

Martin Way Methodist Church

Newsletter – September 2004

Minister – Rev John Nyota

LETTER FROM CHAIRMAN OF THE SOUTH-WEST DISTRICT

July 2004

Dear Friends,

In 2000 the Methodist Conference adopted the Our Calling process as a basic framework within which local churches could seek to understand their mission and purpose. Many local churches had adopted it as a way of evaluating all that they do, either through some form of annual review, or through a more heightened day-to-day awareness of their common life. So the Church exists to:

- increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love
- help people to learn and grow as Christians through mutual support and care;
- become a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice;
- and make more followers of Jesus Christ

However, Our Calling was intended to be much more than a policy document handed down from on high; it was only the beginning of a process through which local churches were to be encouraged to move beyond living off the 'spiritual capital' of the past and to release energy and creativity for the future. The building blocks of Our Calling have now led the Conference of 2004 to adopt Priorities for the Methodist Church. Here they are:

In partnership with others wherever possible, the Methodist Church will concentrate its prayers, resources, imagination and commitments on this priority:

- to affirm its conviction of God's love in Christ for us and for all the world; and renew confidence in God's presence and action in the world and in the Church.

As ways towards realizing this priority, the Methodist Church will give particular attention to the following:-

- underpinning everything we do with God-centred worship and prayer;
- supporting community development and action for justice, especially among the most deprived and poor – in Britain and worldwide;
- developing confidence in evangelism and in the capacity to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved;
- encouraging fresh ways of being Church; and
- nurturing a culture in the Church which is people-centred and flexible

That emphasis on partnership is significant; it comes from an awareness that the Church which looks in on itself without reference to the world beyond its walls is impoverished. Evangelisation – which is a broader term than evangelism – is about the transmission of Gospel values into all areas of life. Therefore partnerships with those national and local bodies which share some of our values about human community can be effective means for sharing the Christian message. But to share the Christian message in a secular culture such as ours involves something of a recovery of confidence in God; and it is that theme of recovery of confidence in God which runs like a golden thread through the Priorities: in worship, in our action for social justice, in evangelism which enables us to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved – now there's a test! – in the encouragement of new ways of being Church, and the pastoral dimension of being people-centred and flexible in all that we do.

How could you see your church responding to these priorities? And what would they mean to you as an individual? We shall begin to tease those questions out at our Autumn Synod on 18 September when the General Secretary of the Methodist Church, the Revd David Deeks, comes to lead a session on Priorities for the Methodist Church. But these are not questions solely for Synod buffs. In the coming months, I hope that you will be able to engage with them in circuit meetings, in church councils, in house groups, and in your personal discipleship of Jesus Christ.

The conference also adopted the Report on the Future of London Methodism. This means that we shall be working towards the establishment of a single District for Greater London in 2006, but taking

more time to agree appropriate structures for the circuits outside London. In order to achieve this, Implementation Groups will be set up; they will of course include representatives from the present London South-West District. The Implementation Group for the London District will produce detailed recommendations to Conference 2005 for implementation in September 2006; the Implementation Group for the circuits outside London will consider further options for their new arrangements and bring proposals to Conference 2005, indicating any necessary transitional arrangements and a firm date for implementation – which I hope will be from September 2007. In addition the five circuits in the London South-West District which straddle the Greater London boundary will be undertaking consultations about their future shape and location.

As you can imagine there will be a huge amount of work to do between now and 2007! I am grateful to those who will be contributing to the process by serving as members of the connexional Coordinating Group, the Implementation Groups, the Nomination Committees for the new District Chairs, and in many other ways. Times of transition can and do induce anxiety. My hope and prayer is that the Holy Spirit will strengthen and guide us through these turbulent times in the life of the Church and bring us through to a place of resolution from which we can embark on fresh journeys of faith.

*With best wishes,
Yours ever,
John Swarbrick*

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel"

"If you dropped a penny on the way to work would you bother to bend down and pick it up? A penny a day is exactly what it would cost you if the UK decided to cancel all the debt owed to the UK by the world's most indebted countries 1p per day per person for less than a year"

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH - SEPTEMBER

I am at last beginning to catch up, having been on an introductory computer course. I now have my own computer and my own e-mail address, but to be honest I feel that the computer is in charge of me rather than the other way round. It seems to have a mind of its own and I'm scared of it which, I gather, is not an uncommon experience. Anyway, the other night I did manage to send two emails, one to a friend four doors down the road, the other to a friend in the United States. I gather that the messages took about the same time to reach both of them. How clever we are! Or are we? Whatever we discover, God has already known. Whatever new thing he reveals to us brings with it new responsibilities. Computers, like many other things we simply take for granted, can be used for good or evil purposes. What a wonderful God we have, but how great are the responsibilities that rest upon our shoulders!

Bill Cox

TALKING POINTS - 27 September-1 October at 8pm

This is a week of evening lectures at St. Mary's Church Hall, Church Path, Merton Park - a forum on five subjects of current concern, seen from the viewpoint of Christian faith. The idea sprang from the report this year that England is the second most irreligious country in the world, second only to Russia. Our friends at St. Mary's didn't believe it and are challenging all of us to come and listen and discuss these issues that affect us all.

The speakers [and possible angles of exploration] are:-

Living in a Multi-faith Society: the Bishop of Southwark - Are religious differences inevitably going to fuel conflict between nations?

Faith and Science: the Bishop of Kingston - is belief compatible with science, how can people of faith influence the development of science?

Faith and Education: Canon John Hall - what influence do religious bodies have on the National Curriculum?

Faith and Relationships: Sue Burrige - marriage versus partnerships, single sex relationships, religious convictions within the family

Faith and Politics: Simon Hughes MP – have faith and belief any relevance to politics? What does it mean to have a Prime Minister who is a practising Christian?

Admission (to cover the cost of light refreshments) is by ticket only, price £2 per night or £8 for all five. Ring 8542-5050 or 8542-5082

WATER WORKS IN KENYA

“We have to be polygamous – it takes three wives to fetch water!”

Some villagers from the Pokot district in the far north of Kenya are sharing

a joke with CMS mission partner Cathy Burgess. She is standing with them under the spray gushing from a freshly drilled borehole that could make this joke obsolete.

The villagers of Kalas used to have to work in threes to get their water, digging deep holes in the dried-out riverbeds. One person would then scoop up the water at the bottom, pass it to another halfway up the side of the hole, who would pass it to the third to fill the jerry cans they would each carry several miles home.

Now they've worked together in a different way to provide a regular, clean water supply right in Kalas. It all began when Cathy's husband Steve, a water engineer, arrived with his colleagues from Christian Community Service (CCS). Cathy explains that the CCS development workers offer themselves as a resource to the community to help the people in their efforts to improve their own lives. They are “the face of Jesus and his people in places far from any church”.

In Kalas CCS first spent time with the community to identify together the advantages of a clean and reliable water supply. With the community in agreement, the chief organised the people to play their part, which included improving the access track for the drilling team from the Catholic diocese to bring in their equipment. Now they have struck water another team from the Catholic diocese will fit a hand pump.

But there are still other ‘invisible’ partners in the project who have provided the funds for the work – including Australian taxpayers, German Christians, and CMS supporters who pay for Steve to be there. Steve and

CCS have done the feasibility study for the borehole, co-ordinated all the other organisations and found the cash to pay for the drilling.

"It's a great example of the co-operation that is really going on among human beings despite what we see on the news" says Cathy.

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OUR FINANCE PLEDGES

Oh dear! What a disappointing response. We printed 100 pledge cards and 45 were taken home – but only 13 have been returned. Yes, only 13 people have apparently made the effort to review their giving. The other 32 have not even confirmed their existing contribution, much less considered whether they can afford to give more. Are you one of these?

Of those that did return a pledge card 3 have maintained their present level of giving, and 10 have increased it. Sadly our pledged income has only gone up by £26-73 net a week whereas we need at least £50 a week.

But now the good news! There are still 55 pledge cards in the two vestibules which you are welcome to take home and complete if you mislaid the first one – and we are happy to receive your pledges at any time. The box for completed pledge cards is still in the church vestibule. Also, there is another opportunity to contribute to church finances on Saturday and Sunday September 11th and 12th when we shall be holding our Church Anniversary and Gift Day.

None of us particularly like talking about money, and even fewer of us like asking for it, but it is a fact of life that the church has running costs just like the rest of us and these need to be met from the weekly offering. The church's bills go up just as much as domestic bills. Does your giving reflect, within your means, the value you place on the church and its work in bringing others to know God's love?

John Butland and Roy Ellis

JOHN SEPHTON

We were saddened to hear of the sudden death of John Sephton at the end of July and send our love and sympathy to Margaret and the family

HELP NEEDED

The Brownie pack which meets on Thursday evenings at Martin Way is in urgent need of a leader. It may have to close at half-term if no replacement can be found. If you can help in any way please get in touch with Geraldine Ellis 8542-4758

There is a vacant post in the Mission and Service Committee team. Derek Heaton has completed his term of office as Overseas Mission Secretary (having done sterling work for us). There is plenty of scope in this job as you will be more-or-less free to "do your own thing". We think there will be someone among us who will enjoy the work.

Interested? Find out more from Rosemary Keen or Doreen Warren.

BIBLELANDS

Thank you to everyone who supported the special Anniversary Service in July. Thanks to your generosity – the collection raised £185 and we took £67.50 for the sale of Christmas cards and books. In a letter after the anniversary Nigel Edward-Few writes "I very much hope that those assembled at Martin Way Methodist Church found the talk both interesting and informative and that it enabled a wider understanding of the work that Bible Lands is doing in this troubled region, Please pass on my grateful thanks to the members of the Church for their generous gifts and also to Rev John Nyota for his hospitality and kind invitation to come and speak, as well as to Michael Mortley for all his technical help!"

Mary and Derek Heaton

CONGRATULATIONS

To Jack Pallister who has passed an audition for the Royal Ballet School Junior Associates. Well done!

CHURCH DIARY FOR SEPTEMBER

Sun	5	10.30 am	All Age Worship Service - Mr Paul Harvey
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Stuart Veitch
Mon	6	2.45 pm	Fellowship
Tue	7	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	8	7.45 pm	Midways (Welcome Back Evening)

70th Anniversary Celebrations

Sat	11	9:00 am	Big Brunch/Coffee Morning & Gift Day
		18:30 pm	Birthday Party & Supper
Sun	12	10.30 am	Celebration Service led by Rev John Nyota
		12.30 pm	BBQ picnic at Horton Country Park including
		16.00 pm	Thanksgiving & Communion Service followed by Afternoon Tea

Mon	13	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Mrs Tina Mills - Adoption)
		8.00 pm	Family Committee
Tue	14	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Thu	16	2-300pm	Seekers Group
Fri	17	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	19	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev John Nyota
Mon	20	2.45 pm	Fellowship
Tue	21	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club (Norman Plastow - Life in the English Country House)
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	22	7.45 pm	Midways - Whistle-stop tour of Italy - Mary Forleza)
		8.00 pm	Finance and Property Committee
Thu	23	8.00 pm	Church Council
Sun	26	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Miss Camille Troughton
Mon	27	2.45 pm	Fellowship
		8.00 pm	Service led by Janet and Bob Hamblin
Tue	28	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer