



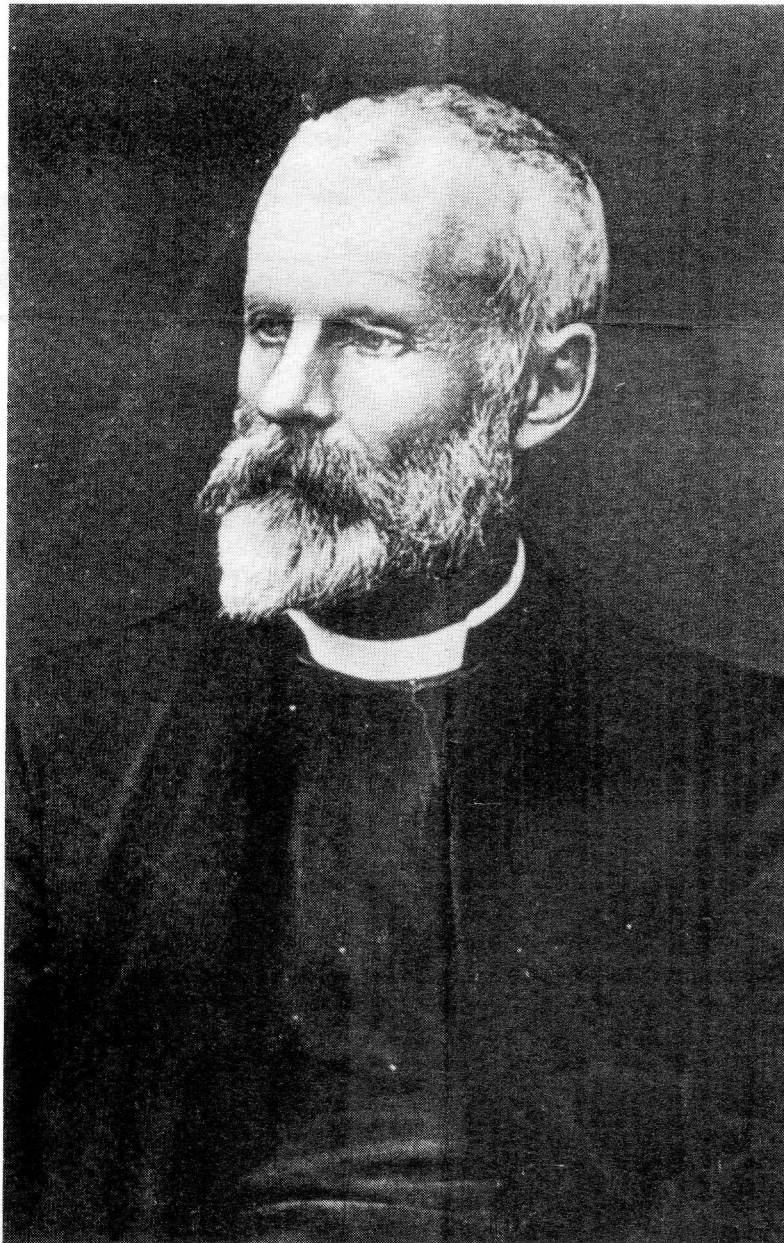
# Morning Calm

## NEWSHEET OF THE KOREAN MISSION

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## CENTENARY ISSUE



CHARLES JOHN CORFE,  
First Bishop in Korea



## CHARLES JOHN CORFE

### Naval Chaplain - First Bishop in Korea

*by the Reverend S.J. Davies*

**A distinguished Admiral who represented the King at Bishop Corfe's funeral on July 4, 1921, wrote that as a Naval Chaplain "his influence among officers and men was unique, he was beloved and deeply respected by all."**

An old blue-jacket remembered him as "a tall, slender man with blue eyes full of mirth and a kindly, humorous manner. Our Chaplain easily bridged the great gulf that then existed between officers and men of the Navy. He was in the truest sense an officer and a gentleman but in private talks in his cabin he became to us wise counsellor, understanding friend and elder brother. His room for some of us became an oasis in the desert."

Padre Corfe always maintained a daily Celebration on his ships, and spiritual instruction in the Faith and informal gatherings for prayer were constantly available in his cabin, which was indeed "open house" to all, and not exclusively to those seeking religious guidance, but to any in trouble or perplexity. At Dockyard and Hospital churches he maintained surpliced choirs, and here and indeed on shipboard his great musical gifts came into full play - as befitted a son of Dr. Corfe, organist of Christ Church, Oxford and a distinguished composer, and a descendant of Handel's friend, Joseph Corfe, who features in the DNB.\* After his death, tributes from all naval ranks spoke of his "simple, straightforward practical sermons"; the very large congregations he drew at voluntary services; his own splendid voice; the concerts he organised; his unfailing good humour and infectious laughter. His little "Book of Private Prayer for Seamen and Mariners Afloat" covered every aspect of the sailor's life. At the Royal Naval Barracks, Sheerness, a popular refrain could often be heard sung by ratings all over the place:

Six jolly parsons all in a row  
And the best of the lot  
Was our own Holy Joe."

Charles John Corfe loved the Navy and the Navy loved him, and it was inevitable that in his very first issue of the Korean Mission magazine "Morning Calm" in July 1890, the famous "Compass" of the Mission of the Gospel was the frontispiece with its attendant anchor "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul." As Corfe wrote then "the needle of the missionary compass points to the Cross, or rather always to Him - Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever. The missionary's compass needs no correction for variation or deviations."

#### "PROPHET OF BAAL"

The future Bishop, born on May 14, 1843 at Old Beam Hall, Merton Lane, Oxford was ordained priest in 1867, having graduated from All Souls, and was almost immediately gazetted Naval Chaplain to

H.M.S. Doris, bound for the West Indies. The year 1873 saw him with H.M.S. Cambridge at Devonport, with full beard, moustache and side-whiskers that he retained all his life. While there he was one of the 450 signatories to the memorial presented to Canterbury Convocation which claimed official sanction for many Anglo-Catholic practices and views, including the training and licensing of priests for their task as confessors. The ecclesiastical outcry resulted, sadly, in the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874, and the signatories were branded as "prophets of Baal"! Charles Corfe's mother was deeply attached to the teaching of Dr. Pusey and other Fathers of the Oxford Movement, so his churchmanship is not surprising, nor that he spent his last night in England before sailing for Korea in July 1890 with Father Bell-Cox at the Port of Liverpool, Vicar of St. Margaret's, Toxteth, the well-known Anglo-Catholic citadel, the last priest to be imprisoned in Walton Gaol under the P.W.R. Act for "ritualism".

When Archbishop Benson sent for the well-known Naval Chaplain in 1889 he told him that he had no pay to offer, no companion priest to go with him, that no English missionary had ever yet gone to Korea - which was hostile to Christianity and had witnessed many martyrdoms as recently as 1870 - but that he wanted him to leave the Navy and become the first Bishop for Korea. With true Naval devotion to duty Corfe consented. An Admiral tried to dissuade him, saying it was all a forlorn hope, but Corfe reminded him "If, in the course of duty, you got orders to attack a battleship in a dinghy you would obey."

#### "A NAVAL BISHOP"

Charles John Corfe was consecrated Bishop in Westminster Abbey on All Saints' Day, 1889 and it did not escape notice that the saintly Bishop Ken was the only other Naval Chaplain to have become a Bishop. Corfe delighted in this, and loved to refer to himself as "a Naval Bishop." He had completed twenty years in the Navy. He resigned in 1881 to help in the North China Mission, but on his return to England in 1883 the Admiralty did an unprecedented thing: it re-instated him with his seniority, obtaining an Order in Council to do so. By 1886 he was chaplain on H.M.S. Alexandra, flagship of the Duke of Edinburgh, Commander in Chief, Mediterranean Station. When he retired in 1889, the Duke appointed him his chaplain.

Bishop Corfe was extremely active in the nine months between his consecration and departure for Korea. Indeed as Bishop-elect he had cut the first

\* Dictionary of National Biography



# CENTENARY OF THE KOREAN MISSION

by the Reverend S.J. Davies



The Centenary of the consecration of Charles John Corfe, a Chaplain of the Royal Navy, in Westminster Abbey on All Saints' Day, November 1st 1989, as the first Bishop in Korea, and the founding of the Korean Mission, was commemorated at the Sung Eucharist in the Abbey on All Saints' Day by invitation of the Dean of Westminster.

It was a scene of great splendour as the three Korean Bishops in their magnificent copes and mitres, accompanied by Bishop Richard Rutt of Leicester and Bishop Paul Burrough, processed to the Sacrament with the Dean, the Abbey clergy and the Crucifer and taperers to the robust sound of "For all the Saints". In the procession too were Fr. Luke Lee, Fr. Stanley Davies and Canon Harold Bear all vested in Abbey copes. Assembled in the Lantern of the Abbey were row upon row of Korean womenfolk in their beautiful long festal gowns – blues, golds, purples, reds shone out against the seemingly sombre Western dress of the congregation.

The Abbey Choir sang Byrd's "Mass for five voices, and as Dering's lovely Gradual Motet, "Gaudent in coelis animae sanctorum" commenced, Bishop Simon Kim of Seoul processed to the Lantern to read the Gospel in Korean, which Fr. Davies, standing at his side, then read in English.

Bishop John Daly, the last English Bishop of Seoul, led the Intercessions; he was also representing the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Service. Bishop John is the oldest Bishop in the Anglican Communion. His Excellency Jay Hee Oh the Korean Ambassador and Mrs. Oh attended the Abbey Eucharist, and in the congregation was Miss Joan C. Hackworth, great niece of Bishop Corfe. Earlier that day she had placed a wreath at his grave at Brookwood with the text "You know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord". Also in the congregation was Canon Austin Masters, SSM, appropriately representing the Society (formerly so wellknown as "The Kelham Fathers) whose founder, along with Father Kelly in 1890 was Charles John Corfe. Sister Joyce, CSP also represented the Community which since 1892 gave such devoted service in Korea.

During the great service in the Abbey, at which so many Koreans communicated, both lay and ordained, one could not help feeling emotionally moved at the thought of Bishop Corfe at his consecration in 1889 by Archbishop E.W. Benson, facing this hazardous venture into the virtually unknown

## Korean Dinner Westminster All Saints Day

left to right:

Bishop Harry Moore (C.M.S.), Canon Sam Van Culin, (ACC), The Revd. Humphrey Taylor (USPG), The Bishops of Taejon, Seoul and Pusan and Fr. Stanley Davies (Chairman of the K.M.)

"Hermit Kingdom" with such tiny resources; also of his resignation in 1905, exhausted and haunted by a depressing sense of failure. The Service in 1989 Prior to the service a Reception for the three Korean Bishops was held, attended by friends of the Korean Mission from the United Kingdom, the USA and Korea. Among those present were the Korean Ambassador and Mrs. Oh, Fr. Clifford Smart who has now served 33 years in Korea, General Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley, and others representing the British Korean War Veterans' Association, Canon Sam Van Culin, Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council and Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Ward, USPG.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the evening Bishop Simon Kim (Seoul), Paul Yun (Taejon) and Benedict Bundo Kim (Pusan) gave a dinner, a Korean Meal, at Church House, at which the Dean of Westminster was among the many guests, also the Korean Ambassador and his wife, Miss Connie Young and Miss Joan Hackworth (who spoke after Dinner) and Brigadier Hackworth (great nephew of Bishop Corfe) and his wife. Fr. Luke Lee presided genially and bi-lingually. After the Korean Bishops, assisted by Fr. Davies, Chairman of the Korean Committee, had cut the splendid big Birthday Cake, there was some rather hauntingly lovely Korean solo and corporate singing before Bishop Paul Burrough pronounced bi-lingually the Farewell Blessing.

So ended an unforgettable All Saints' Day 1989, which had begun with a Korean Mission Committee Meeting in Partnership House at which Fr. Davies as Chairman, had welcomed the three Bishops and Fr. Smart, and at which the Bishop of Seoul spoke, and Mr. Edwin Ward of USPG. Fr. Davies also welcomed and thanked Mrs. Judy Sharman – it was her first visit – our new Administrative Secretary, for her valued, patient work in succession to Mrs. Louise Wyman who had nobly held the fort in that post for so long. Canon Masters was thanked for his far-sighted preparatory work for the Centenary observance which had smoothed the way so well, and Fr. Alan Messom and he were congratulated for the excellent work they were doing in producing such an attractive and readable "Morning Calm", which still featured Bishop Corfe's famous Missionary Compass on its cover. Bishop Simon Kim closed the meeting with his Blessing, and then the Committee gave a lunch.

sod in July 1889 for St. Saviour's Swindon, and attended its foundation-laying in August. Built by G.W.R. men in their spare time, it is one of the oldest subscribers to the Korean Mission. St. Mark's Swindon the Bishop used as a local base for raising funds for Korea, and he addressed a dinner-gathering of G.W.R. workmen and preached on several occasions. His long-standing connection with the church of St. John the Divine, Kennington was vigorously renewed, and Canon C.E. Brooke was chosen as his Commissary. The magazine "Morning Calm" began there, and for many years the Editor was a priest of St. John's where the early Korean Mission festivals were always held. Corfe wrote a great number of letters in this time, and was preaching for Korea all over England. The Royal Navy had responded to him by starting "The Naval Hospital Fund" for Korea, and Seoul and the port of Chemulpo got hospitals. The Duke of Edinburgh became first President of the Fund, and throughout the Navy "Bishop Corfe's Mission" was supported.

Corfe now went to the Sisters of St. Peter's Community, Kilburn (now at Woking) and enlisted their help. Sisters went out to Korea and were a tremendous blessing over many long, fraught years. Before 1889 head ended he inaugurated "The Association for Intercessory Prayer". It was, he insisted, to be not only for Korea, but "for **all** the foreign missionary work of the Church". Member-

ship was purely "by prayer and not by subscription". Into 1890 the Association already had 1,136 members. Later on it developed into the celebrated "Quarterly Intercession Paper", so widely used throughout the Church. The Bishop was always regarded by Father Kelly as the "Founder" of the Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham. As a young man the Revd. H. Kelly was a curate at St. Paul's Wimbledon, who in 1890 offered himself for missionary work with Corfe in Korea. Instead it was decided on Corfe's advice that Father Kelly should remain at home at St. John's, Vassall Road, Kennington with Father Brooke, to train men in a spirit of utter self-surrender for Korea. In fact the first recruit went out in 1892. Meanwhile the little Brotherhood became in 1893 "The Society of the Sacred Mission", a religious community as such, and eventually left Vassall Road in 1896 for Mildenhall. By 1898 eight trained men had been sent out to work in Korea. The Bishop later paid fine tribute to their devotion.

Having accomplished all this, and having conducted his first Confirmation Service at Lancing College (where he was for a short time as a very young boy), when he surprised and pleased everyone by using each boy's name as he confirmed – a practice then unheard of – he sailed for Korea, via America, and arrived as the First Bishop on Michaelmas Day, 1890.

(To be continued)

On All Soul's Day, the Archbishop of Canterbury received the Korean Bishops. The Archbishop expressed his great regret at being unable to be present at the Centenary Service in the Abbey, and hoped that the Centenary Year will be "a time of consolidation for the Church in Korea". He told the Chairman of the KM that the Korean Church will "continue to need the encouragement and support it receives from its friends overseas", and that he looked forward to his visit to Seoul in September 1990. That same evening the Bishops were guests at a dinner given by HE The Korean Ambassador at his Residence, at which Bishop Paul Burrough and his wife and the Chairman and his wife were also present.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the secular press The Times featured the Centenary Abbey Service on its "Court and Social" page, and in the Church press the Church of England Newspaper alone featured it in its "World News" column. So many thanks are due to the Dean of Westminster and all the Abbey staff for the kindness and really warm welcome we received and to the Abbey Sacrist, the Reverend Paul Fergusson, the Celebrant, for his ceremonial guidance.

Everyone who participated felt that the Centenary of the Korean Mission and the memory of a great pioneer Bishop who had left his beloved Royal Navy for a formidable, far-away task, had been well, joyfully, and honourably observed. As we look forward to the continuing task ahead, let us hope that this observance and next year's in Korea itself will inspire us all.

#### **The English Church Mission to Korea.**

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