

Martin Way Methodist Church

Newsletter – November 2004

Minister – Rev John Nyota

From the Minister
November 2004

Dear friends,

Wangari: the story of a woman

She is the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize and just the fourth African ever. The 2004 Nobel Laureate is Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan woman known to the Nyotas. This is her story from the perspective of Kenyan journalists.

Seven-year-old Wangari and a little boy her age are sitting on a grassy knoll overlooking the river. The boy asks whether she knows how to write. She doesn't. So he scribbles a few words on a piece of paper. She's very impressed. Then he asks her whether she knows how to erase. Again she doesn't. So he pulls out an eraser from his pocket and rubs out the marks that he has made. Wangari is fascinated. That evening, she goes home and tells her mother about that boy; he knows so many things, "Not only can he write, he can rub!"

Flash forward to the year 2004 and Wangari, now 64, has just been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace

How does it feel, coming from a point where an eraser was magic, to winning a much desired and very extraordinary global award? Wangari must be elated, overwhelmed, happy - really feeling good about herself.

The "write and rub" anecdote is one of the things Wangari remembers vividly about her school and childhood days. She also remembers the river she crossed on her way to school every day. "It was so clean that I could count the pebbles in it", she reminisces. "I was fascinated by the water and would gaze into it for ages."

It is impossible to see the Nobel Prize winner without going to where the 'green ' story begins

Wangari was born in a village in Nyeri district in 1940. She was just a toddler when her family removed to the Rift Valley where her father worked on a white settler's farm. When she was about seven the family moved back to Nyeri. She was amazed by the hills in Nyeri as her place in the Rift Valley was very flat. She could not understand the concept of walking downhill, so to make sure she didn't lose her balance, she would walk on all fours - backwards. The children of the village had a field day with this behaviour.

But life hasn't been all roses for Wangari. She's had very low moments as well. Once was when she went to prison for about four days. Reason: contempt of court. She had told 'Viva' magazine during an interview after her divorce case in the 80s that the judge was either incompetent or corrupt, or both. She was put in a cell with two other women who taught her how to fold her blanket so that she could lie on it, as they had no mattresses. She was not in a crowded cell because she was considered a very dangerous criminal and had to be isolated.

A simple life

Wangari lives a very simple life. She has the wherewithal to live better but she doesn't. She could live in posh areas like Lavington but has chosen South C, a middle class estate. Although she could drive around in big cars, I remember seeing her in a Nissan van on the Friday the news was announced. She likes the Nissan because she can carry her constituents in it. When on tour if someone needs a ride, it is easier when she has a car that has space instead of simply using a five-seater!"

Wangari's compound has an amazing amount of green amidst the concrete of that area. The neighbours call it a mini forest. Her simplicity extends to her personal style. Her trademark outfit is a 'kitenge', a flowing African print dress.

Continued next month . . .

John

QUOTE - UNQUOTE

The Bible is indeed our plough, our harrow, our seed corn and our bread. Sometimes we may use it as one of these, sometimes as another; it will serve all these uses and more

William Jowett 1833

BIBLELANDS - 150th ANNIVERSARY

Thank you so very much to the faithful "few" including those from St. Martins, St. James, and Stoneleigh Methodist, who came to listen and watch Sevan Balabarien's talk and presentation on the Armenian schools and church life in Lebanon. A wonderful total of £100 was donated to BibleLands and we thank those concerned wholeheartedly for their generous support.

Grateful thanks also to John Nyota, Bob, Rosemary and Roy for their help.

Mary and Derek Heaton

CHRISTMAS POST BOX AND CARDS

As has been our tradition over the years we will again place our Christmas post box in the vestibule into which you may post cards to friends within our Church family, with a donation in lieu of postage for Methodist Homes for the Aged. For the past two years several people have chosen to place just one card in the post box addressed the "The Church Family". These have been displayed on the notice boards in the corridor together with those sent by past church members. We will again be offering this alternative - those of you who have difficulty writing several cards found this a very useful service. Others of you may like to consider the option - perhaps the money saved from not buying cards could also be donated to MHA, or your own personal favourite charity. Alternatively you may like to submit your own personal Christmas greeting to Rosemary to be included in the December Newsletter. These would need to reach Rosemary by 14 November at the latest.

Lesley Mortley

QUOTE - UNQUOTE

Be kind - everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle (*John Watson*)

WHY?

What I am writing now will not make comfortable reading and will no doubt make some people cross, but at the same time I hope that it will also make them think. I want to raise the question why do we not support each other's efforts as much as we should? On 7th October there was a presentation about the work of the BibleLands in Beirut. It was part of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the BibleLands. Very few of us came to that very interesting evening. In fact there were probably as many people from other churches as there were from Martin Way. We let ourselves down badly on that occasion.

Then on Saturday 9th October Midways held a coffee morning in aid of John Nyota's Baby Simba project. It was poorly supported although those who did turn up were generous. Many more could have spared half an hour or so to encourage the efforts of Maralyn and the Midway ladies.

As a church we seem to have become very apathetic. How can we reach out to those in the neighbourhood if we cannot even support each other's efforts?

Bill Cox

PASTORAL VISITORS' TRAINING

Saturday 6 November at Raynes Park

The Pastoral Visitors' Training Workshop will take place on Saturday November 6th at Raynes Park Church in the Wesley Room, from 9.45am to 1pm.

The theme of the workshop is 'Could you be Loved?'. The workshop will revolve around three main topics, all of which were generated by pastoral visitors at the last workshop.

- 1) Young People
- 2) Building pastoral bridges to users of church premises
- 3) How to represent to persons of another faith

There will be tea, coffee and refreshments. Everyone is welcome, pastoral visitors or anyone interested in the pastoral aspects of church membership. The workshop will be led by John Vanek, Lay Worker.

METHODIST HOMES SUNDAY

7th November

This day is designated by conference as a day on which we celebrate the work done by the charity for and with older people. This year's theme is "Every Crowd has a Silver Lining".

On 7 November and throughout the year we are asked to remember MHA in our prayers.

- To give thanks to God for older people in the Church and community
- To pray for the staff and volunteers in MHA's projects.
- To pray for those for whom ageing brings particular difficulties, and for those who are carers.
- To give thanks for the contribution that MHA makes to older people's lives.

The projects covered in South London Districts include:-

- Residential care in Bexhill on Sea, Shirley in Croydon, Tankerton and Woking
- Residential and dementia care in Wallington (Ryelands)
- Live at Home support in Reigate and Redhill

The target for South London is: £20,000

Ryelands, our nearest local home has recently completed building a special care unit for 15 people living with dementia and 23 retirement flats are being constructed in the grounds.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH - NOVEMBER

You have probably come across Thomas Hood's poem which begins

No sun, no moon,
No morn, no noon,
No dawn, no dusk,
No proper time of day...

And ends with the single word NOVEMBER. The thoughts conveyed in that poem seem to indicate that November is a non-month, a negative

month. Yet when we come to think about it we find that November is a month full of interest and variety. On the last day of October we have Halloween and then November bursts in with All Saints' Day, followed by All Souls' Day Children will need no reminder of Guy Fawkes Day although the older ones among us may find it too reminiscent of the Blitz because fireworks seem to get louder and louder with each passing year. Then comes the Lord Mayor's Show and, of course, Remembrance Sunday with the commemorations at the Albert Hall on the previous evening. If we are so inclined we can celebrate St Hilda and St. Hugh on 17th; then towards the end of the month we come to Advent and finally on 30th our Scottish friends remember their patron saint, Andrew. So November is far from being a negative month. It is a month of variety with things for both young and old. God is with us all our days whether they be happy or sad, exciting or solemn. No day need be negative - unless we choose to make it so.

Bill Cox

LIVING IN A MULTI-FAITH SOCIETY

I was lucky enough to hear Tom Butler, Bishop of Southwark, speaking about this during St. Mary Merton's excellent week of talks/discussions 'Talking Points' at the end of September. In a challenging and thought-provoking talk he pointed out that faith is taken more seriously now by the media and that Muslims and those of other faiths are our allies in this development. He quoted Archbishop Runcie as a Christian leader saying that we should strengthen Christians in their faith, support those of other faiths and challenge those of no faith. Evangelism begins by working together for the common good, making colleagues of those of other faiths so that mutual trust and respect can develop. He concluded with the story of the guru who said that his followers should have the courage of a warrior and the holiness of a saint. A lively discussion followed.

You missed a fair treat friends! If you get a second chance take it!

Rosemary Keen

WHAT CAN YOU CHANGE ABOUT YOUR LIFE?

"Before I went I remember being in Top Shop and they had a style that was called 'Africa' and they had a lot of strange, funky clothes, and weird patterns... and they were a little bit like we saw out there but, oh, just so far from it... "

Ruth Davies had an experience this summer that's made her think a lot about shopping. She went to Kenya with the CMS Encounter programme. Ruth, 19, spent 3 weeks there with a group of young people from her church in Swansea.

But the team did find out about real life as well as real African fashion. One of their highlights was meeting a missionary couple who had been sent from their church to work in the Kibera slum in Nairobi, helping to get street children back into families.

So this could be a story about the traumatic life of street children: but today it's about the effect meeting them had on Ruth.

"God underlined a few things that I already knew," she reflected.

"There's my heart for justice: I had an inkling it was there, but God really 'let that go' in Nairobi when I saw the street children."

The trip brought into focus the choices we all make every day, the kind denied to Nairobi's street children. Ruth has spent a lot of time "thinking about money and how people spend it". Sarah Tebbs, 20, who went on Encounter to Ukraine with a team drawn from all over Britain, agrees that while the experience was wonderful, now is the crunch time: "In a way, coming back home made more of an impression than when I was out there - thinking, 'Where am I going to go with God now? What is he calling me to do?'"

"Looking at my own life," continues Ruth, even as she gets angry at the spending sprees of her friends, "I've just got to keep bringing it back to myself and saying, 'What can you change about your life?'"

Good question.

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QUOTES FROM OUR ARCHIVES - NOVEMBER

24 November 1933

Building Committee: the architect agreed to replan the initial buildings five feet nearer Martin Way, leaving 29 ft between Martin Way and the Church

12 November 1934

Miss Catchpole appointed temporarily as Guide Captain

JMA - a library had been formed; Toy Service - toys to be sent to the Play Hour at Lambeth Mission; Sunday School choir to start

23 November 1934

Available space in roof to be utilised for storage of tables and trestles; entry for same through fanlight in the Primary room

25 November 1934

The meeting held on Monday afternoons had taken the form of a Ladies Guild of Fellowship

14 November 1935

A meeting had been called to discuss plans for future work and progress of the church: aim to extend Christ's Kingdom in our midst ; - to double the membership and congregation

A Disciples Roll to be prepared for signatures by old or new members - the roll to be kept on the Communion Table at all services

11 November 1936

The watercourse at rear of site had been culverted

It was resolved that the time for closing meetings should not be later than 10pm, the building to be cleared not later than 10.30pm except with the special consent of the Chapel Stewards

It was decided to send a letter of appreciation to Jobs Dairy in view of their offer to plant and maintain a hedge between our side and theirs

Man to be employed to dig the borders at a cost of approximately £1

5 November 1942

Mr Lawrence intimated his wish to resign the joint office of organist and choirmaster... Mr C Jarvis was appointed [in his place]

Salvage The secretary read a letter from Mr Japes complaining as to the handling of waste paper by the Scouts ... the matter of a strong lock to the coke shed is being put in hand.

Blackout - thanks were accorded to the group of men headed by Mr Watts for the provision and fixing of black-out material

5 November 1955

The Manse Trust have decided to purchase no 14 Tybenham Road for the new manse

BOOK THE DATES

6 November

- St. Mary Merton Autumn Fair from 11am to 2pm: in the Church Hall

27 November

- St. James' Fair from 11am to 1 pm

27 November

- Alexander House Christmas Bring and Buy at 12 Clifton Road Wimbledon from 10.30am to 12 noon. £1 admission including coffee

CHURCH DIARY FOR NOVEMBER

Mon	1	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Mr Bill Cox)
Wed	3	7.45 pm	Midways (Doreen Dowling - Greetings Cards)
Sun	7	10.30 am	All Age Worship led by Janet and Bob Hamblin
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev John Nyota
Mon	8	2.45 pm	Fellowship
Tue	9	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Thu	11	2-3.00 pm	Seekers' Group
Fri	12	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	14	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev John Nyota
Mon	15	2.45 pm	Fellowship
Tue	16	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club (Derek and Mary Heaton Scotland)
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	17	7.45 pm	Midways (Geoffrey Moir - The Falklands after the War)
Thu	18	8.00 pm	Mission Committee
Sun	21	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev Faith Nyota
Mon	22	2.45 pm	Fellowship
Tue	23	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Thu	25	2-3.00 pm	Seekers' Group
Fri	26	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	28	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev Michael Meech
Mon	29	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Mr Bill Cox)
Tue	30	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer