

MINISTER'S LETTER



Dear friends,

The lectionary this month has taken us through the full breadth of Job. The singular question in Job is why do the righteous suffer. It is an important question leading to Christmas not so much as a dampener but as the real reason why Jesus was born: to suffer and be tempted as all of us are, even with death on the cross, and yet keep the Faith. In this letter I have published a sermon I preached on 22nd October in which I quoted extensively from Dr. Gerald Mann, Humorist, writer and minister; the pastor of Riverbend Baptist Church in Austin, Texas. Dr. Mann tells this story, "One day I was sitting in front of two cameras in my study, much as in this setting, and the director came out during a break and said, "We have a call from Florida. It is a child nine years old." Sarah was her name. This was live, interactive television. I never know what is coming. I'll never forget her quavering, haunting, small voice. She said, "Dr. Mann, why does God allow grown-ups to kill kids? They told me at Sunday School that if I prayed, God would protect us, but God did not protect my cousin, Suzanne. She was seven years old and someone killed her."

I was absolutely stumped. Live television. How do you talk to a nine year old? She had asked the question that everyone of us who dares to believe will ask sooner or later. If God is great and God is good, why do the innocent suffer? That is the question that God hears most often. I think it is the question of all religion. All theology eventually becomes theodicy. That is just a big word to define the effort to explain why God won't or can't protect innocent people. I don't have an answer and wouldn't pretend to give one to you in the short time that we have here, but I do want to give three quick responses. If God is great and God is good, why do the innocent suffer?

First response: That is a fair question. Somehow we got this idea that it is a sign of unbelief or is a challenge, a rebellion against God, if we ask the question, "Why do the innocent suffer?" When I first started my Christian pilgrimage and I would ask that kind of question, people said, "If you had

faith, you wouldn't ask that kind of question."

Well, the Bible asks that question often. In the 22nd Psalm, the Psalmist says, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? I call to you day and night, and you do not answer. You saved my ancestors. You don't save me. My friends all mock me. They say, 'You believe in God. Why hasn't he delivered you?'" Our Lord Jesus Christ quoted that Psalm from the cross. The whole book of Job is about why God, if He is great and good, allows a good man like Job to suffer. Jeremiah and the prophets cry out without answer. It is a fair question.

John Claypool, lost his daughter, Laura, at age 11 to leukaemia. My mentor, Carlyle Marney, who was also a good friend of John, wrote him a short note and he said, "John, I do not understand why leukaemia kills children, but I do know that God has a lot to account for some day." Later I asked Marney, "Was that one of your famous statements of reverent agnosticism?" He said, "Oh, no. It is a statement of reverent faith. If I am a person, if God is a person, then questions are in order. I believe that God is the kind of God He said who will allow us to question Him, challenge Him, be angry at Him."

That was a great relief to me because I have to tell you—and I will tell you in a moment—about my own personal experience. There are times in my life when I have been so angry at God that I have asked Him to kill me and cursed Him when He wouldn't. It is a fair question.

If God is great and God is good, why do the innocent suffer. Second response: I do not know.

I think Frederick Buechner is right. If you take three facts, God is good, God is great, and the innocent suffer, you can only reconcile two of those. You can never, ever reconcile all three. The Bible never gives an answer. After Job complains and complains, God says to Him, "Where were you when I created the world? You don't ask me those questions." He says to Jeremiah, "I am the potter, you are the clay. The clay does not ask the potter that kind of question." The Bible doesn't answer the question and neither can I. I don't know why bad things happen to good people, to use Dr. Kushner's famous phrase. This is more than a speculation for me; it is more than an intellectual subject.

Our first child was a rubella baby. Her mother had measles in the early weeks of pregnancy. She was born profoundly deaf and emotionally limited. She has the emotional level of a very small child. She is now 33. She has had a tragic life of drugs and rehab centres and has been a pain and a source of grief and struggle for my wife and me all of our adult lives. It will be a pain that will be there the day that I die.

I'll never forget when she was seven years and we were told that we would have to send her to a school in Massachusetts, two thousand miles from where I pastored a small church in the early days of my ministry. On the night before we were to go, at age seven she came into my study. I was writing my doctoral dissertation, believe it or not, on why the innocent suffer.

In her halting way of talking to me, she said, "Daddy, do I have to go?"

I said, "You know you must."

She said, "Because I am deaf."

I said, "Yes."

She said, "Would you pray for God to let me hear like you and Mommy hear?"

What else could I do. I said, "I ask God that every day of your life."

She said, "Would you ask Him now?"

I got down on my knees and I prayed as I could. When I opened my eyes, I looked into her expectant, wondrous eyes.

She said, "Daddy, what did God say?"

I had to admit that God hadn't said one solitary thing. There was nothing but silence. God is great, God is good. Why do the innocent suffer? I do not know.

But lest we end there in that cul-de-sac of agnosticism, let me tell you what I do know. I do know that sandwiched up against the impenetrable blackness of evil there is the indomitable brightness of good. There is extraordinary goodness in the world, and extraordinary goodness is a greater problem for an atheist than extraordinary evil is for a believer. In my own experience I have seen such magnificent expressions of goodness.

Let me tell you the rest of the story of our daughter, Cindy. Her tuition at

that school was exactly the equivalent of my salary. I went to my church and asked if they could maybe help me send her to school. They were giving thousands of dollars to all kinds of mission causes. I thought maybe she would qualify as a mission. They gave me no raise at all.

I got a call one day from a banker I did not know. He was noted for being a hard-boiled, sharp-pencilled business man. He said, "Would you come to my office?"

I walked in. He was a no-nonsense guy. He said, "I hear you have a problem. I am going to help you solve it. Can you keep a secret?"

I said, "Not from my wife."

He said, "Can she keep a secret?"

I said, "Yes, better than I."

He said, "I am going to put you in the cattle-feeding business. I am going to back you one hundred percent. I am going to personally sign your notes."

I said, "What if they lose?"

He said, "I have so much money that we will never run out until we hit the jackpot."

I am here to tell you that for the next three years while our daughter was away in school I signed all of my paychecks back to the church. Extraordinary goodness.

The day that we were to leave, I broke down and sobbed. I'll never forget her tiny hand on my shoulder saying, "Daddy, God will take care of me."

I don't know why the innocent suffer, but I do know that sandwiched up against the blackness of evil is the brightness of good. I do know that God will not let us live in a world where He has haphazard things, cause and effect, happen. God can no more change the way that He has set the world up to run than He can make a four-sided triangle.

Ultimately I do know that God will not leave evil unanswered. I think there is a day coming when all of the crooked things will be made straight and all of the dark things will be made bright and all of the innocent will be vindicated. I think that is what the cross of Christ is all about.

I have never understood all of those theories about how Christ atoned for our sin, but I do know that somehow in the cross event, God took upon

Himself the blame for having created a world where things can go wrong. The resurrection is God's declaration that eventually things will go right.

I myself have had enough evidence from the goodness of people, and from my own experience with the goodness of God, to keep going. We have a choice. Evil, suffering, tragedy can paralyze you or you can take the evil and the suffering and you can metabolize it. You can ingest it, digest it, transform it into a higher good. It is up to you and it is up to me to make that choice. All that I am saying to you is that I have found enough goodness in the world to choose to keep lighting candles instead of cursing the darkness.

If God is great and God is good, why do the innocent suffer? That is a fair question. I don't know, but I do know there is a goodness in this world that cannot be explained outside of a God who loves you and me. Ultimately I rest my case on the fact that through this long, dark night of suffering—and my suffering has not been nearly what some of yours has been—it is okay to hold up my head and go forward. God grant you the grace to experience that goodness yourself.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John', written in a cursive style.

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BORN IN SONG

Following a visit to David Chapman's Church in Horsham, Mary and Derek have brought back number of copies of David's latest book for sale. It is entitled "Born in Song" and is about Methodist Worship in Britain.

The price is only £9.99, if anyone is interested in a copy please speak to either Derek or Mary.

IVY DAVIS ~ 1909-2006

Mrs Ivy Davis died recently at the age of 97 years. Her funeral took place on Wednesday 18th October at Randall's Park Crematorium, Leatherhead and was conducted by our Minister John Nyota.

This following is the eulogy from her daughter-in-law Nena.

Moira Bailey

Ivy was a delightful and lovely lady. She had had to face many problems and difficulties, especially during the last few years, yet she never let them get her down. She always had a positive attitude to life and one of her favourite sayings was '*you must never give up*'. She never said an unkind word about anyone, always saw their good side. She never complained and constantly thanked people for their kindness and care towards her. Her concern was always for others.

When she was younger Ivy enjoyed an active social and fulfilled life. She worked full time for many years for British Telecom and in her free time enjoyed her favourite hobby- playing BOWLS for Joseph Hood ladies and was secretary there for a number of years. She loved to travel and one of her highlights was a visit to Australia with the Surrey Bowls team.

Ivy had a strong faith and during the last weeks of her life it became more apparent, although she constantly willed herself to get better, she would always add 'but now it is in the hands of the Almighty'. Ivy belonged to Martin Way Methodist Church and there made many friends. She loved attending the fellowship meetings and the Lunch club, just being with her friends and enjoying their company was very precious to her.

For me Ivy was the perfect mother-in-law. She was a real mother, a friend and a good companion. We had so many happy times together with lots of laughs along the way. When Gerald (Gerry) died her grief must have been almost unbearable and yet she was always there for me whatever time of day or night. She was the strength in my weakness and the comforter in my distress.

Ivy we will miss you so much, but thank you for leaving us happy, amusing, positive and delightful memories that we will always cherish.

Moira, a pastoral visitor from the church use to visit her regularly and speaking to me the other day summed up Ivy perfectly by saying ‘*she was a trophy of Grace*’. Indeed Ivy you were. God bless you.

Nena

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RAFIKI TRUST MONTHLY STALL

Firstly, Jenny and I would like to thank everybody who has supported the stall since it started a year ago, especially those who have donated or made things for us to sell. One of the most popular requests is for cakes, so if you are a cake maker we would love it if you could make some for us to have on the stall. Remember the stall is always on the 2nd Sunday of each month.

Also if anyone has any craft items that they feel we could sell, especially on the run up to Christmas, please bring them in on the day or speak to me.

Finally if anyone is having a pre-Christmas clear out or has anything that children would like to buy – such as games, puzzles, novelty gifts etc or any unwanted gifts you feel we could sell as Christmas gifts would also be appreciated.

Thank you in anticipation and please keep supporting the stall as all the money raised goes to help the Rafiki Trust.

Karen Smith

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SAMARITAN’S CHRISTMAS PURSE OPERATION

We are again supporting the Samaritan’s Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box Appeal. Details are on the Notice Board and leaflets explaining how to make up a box are in both Vestibules.

Boxes have to be ready by 19th November – please see Maralyn Loft if you have any questions [Tel: 8543 0696].

Remember, remember the 5th of November

We all know about the 5th of November and the Gun Powder plot that is celebrated by Fireworks, but this year it is also the date for Methodist Homes Sunday. Instead of spending all your money on the temporary pleasure of Fireworks, why not help to ensure a brighter future for older people by making a donation to Methodist Homes for the Aged, also known as MHA. Envelopes for donations will be available from Sunday 29th October and can be put in the ordinary Offertory bags on Sunday 5th and Sunday 12th November. If you are a taxpayer you can also 'Gift Aid' your donation by filling in the form on the envelope.



MHA support more than 8500 older people across the UK, providing a range of care homes, housing and community support services, with a particular emphasis on the quality and meaning of life. A number of former members of Martin Way Methodist Church have benefited from the services of the MHA in the past, your donation can help to ensure that others may benefit in the future.

This year the money raised will be used to complete building work in three new care homes, which will provide much needed residential, nursing and dementia care within a purpose-built environment. MHA is taking dementia care as one of their main themes at the present time. Another one is providing supported retirement apartments with specialist day care. MHA also have a website at www.mha.org.uk where you can find out more about the organisation and the projects they are involved in.

Please give generously for this worthy cause.

Dennis Clark

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**God has given us two hands -
one for receiving and the other for giving.**

Billy Graham

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH - NOVEMBER 2006



One Saturday afternoon in October I went to a Service of Thanksgiving at East Croydon United Reform Church. There were about a hundred people there, most of whom had something in common. They were deaf, or to be politically correct, hearing impaired. They came from Hard of Hearing groups from Croydon, Merton, Sutton, New Malden, Twickenham, Barnet, Guildford, Ealing and Southall. As someone put it, we were all in the same boat.

We may not be able to give thanks for the loss of our hearing, but we can give thanks for things such as hearing aids, loop systems and lip reading classes which help us so that we are not cut off completely.

Thinking about it afterwards, I realised that some of those at the service were worse off than others. The front row in the church was reserved for those who were profoundly deaf and relied on the services of a lip reader or someone using sign language. Some had one hearing aid, others, like me, had two. I take them out at night and enter another world. It has advantages sometimes. "What a terrible storm in the night," someone will say. My response is, "What storm?" because I did not hear it! As some of you know, I might give the answer to a question I thought you asked rather than the one you DID ask, but, thankfully, I can usually get by.

Our hearing is a God-given gift but it is one of the many things we take for granted. It is only when we begin to lose it that we really appreciate it. But at that service I was reminded of something else. Simply that it is very easy indeed to find someone worse off than ourselves. We all have much to thank God for.

Bill Cox

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He who has health is rich
and does not know it.

ITALIAN PROVERB

PUZZLE CORNER

Some things in life may seem easy, but are they? Try this little puzzle.

Look at the chart and say the COLOUR not the word

YELLOW	BLUE	ORANGE
BLACK	RED	GREEN
PURPLE	YELLOW	RED
ORANGE	GREEN	BLACK
BLUE	RED	PURPLE
GREEN	BLUE	ORANGE

Left – Right Conflict

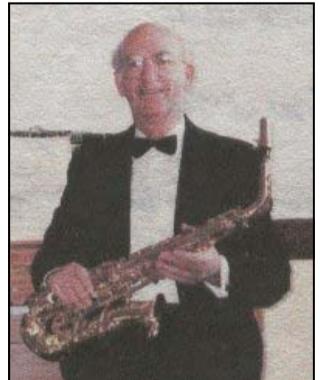
Your right brain tries to say the colour but your left brain insists on reading the word.

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TED ASHWOOD ~ 1931 - 2006

Many thanks for all your cards, messages of sympathy and offers of help, all are very much appreciated through this difficult time.

Special thanks for all those who helped on Saturday at Ted's Celebration of life service at the church and making it a very special occasion. Especially to the Surrey Yeomanry Band for supplying the music for the celebration.



Ted was such a wonderful man and he will be greatly missed by all.

Grace Ashwood

SWANAGE 2006



Our week in Swanage this year began, for some of us, with a journey through a nasty thunderstorm, but thankfully the rest of the week was beautiful with very hot and sunny weather.

Most days were spent on the beach, although it was easy to get burnt, so there were also visits to farms, pitch-and-putt, museums or Corfe Castle. A favourite part of the day spent at Shell Bay was the arrival of the ice-cream boat (usually when Bob had disappeared for a walk or gone in search of ice-creams elsewhere!). Trying to hand over money when receiving ice-creams while standing in waist-high freezing-cold sea-water is an experience not to be missed!

This year in Swanage was particularly poignant as it was most likely to be our last time with Janet and Bob as members of Martin Way. Janet enjoyed summarising the C.S. Lewis story “The Silver Chair” each evening and the children were hooked from the start by Janet’s enthusiasm (and so were many of the adults!).

There were also some activities for the children including sandcastle competitions where they battled against a competitive adult team. A great deal of effort was exerted by the men trying to achieve the biggest sandcastle but they were beaten by Sarah’s team.



Simon's team were fortunate to win another sandcastle competition and all the children worked well in their teams ably led by Simon, Sarah and Ellie.

The Adult team tried hard in the Beach Olympics especially in the piggy-back race where poor Elaine Sweby, being the lightest, had to be piggy-backed several times hanging on to the back of Bob or Steve or Peter for dear life. Marie managed the scoring during the week and Peter for dear life. Marie managed the scoring during the week and unfortunately the adult team was beaten overall by the children's teams.

As a thank-you to Bob and Janet for all their efforts organising Swanage over the years, a surprise party was organised for them. Fern and Jack stayed behind (on the Wednesday) and decorated the gazebo and prepared strawberries and cream and fruit punch. We had also given them a ceramic tray which Marie had made and we had all signed. It was an enjoyable time as we were joined that day by some visitors from Martin Way on a day-trip and were able to be there also.

There were some lovely evenings spent sitting out chatting and stargazing as the sky was so clear. Tim, Steve and Peter were quite knowledgeable about the stars and the Milky Way and some of us thought we had spotted some shooting stars only to be told, in fact, that they were satellites after all.

If there had been a competition for the person with the biggest torch then Sarah would have won it hands-down with here "lantern" that we nick-named "The Lighthouse" as it was about 2 foot tall and was impossible to look at with the naked eye. It came in quite useful during late night visits to the toilet block when you might encounter, if you are called Jenny, a toad or a poor cat who decided to lay across the floor of the ladies' toilets and frightened Jenny out of her skin by accident.

I'm sure there are many other memories of our week that other people have, and all that is left for us to say is a big thank-you to Janet and Bob for organising the Church Camp for us in the midst of their move. We had an enjoyable time.

Andy & Karen Smith

Way back in March I managed to persuade John to start a series about the images on the Holy Spirit. After first looking at the Holy Spirit as a Hovering Eagle in the May Newsletter, John then took a well earned break back home to Kenya, now he has returned he has kept his promise to continue with the series.

Andrew Fox

Holy Spirit as a Flying Dove:

The gentle messenger of peace and comfort

The Bible says much about the Holy Spirit and His working in the life of the believer. Every believer has the indwelling Spirit of God (Romans 8:9). But every believer does not respond to the working of the Spirit in him or her. This session continues from our last one in the series on Holy Spirit. We began by using the image of a hovering eagle brooding over the little ones as is described of the Holy Spirit by the writer of Genesis chapter one. Here we saw God in the person of Holy spirit protecting his created creation during the chaotic time. He does that to us many times when our centres cannot hold and everything within us or around us is falling apart.



The next image is that of a dove. As a peace symbol it recalls the Arc of Noah. Gen. 8:10-11. "He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth."

The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, because of Matt. 3:16

"And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him." *NRSV*.

Just as angels sometimes take non-threatening forms when they approach people so as not to frighten them, the Holy Spirit rarely displays the full extent of her power to us.

In this passage, we see her assume the form of a dove, a bird known for her gentle cooing sounds, so that we could be aware of her presence without being overwhelmed by it.

In scripture, the dove is given as a type and picture of the Holy Ghost. This type provides much valuable teaching and direction.

- I A SOURCE OF COMFORT** (Genesis 8:8-12)
 - The Comforter (John 14:16, 26, 15:26; 16:7)
 - The Fellowship of the Spirit (Philippians 2:1)

- II AVAILABLE TO THE POOR** (Leviticus 5:7)
 - The contrite and humble spirit (Isaiah 57:15; 66:2)
 - The poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3)

- III. UNTIRING IN FLIGHT** (Psalm 55:6; Isaiah 60:8)
 - The Spirit of power (Zechariah 4:6; 1 Corinthians 2:4;
2 Timothy 1:7)

- IV FOUND IN SECRET PLACES** (Song of Solomon 2:14;
Jeremiah 48:28)
 - The Spirit (Psalm 91:1; Matthew 6:6)

- V A SYMBOL OF PURITY**
 - The dove is white, a colour that symbolizes purity
(Song of Solomon 5:2; 6:9)
 - The Spirit is called the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost
(Romans 1:4; Ephesians 1:13)

- VI CAN BE GRIEVED**
 - The mourning of the dove (Isaiah 38:14; 59:11)
 - The grieving of the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 4:30)

- VII GENTLE IN NATURE** (Matthew 10:16)
 - The Spirit (Romans 8:6; Galatians 5:22)

- VIII SWEET IN VOICE** (Song of Solomon 2:14)
 - A still small voice (1Kings 19:12)
 - A voice behind thine ears (Isaiah 30:21)

- IX SIGN OF COMING SPRING** (Song of Solomon 2:10-13;
Jeremiah 8:7);
 - The Spirit (2Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14);
the *earnest* of the Spirit

He is like a dove. At Jesus' baptism the Spirit descended on him like a dove (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:16; Luke 3:22; John 1:32). Doves have been a sign of peace from ancient times. Even today we speak of hawks and doves in reference to military policy. The earliest association of the dove with peace occurred after the great flood when Noah sent a dove out of the ark to look for dry land. The dove returned with an olive leaf for its young (Genesis 8:10) giving us an unforgettable picture of peace on earth. Jesus referred to this characteristic of doves when he asked his disciples to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). The Holy Spirit is as free and peaceful as a dove. Doves and pigeons look a lot alike and often are confused, but there is one important difference. Doves are migratory and pigeons aren't. They make a home and stay there. Pigeons were the first birds to be domesticated (long before chickens, ducks, geese and swans). But doves could never be tamed or controlled. And neither can the Holy Spirit.

We would like to domesticate the Holy Spirit, have him come and go at our bidding (See Acts 8:18-23). We keep calling for an encore. Like a three year old playing "ride the horsy" on his grandpa's foot, we say, "Do it again, do it again." But the Spirit is as free as a bird.

Consider what happens to Jesus in Mark 1:9-12. He is being baptized by John the Baptist. And the heavens open. And a dove descends upon him and Jesus hears the voice of God saying, "You are my son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased." Now, this scene is always portrayed in art and movies as somewhat serene, assuring and comforting. So much so that the descending dove has become a symbol of the Holy Spirit in Christianity, the sign of the peaceful presence of God.

Saint Paul mentions the Spirit 32 times in that letter to the Romans. In the eighth chapter, Paul makes one of his most-quoted Spirit references. After he describes the suffering of this age, and how all creation is groaning as it waits for redemption from this earthly suffering, he seems to pause and reflect for a minute before putting his pen to paper again. Then he writes: "...the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes for us in sighs too deep for words."

These have always been peaceful words of comfort for me, especially during times of turmoil in my life. The Spirit intercedes for us in sighs too

deep for words. Even when I don't know how to pray or what to pray, the Spirit knows and the Spirit intercedes. The Spirit puts words to our sighs. Paul says that we can trust that Spirit so much that we can dare to walk into an speak to threatening situations because the Spirit will give us the words. I have had to trust that, even as weak, inadequate, anxious and threatened as I felt, I would be able to do or say the right thing, the right thing for the situation, in order to bring some bit of good out of that which was not good.

An analyst of religion and culture says that kids and adults who saw the Star Wars movies are better able to understand the Holy Spirit than generations before them, for they saw in Yoda and Obi Wan Kenobi and Luke Skywalker the positive power of something called the Force. The unseen Force that worked within those Jedi knights to overcome evil with good. In fact, one pastor I know began opening his worship services by saying: May the Force be with you. (OK, he was kind of weird.) Some child psychologists have said that kids gained inner strength and assurance because of these movies and this understanding of Spirit.

So, we have the Holy Spirit; the Force; the Heavenly Dove of peace; the divine comforter that we can pull up over ourselves to protect us from the cold world. The Holy Spirit, giving us the words we need at the time we need them; interceding for us in sighs too deep for words. Ahhh. This is nice. And this is true. But this is not all there is.

Let's go back to Mark's account of the baptism of Jesus and the bird that descends upon him. Here comes this bird bringing the word of assurance to Jesus: "You are my son, the beloved, with you I am well pleased." But what's the next line? The next line in the Gospel is: "And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness." That bird was not all sweetness and light. That bird was dangerous. The Spirit immediately drives him out into the wilderness. Doesn't even give him time to have brunch after his baptism or to have family photos taken. We know that wilderness story. In the wilderness, Jesus encounters Satan. Jesus endures forty days of temptation. He is offered this and he is offered that and all he has to do is to give in to temptation and give his allegiance to the evil one, and he can get out of that frightening place. He can then have something to eat and drink. In fact, he can have the world!

If the Spirit drives Jesus into the wilderness, will not this Spirit do the same to us at times? This Spirit is not just a Comforter. This Holy Spirit sometimes feels much more like a Holy Ghost. Perhaps we lost something of this understanding of God when we left behind the archaic language of the King James Version. The Holy Ghost is more haunting; perhaps more awe-inspiring. Saying the Holy Ghost gets people attention more than saying the Spirit. The Holy Ghost brings a bit of dread to any conversation about God. A bit of holy fear that might be good for us to have.

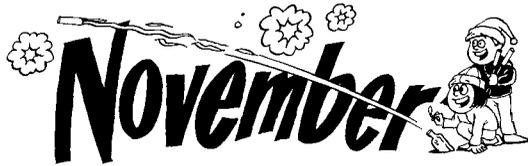
No wonder Jesus prayed, "Lead us not into temptation..." He knew something about this Holy Ghost of God and what can happen when we are driven into the wilderness, into those times and places where our faith in God is tested and our lives are on the line. This Spirit, this Holy Ghost, this Heavenly Dove, descends upon him. Brings him words of assurance. Then drives him into the face of evil where all that he believes is tested. I encourage you to read further in the Gospel story, beyond the baptism, in order to understand that this bird is dangerous.

And yet, in the wilderness this same Spirit is also present to deliver him from evil; giving him the power to resist evil; giving him the words to say when he needs to say them; and interceding for him when his sighs can't even be formed into words. And at the end of the forty days, descending upon him once again in the form of winged creatures. Well, at least we almost always imagine them as winged creatures, those angels who came to minister to him and to bring him out of the wilderness ready to take on the world.

The Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove, brings God's peace. But God's peace is not the same as peacefulness. Much as we would like it to be. God's peace sometimes involves being driven into the face of evil, being forced to take on evil, as it is manifested in the deeds of another person or in an unjust system of society. Yet, at the same time being given comfort and the power to overcome evil. And to hear, somewhere deep inside ourselves, those words of assurance from God: "With you I am well pleased."

Next time we will look at the Spirit as a Wind

John Nyota



CHURCH DIARY

Weds 1	7.45 pm	Midways Group - <i>Charles Dickens & Women</i> - Mr & Mrs Peter Davalle
Thurs 2	2.30pm	Alpha Course
Sun 5	10.30 am	All Age Worship led by Mrs Valerie Ashcroft
	6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Margaret Adams
Mon 6	2.45 pm	Fellowship - <i>Tony Loft</i>
Tue 7	10-12noon	Coffee and Chat
	8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
	8.00 pm	Preacher's Meeting at Ruxley
Thurs 9	2.30pm	Alpha Course
Fri 10	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun 12	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev John Nyota
Mon 13	2.45 pm	Fellowship
	8.00pm	Taizé Prayer & Praise at St.John Fisher Church
Tue 14	10-12noon	Coffee and Chat
	8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds 15	7.00 pm	Midways Group - <i>Cards</i> - Janet Laker
Thurs16	2.30pm	Alpha Course
Sun 19	10.30 am	Praise Service led by Brenda Cannon
Mon 20	3.45 pm	Fellowship - <i>Pauline Riley</i>
Tue 21	10-12 noon	Coffee and Chat
	8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
	7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club – <i>Mary & Derek Heaton</i>
Thurs23	2.30pm	Alpha Course

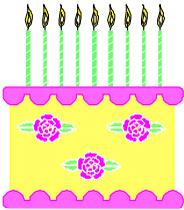
Thurs	23	8.00 pm	Mission & Service Committee Meeting
Fri	24	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	26	10.30am 6.30 pm	Morning Service led by Rev Barrie Tabraham Bible Study led by Rev John Nyota
Mon	27	2.45 pm 8.00 pm	Fellowship Pastoral Meeting for all Class Leaders at the Manse
Tue	28	10-12noon 8.00 pm	Coffee and Chat Time for Prayer
Weds	29	10.30 am 7.00 pm	Morning Communion led by Rev John Nyota Midways Group - <i>With Pat O'Leary</i> -

Pat is a retired Jockey - This is an open evening to which all are welcome, Pat is used to large audiences and we would like to have a good turn-out.

Please refer to the Website (www.martinway.org.uk) or Weekly Notice Sheet for any additional information

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We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday this month a very



Happy Birthday



and especially to:

Sian Smith on 5th November

Jennifer & Rosemary Fernando on 6th November

Megan Sweby on 7th November

Jack Pallister on 9th November

Jacob Passfield on 27th November

ANOTHER CHANGE TO MAKE A NOTE OF

Doris Klass has now moved into a Navy/Merchant Navy residential home. She has been and will continue to be missed at Church, Fellowship and Lunch Club

Her new address is:

Mrs Doris Klass
Royal Alfred Seafarers Society
Flat 5
Belvedere House
Weston Acres
Woodmansterne Lane
BANSTEAD
SM7 3HB

Her new telephone number is: 01737 850720

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JONATHAN VEIRA



You may have noticed a poster up on the Notice Board giving advance notice of an evening's "Audience with Jonathan Veira".

He is an internationally acclaimed baritone opera singer and outstanding pianist. The evening promises to be one of humour, Christian Testimony and first class music, including Classical, Christian and Contemporary.

The Audience is to be held on Friday 1st December at 7.30pm in St. Luke's Church, Wimbledon Park (5 mins walk from the District Line Station). For further details or to order Tickets contact (020) 8241 7220.

Items for the **December Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 24th November** at the latest