

# Martin Way Methodist Church

Newsletter - April 2004

Minister - Rev John Nyota

## A Deadly yet a must Safari

Jambo rafiki (dear friends)

We all know those things that are risky yet must be undertaken. Lent is a time to recall to mind such events. There is a tradition among the Maasai regarding the initiation to manhood. The pain is excruciating because the circumcision is done without the painkillers and when one is already an adult, 15-18 years old. Yet every boy who wishes to be called a man has to go through this painful but necessary ceremony.

But if you think that is scary consider this one, which is now dying. Every initiate was required to hunt for a lion and kill it. Only then would he come back home as an approved defender of the community - Moran. If the first one is torture then the second is deadly. Of course there is a sense in which a number of Morans would have pooled resources to kill a lion together, but even then it is deadly and lives were normally lost.

I know by now you are thanking God, like me, that you were never born a Maasai! Well as Christians we know the cost of the cross. It was a deadly safari which was necessary. It had to be taken! Without it there would have been no hope for you and me and for millions of others out there. Jesus came knowing all too well that he was a sheep for slaughter. This was however not very explicit to his disciples and the crowd of joy riders who accompanied him wherever he went. For them the day of reckoning for the rowdy Romans had finally come. With Jesus around the guys were going to be fixed. What was even better, they were going to replace them. In fact their arguments were about who was greatest.

Little did they know that they were in for a dangerous Safari! Any one among them who wanted to save their lives had to lose it first. Indeed any that wished to follow him had to take up the cross. The king they were following had a different agenda. His was not just an earthly kingdom but an eternal one. It involved humbling himself to death even death on the

cross. For indeed the very act of shedding the glamour of heaven and coming down was itself a humbling mission.

This is what we are called to as Christians and Easter is a time to remember. That just like our King who confounded the world we are called to lose what we love most for the sake of others even for the sake of Christ. Entry to the kingdom is not a Concorde trip. It is a painful one, a deadly one yet necessary. It is like driving on the wrong side of the road colliding with the cars on the opposite side. I mean it is telling the world not so much with your mouth but more with your actions that life can be lived in a more humane way. That there is an alternative to immorality, to selfishness etc. We are the alternative. Our ways are bound to crash with those of the world but so be it. That is what makes the safari deadly.

But lest we forget, our King will not last for long in the grave! Even death cannot contain him. Then comes the celebration. To be Morans we have got to face the lion like our King, not with spears and arrows but with humility and firmness to the cross and the reward will be heavenly life below (not in worldly terms) and actual heaven after. I cannot wait for this safari. Will you come with me?

*John*

### **What and who are the Leadership Team?**

Some people at Martin Way are asking - what is the Leadership Team? As its name suggests it is a team of people brought together by the Minister and the Church (Vestry) Stewards to provide leadership and support for the whole church in Worship and Pastoral matters and act as a support for the Minister. The team consists at present of the Minister and Vestry Stewards together with co-opted people. These at present comprise the Worship Co-ordinator, a Local Preachers' representative and the Church Worship Leader. The co-opted members can be changed or others can be added if it is felt that the church would benefit.

We trust that this will help people to understand the purpose of the team and that everyone will feel free to speak to any of us about Worship, Pastoral or other matters relating to the life of the Church here at Martin Way.

*The Leadership Team*

## **Jean Butland**

It is with great sadness that we report the sudden death of Jean Butland on 7 March. One of the earliest members of Martin Way she was dearly loved by all who knew her. We all share with John and the family in the sadness of her loss and assure them of our love and prayers. A full tribute will appear in the next Newsletter.

## **Dates for your Diary**

- **BIG BRUNCH** Saturday 3 April 9-12 noon  
GODSPELL is going to have quite a few expenses and in order to keep costs down SIGMA are having a Big Brunch on 3 April 9-12 noon. All profits are to go towards the expenses of the production so that we can send more to NCH Action for Children
- **GODSPELL - MAY BANK HOLIDAY** 1-2 MAY: Book the date now!
- **TONGUES OF FIRE** -lead a Christian Aid concert on Saturday, 22nd May. More details in next month's Newsletter and the Weekly Notices

## **Many Thanks**

Following their two excellent concerts Merton Park Music Centre have generously given the grand amount of £200 to the church funds.

## **St. Raphael's hospice**

Join in Tea @ Three and support

Last year more than 50 tea parties were held in Merton and Sutton during the month of June to support St. Raphael's Hospice. Thousands more were held up and down the country in support of hospices nationwide, People held them in their homes, gardens, offices, shops and schools.

Could you help to raise more funds to enable us to continue caring for the terminally ill amongst us.

*Further information from Tony Loft.*

## **An Invitation**

Before the war most Methodists had a Wesley Guild. The one at Raynes Park Methodist Church was at one time the largest in the District with over two hundred members. Today our membership is down to fourteen, but there is good fellowship and friendship to be found at our Monday evening meetings.

The Wesley Guild movement has since 1912 encouraged and supported the development of primary health care in Africa. In 1992 the Nigeria Health Care Project was launched. By August 2003, £500,000 had been reached. The money goes to rural areas of Nigeria where health care provision is either inadequate or non-existent.

On Monday 26 April the Wesley Guild at Raynes Park is being honoured by a visit from John Mann who is coming down from Huddersfield. He is the West Yorkshire Guild Secretary and has been actively involved in the work being done in Nigeria. He will talk about it and show slides.

The members of the Wesley Guild at Raynes Park invite you to join them on this very special occasion. Please come and support them if you possibly can. There will be stationery items for sale and a collection for the work in Nigeria.

I look forward to seeing you at Raynes Park Methodist Church on Monday 26 April at 7.30 pm.

*Bill Cox (Vice-chairman and Secretary of the Raynes Park Wesley Guild)*

## **Fellowship**

Every Monday afternoon a small group meets to enjoy a series of excellent speakers followed by a cheering cup of tea. It may well be that newcomers to the church or those who attend other meetings, such as Midways or Coffee and Chat do not realise just what good things they are missing. The meetings are open to all and a warm welcome awaits you.

## **Thought for the Month**

April - the very name sounds as if it should be a gentle month. After the cold and gloom of January and February and the blustering of March, April with its gentle showers brings the promise of flowers to come in May - or was that before global warming?

Anyway, gentleness is one of the Fruits of the Spirit. Paul mentions in his letter to Galatians (Chapter 5 verse 22)

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Surely the world today is in urgent need of these fruits! Someone suggested concentrating thoughts and prayers on each fruit in turn for a whole week. First love, then joy and so on. Then, when you come to the end, start all over again! Someone else suggested that there should be a

tenth fruit - a sense of humour. That certainly is a wonderful gift from God for which we should give thanks and praise. But, like all of God's gifts, a sense of humour can be used as God intended, or misused. It needs to be seasoned with a bit of April's gentleness!

*Bill Cox*

### **Sri Lanka - Methodist/Anglican Teacher Training Colony**

It is now March 1921 and Mr and Mrs Sneath are with us. The Wesleyan Missionary Society have sent out a man who beyond excellent educational qualifications is inspired with a true spirit of unity and finds in this place real scope for the expression of his ideals and powers.

Frequent reference has been made to the need of a national expression for religious feeling. This Lent we have as a staff taken up this matter, and on Ash Wednesday as a whole Colony we went in procession to Getambe church. All of us were dressed in white and, led by the women students who held the banner, we filed for a mile down the Colony Hill chanting a hymn. When we reached our Practising School we sang another hymn, and then continued to the Church where Mr Sneath preached the sermon. We returned as we came. The Staff are enthusiastic over the value to the students and to our neighbours of such expression to our religious feelings..

On Good Friday we held a simple but striking service. The voluntary self-denial of the students and staff produced 50 rupees which was spent on rice. During the previous weeks the students had been visiting the villages and finding cases of need. On this afternoon, the rice was dedicated to God's use and distributed to the students who then started off on their happy journeys. 240 measures of rice went to some 60 families and were a practical expression to them of the gratitude we felt to God for His great love. As the rice was given the students told the people that as rice is the staff of physical life so there was something necessary for eternal spiritual life. This either became the chance for conversation or for telling them of the open air services they could attend to learn more.

Good Friday our main hall was illuminated with Crosses. As a whole Colony we went in procession with lights into the high road and held two services and proclaimed full and free and immediate Salvation from sin as the gift of God.

On Easter evening the hall was illuminated with Crowns instead of Crosses; sacrifice consummated in victory. A number of outsiders, villagers and traders, came to the Magic Lantern service when again Christ's Gospel was heralded forth. Then in an impassioned few words one of the staff told the people that he knew that though we were to preach all day they would never gather the reality of our joy at Christ's resurrection from words alone. So out of the fullness of our heart and to give vent to pent up feeling we were going to set off fireworks that from this demonstration of joy they might the more readily share with us in our sense of victory.

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### **Superflour and Wonder Women**

In one of the countries of Central Asia chronic malnutrition affects over 50% of children under five, according to the world food programme. Its war-torn recent history has left many widows, as well as men unable to work because of ill-health.

Now development workers have introduced the concept of 'Superflour' to local people. The words 'simple' and 'genius' might have been invented to describe this idea, first developed by Miriam Krantz, a Mennonite missionary in Nepal.

The recipe is simple: two parts grain, one part pulses. A nutritious flour results, which can be produced by local women using local ingredients: here they use corn, rice and chickpeas. With water and a teaspoon of oil it makes a 'super-porridge' which both tastes good and helps children to recover from malnutrition. Add a little wheat flour and you can make bread and cakes too.

The project is entirely run by women: a local project officer and two supervisors work with 34 others to produce the flour - they are all the main breadwinners for their families. "The women clearly enjoy working together and they have enjoyed the other training in literacy, health education and numeracy that we have given them" says one worker.

So does Superflour really have super powers? It sometimes seems like it: "It changes the lives of those who prepare it as they gain confidence and self-esteem. Their neighbours ask them about health issues and their husbands (if they have them) include them more in decisions that affect the family."

It is hoped that the project will grow into a women's co-operative and spread throughout the country. Meanwhile the project officer now gets introduced to young children on the street by their mothers with the words, "This woman helped you get strong!"

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### **Story told by an Old Woman at Piddi, Pakistan June 1935**

When I was fifteen or sixteen years old I dreamt one night that I stood at a place where there were two ways; one of them was broad and very easy to go along, but there came a bad smell from it, the other way was covered with bushes and brambles, and there was only a narrow, difficult pathway through them.

But I went along this narrow path, and, at the end of it, there were three Holy Men sitting, and, on the head of One, was a crown of thorns. He was busy writing in His books and there were angels sitting all round singing most beautifully.

I sat down against a wall and listened, and, after a time, He spoke to me and said: "Little girl, you will get tired sitting there, and I am not ready for you yet, I think you had better go back now, and I will send for you again later on."

Then I woke up and found that I was on my own bed, but I have never forgotten my dream. I did not know who it was that I had seen until some years later, after my marriage, missionaries came to my village and told me about the Lord Jesus, and then I knew that it must have been He, for He was wearing the crown of thorns. Had I known before I would have asked to stay longer and see more of that wonderful place.

Since then, through all the many troubles of my life, that memory has been with me and has given me much comfort and help, for I hope again to see Him whom I saw in my dream that day

*[© Acc. 532 Katharine Cox, working at Tarn Taran]*

### **CHURCH DIARY FOR APRIL**

Thu	1	2-3.00 pm	Seekers Group
Fri	2	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	4	10.30 am	Palm Sunday Family Service led by Rev John Nyota

Mon	5	2.45 pm	Fellowship - Molly Clements - Hot Water Bottles
		8.00 pm	Easter Evening Meditation
Tue	6	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Easter Evening Meditation
Wed	7	8.00 pm	Easter Evening Meditation
Thu	8	8.00 pm	Maundy Thursday Service - Communion and washing
Fri	9	10.30 am	Good Friday Service at Merton Park Baptist Church
		pm	Good Friday Picnic/Ramble at Hurst Park
Sun	11	6.00 am	Sunrise Communion on Cannon Hill Common led by Rev John Nyota, followed by Breakfast at Martin Way
		10.30 am	Easter Day Communion Service led by Rev John Nyota
Tue	13	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	14	7.45 pm	Midways - Doreen Dowling - Decorations and Flowers
Thu	15	2-3.00 pm	Seekers Group
Fri	16	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	18	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Mr David Morgan
Mon	19	2.45 pm	Fellowship
Tue	20	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club - Mrs Pamela Lyne - "Paintings I like, but..."
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	25	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev John Nyota
		8.00 pm	Service led by Janet and Bob Hamblin
Mon	26	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Lily Dakin)
		8.00 pm	Pastoral Committee (at the Manse)
Tue	27	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	28	7.45 pm	Midways - David Harrison - Mysterious Wimbledon
Fri	30	12.30 pm	Lunch Club