

Martin Way Methodist Church

Newsletter – July/August 2005

Minister – Rev John Nyota

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear friend

24th May is a very special day in our home. On that day in 1997 our first child, a daughter arrived. Of course like every parent we can forget anything but not this day. How about with Cherie's counting every second and mini-second towards it. To every Methodist who we are though, the day means more than Cherie's birth. On this day in 1738, John Wesley had a spiritual experience which he described as God working in his heart through faith in Christ. Wesley himself described in his journal how he felt his heart 'strangely warmed' at a meeting held in Aldersgate Street in London. This experience gave his life a new sense of purpose and direction. After years of wandering in the spiritual wilderness, he now set his heart on the unique nationwide mission that was to capture the hearts of thousands and lead eventually to the founding of the world-wide Methodist Church.

This year on 24th May, the remembrance of John Wesley's conversion coincided with the remembrance of Jesus' ascension to His Father. By that act, Jesus took leave of His earthly presence to return to His spiritual home and leave the gift of God's Holy Spirit to those behind, so we could carry on His work in our world.

By this action, Jesus promised that He would always be with us in every experience of our lives and we need never feel alone or afraid. His offer of a heart-warming experience is there for the taking. What about it? At the heart of our Christian faith is the fact that God had a heart for His people and at a certain moment in history, He sent Jesus into the world. By the shedding of His blood, Jesus offered to take all our wrongdoing and sin on His shoulders and offered the whole world life with a capital L in return. By the gift of His Holy Spirit, God can work in our hearts and give us a sense of purpose and meaning in life. The human heart, in its physical form, is central to our human bodies and is a valve by which blood

is pumped around to give us life. But we also need a spiritual heart. A spiritual heart is central to our well-being as followers of Christ today. God must be at the heart of our faith. Jesus needs to be the lifeblood of our Church community and then the Holy Spirit can work to bring Jesus to our hearts and minds and inspire us to worship and serve others.

From the very beginning, God has had a heart for His people. The question is "Do we have a heart for God?" And do we have a heart for our world and our local community that people's hearts may be touched by the love of God? If so, then it's important that we remain close to the heart of God. It's vital that we open our hearts (and our minds) to God through Jesus Christ so that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may be touched by God's love and offer our whole selves - heart, soul and mind - in His service and share our heart-warming' experience with others.

May we echo the words of John Wesley's brother, Charles, who wrote the following verses.

O for a heart to praise my God, a heart from sin set free,
A heart that always feels thy blood, So freely spilt for me.

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart; come quickly from above,
Write thy new name upon my heart, Thy new, best name of love.

(HP 536, verses 1 and 5)

May God grant us an ever increasing experience of His heart-warming and life-changing love.

Yours in Christ

John

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Barrie's Sabbatical 12 September - 10 December 2005

Many of you will know by now that I shall be on sabbatical leave later this year. Some of you will remember that my last sabbatical was mainly spent working on Brother Charles, which was published in June 2003. On this occasion I shall be working on producing a 2nd edition of The Making of Methodism which appeared ten years ago and is now due for revision.

A word about timing. Methodist Ministers are now required to take sabbaticals every seven years. They are no longer an option. Neither is one allowed to move the date earlier or later than one year. This has worried me a little. My last sabbatical was in the connexional year 1999-2000, two years after it should have been taken, because I moved into a new circuit in 1998. I decided to defer the present one (due in the year 2004-2005) a year for obvious reasons - last year, as you know, was interrupted by major surgery and extended convalescence. Next summer (2006) would have been difficult with Stuart Veitch retiring and Faith and John Nyota being in Kenya for three months, so my sabbatical really had to be taken this Autumn.

Can I take this opportunity of thanking Stuart and my ordained and lay colleagues for covering during my absence; the Methodist Church for the privilege of being able to take a period of extended study leave such as this; and, finally, all of you, for your support and care for me, especially during the past fifteen months.

Blessings to you all,

Barrie Tabraham

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH - JULY

The holiday season is upon us once more. How times have changed since I was a boy. Only the well-to-do went on holiday then. The nearest most of us got to it was a cheap day return to Brighton on a Bank Holiday. I never went on holiday with my parents. The first holiday I had was in 1938 when I was eleven years old. I had passed the 'eleven plus' and had been accepted at a very good grammar school (Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith) where I would begin in September. My mother arranged for me to go for a week to Torquay with a work colleague from her office. I remember being amazed at seeing palm trees growing there. Then came the war years and the next holiday I had was to the Isle of Wight with June. We were among the first visitors allowed to go there after the war and it was wonderfulbut that's another story! Our honeymoon in 1948 was at Bognor Regis.

Today people go far afield on holiday. My grandson is off to Cuba this year and already my grandchildren have seen more of the world than I have.

But then, they probably haven't seen as much of England as I have either. Young married couples would not consider Bognor for a honeymoon. My daughter Chris married Gary last year and off they went to Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Come to think of it, when you're in love it doesn't matter where you go as long as your loved one is with you.

Jesus didn't go on holiday, but he did realise the need of slowing down and relaxing from time to time. A text I like very much is 'Come ye apart and rest awhile.' The disciples had been going through a pretty hectic time when Jesus gave them that invitation. Notice that he did NOT say "Go and have a couple of days off." The invitation was to be WITH HIM, to rest within his presence. We are always in his presence although we often forget we are. But we also need to accept that invitation from time to time. If we relax in his presence we find ourselves being given new strength, encouragement and insight. Happy holidays!

Bill Cox

CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD - THEY JUST ARE

Thursday 12 May dawned bright and sunny, one of those rare spring days and an ideal start for a 'Quiet Day'. Following a not-so-quiet harrowing journey, Joyce Plant and I arrived at the sleepy village of Hurley near Maidenhead which, in stark contrast to life on the A308 was a perfect setting for quietness and for appreciating the beauty of nature and its Creator. The event was organised by the Women's Network London South West District and led by Rev Julia Underwood, looking at 'Exploring Spirituality' based on 'Essence' by Rob Frost. The day offered time and space to explore spirituality creatively using materials and various activities or simply 'being'.

Being quiet allows time to stand still and look to God for our own sense of self worth, sometimes forcing us to be honest with ourselves. My first impression of some of the activities i.e. playing with clay, sand and broken pottery, did not really appeal but I found myself by the end of the sessions wanting to experiment and enjoying the fun. I realised that the diversity of our life experiences and upbringing help us to recognise that we are all different and that we all encounter spiritual things in different ways. The Ignatian-style meditation on the Prodigal son where we were asked to spend some time thinking about the characters we identified with

most, was both stirring and challenging, and was a means of making the text come alive for me.

We live under the pressure of the ever increasing pace of life, as we discovered on the M25, rushing from one activity to the next, racing through traffic lights on amber, getting irritated when someone in front of the supermarket queue gets out a cheque book, convenience foods, etc. By the end of the day, after a walk in the country my sense of smell was keener and I could appreciate the song of the birds. Rest is not optional, it is God's command, a gift and a discipline. In our time of sharing and reflection it was good to meet with other Methodist women and to hear that each one got something different from the sessions. After such a day I realise that we need to spend time in solitude, time to smell the flowers and simply be ourselves.

(The "Essence" book and tape will be available in the Church Library)

Gwen Wildman

If we have not quiet in our minds, outward comfort will do no more for us than a golden slipper on a gouty foot

John Bunyan

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

I have recently been reading 'Don't just stand therePRAY something!' by Ronald Dunn. He refers to Ephesians 6 which says our struggle is not against the evils of blood and flesh but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Paul's letter says about putting on the whole armour of God, however the author suggests the most important passage is verse 14 "Stand therefore ... and going on to verse 18 ... Pray in the spirit at all times with prayer and supplications. Prayer is the warfare. It is the battlefield upon which the spiritual warfare is waged'. Ronald Dunn's italics. (There is a copy of this book in the Church Library).

He then takes us on to Exodus 17 vv8-13. The Israelites meet Amalek in the valley of Rephidim. Moses sends Amalek to the valley to fight and Moses will go to the hill top and hold the staff of God in his hand. So Joshua went to battle and Aaron, Hur and Moses went to the hilltop. Whenever Moses holds high the rod Joshua prevails, but when he lowers

the rod Amalek prevails. Moses grows weary so Aaron and Hur find a stone for him to sit upon, then standing either side of this, they hold up his hands until the sun goes down. Joshua defeats Amalek with the sword. Then the Lord said to Moses "write this as a reminder in a book". Ronald Dunn says "the Church could win more battles in the valley if we had more intercessors on the mountain 'lifting high the rod of Jesse' in the name of Jesus. The battle for lost souls is won by prayer and intercession. Prayer is the battle. Evangelism is not the attempt to win the battle - it is the mopping up operation".

Some of us are going on an Alpha training course in June, and it is hoped to run Alpha courses in the Autumn.

We have a small prayer group which meets weekly on Tuesday evenings at 8pm. We need many more intercessors. If you can't meet on Tuesday evening, would another time suit you, e.g. Tuesday or Wednesday am or Thursday pm, Saturday at 8am (as lots of churches do) or Sunday morning 9.30 to 10.15? If you meet in a prayer cell or home group, please let Tony Loft know.

Joyce Plant

QUOTE - UNQUOTE

Do not let us fail one another in interest, care and practical help; but supremely we must not fail one another in prayer

Michael Baughen

AS FINE SILVER

Malachi 3:3 says: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver"

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study. They got to wondering what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest, so as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot, and then she thought again about the verse that says "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver." She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment, then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy - when I see my image in it."

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has his eye on you and will keep watching you. His aim is not to abandon or destroy you, but to refine you - until he sees his image in you.

[Evesham News July 2002]

QUOTE - UNQUOTE

One person who has mastered life is better than a thousand persons who have mastered only the contents of books, but no one can get anything out of life without God.

Meister Eckhart

QUOTES FROM OUR ARCHIVES - JULY/AUGUST

4 July 1934: the first meeting of the proposed staff for the Martin Way Methodist Sunday School was held at 46 Arundel Avenue ...allocation of rooms: Intermediate North Lecture Room; Junior Main Hall; Primary Classroom on SE side; Beginners Minister's Vestry ...the School service would be from 3-4pm .. Lesson books to be provided to all teachers and superintendents without obligation of repayment

20 July 1936: Mrs Dale had offered her services as Brown Owl ... Parade Service to be once a month

27 July 1939: The Leaders Meeting had recommended that an Air Raid Precautions Committee be formed. It was agreed that at least one room should be 'blacked out'. Mr Bounds suggested that the land in front of the church should be made available for cultivation. This was agreed and the Chapel Stewards were asked to arrange the allotment, preference being given to members of the congregation.

29 August 1945: Circuit Finance Committee had proposed to raise the assessment of Martin Way to 142 an increase of 12 ... Owing to shortage of rationed goods it was found impossible to hold the usual Harvest Supper

5 July 1949: an augmented choir would render 'Merrie England' [19 November]

24 August 1955: the old Worple Road Manse Trust had been dissolved and a new Circuit Trust formed with 15 members. These are:- the 2 Circuit Stewards, the Manse Steward, the six present members and the following six members from Martin Way, Messrs Allen, Charlton, Sewell and Warren, Mr Faulkner and Miss V Brown

2 July 1957: starting date [for building new church] agreed with the contractors at 15 July (nine months for completion); Mr Lewis was willing to collect material to make a film strip showing the history of Martin Way

20 August 1957: The Secretary was to inquire if provision has been made for the provision of deaf aids

28 July 1958: "We accept with thanks the organ from Mr and Mrs A E Watson and decide that it shall be placed in the gallery".

No facilities for members of the congregation to hang their coats in the new church. proposed "That we purchase a hat and coat stand for £5-3-9".

CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOUR BURDEN IN LIFE?

[a true story from America]

Brenda was a young woman who was invited to go rock climbing. Although she was scared to death, she went with her group to a tremendous granite cliff.

In spite of her fear, she put on the gear, took a hold on the rope, and started up the face of that rock. Well, she got to a ledge where she could take a breather. As she was hanging on there, the safety rope snapped against Brenda's eye and knocked out her contact lens. So there she was on a rock ledge, with hundreds of feet below her and hundreds of feet above her. Of course, she looked and looked and looked, hoping her contact lens had landed on the ledge, but it just wasn't there. Here she was, far from home, her sight now blurry. She was desperate and began to get upset, so she prayed to the Lord to help her to find it.

When she got to the top, a friend examined her eye and her clothing for the lens, but there was no contact lens to be found. Brenda sat down, despondent, with the rest of the party, waiting for the rest of them to make it up the face of the cliff. She looked out across range after range of mountains, thinking of that Bible verse that says 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth.' She thought 'Lord you can see all these mountains. You know every stone and leaf, and You know exactly where my contact lens is. Please help me.'

Finally, they walked down the trail to the bottom. At the bottom there was a new party of climbers just starting up the face of the cliff. One of them shouted out, "Hey you guys! Anybody lose a contact lens?" Well, that would be startling enough, but you know why the climber saw it? An ant was moving slowly across the face of the rock, carrying it.

Brenda's father is a cartoonist. When she told him the incredible story of the ant, the prayer and the contact lens, he drew a picture of an ant lugging that contact lens with the words, "Lord, I don't know why you want me to carry this thing. I can't eat it, and it's awfully heavy. But if this is what You want me to do, I'll carry it for You."

It would probably do some of us good to occasionally say, "God, I don't know why you want me to carry this load. I can see no good in it and it's awfully heavy. But if You want me to carry it, I will."

We can show our love for him through simple obedience.

[Evesham parish magazine August 2002]

SYLVIA CLARK

Sylvia's friends were saddened by the news of her death. She had been a member of Martin Way for many years and regularly attended Sunday morning services. After the service she liked meeting her friends for coffee in the hall. She also came to the monthly mid-week Communion Service. She was a member of Midways and at fund raising Coffee Mornings always enjoyed helping on the cake stall

We send our love and sympathy to her sons Stephen and Robert and all her family. A full appreciation will appear in the next Newsletter

HELLO FROM THE CHURCH STEWARDS

In April 2005 at the General Church Meeting Gwen Wildman stepped down after seven years in office, two new stewards were appointed - Annemarie Pallister and Andy Smith (married to Jane), so along with Moira Bailey (senior steward), Dennis Clark, Gwen Edwards and Joan Harding we have a full complement. We meet regularly with John Nyota (Minister), sharing concerns passed on to us as we look at the Church's life and activities.

On Saturday 21 May around twenty stewards from the circuit met together here at Martin Way for a training day. We all had a most enjoyable lunch prepared and served by Brenda Cannon and Maralyn Loft, which was appreciated by everyone.

During the afternoon Stuart Veitch gave a talk on growth and renewal in our relevant churches and challenged us on many points, including asking us if we are a church growing and alive, or the opposite. Another question raised was "Have you seen any conversions in recent months (or years)?" What do you think about these questions? Please consider these things and perhaps you would like to pass your thoughts to the stewards, so that we can learn where you as church members think we have reached. Are we

growing at Martin Way spiritually, numerically and in outreach? What could we do to improve our growth? One vital thing that everyone can do is to pray that the Lord will give us vision for the way ahead individually and as a Church

QUOTE - UNQUOTE

People who have come to know the joy of God do not deny the darkness, but they choose not to live in it.... Every moment of each day I have the chance to choose between cynicism and joy... increasingly I discover that every choice for joy in turn reveals more joy and offers more reason to make life a true celebration in the house of the Father

Henri J M Nouwen

SPRING HARVEST 2005

20 from Martin Way went to Skegness on 31 March with at least the expectation of being cold on the windy east coast. We ranged from nearly 6 months old to 69 years young! We stayed in three adjoining ground floor apartments, modern, fairly well equipped and WARM. The weather was very kind to us and we managed in the busy schedule to all have a Sunday Roast Lunch together in one of the apartments which was quite an achievement and enjoyed by all. Everyone did their own thing, taking from the Seminars, Worship, Resources Centre and Leisure Activities what they wanted. The children had their own club that has left them with a lasting memory - if you go into Sunday Club you will witness this! Speak to anyone who went and you will get a different story from each, I am sure. A group are planning to return in Easter 2006 and anyone who is interested please speak to anyone who went this year if you have any questions.

Maralyn Loft

BIG BRUNCH

There have been two so far this year with another three planned. They have been quite a success - the profit from the first two has been 390.00 being a big boost to the fund-raising for The Rafiki Trust. If you enjoy a full English Breakfast [or Brunch] come along between 9am and noon in the Coffee Lounge for service with a smile!! Next dates are 16 July and 17 September.

FROM A NORMANDY CRUCIFIX OF 1632

I am the great sun , but you do not see me,
I am your husband, but you turn away,
I am the captive, but you do not free me,
I am the captain you will not obey.

I am the truth, but you will not believe me,
I am the city where you will not stay,
I am your wife, your child, but you will leave me,
I am that God to whom you will not pray.

I am your counsel, but you do not hear me,
I am the lover whom you will betray,
I am the victor, but you do not cheer me,
I am the holy dove whom you will slay.

I am your life, but if you will not name me,
Seal up your soul with tears, and never blame me

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH -AUGUST

Many years ago when I worked as a librarian in Fulham Public Libraries there was a book which was very popular. I can't remember the name of the author but the title was 'August is a Wicked Month'. For many older people that title is a true statement. There is a false assumption that everybody goes away on holiday in August. Only parents with children of school age have to go way in August, most other people avoid holidaying in August because prices are put up during school holidays. We are all exploited whatever age we may be!

For many older people August can be, if not wicked, certainly a lonely month. Clubs and societies often don't meet in August so they are left high and dry. So this month, think of people living alone and perhaps pay them a visit or invite them round for a cup of tea. Your thought or even better, your action, will be much appreciated. In our efforts to follow the Christian way, what we do OUTSIDE the church is often far more important than anything we do within the church. Help take the 'wickedness' out of August for someone near you this summer. God bless you.

Bill Cox

CHRISTIAN AID

Thank you to all those who helped with the house-to-house collections this year - it is not an easy task but well worth-while. Martin Way collected ,900.50. Six of us walked this year and one did the cycle ride and the sponsorship will raise in excess of a further ,400.00. Well done Martin Way!!

Tony Loft

HAIL AND FAREWELL!

A small team has been set up to be in charge of communication matters at Martin Way. It will oversee not only the Newsletter and such things as the Christmas and Easter leaflets, but all ways of making sure that everyone who comes to church knows what is actually going on. It will start work in September at the beginning of the new church year, timing which fits excellently with my passing on the baton of Editorship after a five year stint to our new Editor, Andrew Fox.

Andrew will welcome any suggestions you have about what you would like to see in the magazine - and of course, any contributions.

His email address is:- roife@aol.com

Many, many thanks to all of you who have contributed articles, comments and suggestions over the years and have put up with my regular cries of "I need it by Sunday!" And finally, I can now reveal the hidden monthly competition - "Spot the spelling mistake"!! [Sorry, no prizes!]

Rosemary Keen

CHURCH DIARY FOR JULY

Fri	1	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	3	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Janet and Bob Hamblin
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev John Nyota
Mon	4	2.45 pm	Fellowship
Tue	5	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	8	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	10	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev John Nyota
Mon	11	3.45 pm	Fellowship (Moirra Bailey)
			[next meeting September]
Tue	12	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sat	16	9.00 am	Big Brunch for Kenya
Sun	17	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev John Nyota
Mon	18	2.45 pm	Fellowship
Tue	19	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club - An evening with Ted Ashwood
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	22	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sat	23		SUMMER CAMP at Swanage
Sun	24	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev Barrie Tabraham
Mon	25	2.45 pm	Fellowship
Tue	26	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	29	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	31	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev John Nyota

CHURCH DIARY FOR AUGUST

Sun	7	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev John Nyota
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Stuart Veitch
		8-22 August	KENYAN TRIP
Sun	14	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Brenda Cannon
Sun	21	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev Charlotte Elvey
Sun	28	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Paul Harvey