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The Story of a Church

-FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

This year marks the half century of the Greater World Christian Spiritualist Church in St. Helier, Jersey. The anniversary celebrations were attended by Mrs. Nora Moor, national president of the Greater World, and Annette Clifton, editor of "The Greater World" paper.

On July 28th, 1935, a very special and unique event took place - unique, that is, for the Island of Jersey. At the Espero Hall, situated on The Parade, St. Helier, the very first service for Christian Spiritualism took place. The St. Helier C.S. Church was born.

The instigator was Charles E. Hedges, whose whole life was dedicated to the Christ Way. A science master at a local seat of learning, he was a much-respected man, and when he received the call to open a church on the island that dedication stood him in good stead.

"Now You Know!"

vacated and the church moved, for a time, to David Place.

In Enemy Hands

The St. Helier church had the experience of being the only Spiritualist church on British soil to undergo the trauma of enemy occupation during the last war. On July 1st, 1940, those many Channel Islanders who had not been evacuated to the mainland, woke up to find that the German invasion had begun. Jersey was occupied that day and was to remain so for five years.

In September, 1940, the Greater World church moved to another address in St. Helier, this time in Dumaresq Street,



CHARLES E. HEDGES: "Now you know," said the spirit visitor.

ment projects by the States of Jersey, the building had to be vacated. Compensation enabled the church to build its own place in Dorset Street, St. Helier, where it remains today, a continuing witness to Christian Spiritualism. It is a beautiful,

He is a man totally dedicated to Christian Spiritualism, and is ably supported by his wife, Olga. Both have been in the Movement over forty years.

Happy Anniversary

On Sunday, July 28th, 1985, a large congregation gathered at the Dorset Street church for the anniversary service, which was conducted by Mrs. Nora Moor, national president of the Greater World, Annette Clifton, the editor, and Roy Perkins, the church leader. It was a happy event, expressed through the warmth and friendship emanating from the congregation.

Roy Perkins spoke of the history of the church, its objects and aims, and Mrs. Moor continued the theme of history with her memories of the early days of Christian Spiritualism and Miss Winifred Moyes, founder of the Greater World Movement. These memories, which created a living link between the present day and the past, were appreciated by the congregation, and this was demonstrated in the warm reception given to Mrs. Moor.

One Sunday morning there appeared before him a visitor from the world of Spirit. In a great light, the spirit form came quietly. No words were spoken, but impressed upon Hedges mind were the words "Now you know!" Had the words been spoken they could not have made a deeper impression. The spirit vanished, but for many days Hedges felt an ecstasy of the soul which no earthly joy could give. Several days passed before he received another message. On that occasion a voice said: "Reveal to others what a loving God has revealed to you.

Hedges became a highly gifted medium and became one of the early diploma holders in the Greater World Movement. His ministry as a platform medium was to take him to the mainland, where he quickly linked up with the Greater World. In 1936, one year after the founding of his church, he sought affiliation with The Greater World Christian Spiritualist League. This was granted and from that time the church maintained close links with Headquarters, with only one period - five years - when the link became inactive, through no fault of its own.

In 1938 the Espero Hall was

where they were to remain throughout the war.

It is an amazing fact - but perhaps not so surprising if one considers that the protective hand of Spirit was upon them - that the small Christian Spiritualist church was unharmed throughout the years of enemy occupation, and received no harassment or interference from the Germans. But nevertheless, hardships *were* experienced. On three occasions Roy Perkins, the present leader of the church, escaped deportation to Germany at the very last moment! Life was lived on a knife-edge but the church remained open and active. Several of the church members befriended some of the Russian slave labourers brought to the Island by the Germans to dig a huge underground hospital. To openly befriend such people was to risk severe reprisals by the Germans.

After the war - in 1954 - the church was Registered in accordance with the States of Jersey Law, Article 38, for Births, Marriages and Deaths. Five years later (in 1959), when the Dumaresq property was purchased from the owner, the church had the joy of continuing in its own premises until 1970. In that year, due to redevelop-

modern building, its interior simple in design, clean and sparkling. The abundance of flowers on the Island (for which Jersey is noted) is shown in the floral arrangements. In a large alcove to one side of the rostrum stands an organ and a lectern.

A Woman of Courage

Charles Hedges passed to the higher life in August, 1964. The next president was English-born Mrs. E. A. Chegwyn, a most remarkable woman, who had been headmistress of a Jersey school. During the enemy occupation of the Island, she was deported to Germany, with many others, but survived the trauma of internee camps and returned to the Island after the war. She was endowed with a great sense of duty, but preferred to stay out of the limelight.

Mrs. Chegwyn's presidency continued until 1972, when she resigned through ill health. Her transition took place the following year, in England, and the funeral service was held at Greater World Headquarters, conducted by Mr. Fred Moor, then national president.

Mr. Roy G. Perkins was elected president in 1972 and remains the leader to this day.

Later, during the demonstration of clairvoyance given by the editor of *The Greater World*, friends and loved ones from Spirit made known their presence on this happy occasion.

After the service, a celebration cake was cut and it was ten o'clock before the lights were finally extinguished in the church and the doors locked for the night. There were to be three other services that week, conducted by Annette Clifton, before the church folded away its half a century of memories and began the task of moving towards its next fifty year landmark! Somewhere from Spirit Charles Hedges must have been giving thanks to that bright messenger of God who appeared to him that Sunday morning in the early 1930's!

The warmth and friendliness of the Jersey people is a joy to experience, and any readers planning holidays on the Island will find this an added bonus to their trip.

The church is located in Dorset Street, St. Helier. Sunday services are at 7 p.m.; there is

(See next page, column 1)

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Material submitted for publication in THE GREATER WORLD must be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope for return if necessary.

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THE STORY OF A CHURCH

(Continued from front page)

healing on Tuesday at 7.30 p.m. and a service on Wednesday evening at 7.30 p.m. Discussion Nights are arranged as required. All enquiries to Mr. and Mrs. Perkins, telephone no. 0534-39528.

(Ed: In the archives of *The Greater World* are reports of Zodiac services held at the Town Hall in St. Helier both before and after the war, so that Jersey was well known to our Founder, Miss Winifred Moyes. It is a happy thought.)

- (5) I believe in communion with God, with His angelic ministers. and with souls functioning in conditions other than the earth life.
- (6) I believe all forms of life created by God intermingle, are interdependent and evolve until perfection is attained.
- (7) I believe in the perfect justice of the Divine Laws governing all life.
- (8) I believe that sins committed can be rectified only by the sinner himself or herself, through the redemptive power of Jesus Christ, by repentance and service to others.