

The land was to be left fallow for the whole year so that the land belongs to God. No man may sell the land because all the land belongs to God.

CELEBRATING THE JUBILEE

Twenty five years of the reign of a good king is a symbol of the British tradition. A symbol of traditional authority and tradition.

Are these traditional ways of exercising power and privilege those we want to celebrate? Do we want to celebrate a narrow nationalism which looks to past greatness when the oppression of others made us one of the strongest nations in the world? The survival of "our way of life" with its discrimination between people in terms of class, race or ethnicity? The continued ascendancy of the "haves" with their exploitation of the "have-nots"?

MALCOLM ROSS

The idea of a Jubilee year comes from the Bible (Leviticus Chapter 25). It was a sacred year to God in which was proclaimed "liberation to all the inhabitants of the land".

The land was to be left fallow for the whole year as a token that the land belongs to God. No man may own ~~the~~ land because all land belongs to God. Each has the right to live off the land, no one has the right to keep it for himself exclusively.

The idea of the Jubilee was a way of celebrating the liberation of the people from slavery and of the bringing them into the "promised land" of justice and peace between God and men, and between men and men. It was to be a reminder to the people of the sort of society they were meant to be - compassionate, just, liberated from oppression.

1977 is called our Year of Jubilee. What are we celebrating?

Twenty five years of the reign of a queen - who is a symbol of the British tradition. A symbol of traditional authority and traditional privilege.

Are these traditional ways of exercising power and privilege those we want to celebrate? Do we want to celebrate a narrow nationalism which looks to past greatness when the oppression of others made us one of the strongest nations in the world? The survival of "our way of life" with its discrimination between people in terms of class, race or ability? The continued ascendancy of the "haves" with their private estates, their accumulated wealth and their entrenched privileges, over the "have nots" in their dole queues, their monotonous dehumanising jobs and their restricted horizons? Do we want to celebrate the rise

of a new "modern Britain" in which the traditional upper classes have been displaced by the rising meritocracy of the "achievers" and the "go getters"? Those who can rise to "the challenge of life" and "show initiative" by climbing the ladder of success without a thought for those beneath them who hold the ladder up as they sink deeper into the despair of being "failures".

It may be that this sort of jubilee is what some people want to celebrate. In world terms even the poorest of us is a lot better off than the majority of the people in the world who share the resources of God's land. So far we have managed to stay among the possessors rather than the dispossessed, the fed rather than the hungry, those on top of the pile rather than those underneath.

This sort of jubilee is anti-human and therefore anti-Christian.

Those of us who follow the way of Jesus of Nazareth continue to celebrate a different Jubilee. In which the call is for those who possess to share with those who have nothing. For those who hold privilege to surrender it for the sake of those who do not. For those who are a "success" to learn to live from those who are "failures". For brothers and sisters to join hands in helping each other towards the realisation of their own full humanity.

Our Jubilee is a celebration of the kingship of the poor, the weak, the powerless, for only by our common struggle to set them free can we discover our own humanity and our own freedom. Our Jubilee is a celebration in the Way of Jesus. That love between us is possible if we allow that love to subvert and destroy the falsity and slavery which binds both ourselves and our society. It is a celebration that our "land" (our resources) belong not to us but to God, we are

of a new "modern Britain" in which the traditional upper classes have been displaced by the not owner occupiers but tenants and stewards for the sake of others as well as for ourselves. We celebrate the Jubilee of Christ our King who rules by serving others to the uttermost, whose "privilege" was to share our humanity in order to liberate "all the inhabitants of the land".

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Copies of this pamphlet are available from

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