

## *Bishop Kenneth Hallowes (1913–1995)*

Ken Hallowes, who died at his home in Pietermaritzburg on 10 July 1995 aged 82, came from a line of Anglican missionary priests. His great-grandfather came to this country in the early 1870s as a missionary sent by the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG); his grandfather was Charles Johnson after whom the Charles Johnson Memorial Hospital at Nqutu was named; his father came from England in the early 1900s to work at the hospital in preparation for becoming a missionary. There he met and married Johnson's daughter.

Despite this background, it seemed at first that Ken Hallowes would not follow in the footsteps of his missionary forebears. He had a typical Zulu boyhood, joining the other herdboys around the mission looking after their fathers' cattle. From this experience he learnt fluent Zulu and a great respect for Zulu culture and tradition.

After his schooling at Cordwalles and Michaelhouse he worked briefly as a sugar-cane farmer on the Natal south coast before moving to Kenya. During the four years he spent on a coffee farm there, he decided to enter the priesthood, and saved enough money to study at Oxford. He was still in England when the Second World War broke out. Shortly before he joined the army he met Nancy Joan Dewey, whom he married after the war: he was chopping down pit props, while she ran a rest centre for bombing victims. Three sons were born of the marriage.

He served in North Africa (including the Battle of El Alamein), Italy and Greece, and after he was demobbed studied theology at Cambridge before returning to South Africa in 1947. He spent four years at St Chad's Teachers' Training College at Ladysmith, and then moved to Springvale Mission near Highflats, one of the longest established of the USPG missions, which his great-grandfather had served and helped to found.

He never lost the practical farming and building skills which he acquired in his youth, and during his 14 years at Springvale he built more than 20 churches. Suffragen Bishop Matthew Makhaye, who was one of his assistant priests at Springvale, said that during their rounds of the extensive mission and its outstations, Hallowes would often stop being a priest and become a builder', teaching the young urban priest how to mix cement, and clamber up on to a roof to hammer in nails.

Hallowes was consecrated Suffragen Bishop of Natal in 1969 and retired in 1981, but during those 12 years he was always more at home in a safari suit and gumboots, or a beekeeper's helmet and veil, than in episcopal robes.

His period as bishop coincided with some of the worst apartheid excesses and he took a strong stand against forced removals and detentions. He joined an ecumenical church leaders' group to oppose the removal of thousands of people to the barren veld at Limehill, and was instrumental in persuading the Anglican Church to join and help fund the ecumenical justice organisation Diakonia. Bishop Makhaye said that Hallowes completely identified with the Zulu people whom he served. He would sit where the people sat and eat what they ate.'

CARMEL RICKARD

(Courtesy of the *Sunday Times*)



**Kenneth Hallowes**  
*(Photograph: Natal Witness)*