in conspicuous places. Over the pulpit the words 'Be at Rest' were worked in white flowers on a black background'.<sup>27</sup> In Wollongong and Dapto churches special Military Parades and

23. *Illawarra Mercury*, 6 July, 1915.

24. *Illawarra Mercury*, 10 August, 1915.

25. R.S.C.H.R., 3 October, 1915.

26. R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L., 24 October, 1915.

27. *Illawarra Mercury*, 24 December, 1915.

Intercessions were conducted for the 'Waratahs' route march in aid of campaigning for recruits.<sup>28</sup> The Rev. Dowe's Christmas message expressed optimism and reassurance, while at the same time reminding the people that the sacrifices made for them at the front were not in vain. 'Some, alas, have already fallen, others may yet fall - but to all such their country will raise an imperishable monument, and their names will live in the nation's everlasting love and gratitude'.<sup>29</sup>

### 1916

The first Sunday in 1916 was celebrated in the churches with a Day of National Penitence and Prayer. Large congregations were in attendance, and at Austinmer their numbers were swollen with visitors from C.M.A. Summer School. The Rev. Dent preached an appropriate sermon from 1 Peter 5:6, 'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you'.<sup>30</sup> The *Wollongong Parish Paper* began the year by publishing a list of the Church of England men who had volunteered from the parish and the parishioners were asked 'to bear them up in prayer by name each day'.<sup>31</sup> Over seventy names were mentioned, with five who had been killed mentioned in the Roll of Honour section. The parish's sympathy was also extended to the mother of

28. R.S.S.M. (No.2), and R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L., 8 December, 1915.

29. *Parish Gazette*, December, 1915.

30. Register of Services, All Saints', Austinmer (1906-1918), 2 January, 1916. (Hereafter R.S.A.S.)

31. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, Vol.3, No.11, January, 1916.

Private Muir of Figtree, 'in this, the loss of her second son, who died doing his duty to God and Country so nobly'. In February, the Wollongong Red Cross held a Garden Fete to raise funds. Mrs. Stubbin was mentioned as helping on the refreshment stall.<sup>32</sup> The loss of church workers was beginning to take an effect, particularly among the smaller churches, on church activities. The St. Michael's choir requested 'some male voices', and this was echoed at Bulli, 'the Choirmaster is anxious to obtain more members, and especially tenors and basses'.<sup>33</sup> Two members of the Balgownie choir enlisted in February and the church held a Special Military Parade and Farewell to the Recruits.<sup>34</sup> They prayed that God would 'protect them and our other young men who have gone from here, and bring them safely back to us'.<sup>35</sup> In March, Bulli church members said 'au revoir' to their choirmaster 'who is leaving for the front on Monday' and presented him with a wristlet watch.<sup>36</sup>

The Church work in soldiers camps was well supported in the Illawarra. The Thursday night Evensong services at St. Michael's donated the offertory to the Soldiers' Club for the duration of the war. At Figtree, the Sunday School teachers decided to forgo their books and donate the money to the maintenance of the same Soldiers' Club

32. *South Coast Times*, 18 February, 1916.

33. *Parish Gazette*, May, 1917, p.4.

34. Register of Services from St. Aidans, Balgownie, (1915-1940), 19 March, 1916. (Hereafter R.S.S.A.B.)

35. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, Vol. 3, No.12, February, 1916.

36. *South Coast Times*, 17 March, 1916.

at Liverpool, which was conducted by the Home Mission Society.<sup>37</sup> The church at Bulli decided to donate five shillings a week for the 'work among our N.S.W. soldiers in camp'. The rector appealed to his parishioners to 'please try and spare a penny or two, although we know you are already giving to a lot of good objects - Red Cross, Belgian Fund, etc.'. <sup>38</sup> The work was said to cost the Church £12 a week to run, and all of the churches recorded in their financial accounts regular donations each month. The Congregational minister in Wollongong, Rev. Olver, wrote to the *Illawarra Mercury* in 1915 that these Church clubs which were doing a 'great service ... provide place and opportunity of letter writing, a place of meeting, games and concerts, etc., and also minister to spiritual needs'. <sup>39</sup> He had enlisted in the army a month earlier, so was in a position to comment through the eyes of a soldier, as well as a clergyman.

A public meeting, which Rev. Stubbin attended, was held in early April to arrange a celebration of Anzac Day, and to deal with patriotic funds. A memorial hall for the soldiers was suggested. But the Rev. Stubbin disagreed, believing that 'all funds collected at present should be in aid of existing funds'. Instead he proposed the formation of a local fund in aid of returned

37. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, Vol. 3, No. 12, February, 1916.

38. *Parish Gazette*, April, 1916, p.2.

39. *Illawarra Mercury*, 3 August, 1915.

soldiers to be collected partly at Anzac Day services, and this was accepted by the meeting.<sup>40</sup> On Anzac Day, a United Protestant service was held. At noon, 'a very large congregation stood silently whilst the Rev. Stubbin slowly read out the names of the heroes that had laid down their lives on active service'.<sup>41</sup> The Methodist minister, Rev. F. Duesbury read a list of the Australian forces that took part in the famous landing, the Presbyterian and Salvation Army clergy offered prayers of intercession and Rev. J. Poole, the curate from St. Michael's, read from Ephesians 6:10-18, 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God ...'.<sup>42</sup> The National Anthem brought the service to a close.

The Annual April Easter Meeting of 1916 revealed the effect of the many war funds on church finances, and also revealed that for the first year of the war, people were more willing to donate money for the war effort than to their church. At St. Michael's, the Secretary's report revealed that 'in spite of the dearth of workers' all the work of the church had proceeded, and the finances were in credit.<sup>43</sup> The Bulli church balance sheet was not so fortunate, it

40. *Illawarra Mercury*, 14 April, 1916.

41. *Illawarra Mercury*, 28 April, 1916.

42. *South Coast Times*, 28 April, 1916.

43. *South Coast Times*, 5 May, 1916.

showed a deficit of £9, 'the first time for many years that the accounts have so closed'. However, the shortage was attributed to the lack of lady collectors rather than to the war.<sup>44</sup> Offertories at Figtree church were also slightly down from previous years, £25.9s. 7d. for year ending 31st March, 1916 compared to £31.3s. 4d. for 1915.<sup>45</sup> Due to the shortage of male parishioners the formation of a Parish Council at Helensburgh ceased and did not resume again until 30 April, 1923.<sup>46</sup>

The war was never far from the thoughts of the lay people. Corrimal Parish Council decided to apply for a faculty to place a Memorial Cross and Tablets in the Church in late June<sup>47</sup>; the parishioners at Mt. Kembla attended a Memorial Service in June for Private J. Peace, which Rev. Stubbin conducted.<sup>48</sup> Special Commemorative Services were held throughout all the churches for the death of Lord Kitchener, with large congregations.

'A detachment of cadets marched from the drill hall to St. Michael's, and the Mayor, Ald. Beatson, and some of the members of the Wollongong Council and of the local Recruiting Committee also took part in the service.'

44. *Parish Gazette*, June, 1916, p.2.

45. All Saints Church, Figtree Offertories (unbound), (1912-1918), 31 March, 1915 & 1916. (Hereafter A.S.F.O.)

46. H.C.M. (Vestry Meeting), 11 April, 1916. (Hereafter H.C.M.(V.M.))

47. C.P.C.M., 28 June, 1916.

48. Register of Services from Mt. Kembla Church (1908-1927), 18 June, 1916. (Hereafter R.S.M.K.C.)



The Rev. Stubbin preached an impressive sermon, based on the text, 'For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself'.<sup>49</sup> The coming referendum for six o'clock hotel closing occupied most of the clergy during the next few months, calling upon their congregations to 'Be Patriotic and sensible and vote for 6 o'clock closing'.<sup>50</sup> At the Marshall Mount Public School picnic, the Rev. O'Neill presented a gift to Corporal Moore as a farewell token from his friends before he left for the front 'to fight in the battles of the Empire'.<sup>51</sup> At the public commemoration of the second anniversary of the war in August, the Rev. Stubbin optimistically said 'that after two years of dark clouds they could thank God that there was a glint of brightness'.<sup>52</sup> The 'glint' was not bright enough for Mrs. Dungey, an active church member from Mt. Kembla, who a week later 'received news of the death of her son, Pte. William Dungey from wounds. Another son is just about to sail'.<sup>53</sup>

The churches encouraged their parishioners to take a practical interest in the war, and supported any voluntary work done to aid the war effort. The Rev. Dowe's daughter, who was in England was mentioned in the

49. *Illawarra Mercury*, 16 June, 1916; Romans 14:7.

50. *Parish Gazette*, June, 1916, p.4.

51. *South Coast Times*, 28 July, 1916.

52. *Illawarra Mercury*, 8 August, 1916.

53. *South Coast Times*, 1 September, 1916.

parish paper as 'helping to make shells for the British Army. A Volunteer Ordinance Depot has been established at Finchley where many women workers (Miss Dowe among them), are giving their services gratuitously'.<sup>54</sup> The tremendous work done for one of the patriotic funds by Mrs. Bartlett was acknowledged and praised. She had 'knitted over 200 pairs of socks for the boys at the Front (after 200 she says she lost count), besides 20 Balaclava caps, 20 pairs of mittens, and a number of mufflers. Mrs. Broadhead, of Thirroul, has, we know, a great record too'. The rector added that 'We shall be glad to hear of others who have done well'.<sup>55</sup> A tea and concert held at St. John's, Keiraville auctioned the flowers that were used for decorations, and donated the proceeds to the Wounded Soldiers' Fund.

A Mission of Repentance and Hope was held throughout the Diocese in October and November. It was held primarily as an appeal from the Church 'to the Nation to repent of national sins'. Again, the theme of righteousness and repentance is evident as is the desire of the clergy for a religious revival. The Mission Prayer clearly states this:

54. *Parish Gazette*, August, 1916, p.4.

55. *Parish Gazette*, October, 1916, p.3.

'O Heavenly Father, bless, we beseech Thee, the coming Mission in this Parish; Grant that thy Holy Spirit may come upon us in the fulness of His Might; Bless the Missioner; Arouse the careless; Turn and soften the wicked; Bring back the wanderers; And grant that all Thy faithful people may be led to love Thee more and serve Thee better, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.<sup>56</sup>

The clergy, like many did not really believe that the war would last for another year. The Rev. Stubbin's comments at the Anniversary of the War reflects this, and a striking example occurred at Corrimal in November, 1916. As already mentioned, the Parish Council applied for a Memorial Cross and board earlier in the year. On 30 November, a Chaplain-Captain, W.J. Cakebread, dedicated the cross and roll of honour board 'to Parishioners who fell in the Great War 1914 to ...'.<sup>57</sup> Already it was termed as the 'Great War', yet another two years were to pass before peace would be declared. On the afternoon of Christmas Day the residents of Helensburgh also unveiled an Honour Board in memory of local soldiers who had been killed on active service. The Rev. Smee, as a member of the Patriotic Committee, expressed their sympathy to the relatives of 'those who had fallen while obeying the call of duty'.<sup>58</sup>

56. *Parish Gazette*, November, 1916, p.2.

57. Register of Services from St. Albans, Corrimal, (1916-1929), 30 November, 1916. (Hereafter R.S.S. A.C.(No.2) ).

58. *South Coast Times*, 29 December, 1916.

1917

On the first Sunday of 1917 the churches commemorated those who had fallen in battle, with a Special Day of Penitence and Prayer. At St. Augustine's, Bulli, fifteen names were read out at every service. In his New Year Greeting, the Rev. Dowe no longer expressed optimism, but the belief that the end of the age was at hand, a time of great joy for those who were ready and waiting for Christ:

+ 'This is a very solemn year, the most solemn that has ever dawned on mankind because the signs are so plain that it is one of the last that are left to us in this dispensation. At any time, now, Christ may come, awaken His sleeping saints, and take away His waiting people'.<sup>59</sup>

A sense of despair and realisation of the impact of war is obvious, compared to the allusions to great bravery and heroism of earlier years. The clergy's desire for righteousness and national repentance now appears to have a different motive, the motive of readiness for the second coming of Christ rather than the motive of becoming a God-fearing nation and Empire. However, millennialism did not become the dominant motive although it did gain prominence, as is perhaps generally the case during times of world crisis. The increasing war-weariness and mood of apathy that began to descend upon Australians was not absent from the church. Rather tauntingly, the Rev. Dowe

59. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1917, p.1.

exclaimed in March, 1917:

'Ask Christian people to meet once a week for Special Prayer for the Empire and for our Boys, and they won't bother to come - the war isn't their business! England will win somehow. England will manage somehow.'<sup>60</sup>

At the Bulli annual Vestry Meeting the same sense of disillusionment was obvious; 'expressing regret that the congregations at the several churches were so small, stating that the Political Questions of the day were somewhat responsible for it'.<sup>61</sup> What those political questions were is not mentioned, but it is interesting that politics affected the church attendance to such a degree. However, there was a credit balance financially compared to the previous year and ironically 'the number of regular monthly subscribers had risen to 220 - a greater number than we have ever had in the parish before'.<sup>62</sup> Also at St. Michael's the Secretary announced 'that there was an increase in all departments. Offertories in nearly every case had increased'.<sup>63</sup> There was an overall increase of twenty in the average attendance on Sunday at Dapto, and the offertories for Corrimal of £53.12s. 6d. for 1917 were the largest during the war.<sup>64</sup> For the majority of the churches there seemed

60. *Parish Gazette*, March, 1917, p.3.

61. B.C.M.(A.V.M.), 17 April, 1917.

62. *Parish Gazette*, May, 1917, p.3.

63. S.M.A.V.M., 17 April, 1917.

64. Corrimal Church Account Book (1916-1919), April, 1917.

to be an increase, both in attendance and giving. Clergymen probably interpreted these increases as a sign that the people of the Illawarra region were beginning to turn to God as an answer to the questions that they asked and as a comfort in times of loss. However, this was probably only a small minority, and most likely the National Mission had increased figures or the 'occasional' Church members had become more devoted and regular in worship. Whilst those who did attend each Sunday grew more committed to the ministry of the church and faithful in giving both of their finances and of their time.,

Dean Talbot, the Anglican Dean of Sydney, visited Wollongong in early April as President of the Returned Soldiers' Association. Most of the clergy belonged to the Association, but at the meeting held in the town, there were few others who attended. In his address, the Dean explained the work of the Association and added that 'he ought to have been at home composing his Sunday sermon, but ... Soldiers should come first every time'.<sup>65</sup> Later in the month, Anzac Day celebrations were held. At the Public School, national songs were sung. Ashmead Bartlett's account of 'The Landing' was read, and patriotic speeches were delivered by the Mayor of Wollongong, the Headmaster, Inspector of Schools and Rev. Stubbin. In the afternoon a United Protestant service

65. *South Coast Times*, 6 April, 1917.

was held, prior to which a procession of Anzacs, the Light Horse and motor cars with wounded soldiers, proceeded along the main street to the Town Hall. The overall emotion of the day was greater than even the year before. Long before the official time for the service the 'Town Hall was filled, and many were unable to obtain admission ... The audience was one of the largest seen in the hall for a long time'.<sup>66</sup> The speeches of the day were very nationalistic, while at the same time, had echoes of imperialism. A modern historian, Gammage, writing about the exploits of the Anzacs at Gallipoli, believes that, 'For years it had required only one great Imperial deed to consummate the highest hopes and expectations of the Australians; now in the fullest and most glorious measure, it had come'.<sup>67</sup> These were the prevailing emotions at the second Anzac service, held in Wollongong, and in his speech to the schoolchildren, the Rev. Stubbin responded to the new feeling of nationhood won for them by their soldiers:

'The day they were celebrating was an epoch making event in the history of Australia. They could picture the great trial our soldiers were called upon to face that day. They had to attack fortified heights, in which the enemy were entrenched. The test was severe, but our men did not flinch. They went bravely on and effected a landing. That was Australia's answer to the call of Empire. (Applause) It proved to the world the British Empire was united. It also proved that the British blood had

66. *Illawarra Mercury*, 27 April, 1917.

67. B. Gammage, *The Broken Years*, (Victoria, 1975), p.12.

not deteriorated in the Australians. It also earned for the Australians an eternal glory. We cannot have a glory without cost, and our thoughts on Anzac Day of that great glory is tempered by the thought of the losses of many brave men. Theirs was the sacrifice, ours the glory. It remained for the rising generation to maintain that glory. We should remember we're all Australians, belonging to the British Empire'.<sup>68</sup>

Anzac Day services were also held in the churches and were well attended. At Corrimal the offertory was donated to the War Chest Fund, the object of this fund was 'to give assistance in any emergency arising from the war', and to co-operate with others in doing so. Collecting boxes were placed in business houses and factories for small donations, thus the name was earned 'War Chest'.<sup>69</sup> Archdeacon Haviland preached at Austinmer on Anzac Day, and the text was aimed more at directing the people to God and righteousness than a patriotic spirit: 'If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God'.<sup>70</sup> In July, a memorial service to John Biggar was held in Corrimal church. The war weariness that was evident at the beginning of the year, was again visible in the Rev. Stubbin's address at the third anniversary of the war in August, he 'regretted the continuance of the war ...

68. *South Coast Times*, 5 October, 1917.

69. Scott, *op.cit.*, p.715.

70. R.S.A.S., 25 April, 1917, and Colossians 3:1.



but did not regret that the British nation had entered the war'.<sup>71</sup> The Rev. Dowe wrote to his parishioners that 'the war still drags on its slow course. The definite entry of the U.S.A. on the side of the Allies is something to thank God for ...'.<sup>72</sup> In September, the Rev. Dent of Austinmer, volunteered as an army chaplain, and was said to 'look well in the khaki'.

The following months saw the loss of many loved ones in the Illawarra. Almost every church seemed to have a memorial service. These casualties were from the major battles in France at the time. At Messines, although there was victory there was also tragedy; 6,800 Australians were killed or wounded during the battle in June. Further battles were fought at Menin Road Ridge, at Polygon Wood, at Broodseinde Ridge, and at Passchendoele which finally fell on 6th November. Gammage writes: 'Since July, 38,093 Australian soldiers, almost 60 per cent of the A.I.F. in France, had become casualties, a huge expenditure, which brought not peace but frustration'.<sup>73</sup> At Dapto, a memorial service was held in September for the late Corporal Cliff Moore, and in November, a service was held for Private F.E. Bryce, at which Rev. Godson preached on Ecclesiastes 1:1 and 4: 'The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem ... A generation goes, and a generation comes,

71. *Illawarra Mercury*, 10 August, 1917.

72. *Parish Gazette*, August, 1917, p.2.

73. Gammage, *op.cit.*, pp.187-190.

but the earth remains for ever.<sup>74</sup> The 'list of those who have given their lives for their country' was also added to at Bulli: the brother of Mrs. Small, W.A. Bauer; the son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Taylor of Woonona, killed in action on September 20, 1917; and Private A. Hargraves, husband of Mrs. E. Hargraves of Woonona. The newspaper reports carried further bad news for many, 'the recent valiant deeds of the Australians in Flanders have inevitably made sad news for some homes here'.<sup>75</sup> From St. Michael's parish, Major Arnold Hosking had fallen on 20th September, being killed in action. A bronze plaque in St. Michael's commemorates his death: 'To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Major Arnold Kingsley Hosking M.C. Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori'. He was very well-known in the town, and when the news arrived many flags were flown half-mast. Another plaque in the same church commemorates the death of Lieutenant X Percy I.H. Owen who was also killed in action at Ypres, 22nd September. The *South Coast Times* reported that he was remembered 'by many and by his good fellowship and courteous manner gained the respect of all who knew him'.<sup>76</sup>

The grief of the bereaved was very real to the clergy, as they delivered the telegrams sent by the Defence Department: 'A cable has been received by his brothers, per Rev. C.A. Stubbin, of the fall of Gunner W. Meurant

74. R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L., 9 September, and 11 November, 1917.

75. *South Coast Times*, 5 October, 1917.

76. *South Coast Times*, 12 October, 1917.

in France'; 'the Rev. Godson conveyed to Mr. and Mrs. Moore the sad intelligence that their son, Pte. Clifford Moore, was officially reported killed in action'.<sup>77</sup>

Apparently in the early months of the war, the government had asked the churches to accept this responsibility, and church leaders had readily agreed. 'It showed, they said, the relevance of the church and the close ties between a minister and his people'.<sup>78</sup> But as the number of dead continued to rise, the clergy regretted the action. At his farewell, the Rev. O'Neill, said he had shared in 'the people's sorrows, particularly in recent months, when his duties brought him into contact with many who had lost loved ones while doing their duty for their country'.<sup>79</sup> The following quotation from the November issue of the *Bulli Parish Gazette* expresses their dilemma and concern:

'Your Minister has definitely decided that he will not any longer convey bad news from the Front direct to the houses of his parishioners; and he is not the first nor the only one among the clergy who have so decided ... All this is because so many of our people are terrified when they see the minister come to their houses, even when he comes on ordinary business, or to make enquiries. It is not fair either to the minister or to the parishioners. If, then, the sad task of conveying bad news is ever imposed upon your Minister you may rest assured that he will not call at your house as on an ordinary visit; but he will send the bad news by letter, by special messenger or by post, and

77. *South Coast Times*, 24 August, and 31 August, 1917.

78. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.73.

79. *South Coast Times*, 29 June, 1917.

will follow in person as soon as possible; and you need not be frightened every time you see him coming to your door.'

The clergy obviously did not resent the fact that they were chosen, but found that it was personally distressing both to them and their parishioners as they went about their normal clerical visitation:

It was perhaps the kindest thing the Authorities could do, to decide to send all bad news through the ministers of the Churches; and the ministers have generally accepted it as a necessary, though very painful task. But many are now feeling the necessity of following some such course as your minister has decided upon. It is dreadful to see people fainting and shrinking as soon as you enter their front gate. At present the minister cannot even call to make enquiries after a soldier without frightening the relatives into a week's nervous sickness.<sup>80</sup>

Normal church activities continued. In early November, at the annual tea and concert for St. Luke's, Dapto the rector encouraged a returned soldier who was present to recount some of his experiences in Gallipoli and France for the audience.<sup>81</sup> The necessity of farewelling recruits and welcoming home returned soldiers was discussed at a combined meeting of members of the Win-the-War League Recruiting Committee and War Service Committee. A separate sub-committee was organised to deal with the arrangements, upon which the

80. *Parish Gazette*, November, 1917, p.3.

81. *Illawarra Mercury*, 9 November, 1917.

Rev. Stubbin presided.<sup>82</sup> The Archbishop of Sydney, appointed Wednesday, 21st November as a Day of Fasting and Prayer - 'specially asking of Almighty God that the nations may be turned to Repentance and so the present disastrous war brought to a happy termination'.<sup>83</sup> The heads of other Protestant churches also requested a Day of Prayer and combined services took place in some of the parishes. At St. Michael's, services were held throughout the day beginning at 7.30a.m. with prayer and intercession, at which 85 people attended, one at 11.00a.m., a special service for Business Men which attracted the least number of people, another special service at 2.30 for school children, which 415 attended, and the final service was held at 7.30p.m., which 115 people attended.<sup>84</sup> The response would have been encouraging for the clergy, but special occasions usually attracted large attendances compared to the average Sunday congregation, which was the only true estimate of the people's faith in God.

In late November Balgownie Church of England welcomed home 'three of our boys'. They were each presented with a 'beautiful gold medal suitably inscribed, also with their regimental colours' by the Rev. Stubbin. A musical programme followed, with such patriotic and stirring songs as 'When Our Heroes Return',

82. *Illawarra Mercury*, 23 November, 1917.

83. *Parish Gazette*, November, 1917, p.4.

84. R.S.S.M. (No.2), 21 November, 1917.

'The Old Country', 'The Army and Navy', and the curate, Rev. F. Hall, rendered the song 'The Deathless Army'.<sup>85</sup>

The Annual Service of Commemoration for the Fallen was held in Bulli parish in December with special guest preachers. The year of 1917 ended with the cry by churchmen for more prayer:

Prayer for our rulers, Prayer for our soldiers,  
Prayer for our people, Prayer that God will  
save us from enemies within, and, chiefly and  
above all, Prayer that God may accomplish His  
purposes of mercy towards us, make us a God-  
fearing people, and then use us for blessing  
to the rest of the world.<sup>86</sup>

### 1918

Prayer also began 1918. Throughout the Empire a Day of Prayer was advertised; 'In view of the nation's great need of the guidance and help of God, the people of Wollongong and district are urged to pay earnest heed to His Majesty's appeal'.<sup>87</sup> The clergy's confidence that the people would 'turn to God' had been seriously weakened by 1918 and this was obvious in the additional appeal made that the 'public will demonstrate by their presence at these services that they are in sympathy with a movement which has for its object intercession for a speedy termination of the war'.<sup>88</sup> The Rev. Dowe believed that the coming year would only be happy when it was passed 'in the Faith, and Fear, and Love of God'.

85. *South Coast Times*, 30 November, 1917.

86. *Parish Gazette*, December, 1917, p.2.

87. *South Coast Times*, 4 January, 1918.

88. *Illawarra Mercury*, 4 January, 1918.

As he had done the previous year, the Rev. Dowe stressed the nearness of the Lord's coming: 'Should the Lord come this year for His people (as probably He will), the Christian man can await Him without fear. And as the troubles of the last days close in (as we believe they are closing in), on the world - well, the Christian man views them without too much concern'. He wished for his friends a year with 'Trouble outwardly perhaps, but inward Peace'.<sup>89</sup>

Outward peace was still a long way off for many. At Albion Park, a Memorial Service was conducted for Private W. Dennis, 'who made the supreme sacrifice in France', and at Corrimal, a service was held for W. Acres. At Unanderra a Central Illawarra Honor Roll was unveiled containing about 220 names. The Rev. F. Hall said 'that when one looked at the Honor Roll they could not help saying "Thank God for the men that have gone"'.<sup>90</sup> Late in April, the Harvest Festival gifts of fruit and vegetables from St. Luke's 'which were on a liberal scale' were donated to the Dapto Red Cross.<sup>91</sup> St. Michael's church had decided to invest £330 in the Commonwealth War Loan Fund and the rector noted that 'considering the unsettled state owing to the war, it could be seen that the parishioners were recognising their responsibility in connection with the church'.<sup>92</sup>

89. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1918, p.3.

90. *Illawarra Mercury*, 19 April, 1918.

91. *South Coast Times*, 26 April, 1918.

92. *Illawarra Mercury*, 19 April, 1918.

The Secretary from Bulli church was able to congratulate 'all on the healthy state of the balance sheet, showing as it did, a credit of £14, compared with 14/- last year'.<sup>93</sup>

A united Protestant service of prayer was held in St. Michael's Parish Hall to celebrate Anzac Day. After Rev. Stubbin opened with a prayer of invocation, the Methodist minister, Rev. J. Ward Harrison, read from I Kings 18, the story of Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel. The Congregational minister delivered the address, followed by silent prayer during which Rev. Stubbin 'suggested at intervals suitable topics for petition with good effect'. Prayers were then said by each of the ministers for the nation's political leaders, for the military leaders and for the spiritual leaders. The Rev. Stubbin closed the service 'with a comprehensive prayer concerning the spiritual war and the Kingdom of God, and praying for direction as to the Will of God'.<sup>94</sup> The righteousness of the nation was uppermost in their minds, for they believed that only through this and prayer would the war be won. At the Anzac Sunday service in St. Michael's, the imperial loyalty of the Anglican church was very much in evidence: the pulpit was draped with the Union Jack and the National Anthem was loyally sung.

Another young recruit from Yallah was farewelled in

93. B.C.M. (A.V.M.), 11 April, 1918.

94. *Illawarra Mercury*, 3 May, 1918.



July. The Rev. Godson offered a prayer for the divine protection and safe return of the new recruit, and an iced cake was presented by the ladies, bearing the words, 'God Speed and Safe Return'.<sup>95</sup> A month later, a League of Loyalty meeting was held at Port Kembla Church of England, and at Bulli, the new rector's wife, Mrs. Shaw, was appointed vice-president of the local Red Cross. Further Memorial Services were held at Corrimal and Dapto, and at Bulli. The churchwardens agreed 'that a letter of condolence be sent to Mrs. Schadel, sympathising with her, owing to the loss of her husband at the front'.<sup>96</sup> The fourth anniversary of the war was again celebrated in August, at which the Mayor read the resolution:

'that on this the fourth anniversary of a righteous war, this meeting of citizens of Wollongong records once more its inflexible determination to continue to a victorious end the struggle to maintain the ideal of liberty and justice, which is the common and sacred cause of the Allies.'<sup>97</sup>

It is interesting to note that the civic leaders also thought of the war as a 'righteous' one. McKernan maintains that the thoughts and ideas the clergy placed before the people were often banal and commonplace, little different from those put forward by Mayors, Members of Parliament and other civic leaders.<sup>98</sup>

95. *South Coast Times*, 12 July, 1918.

96. B.C.M.(C.M.), 12 August, 1918.

97. *South Coast Times*, 9 August, 1918.

98. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.1.

However, the same argument could apply to the civic leaders that they were only echoing the views heard and expounded the previous Sunday whilst in church. Particularly in a small town like Wollongong, quite a number of prominent men, as already noted, attended the churches and would naturally be influenced by what they heard from the pulpit. This was again evident at the victory celebrations in November of 1918.

Before this occurred, many felt that the war had still a long way to go before peace was declared. In an effort to secure more recruits for the war a 'March to Freedom' campaign was organised in Wollongong, and at the religious service on Sunday, the Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican ministers spoke. However, the campaign was not very successful, as only six men came forward.<sup>99</sup> The Austinmer Churchwardens decided to hold a Memorial Service for the late Lance-Corporal George Cheadle in September. They decided to have '200 hand bills printed at Bulli and also to have the Memorial Service advertised in the *South Coast Times*'.<sup>100</sup> The same month, Mrs. Stubbin donated some goods to the Soldiers' Christmas Parcel, along with others who expected the war to last for another year. At the Rural Deanery meeting in October, there were two visitors who reflected the diverse interests of the church during this period. The address was given by Rev. C. Lack of

99. *Illawarra Mercury*, 30 August, 1918.

100. S.R.A.S., 21 September, 1918.

the China Inland Mission and a short talk was presented by Rev. Harvey, a chaplain to the A.I.F.<sup>101</sup> Early in October, special services were held in most Anglican churches to celebrate the surrender of Turkey and Austria, and on 27th October, a Memorial Service was held at Dapto for Private Alfred Stephens.

On Monday, 11th November at the eleventh hour the long prayed for Armistice was signed. Immediately the news became known in the Illawarra, church services of thanksgiving were held. At Austinmer 'people of all classes and creeds flocked into the church and listened with rapt attention to the minister. After this, the tin can bands got to work again, and the din was enough to deafen one'.<sup>102</sup> The Rev. Stubbin of St. Michael's wrote the 'following historical record' in the Service Register:

The official news of the signing of the Armistice was conveyed to the people of Wollongong by the ringing of St. Michael's Church bell which it was arranged should be the means of communicating the news when official. The people according to arrangement as notified by the rector, met immediately in the Church for a Thanksgiving Service to Almighty God in grateful acknowledgement of His gift of Victory. The church was thronged with people of all denominations and a solemn and happy service was held. The rector read the official news and addressed the gathering, finally asking all present, as an act of thanksgiving most acceptable to God to join him in consecrating their lives to God, to henceforth live after His laws under the leadership of Jesus Christ His Son. The whole congregation following

101. Chapter Minutes, 30 October, 1918.

102. *South Coast Times*, 15 November, 1918.

the rector knelt in silent prayer in this act of consecration.

(Signed C.A. Stubbin)<sup>103</sup>

The official celebrations for peace involved all the prominent members of the community, including the Protestant and Catholic clergy. The victory was evidence, the Rev. Stubbin said, that 'God had set his seal on the side of righteousness and truth. It was 'for us as a people and as individuals to establish righteousness and justice in our land'. The Mayor, Ald. Lance, also echoed these sentiments: the time was coming, he felt, 'when we would build up our nation on principles of righteousness'.<sup>104</sup> The war had not convinced the people of their need to turn to God, but the clergy believed that in giving a victory, God had made it still possible for them to repent in peace, rather than under the fear of His judgement. A 'United Churches Victory Thanksgiving Service' was held after these celebrations at Wollongong Show Ground. It was not totally 'United' as the Catholic priest was conspicuously absent. He said he had conducted special Mass that morning, 'thanking God for peace and for the glorious victory, ... he had done his part and would not take part in the service that afternoon'.<sup>105</sup> The following Sunday a Day of Thanksgiving for the Cessation of Hostilities and

103. R.S.S.M. (No.2), 11 November, 1918.

104. *Illawarra Mercury*, 15 November, 1918.

105. *ibid.*

Commemoration of the Fallen was held in all the churches. Large congregations were much in evidence, at Dapto over three hundred people attended, whilst in the small village of Clifton, forty-five worshipped in the church, an increase of thirty from the previous week!<sup>106</sup> At the victory service at Thirroul, the Rev. Shaw preached from the text John 15:13 - 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'.<sup>107</sup>

In late November, a public meeting was held to discuss the celebration of peace. Rev. Stubbin was vocal in his desire that the main aim of such a day should be to give the children a good time, with some remembrance of the returned men and of those that had laid down their lives. At a further meeting, the Rev. Stubbin suggested a sports day with a Continental in the evening for the soldiers. Against his motion, it was amended to hold a ball in the evening: 'it was what the men wanted'. The Catholic priest was one of those who voted against holding a Continental.<sup>108</sup>

### 1919

The joy of homecoming and remembrance of those who were not returning dominated the life of the church for most of 1919 as it sought to readjust to a life without war. Rev. Stubbin expressed the feelings of many when he

106. R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L., 24 November, 1918; Register of Services from Emmanuel Church, Clifton (1902-1931), 17 November, 1918. (Hereafter R.S.E.C.)

107. Register of Services from St. David's, Thirroul (1911-1928), 24 November, 1918. (Hereafter R.S.S.D.)

108. *Illawarra Mercury*, 29 November, 1918.

wrote in June: 'The homecoming and the news of further homecoming in the near future ... of many of our gallant men ... has gladdened many of us during the past month, and we feel sure that most of you have learnt to "rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep" in the fullest and truest sympathy in each case'.<sup>109</sup> But the weeping was not totally ended. Further news of deaths were still prevalent as a result of the war, a memorial for Private James Stephens was held at Dapto in April. The Rev. Godson's sermon text was: 'Put on your whole armour'.<sup>110</sup> Those soldiers who did return were greeted at the local railway stations or at socials. The town band, accompanied by aldermen, and clergy, would escort them in a procession into the town centre, where they were welcomed home. The churches also held their own 'Welcome Home' socials at which the Diggers were 'very feelingly welcomed back into their homes once more'.<sup>111</sup> Regulations placed on many social gatherings by the Government due to the Influenza Epidemic, restricted and haltered many of these activities. The first official civic reception was not held until March for the year 1919. The Rev. Stubbin spoke on behalf of the churches, and 'wanted them to realise that the church did heartily welcome them; it was not merely a welcome of the lips, it was a welcome from the heart'. He added that the

109. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, Vol.7, No.4, June, 1919.

110. R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L., 13 April, 1919.

111. *South Coast Times*, 19 September, 1919.

church had 'tried to be their pals, it had tried to surround them with the Sheltering Presence, and it believed that their presence this night was a proof that its prayers had been answered'.<sup>112</sup>

The return to civilian life now confronted the returned soldiers. The Rev. Stubbin appealed to his parishioners to show 'them our deep appreciation of their sacrifice for us'. He especially stressed their spiritual condition:

Let us earnestly and lovingly endeavour to restore the spiritual faculty which has been sacrificed for us by seeking to draw them back under the sweet and holy influence of the Holy Spirit working in and through the means of grace, and revealing the Christ who has given a much greater sacrifice for them that so they may be restored to their souls that life, which will mean in the end, more than all the material things in life ... We have prayed for the salvation of their physical life and God has answered; now let us pray and work for their spiritual life, which is the highest and most practical way of showing our appreciation of their noble sacrifice for us.<sup>113</sup>

But in many homes there was no proof of answered prayer. More than 60,000 Australians were never to return home. Gammage writes that 'perhaps 7,000 remained of those gay legions - about 32,000 men - which had set forth in 1914, and in some battalions over 1,000 soldiers had been killed in battles'.<sup>114</sup> To remember

112. *South Coast Times*, 28 March, 1918.

113. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, June, 1919.

114. Gammage, *op.cit.*, p.266.

and to mourn the dead, memorial tablets and Honor Rolls were erected in the churches. One of the first churches to erect a memorial after the war was St. Michael's. In May, 1919, a meeting of parishioners was held 'to consider what steps should be taken to provide a suitable Memorial to our Men from this parish who had lain down their lives at the call of King and Country'. It was finally decided to erect a Memorial tablet in the Church 'to those men who have fallen surrounded by a silk Union Jack' and that another tablet be erected in the Parish Hall 'containing the names of the Church of England men of St. Michael's parish who enlisted for Active Service'.<sup>115</sup> On the former tablet under the words 'These Gave Their Lives' are fifty-five names. At the unveiling of the memorial tablet to Captain Hosking, a friend commented that 'if it had been gold it would not even convey to future generations the very great veneration the townspeople and returned soldiers have for the memory of this gallant officer'.<sup>116</sup> These words apply equally well to the many others that were killed or died through the effects of the war. At Austinmer, the rector's wife, Mrs. Reed, took up a collection in aid of the War Widow's Fund, for those whose husbands were never to return. A marble tablet was erected in All Saints, Figtree in memory of the men who fell in the war. An Honor Roll fund was organised, and one collector, Mrs. T. Chapman, raised almost half of

115. S.M.A.V.M., 17 May, 1919.

116. *Illawarra Mercury*, 13 June, 1919.



the funds needed with £6.3s. 6d. Most contributors gave 10s. or 5s., a sizeable sum in those days, particularly from a predominantly mining and farming community.<sup>117</sup>

To raise funds for a War Memorial Tablet, the parishioners at Helensburgh held a series of socials in 1921. Twenty-three names were inscribed upon it, and the Holy Table in the Church was 'dedicated to the honour and glory of God and in memory of the above men who fell in the Great War'. At Dapto, two memorial tablets were unveiled to the memory of Tom F. Lindsay and James Stevens. On 20 September, 1921, a tablet was unveiled 'to the memory of the men who voluntarily left their homes to fight in the Great War 1914-1919'. There were fifty-seven names on the tablet, nine of whom made the 'Great Sacrifice', from Dapto Parish.<sup>118</sup> There is a particular pathos in the death of the two Dungey brothers from Mt. Kembla, whose father had been killed in the 1902 mine disaster. On their gravestone in the church cemetery is inscribed the words: 'In loving memory of two heroes whose names will never die on the roll of honor'. Pte William Dungey died of wounds on 16 August, 1916, received at the battle of Pozieres and Pte John Dungey was killed in action on 22 August, 1916 at the Battle of Bray-Sur-Somme. Underneath was the now familiar text: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'.

117. 'Honor Rolls Bills' - found in an envelope in Flgtree Church records.

118. R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L., 20 September, 1921.

As one reads through the war related activities of the church there is an overall impression of its deep faith and trust in God, and that out of the war would come blessing. The clergy have been criticised in their war effort for being ineffectual, but their real concern was not for the material well-being of the soldiers or their parishioners. Certainly they applauded, encouraged, and gave donations to the secular organisations that were concerned with this aspect of the war. Although they could and perhaps even should have, demonstrated their Christian concern in practical areas, clergymen did not believe that this was where their ministry was most needed. Their basic rationale about the war explains this attitude. The war was a holy and righteous war sent from God as a judgement on an unrighteous nation, and it was the clergy's duty to turn the people back to God. As the war continued, they became more fervant in their quest. Some believed that the Coming of the Lord was at hand, for which the nation should be prepared so as to meet its God with joy. But the clergy had no answers as to why so many young and some Christian men were dying for 'the cause of righteousness' so they preferred not to ask the question. When they did ask it, they justified the deaths in terms of sacrifice and salvation. Most of the clergy mourned, and remembered the dead and attempted to heal the spiritual wounds created by a physical battle. The Rev. Stubbin explained: 'Let the world offer them its material

things, but let us offer them our spiritual things'.<sup>119</sup>

119. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, June, 1919.

### Chapter 3: Recruitment, Enlistment and Conscription

'... the British oversea Dominions did not view with calmness the prospect of coming under the beneficent rule of the Kaiser; and Canada, Australia and India have each sent tens of thousands of their best and bravest to the support of the Mother Country. Unhappily the call for them has not ceased. It is possible, and even probable, that both in England and Australia, recourse might yet be had to conscription. In the meantime, we are proud of our volunteers ...'

Rev. Dowe

( *Parish Gazette*, July, 1915)

A few days after war was declared in Australia a coded message was sent by the Governor-General to the King about the request for recruits: 'There is an indescribable enthusiasm and entire unanimity throughout Australia in support of all that tends to provide for the security of the Empire in war'.<sup>1</sup> The British Government had requested a force of 20,000 men to be despatched overseas as soon as possible. The response in Australia was amazing, by 20 August more than 10,000 men were reported to have volunteered in Sydney to join the Australian Imperial Force. In 1914, Australia's defence system had only just begun to be operational on land. In 1911 the Royal Navy in Australia had been granted the title 'Royal Australian Navy' and in 1913 the first ships of the Australian fleet arrived in Sydney: a battle cruiser, three cruisers and three destroyers. But as yet there was no army, although there was a military system. In 1909, a Defence Bill was passed in Parliament to institute a system of compulsory military training, but it was not brought into force until the following year under a new Government.<sup>2</sup> In 1910, Lord Kitchener visited Australia to inspect and report upon the military forces for the Commonwealth Government. He approved of the compulsory training scheme, but raised the age limit to twenty-five. Training began with junior

1. Scott, *op.cit.*, p.207.

2. *Ibid.*, p.194.

and senior cadets (12-18 years), who passed into citizen forces (18-25) and then went into the reserves for an extra year. Kitchener found the military defences inadequate, and recommended forming a land force of not less than 80,000 men, the division of the Commonwealth into numerous military areas, and the establishment of a military college to train officers, as well as other ideas which were brought into force by a succession of Defence Acts in 1910, 1911 and 1912.<sup>3</sup>

At least two of the Anglican clergy in the Illawarra were supporters of military training. On Empire Day in May, 1914, the Rev. Newmarch of St. Michael's in the course of his sermon, 'commented favourably upon the present military system of the Commonwealth'.<sup>4</sup> Prior to the service, a procession of cadets marched through the town to the church where they participated in the service in a Church Military Parade. The Rev. Dowe also favoured military training and quoted Rudyard Kipling to emphasise his thoughts on Empire Day. 'Kipling says we ought to have -

"Every man born in the Island broke to the  
matter of war;  
Every man born in the Island entered at  
youth for the game;  
Soberly and by custom taken and trained  
for the same, -  
Almost as if it were Cricket, not to be  
mastered in haste,

3. Souter, *op.cit.*, p.151.

4. *Illawarra Mercury*, 26 May, 1914.

But after labour and patience, by  
 Temperance, living chaste;  
 So at the threat shall ye summon, - so at  
 the need shall ye send,  
 Men, not children nor hirelings, tempered  
 and taught to the end;  
 Cleansed from senile panic, slow to dread  
 or despise;  
 Humble because of knowledge, mighty  
 through sacrifice!"<sup>5</sup>

Little did Rev. Dowe realise how prophetic this quotation would be, or that 'the threat' would summon the men of the country in three months' time. In July, 1914 he wrote: 'Only defensive war is ever justifiable, and for that every man ought to be ready. To be able to put up a strong defence is the best guarantee that other nations controlled by ambitious conscienceless politicians, will not attack us'.<sup>6</sup> When the attack did come, it was not to be against Australia, but the Empire, which Australians were to defend in a war on the other side of the world.

During the first few months of the war, the response by Australians to the call for recruits was such that many volunteers were turned away as the army applied stringent physical requirements. All the same, by the close of 1914, 52,561 men (from roughly 820,000 eligible by age), had enlisted. As Gammage writes: 'It was to be a great war'.<sup>7</sup> The clergy were enthusiastic campaigners of recruiting and encouraged the men in their

5. *Parish Gazette*, July, 1914, p.3.

6. *Parish Gazette*, July, 1914, p.3.

7. Gammage, *op.cit.*, p.7.

congregations to go. Biblical texts were made relevant and used in sermons: 'Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ'; 'And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way'.<sup>8</sup> After the first response of excitement and patriotism, volunteer numbers began to decline. In January, 1915, 10,225 men had enlisted, but numbers fell progressively to 6,250 in April. The heroic deeds at Gallipoli secured more volunteers, 12,505 in June, and 36,575 in July, which was the highest total recorded in any month during the war. During June, Senator Pearce asked 'Have we done all we can do?' The question was asked after a message from the British Government arrived, saying that every available man was wanted at the front.<sup>9</sup> After July the first serious appeals for recruits began, not only from the secular authorities but also from the pulpit.

The church fully supported recruiting as an extension of the clergy's belief that the Empire was fighting a righteous war, which was part of God's plan for the salvation of the nation and the world. In comforting bereaved relatives, Rev. Dowe wrote that 'it is hard to lose our loved ones, but in these cases they have at least the satisfaction of knowing that their loved ones have died, not of fevers or of old age, but giving their lives for the salvation of their country - yes, and

8. R.S.A.S., 8 November, 1914 (2 Timothy 2:3),  
R.S.E.C., 31 January, 1915 (Matthew 20:4).

9. Scott, *op.cit.*, pp.290,292.



even of the whole world'.<sup>10</sup> The clergy believed that a test of a man's faith and trust in God was willingness to defend his country. The volunteers would be fighting 'for God and humanity in the ~~course~~ of righteousness and truth', the Rev. Stubbin proclaimed one Sunday morning.<sup>11</sup>

The clergy encouraged men to go for many reasons. In the first few months the defence of England and fears for Australia's safety were the prominent inducements offered by the clergy. The Rev. Dowe emphasised this by declaring that if the Germans won they would not want or expect a slice of England; 'but they will certainly expect and get territorial gains in the South Pacific. Perhaps they might be satisfied with New Guinea, but suppose they wanted a slice of the mainland'. The weakness of Australia's defence policy for her own security was emphasised by Rev. Dowe when he added: 'If England were beaten what would prevent them (Germans) from getting it? The only answer is that we must see that England is not beaten'.<sup>12</sup> The Rev. Stubbin impressed upon his listeners the need for further recruits 'unless continued reinforcements are forthcoming, our homes, mothers and sisters are in danger'.<sup>13</sup> Rev. Godson made a similar appeal:

10. *Parish Gazette*, November, 1917, p.1.

11. *Illawarra Mercury*, 6 July, 1915.

12. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1915, p.3.

13. *Illawarra Mercury*, 6 July, 1915.

If a man came into your house and commenced knocking the wife and children about, would you say 'Brother, I do not believe in fighting, please go?' Would they sit down calmly and let him repeat the attack? No. In his own and ninety-nine other cases in the hundred they would soon find whether the attacker could fight.<sup>14</sup>

The fear of coming under German rule was also prevalent in the clergy's recruiting campaigns. 'If Germany conquers us we should become a part of her Empire, and our sons would have to go and fight in her armies. May God save us from that'.<sup>15</sup> A combination of patriotism, imperialism and fear was used by Rev. Dowe: 'The British oversea Dominions did not view with calmness the prospect of coming under the 'beneficent rule of the Kaiser; and Canada, Australia and India have sent tens of thousands of their best and bravest to the support of the Mother Country. Unhappily the call for them has not ceased'.<sup>16</sup>

The ideals of patriotism and imperialism were often used as interchangeable incentives for recruits. In 1915, Rev. Stubbin wrote that 'some of our young men are either blind to the need, or sadly lacking in patriotism to hold back from offering in the face of such pressing danger to our Empire'. He continued that

14. *South Coast Times*, 12 July, 1918.

15. *Parish Gazette*, November, 1916, p.3.

16. *Parish Gazette*, July, 1915, p.1.

he felt "the time has come for the mother to say to her son, 'Go and do your duty, your country needs you'".<sup>17</sup>

Those who did volunteer were praised for showing their 'patriotism in going to the front to fight in the battles of the Empire', for 'doing their duty for their country' and hope was expressed that their 'noble example' may 'prove an inspiration to many to follow them in the way of self-denial even unto death'.<sup>18</sup>

Emotive appeals were made as casualty lists grew, with criticism and a sense of shame levelled towards those who did not volunteer. The appeal to 'mateship' was used: 'nothing could hearten war tired men like seeing reinforcements coming'.<sup>19</sup>

Men in congregations were told that 'if they did their duty, should be in the trenches assisting their comrades', or that there was 'the pride of knowing that they were fighting for their country and the satisfaction of feeling that they have justified their manhood'.<sup>20</sup>

The apathy of those who stayed behind was criticised by Rev. Dowe in 1917: 'Young men who could go and help, don't; and nobody seems to think the worse of them. Letters from the Front speak of the shame that Australian soldiers feel at the stoppage of reinforcements from Australia; but nobody seems to care. People think "O, England will win somehow; let England do it"'.<sup>21</sup>

17. *Illawarra Mercury*, 6 July, 1916.

18. *South Coast Times*, 28 July, 1916 and 29 June, 1917; *Parish Gazette*, July, 1915, p.2.

19. *South Coast Times*, 29 January, 1915.

20. *South Coast Times*, 23 November, 1917; *Parish Gazette*, December, 1915, p.2.

21. *Parish Gazette*, March, 1917, p.3.

The apparent change in attitude from 1914 and 1915 reflects the disillusionment and despair about the war that was so far removed from the reality of everyday life for those at home. It was an attitude that the clergy could not accept, for it also revealed an apathy towards religion and for them, the true cause of the war, God's judgement on an unrighteous nation.

The clergy pressed on with recruiting. Occasionally those who stayed behind were denounced from the pulpit as 'nothing else but cowards and shirkers', or to be 'classed among shirkers or wasters', or like the 'thousands of larrikans in Sydney ... they crowd the Stadium and the Racecourses and such like places'.<sup>22</sup> Appropriate Biblical texts were used for sermons, 'Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty', and another: 'I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses'.<sup>23</sup> The Rev. Godson preached on topics that leave little doubt as to content; 'Go Forward', 'Quit you like men'; 'Thy will be done'; and many others.<sup>24</sup> The comparison between Biblical battles and heroes were often used to demonstrate the call of God's people to fight and defend

22. *Illawarra Mercury*, 3 May, 1918; *Parish Gazette*, December, 1915 and October, 1916.

23. R.S.A.S., 15 August, 1915 (Judges 5:23); 1 August, 1915 (Luke 16:4).

24. R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L., 31 December, 1917; 6 January, 1918; 27 January, 1918.

His truth. A parallel was also sometimes drawn between volunteering for one's country and for Christ. Rev. Godson spoke of one soldier at his Memorial Service; 'Just as he was prepared for the call of King and Country so likewise he was prepared for the greater call - the call home to be with his God'.<sup>25</sup> At a soldier's funeral in 1915 the Rev. Stubbin called upon his congregation to be like the young man who volunteered for his country, but for all to 'volunteer for the service of the King of Kings, and to give up our lives so wholeheartedly to His Service that when our call comes we, too, may be accounted heroes, heroes of the King of Kings'.<sup>26</sup>

The clergy strongly believed that it was the nation's 'bounden duty to fight' for 'in this lays (sic) the safety of the Empire'.<sup>27</sup> Not surprisingly though, clergymen as recruiters were dubbed as members of the 'would-to-God-that-I-could-go' brigade because they were asking men to do what their calling often debarred them from doing.<sup>28</sup> The hostility towards the clergy was remembered by a Victorian: '... a young clergyman about 25, a splendidly made fellow over six feet high, and as sound as a bell. He went around advising every young fellow to go to the war yet he never volunteered himself, not even as a chaplain. Such hypocrisy one cannot forget'.<sup>29</sup> The Anglican clergy in the Illawarra were

25. *South Coast Times*, 23 November, 1917.

26. *Illawarra Mercury*, 8 October, 1915.

27. *South Coast Times*, 12 July, 1918.

28. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.115.

29. Souter, *op.cit.*, p.246.

not exempt from the criticism and accusations. The Rev. Godson blamed the attitude on the 'devilish devices of the Germans' and declared that 'the statements emanating from the so-called labor classes "that the clergy delighted in the war and gloried in urging men to go forth to slay their fellow-men, while at the same time they sheltered in their homes and pulpits" were utter travesties of the truth'. He boldly added that 'it was not for him to tell any man to go and stand back himself', if they could raise a body of Dapto men to go and enlist 'he would go as their chaplain if the authorities would take him. He would love to go to cheer the men, to urge them on, and if necessary, to die with them'.<sup>30</sup> Godson probably would not have been able to volunteer, as he was 53 years old in 1918. Defence had imposed age limits of 30 to 48 years for continuous service and 30 to 52 for 'voyage only' chaplains, who accompanied a troopship across and returned to Australia as soon as practicable with a hospital ship.<sup>31</sup> Most of the clergy were ineligible by age or ill-health to be sent. Rev. King-Brown was 60, Rev. Dowe was 58, Rev. Newmarch (who left in 1914), was 50 but unwell, and Rev. O'Neill was 48. The youngest clergyman in the Illawarra was Rev. Dent who at 33 did, in fact, go as a chaplain. The Rural Dean, Rev. Stubbin, who at 41 was really the only eligible clergyman, was prevented from going because of his responsibilities in the Deanery and also personally,

30. *South Coast Times*, 3 May, 1918.

31. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.41.

because he had a family.<sup>32</sup> However, some of the clergy attempted to justify their position of not going by pointing out that their sons had volunteered. The Rev. Shaw, who succeeded Rev. Dowe at Bulli, had three sons enlist, and the Rev. Stubbin, two sons. He wrote in 1915 when the eldest volunteered, 'If I think it right for him to go, I think it right for you'.<sup>33</sup> Claude Stubbin was praised for volunteering by a newspaper report: his action 'should put to shame many that are in a position to volunteer, but so far have not done so'.<sup>34</sup>

The general consensus of opinion among the Anglican Bishops was that it was far more important for a clergyman to tend to the problems of a parochial ministry, rather than enlist in the ranks. Although the clergy traditionally had an honoured role in the army it was decided by Defence officials to use the 1911 census figures as a means of apportioning chaplains for each denomination. Thus each chaplain 'was appointed to a brigade in such a way that each brigade, which consisted of four battalions or four thousand men, had four chaplains, two Anglican, one Catholic and one Protestant'.<sup>35</sup> Even at its peak, no more than one hundred chaplains served in the A.I.F. at any one time, and also 'continuous' chaplains were only required to serve for

32. C.N.

33. *Illawarra Mercury*, 6 July, 1915.

34. *Illawarra Mercury*, 4 June, 1915.

35. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.41.

one year. There was plenty of opportunity to secure a chaplaincy and indeed the many Protestant applications exceeded vacancies, so there was no official church pressure upon the clergy to volunteer. In fact, the opposite occurred. During a Confirmation service at St. Michael's in 1916, His Grace, Archbishop Wright said that 'the real churchman was he who believed that no matter what the real situation might be, one thing they could never afford to let go was the ministration of their sacred faith'.<sup>36</sup> The Sydney editor of the Anglican paper, *Church Standard*, was Bishop Stone-Wigg, who expressed the common Anglican view of the situation:

to work one's parish in days of tension, to keep colour and warmth in one's church and its services, while the war and its death-roll are bleaching them white means an incessant struggle ... The pilot of the parish must not leave his post.<sup>37</sup>

All in all, fifty-one Anglican ministers out of 1,400 in Australia, succumbed to public pressure and enlisted in the ranks, while 175 men went as chaplains. Rev. Godson had rather exaggerated when he was defending his position by declaring that 'thousands of clergymen were serving as chaplains, while hundreds more had lain down their lives on the field of battle'.<sup>38</sup> Even if this assumption included other denominations it was still a gross overstatement. Only one Australian Catholic priest

36. *South Coast Times*, 2 June, 1916.

37. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.94.

38. *South Coast Times*, 3 May, 1918.



enlisted and six Presbyterian ministers and eighty Methodist ministers went to the front. Of those who served as chaplains with the A.I.F., 86 were Catholics, 70 Presbyterians, 54 Methodists and 27 'other Protestant denominations'.<sup>39</sup> *Put in Table from*

Only two Anglican ministers volunteered from the Illawarra, and as far as can be ascertained, one minister from each of the other Protestant denominations. The Rev. Newmarch of St. Michael's volunteered as chaplain with the Australian Expeditionary Force when war broke out and received a commission in November, 1914 with the Commonwealth Defence Forces.<sup>40</sup> It is doubted whether he sailed, because no mention is made of absence in the Diocesan records, and he is recorded as having a licence for St. Oswald's, Haberfield dated 2 November, 1914.<sup>41</sup> The other volunteer, as already mentioned, was Rev. Dent from Austinmer in 1917. He received a Commission of Captain to go with the troops as Chaplain. The townspeople were said to be 'justly proud' of him for 'having laid aside his broadcloth and a life of comparative ease to don the khaki to join the boys in defending our glorious old flag'.<sup>42</sup> He was away for two years, and returned to an incumbency at St. Mary's and Rooty Hill.

39. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.41.

40. *South Coast Times*, 13 November, 1914.

41. C.N.

42. *Illawarra Mercury*, 7 September, 1917.

Opposition from some areas was no barrier to the clergy as they continued to endorse the recruiting appeals. At first the nationwide appeals seemed to be a success, enlistments rose from 9,119 in December, 1915 to 22,101 in January, 1916. After March, though, a steep decline began and in June the figure had dropped to just 6,582.<sup>43</sup>

Early in 1916, the British Government had introduced conscription and it was soon clamoured for in Australia by the daily press, imperialists and the majority of Protestants. In the first month of serious recruiting in July, 1915, two Illawarra clergy mentioned conscription. Both mention it as a threat rather than something desired, and applaud the idea of volunteering as more acceptable. With a note of apprehension Rev. Stubbin said that 'there is no doubt that every man is needed, and unless more of our young men come forward, conscription will have to be resorted to and we do not envy the feelings of a young man who is compelled to go ... If there are any in this parish so waiting for guidance, I would say to you, go and the Lord prosper you'.<sup>44</sup> Writing in the *Parish Gazette*, the Rev. Dowe believed that 'it is possible, and even probable, that both in England and Australia, recourse must yet be had to conscription', but significantly he added, 'we are proud of our volunteers, and shall never cease to follow with our interest and our prayers those

43. K.S. Inglis, 'Conscription in Peace and War, 1911-1945', from *Teaching History*, 1967, p.15.

44. *Illawarra Mercury*, 6 July, 1915.

who freely, without any other compulsion than their own sense of duty, volunteer for the defence of the Empire'.<sup>45</sup> However, in the early months of 1916 the Battle of the Somme was fought and the A.I.F., in seven weeks, had lost 28,000 men killed and wounded. Only 7,000 reserves were available in Britain and the Army Council threatened to re-distribute the newly-formed Australian Third Division among British divisions. To avoid this, the Council demanded 32,500 men immediately and further monthly recruitments of 16,500. But enlistment in the three months after June had only averaged 6,000.<sup>46</sup> Although F.B. Smith maintains that the official figures were 'grossly inflated', the Prime Minister, W.M. Hughes, relied on these to finally force for a conscription referendum in October, 1916. This campaign, in the estimate of Smith, 'initiated the most bitter struggle in the history of Australian politics'.<sup>47</sup>

The Protestant clergy were almost unanimous in their support for conscription. Yet in Wollongong, as far as can be ascertained only two clergy mentioned conscription and then solely for the first campaign. Historians have mostly explained the support in terms of patriotism or imperialism or both. A.D. Gilbert believed that 'religion had been overshadowed by imperial

45. *Parish Gazette*, July, 1915, p.1.

46. Scott, *op.cit.*, p.338.

47. F.B. Smith, *The Conscription Plebiscites in Australia, 1916-1917* (Sydney, 1938), p.10.

patriotism ... conscription became a sacred obligation', and K.S. Inglis wrote that 'Christianity was the obverse of the Empire; in one Methodist paper a minister concluded that Jesus would have voted "Yes"'.<sup>48</sup> However, McKernan argues that 'churchmen had synthesised war and Christianity so that support for the war effort became an act of Christian virtue'.<sup>49</sup> In this sense, conscription was accepted, but as already noted the Illawarra clergy were hesitant and it is believed that they would have preferred in many respects to see volunteering continue because, as already mentioned, it was their test of a man's faith and trust in God. Conscription showed that for many this was not so, and also revealed to the clergy that their cry for the nation to turn to righteousness was failing. Outwardly, they argued for conscription. The cry for a more Christian life was evident in the sermon text used by O.G. Dent the Sunday before the referendum, and the hope that 'conscription might be one of the methods' towards that goal was expressed:

Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there

48. A.D. Gilbert, 'Protestants, Catholics and Loyalty: An Aspect of the Conscription Controversies, 1916-17', *Politics*, Vol.VI, (1971), pp.22-23; Inglis, *op.cit.*, p.18.

49. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.110.

be any praise, think on these things.

The note beside the morning service in the register leaves little doubt of the sermon content: 'Conscription or etc.: How to decide'. The evening service had the dual theme of mourning and action: 'When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry'.<sup>50</sup>

The Rev. Dowe was the only Illawarra Anglican clergyman known to have expounded an opinion on conscription. Although he disagreed with conscription as such, he believed that 'whether the State should have power to call up citizens for its defence in this emergency is an entirely different thing'. Rev. Dowe based his support for conscription on the defence of Australia and fear of the Germans:

Some people say, 'O England is winning and our help is not wanted. Well, Germany has conquered about 80,000 square miles of the territory of our Allies, and we have won back about 200 square miles; at that rate the war will last ten years. Germany still holds all the great iron works of Belgium, and all the best coal country and manufacturing part of France; and thinks she is going to win all along; and so think a good many Europeans. If she does, she gets Australia, and we get Conscription to some purpose, namely to serve in the German armies ... We are fighting not only

50. R.S.A.S., 15 October, 1916, Philippians 4:8 and Esther 4:1; McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.110.

for the Empire, but chiefly for our own free homes.<sup>51</sup>

The only other stand for conscription by an Anglican clergyman in the region was Rev. Smee who spoke at the Helensburgh School of Arts in August, 1916. During the course of the meeting, the group unanimously affirmed

'their inflexible determination to see the war to an end by all means'.<sup>52</sup>

At an Anti-Conscription meeting at Woonona in August, the Presbyterian minister, Rev. J. H. Beynon, attempted to move an amendment 'that this meeting of Britishers pledges itself to support any measure that the Government takes to bring this war to a successful termination'.<sup>53</sup>

A vote was taken but it was almost totally defeated. The action of Rev. Beynon was the only such move that was reported in the local press for the other Protestant clergy in the region on the conscription issue.

According to Rev. Dowe, his parishioners feared conscription for two reasons: 'that all our men will have to go' and 'that a big proportion will be taken from the Illawarra District'. He replied that the first was 'a wee bit absurd' and the second 'a mistake'. He attempted to quell their anxiety by reassuring them in a rather misconstrued manner that 'England does not want us to help in any bigger proportion than she is herself

51. *Parish Gazette*, October, 1916, p.4.

52. *South Coast Times*, 11 August, 1916.

53. *Illawarra Mercury*, 15 August, 1916.

contributing'. Early in 1916, England had introduced conscription, and as Dowe pointed out 'we ought to do our share'. He also wrote that 'the men in necessary industries will be the first to be exempted ... If the State calls up men for its defence it will take them impartially from all over Australia'.<sup>54</sup> The official Anglican opinion regarding conscription, echoed the sentiment of the Prime Minister, Fisher, at the beginning of the war, that Australia would give 'the last man and the last shilling'. In October, 1916 at the General Synod of the Anglican Church in Sydney, Gilbert White, a former missionary bishop, said that 'compulsion was just, because it was fair to all, honest, because it honoured the promise of the last man, and self-sacrificial, because it was necessary for the good of the country'.<sup>55</sup> J.C. Wright's primatial address asked the Synod 'to tell the people to honour the pledge they had given about the last man and the last shilling and also to stress the moral obligation of each citizen to defend his country in time of danger'.<sup>56</sup> But on 28 October, 1916 the voters elected for 'No' conscription by a majority of 72,476.<sup>57</sup> No comment was made by churchmen in regard to their failure but an interesting incident at Bulli deserves mention. An article in the local press on

54. *Parish Gazette*, October, 1916, p.4.

55. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.116.

56. *Ibid.*

57. Scott, *op.cit.*, p.352.

3 November reported that 'as a consequence of the Referendum campaign a well-known lay reader of St. Augustine's parish has resigned therefrom'.<sup>58</sup> One wonders whether it was because of the defeat of the 'Yes' campaigners, or because he was a supporter of the 'No' vote in a church that supported the opposite view. No mention of the incident was made in the *Parish Gazette* nor in the Church Minute book.

During the second referendum campaign in December, 1917, no mention of conscription was made by any of the clergy in the Illawarra. Yet A.D. Gilbert writes that the 'sacralization of conscription was even more explicit during the 1917 campaign'. Not one of the Church Service Registers have an entry concerning the referendum, the only one that could be appropriate was the sermon preached at Dapto the Sunday before on 'Thy Kingdom Come'.<sup>59</sup> The defeat of both conscription referendums would have been terribly disheartening for the clergy. They had supported it, believing it was a means of discerning the attitude of the people towards their belief of a holy and righteous war. It is unusual that the clergy in the Illawarra region appear to have been so silent on such a momentous decision, but this could support the theory that they preferred the volunteering of their parishioners for a just cause rather than being forced. It must have been a time of great

58. *South Coast Times*, 3 November, 1916.

59. R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L., 16 December, 1918.



dilemma and soul-searching for the clergy, particularly those with sons already involved in the war who freely volunteered. McKernan writes of the serious implication of the defeat of conscription, 'Protestant clergymen had treated conscription as a moral issue, as a question of conscience, and the majority of Australians rejected either their judgement that the issue contained moral obligations or their view of what was the moral way to act'. Most importantly it also justified 'clerical fears about the unregeneracy of Australian society'.<sup>60</sup> Rather ironically, Rev. Dowe wrote in October, 1916 that: 'Christians were loyal to the Imperial Government even when that Government was hunting them to kill them; and Christians must be loyal still'.<sup>61</sup>

60. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.125.

61. *Parish Gazette*, October, 1916, p.4.

## Chapter 4: A Righteous War

### A Prayer for the Empire (Tune: 'O King of Kings')

O Father, Who of all true life  
Art still the only Giver,  
Our Empire, in this time of strife  
We pray Thee now deliver;  
From all the dangers that surround  
Protect, we pray, our Nation;  
May our rejoicing still be found  
In Thee and Thy Salvation!

O let our land be purified,  
By national Repentance;  
Our sins be judged and mortified  
By Thy all-loving sentence;  
Delivered from Thy righteous wrath,  
O Lord, receive our nation  
Thy chosen instrument henceforth  
For Earth's regeneration.

P.W. Dowe

( *Parish Gazette*, December, 1917)

At the beginning of January, 1915, Rev. Dowe expressed the clergy's response to the war when he wrote to his parishioners: 'Your minister believes that this war comes as God's call to the Empire to repentance, and to the forsaking of many national sins'.<sup>1</sup>

Clergymen firmly believed that the nation must heed God's call for righteousness and repentance and return to Him. During the early years of the war, the clergy thought that God's call was primarily aimed at the social evils of the nation; intemperance, pleasure-seeking and sabbath desecration. However, by 1917 the purpose of the war was interpreted by some of the clergy as a time of preparation, and the last days before the coming of Christ: 'It is the judgement of God falling upon a World which had turned away from Him ... and of the near coming of Christ for His people'.<sup>2</sup> All clergy shared the basic belief that because the war was from God, some ultimate blessing and good must come to the nation and its people. Either the nation would turn away from its national sins to the worship of God or the Lord would return for His people in Majesty and great joy.

Apparently, the clergy never doubted that the war was sent from God for a purpose. Rev. Dowe preached on the text: 'Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a

1. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1915, p.4.

2. *Parish Gazette*, December, 1917, p.4.

city, and the Lord hath not done it?'.<sup>3</sup> Whilst Rev. Dent preached on texts to assure his congregation that, 'we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose', and that 'If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king'.<sup>4</sup> Rev. Dowe was convinced 'that the war, though so terrible an evil, will in God's providence bring about great good', and Rev. Stubbin applied his message directly to the people: 'we can support our men in the field by getting right with God'. The clergy often included Biblical battles in their sermons to convince their congregations that God had previously tested the faith of His people Israel through the judgement of war. The illustration of the battle between Gideon and the Midianites was most commonly used. Rev. Stubbin preached that God's sword had been issued for Gideon 'because he made an offering, built an altar, and engaged in worship before engaging in battle'.<sup>5</sup> Clergymen preached on 'the resemblance in the position of the British nation in this war, to that of David in rebellion of Absalom' and emphasised the power of prayer for 'bringing in God's help' as demonstrated in the

3. R.S.S.D., 11 August, 1914. (Amos 3:6)

4. R.S.E.C., 6 August, 1916 (Romans 8:28); 13 December, 1914, (Daniel 3:17).

5. *Illawarra Mercury*, 8 January, 1915.

battle between Joseph and Amalek.<sup>6</sup> As Rev. Stubbin said: 'Victory was in the hands of God'.<sup>7</sup>

Victory, though, would be hastened if the people turned to God and righteousness: 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you'.<sup>8</sup> A righteous nation had been expounded by clergymen before the war. On Empire Day, 1914, the Rev. W. Newmarch had said that the day was 'a monument of the greatness of the British Empire, and was a monument that also stood for righteousness'. He urged his congregation 'to love and serve God, for by so doing they would help to make the Empire much mightier'.<sup>9</sup> In 1916, the Rev. Stubbin wrote to his parishioners of the need for righteousness and repentance:

'If our nation is to be worthy of the high privilege of being the instrument in God's hand for promoting and preserving the righteousness in the world, then we will certainly need as a nation to put away our many sins. Let us heed this call and examine ourselves as individuals and in humility clean up our own doorsteps and get right with God, and then let us throw the weight of our influence very solidly against these national evils which are so conspicuously wrong in the sight of God and lowering to our people.'<sup>10</sup>

6. *South Coast Times*, 29 January, 1915.

7. *Illawarra Mercury*, 9 August, 1918.

8. R.S.A.S., 12 September, 1915 (Matthew 6:33).

9. *Illawarra Mercury*, 26 May, 1914.

10. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, January, 1916.

The following year Stubbin expressed a belief that 'if we wished to see an end of the war we must as a nation tackle the problems of evil that existed'.<sup>11</sup> This argument was supported by the other clergy in the region; that reform must come out of the evil, and that the war had provided the stimulus for a re-awakening of religious thought and commitment.

The 'national evils' of drink and 'sabbath desecration' were the main target of attacks made by the clergy in their desire for a righteous nation. Drink was compared to the battle of war by Rev. Dowe:

War has slain its thousands, but drink its tens of thousands, the victims of war are buried in honoured graves, and their names recorded in gilded letters on our Rolls of Honour. The victims of drink fill our prisons, our lunatic asylums, our hospitals, our old age asylums, our domains, and our gutters; their names are recorded in black in our Court charge sheets; and they drag down their wives and children with them.<sup>12</sup>

On 3 April, 1915, the King, George V, became a total abstainer and inaugurated a movement known as 'Follow the King', which the clergy advocated for all to follow. Rev. Stubbin urged the Mayor of Wollongong to initiate the movement in the township. Rev. Stubbin succeeded, and at the inaugural meeting, the guest speaker, Mr. Pulsford, referred to the effect of alcohol, adding that anyone

11. *Illawarra Mercury*, 10 August, 1917.

12. *Parish Gazette*, April, 1916, p.4.

who 'treated a soldier to drink, we are entitled to regard as a German spy'.<sup>13</sup> In 1915, the Rev. Dowe from Bulli attended an Early Closing meeting at which he moved the following resolution: 'that ... all liquor bars throughout the State should be closed at 6 o'clock and that this meeting calls upon the State Parliament to immediately legislate accordingly'. The motion was carried unanimously after others had spoken, including the Methodist and Congregational ministers. It is interesting that the chairman, Rev. A.G. Palmer, the Bulli Presbyterian minister, hoped that the movement 'would not be regarded as a clergymen's movement'.<sup>14</sup> The proposed licensing of a hotel at Coledale in 1916 caused a public meeting to be held, with the President of the local Miners' Lodge in the chair. The Rev. Dent moved a resolution in favour of six p.m. closing. He believed that 'there were enough evils to fight in the locality without adding to them'.<sup>15</sup>

The Early Closing Movement gained momentum when the New South Wales Government announced a referendum on hotel closing, to be held in June, 1916. Clergymen were very vocal in their support for 6 o'clock closing, contrary to the silence that prevailed for the conscription referendum four months later. Regular

13. *South Coast Times*, 28 May, 1915.

14. *South Coast Times*, 23 July, 1915.

15. *South Coast Times*, 12 May, 1916.

meetings were held in St. Michael's Parish Hall from March onwards to advocate 6 o'clock hotel closing. In the April issue of the *Parish Gazette*, Rev. Dowe left little doubt as to how he believed his parishioners should vote: 'Your minister says it will be a burning sin if the people of N.S.W. don't decide for 6 o'clock closing. The evils of drink are incalculable'. In a more jocular manner he added: 'Of course, the brewers won't like early closing, and are fighting tooth and nail (as well as Tooth and Toohey), against it'.<sup>16</sup>

Two months later, Rev. Dowe devoted a page to denounce the oppositions 'Bogies' and to further urge his parishioners to 'be Patriotic and sensible'.<sup>17</sup>

Advertisements which advocated 6 o'clock closing, also used patriotic propaganda: 'Be Patriotic... We are fighting Germany, Austria and the drink. The greatest of these three deadly foes is the drink'.<sup>18</sup> In June, 1916, the referendum was held, and 6 o'clock closing had a resounding win over its closest opponent of 9 o'clock. Between Helensburgh and Wollongong, 6 o'clock closing won by 1,418 votes, and between Figtree and Jamberoo, early closing won by 2,172 votes.<sup>19</sup> Rev. Dowe congratulated 'the country on the great saving in health and wealth that will result from this latest bit of

16. *Parish Gazette*, April, 1916, p.4.

17. *Parish Gazette*, June, 1916, p.3.

18. *South Coast Times*, 2 June, 1916.

19. *South Coast Times*, 16 June, 1916.



reform'.<sup>20</sup>

The desecration of the Sabbath was condemned by the clergy: 'What is sin? Some people will say it is murder or fornication, or theft. Sin is much more than that ... To stay away from Public Worship (unless you are prevented by reasons that you know God would approve), is a sin'.<sup>21</sup> Public worship of God was continually being upheld by clergymen. In almost every issue of the *Parish Gazette* there was an article about Sunday worship or the observance of Sunday by parishioners. Dowe believed that 'the way you observe Sunday supplies an exact index of your spiritual standing'.<sup>22</sup> Rev. Stubbin also preached that the nation sought more after pleasure and gain than righteousness, and maintained that on Sundays, pleasure resorts were more sought after than the churches, even in the present war time. He based his sermon on the text: 'But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them'.<sup>23</sup> A lay member of Fairy Meadow Church wrote to the editor of the *Illawarra Mercury*: 'It would be a thousand times better in our present day to set Sundays down for general prayer and stop all Sunday pleasuring while the war lasts'. He believed that if it could be brought about 'we shall have

20. *Parish Gazette*, August, 1916, p.2.

21. *Parish Gazette*, April, 1915, p.1.

22. *Parish Gazette*, February, 1916, p.4.

23. *Illawarra Mercury*, 24 August, 1915.

some hope of early peace'.<sup>24</sup>

Not only was being absent from Sunday worship a sin, but so were many of the 'pleasures' that were sought after. Bulli Churchwardens decided that 'the holding of Concerts on Sunday evenings by the Bulli Band is not in the best interests of the community'. They requested the rector to ask the other Protestant ministers in the town if they would send in a joint protest against the band's continuance. In 1917 the clergy again protested due to 'a rumour that our United Services on Sunday evening will be prevented by the hall being let for Sunday Evening Concerts'.<sup>25</sup> As previously mentioned, the Wollongong Ministers' Association objected to the running of Sunday trains. Rev. Dowe believed it was 'a plain mockery of God to say "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law" and then to use a Sunday train'. Sunday sports were condemned for 'they tend to lower the popular estimate of the Sanctity of the Day'.<sup>26</sup> An appeal was made to Christian men to give up Sunday newspapers: 'Cannot you practise enough self-denial to leave these things alone on the one day of the week that God calls us to keep holy?'. Sunday trading was bitterly opposed and the State was condemned for granting trading licences, 'this is not the first pretence

24. *Illawarra Mercury*, 24 August, 1915.

25. B.C.M. (C.M.), 12 November, 1915; *Parish Gazette*, August, 1916, p.4.

26. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1915, p.2 and February, 1916, p.3.

of the State to be above God'.<sup>27</sup> Rev. Stubbin also preached in opposition to Sunday work and spoke against any attempt at its introduction locally in 1916.<sup>28</sup> Two years later, Rev. Dowe wrote to the editor of the *South Coast Times* against a suggestion that volunteer workers should work on Sunday to build a war widow's cottage. Instead, he hoped that the work would be completed on a week-day or Saturday, 'in order to save the town from the sin and danger of beginning organised Sunday work'.<sup>29</sup>

Clergymen felt the need to express their opinions on other 'national sins' besides the dishonour of the Sabbath, and the evil of the drink. Like the mother church in England, the Anglican Church in Australia sought to 'discharge its sense of vocation to act as the Christian conscience of the nation'.<sup>30</sup> This was particularly important for the war effort and for the establishment of a righteous nation. Rev. Godson questioned the necessity of holding dances during the war, 'Girls with brothers or sweethearts at the front, was this the time to attend dances and encourage young men to stay selfishly at home? Men, who if they did their duty, should be in the trenches assisting their comrades!' A year later, Rev. Godson told the young

27. *Parish Gazette*, August, 1916, pp.2 & 4.

28. *Illawarra Mercury*, 29 August, 1916.

29. *South Coast Times*, 15 February, 1918.

30. A. Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War*, (London, 1978), p.70.

men in the congregation that 'instead of going to dance "to drive the blues away"', they should be 'giving serious thought to doing their duty to their country'.<sup>31</sup> Clergymen were also concerned about the effect of picture shows: the temptation that they presented was 'particularly insidious ... because it seemed so harmless'. Congregations were warned that picture shows were 'rapidly destroying our national, domestic, and religious life ... its moral poison is of the most soul deadening character'. Rev. Stubbin blamed the pictures for gradually and surely destroying 'homelife which has been the bulwark of the British nation' and for 'lowering the moral tone of our people to a degree which is hardly conceivable'.<sup>32</sup> Rev. Dowe also spoke out in opposition to the extravagance found in the parish: 'Surely these people don't know that there is a war going on!' He added an inquiry as to how much they had contributed 'to the Red Cross, and the War Chest Funds, or to the Missionary Work of their Church'.<sup>33</sup>

Although the clergy believed that the war was a righteous war sent from God, they also maintained that German ambition was to blame, and that the Empire was totally justified in defending herself. Rev. Dowe wrote: 'We do not envy the consciences of the German politicians who could plan and begin such a terrible conflict for no

31. *South Coast Times*, 23 November, 1917 and 3 May, 1918.

32. *Illawarra Mercury*, 3 March, 1916.

33. *Parish Gazette*, May, 1917, p.4.

other purpose than the mere desire of conquest'. He believed that 'France, Russia and England are quite right to object'.<sup>34</sup> The German people were treated with tolerance during the early stages of the war and not only by the clergy. At the combined Protestant service on 14 August, 1914, the Mayor of Wollongong, Ald. Lance, said that he deplored 'the fact of war with Germany, a nation ... to which we were related by blood. He thought this a time for special kindness towards the German people among us'. In early 1915, Rev. Stubbin also reminded his parishioners that they were 'fighting with kindred people'.<sup>35</sup> Anti-German feeling among the clergy was not particularly intense until nearer the end of the war, although the general population was less tolerant. McKernan believes that no churchman could condone the spirit of hatred displayed by the Melbourne Argus in 1914, where a headline proclaimed 'A Good Day - Slaughter of 3,000 Germans in Ten Minutes'.<sup>36</sup> The clergy tried to maintain an attitude of tolerance and understanding towards the German people in Australia:

We have many Germans among us who have come here to avoid Prussian militarism, and whose sympathies are entirely with us. It would be a wicked shame to show ill-feeling towards them. Many of them are doing all they can to prove their

34. *Parish Gazette*, July, 1915, p.1, and August, 1917, p.2.

35. *South Coast Times* 14 August, 1914, and 29 January, 1915.

36. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.37.

sympathy with the Empire.<sup>37</sup>

Dowe recognised that there were some Germans in Australia 'who have no such feelings'. As anti-German emotions rose among the general population, many Germans were thrown out of their employment, and, being without a means of livelihood, offered themselves for voluntary internment.<sup>38</sup> Among the clergy, Rev. Dowe doubted the wisdom of removing Germans from their employment:

As soon as we intern them, the country will lose the benefit of their industry, and we shall have to support them, and we have quite enough to do just now to support ourselves and our boys at the front.<sup>39</sup>

As the war continued, and casualty lists grew, so did the hostility towards Germans and Germany. Even the clergy abandoned their tolerant attitude and regarded the German nation as an advocate of the Devil. Commenting on another clergyman's opinion, the Rev. Shaw who succeeded Rev. Dowe, said that the clergyman 'may surely be forgiven mistaking the Kaiser (whose telephone number is said to happen to be 666), for the final anti-Christ'.<sup>40</sup> Congregations listened to their clergy expound 'the devilish devices of Germany' and the 'hordes of Germany' as they pursued their 'policy of frightfulness'.<sup>41</sup>

37. *Parish Gazette*, June, 1915, p.2.

38. Scott, *op.cit.*, p.112.

39. *Parish Gazette*, June, 1915, p.2.

40. *South Coast Times*, 18 October, 1918.

41. *South Coast Times*, 3 May, 1918; *Illawarra Mercury*, 8 August, 1916.

'Evil was stalking through the land' and 'greedy schemers' like the Kaiser must be crushed 'until the German menace to Europe is for ever removed'.<sup>42</sup>

McKernan points out that even though these sentiments adopted by the clergy are contrary to their Christian principles, they have elevated the war from 'a mere affair of nations' to a 'moment in God's redemptive plan'.<sup>43</sup> The salvation of the world could not be complete until the work of the Devil was also crushed, and Germany was seen as the instrument of that work.

McKernan points out that: 'the community would not have welcomed a restrained, cautious attitude'.<sup>44</sup>

Christ's commandment to 'Love your neighbour' was not forgotten by the clergy amidst all the anti-German hostility. The commandment, however, was sometimes interpreted in an inconsistent manner:

... teaching men to love their enemies, and to do good to them that hate them. Even in this great war when the British have had to fight the brutal Hun to defend poor Belgium, with its helpless and defenceless women and children, Christians are continually praying even for those who fight against us.<sup>45</sup>

Rev. Dowe attempted to justify his own position and the Empire's by placing the blame onto the Kaiser:

42. *South Coast Times*, 31 May, 1918; *Parish Gazette*, August, 1917, p.2.

43. McKernan, *op.cit.*, p.38.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *South Coast Times*, 11 October, 1918.

Yes, all mankind are brothers: ... but brother Kaiser and other brothers behind him have been for forty years planning to subjugate all their other brothers in France, Russia and England with a view to absorbing the possessions and wealth of these brothers ... the present war is to ... bring about a truer brotherhood of men and of nations.<sup>46</sup>

In another issue of the *Parish Gazette*, Rev. Dowe wrote that 'If Germany hates all British we needn't come down to their level and hate all Germans'.<sup>47</sup> Two incidents are known to have occurred with German people in the local parishes. In the St. Luke's Burial Register, the death is recorded in 1916 of Kate Johanson, and in brackets after her name are the words: 'known as Johnson'.<sup>48</sup> The other incident was a far more heated one at St. Michael's in 1918. During the Annual Vestry Meeting, a motion was moved by a prominent church member 'that for the duration of the war no alien of enemy birth hold office in this church'. The Rev. Stubbin then ruled the motion out of order, which drew protests. Another lay member said he would have supported the motion if it had been allowed. He believed 'This land was at the moment permeated with German spies. He knew Germans he could trust, but some of those who were trusted were the most dangerous'.<sup>49</sup> No mention of

46. *Parish Gazette*, August, 1917, p.2.

47. *Parish Gazette*, June, 1915, p.2.

48. Burial Register of St. Luke's, Dapto (1901-1966), 29 April, 1916.

49. *South Coast Times*, 19 April, 1918.



*The [unclear] were not  
of [unclear]*

the motion was recorded in the actual church minutes because it had been ruled out of order. However, it shows an interesting insight into the attitudes of the lay person toward the Germans in the township, which are otherwise unknown.

The continuance of the war again caused the clergy to reflect on its purpose. They realised that besides conquering Germany there was another purpose. The goal of a righteous nation. By the middle of 1916 there was little evidence of either victory for the Empire or a Godly nation. Lord Kitchener's death in June, 1916 was interpreted by the clergy as another warning from God. Rev. Stubbin believed that the 'death of Lord Kitchener might have been averted had the people taken heed of the first warning and turned to God'. He attempted to convict the people of the necessity of turning to God to achieve a victory for the Empire:

... ever since the commencement of the war the nation had been depending on the arm of flesh to achieve victory, rather than on the arm of God. We had not only been depending upon our splendid leaders, but upon our splendid navy. God had been left out of our calculations altogether ... As a nation at the beginning of the war we did not learn a lesson and attempt to grapple with the national sins. It even seemed that the power of evil had grown stronger since the war - the warning of the war had been neglected - and once again God found it necessary to give another warning.<sup>50</sup>

50. *Illawarra Mercury*, 16 June, 1916.

However, the Rev. Stubbin's hopes were not realised. Even though church attendances rose, there was not the huge increase that the clergy prayed for, nor the religious revival that had been expected. In England, a similar response had occurred. In 1915, a group of Anglican ministers under the Archbishop of Canterbury recommended 'a national Mission led by the Archbishops ... through all the cities and towns and villages of the Land'.<sup>51</sup>

The National Mission of Repentance and Hope held in 1916 was 'an attempt by the Church of England to respond to the spiritual needs of the nation in wartime'.<sup>52</sup> The Australian church participated, and missions were held in all the parishes between September and November of 1916. The Rev. Dowe explained the reason for holding a mission to his parishioners:

... the war has not yet led the nation to turn back to God; and we fear lest more troubles and heavier chastisements yet may be needed before ours becomes a God-fearing country. In the meantime we can individually wait upon God and ask for national blessings. Our Mission is intended, primarily, for that very purpose. It is the Church's appeal to the Nation to repent of national sins; it is a call to the Nation to learn righteousness from National judgements.<sup>53</sup>

The Wollongong Rural Deanery began preparations for the

51. Wilkinson, *op.cit.*, p.72.

52. *Ibid.*, p.70.

53. *Parish Gazette*, November, 1916, p.3.

mission in January, 1916, after deciding to 'heartily co-operate'. The parishes of Helensburgh, Bulli, Austinmer, Wollongong and Dapto were each assigned missionaries, and a special Sectional Conference of Clergy was held in Wollongong in July to arrange details.<sup>54</sup> The mission was held at St. Michael's in September, for a week. Services were held nightly, led by Rev. Bazeley and on the Saturday an Open Air Service was held. At the initial service, Rev. Bazeley preached on the problems caused by sin, that 'there was no difference between any of them, because "all had sinned, and come short of the glory of God"'.<sup>55</sup> He believed that it 'was the hardest text of the Bible for respectable people to receive'. Rev. Bazeley denounced those who imagined that 'their common patriotism was the equivalent of religion'. He answered a question about the position in the next world of the man who died in battle in this world, saying if in addition to his patriotism he had 'accepted the benefit of Jesus Christ, he had no doubt of his salvation, but he had little hope of it otherwise'.<sup>56</sup> At Bulli, special prayers were published in the *Parish Gazette* for 'The Mission', 'The War', 'For Ourselves', 'The Missioner' and 'Confession'. Rev. Dowe requested that the prayers be said morning and evening, 'without fail', for then the mission would be blessed.

54. Chapter Minutes, 5 January, 1916 and 23 July, 1916.

55. Romans 3:23.

56. *South Coast Times*, 8 September, 1916.

He warned that if they failed to pray 'shall you not be guilty in God's sight; and will not the responsibility for the unsaved lie at your door ...?' <sup>57</sup>

When the Mission was over, the clergy assessed its influence and worth. Rev. Dowe was non-committal; 'We hope that those who heard ... will not easily forget his words; but that they may be the beginning of a higher spiritual life to many of us'. <sup>58</sup> Rev. Stubbin was more enthusiastic about the Mission, praising, 'the very splendid result ... I feel sure its effect will last for many a long day'. He too, expressed the hope that 'none of you will allow yourselves to go back into even seeming indifference. Cultivate the spiritual life by cultivating the presence of God and using all the means of grace which He has given us'. <sup>59</sup> The Mission failed to make a great deal of difference in church attendance. At Dapto, for the three months prior to the mission the average Sunday attendance was 57, and for the three months after the mission, attendance only rose by 9 to 66. Hardly the increase the churches anticipated. <sup>60</sup> Certainly, church attendance rose slightly in 1917, but it was not a direct outcome of the mission as hoped and prayed for.

The disappointment of the National Mission caused

57. *Parish Gazette*, October, 1916, p.2.

58. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1917, p.2.

59. *Wollongong Parish Paper*, October, 1916.

60. R.S.O.M.C.O.S.L., 2 July to 31 December, 1916.

the clergy once again to reflect upon the real purpose of the war: they never doubted that it did have a purpose or that it was from God. Millennialism was discussed in the previous chapter, and by 1917, Rev. Dowe at least, believed that the 'signs are so plain' that the year was 'one of the last that are left to us in this dispensation'.<sup>61</sup> He wrote that the Times of the Gentiles which had begun in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar was to last for 2,520 days, each day standing for a year. Beginning from the Captivity of Judah in 604 BC, that brought the time to 1916 AD: 'at any time we may have the Second Coming of Christ, the First Resurrection and the taking away of Christ's waiting people ... the next Dispensation will follow with all its times of trouble ... until the final Judgement Day'.<sup>62</sup> At the beginning of 1918, Rev. Dowe also wrote about the Times of the Gentiles except that he believed the end was either 1916 or 1920.<sup>63</sup> Rev. Dent also warned his congregation of the Judgement of God: 'But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be'.<sup>64</sup> However, these last days were not viewed with terror by the clergy. 'What a blessed prospect for His people!'. Rev. Dowe rejoiced:

61. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1917, p.1.

62. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1917, p.2.

63. *Parish Gazette*, January, 1918, p.3.

64. R.S.A.S., 28 November, 1915. (Matthew 24:37)

What a glorious thought, that while the World plunges deeper and deeper into the Wars and famines and sorrows that are to mark the last days - we who are found watching and waiting for Christ shall be caught away with Him - to escape all those troubles, and to spend our millennium with the Lord.<sup>65</sup>

Those who were not among the 'watching and waiting' were warned of the troubles that they would participate in, and clergymen appealed to them to turn to God and righteousness.

The ethics of war were never discussed by any of the clergy. They all accepted that the war was from God, sent as a warning and judgement on an unrighteous nation. Clergymen believed that it was their duty to try to convict people of national and individual sins. Even the moral problems of the war that the clergy preached upon, were only the old social problems given a new impetus in the quest for righteousness. As the nation began to despair of victory in the war, the clergy turned to varieties of millennialism. Throughout the war, though, the clergy maintained that whatever its purpose, only blessing could come of it because the war had come from God:

'O let our land be purified  
By national Repentance;  
Our sins be judged and mortified  
By Thy all-loving sentence;  
Delivered from Thy righteous wrath,  
O Lord, receive our nation  
Thy chosen instrument henceforth  
For Earth's regeneration'.<sup>66</sup>

65. *Parish Gazette*, December, 1917, p.3.

66. *Parish Gazette*, December, 1917, p.1.

## Conclusion

### Prayer About the War

'... Look down upon Thy Nation and Empire now suffering Thy judgement of War. Pardon our National sins - our falling away from Thee - our misuse of the vast wealth that Thou hadst given us - our worship of Mammon - our devotion to material things - our neglect and forgetfulness of Spiritual things - and grant us so to humble ourselves under Thy chastisements that our Nation and Empire may be brought back to Thee; that we may be in the future, more than in the past, a people that Thou may bless and use, for the glory of Thy great Name ...'

( *Parish Gazette*, October, 1916. A prayer read during the National Mission of Repentance and Hope in 1916.)

The First World War was a period of great change and unrest; no aspect of Australian society was left unscathed. Throughout the war, the local Anglican parish churches presented a semblance of stability and normality. The clergy's attitude to war was based on scriptural attitudes and beliefs: that the war was a call for righteousness, sent from God to further His purposes through the Australian nation. The spiritual meaning attached to the war influenced the activities of the parochial ministry, the specific war ministry of the clergy, the clergy's attitudes towards conscription and recruitment, and towards the Germans and the war itself. The clergy reacted in the only way they knew how by turning to the scriptures and referring to the great Biblical battles.

Throughout the four years of war, the clergy believed that their first consideration should be the maintenance of the normal peacetime ministry of the church. Amidst the stress of war, the clergy conducted services, held prayer meetings, encouraged missionary zeal, participated in community affairs, visited parishioners and preached the need to turn to God. Church attendance figures rose slightly during the war, and the faith and financial support of parishioners continued and even increased. The clergy believed that the normal parish ministry was of the utmost importance as a source of peace and reassurance during a time of



great tragedy.

Clergymen defined their specific war ministry in spiritual terms. Indirectly, the clergy's main war effort was in comforting bereaved relatives and ministering to those who were suffering privation because of the war. The clergy themselves believed that their foremost ministry was to convince the people of their need to turn to God and repent of their sins. Through prayer, memorial services and civic celebrations, the clergy attempted to turn the people away from unrighteousness. As is generally the case in times of world crisis, by 1917 some of the clergy believed that the second coming of Christ was at hand, and became more zealous in their preaching of repentance and righteousness. The clergy did not neglect to support and encourage the charitable war organisations that were formed, but were convinced that their ministry was to offer spiritual comfort and fulfilment.

The support of recruiting was an extension of the clergy's belief that the Empire was fighting not only for a victory, but also for the salvation of the world. A test of a man's faith and trust in God was his willingness to defend his country. The clergy, therefore, favoured recruiting, whilst the majority remained behind in their parishes. Clergymen believed that it was far more important for them to tend to the problems of a parochial ministry than to enlist and disrupt the life of the parish. Believing that the two conscription

referendums were a means of discerning the attitude of the people towards the belief of a holy war, the clergy supported a 'yes' vote. Yet there was a hesitancy on the part of local clergy to speak publicly in favour of conscription, indicating that in reality they preferred the system of volunteering. For as already mentioned, according to the clergy, volunteering was a sign of a man's faith in God. The defeat of the two referendums revealed that the Australian population as a whole did not heed the public opinions expressed by the clergy nor regarded their views as absolute.

The Anglican clergy never doubted that the war was sent from God for a purpose. It was their duty to convict the people of their national and individual sins of intemperance, sabbath desecration, selfish pursuits and extravagance. The ethics of war were never discussed, and the morality of war was interpreted by the clergy in terms of the social ills of the day. In 1916, there were no signs of the nation turning back to God and a National Mission of Repentance and Hope was held. The Mission was regarded as an appeal from the churches for repentance, but the effect upon the nation was not very great. As the nation despaired of victory in the war, the clergy turned to varieties of millennialism to further explain why righteousness and repentance were so important and necessary for the nation. The sustaining belief of the clergy was that out of the judgement of war would come blessings to the

nation, and it would be an effective instrument for God's purposes.

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