

Martin Way Methodist Church

Newsletter - February 2005

Minister - Rev John Nyota

Jambo rafikis

Happy New Year to you all!

Hope you had a splendid Christmas and that the New Year will be full of pleasant surprises. My deepest thanks to to all of you who participated in making the Christmas carols and services so enriching to all those who attended. It was so pleasing to see so many of our young adults participating in the music band. May the Lord bless you and those who organised you richly!

Thanks for all the many cards, surprises and special treats given to my family and me for Christmas! I feel very blessed and appreciate those who took the time to bless me this holiday and into the New Year! I deeply appreciate your generosity and your thinking of me! With our families miles back in Kenya we felt in reality that you are our family and we always tell them of how deeply loved we feel. And let me hasten to add that my mum was home for Christmas after a stint in hospital. She knows that you were praying for her and sends her love.

Well, 2004 is finally behind us. It's been both a wonderful and terrible year. Wonderful for many of us who have been, once again, blessed beyond measure with life, health, loved ones, work, financial security. But a struggle for those whose lives have been shattered by the death of someone close, ill health and money or family worries. Then, of course, there are the many, many who all around the world have been affected by hunger, poverty, war, crime, prejudice and political oppression.

And sadly, 2004 couldn't have ended on a more tragic and heart-breaking note - with the news of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster. The images of death, destruction, pain and suffering of the millions of people whose lives have literally been torn apart by this disaster are almost too unbearable to look at. In fact, I have to confess that I have found it difficult to watch news or read the newspapers since Boxing Day. This disaster has

left us, as Christians, with a lot of questions “Where was God when the tidal wave struck? How can a loving God allow such things to happen?” or perhaps more simply “ Why do things like this happen?”. Don’t think that your faith is failing you. We are entitled to ask these questions at a moment like this.

Friends, we can say - as did the Archbishop of Canterbury - that God was there when the tidal wave struck, that God was drowned, that God was running for fear and life, God put His arm (through another human being) around a loved one or stranger at the moment of death, God is a widow or orphan, God is waiting for news of a loved one, God is there picking up the pieces, God is working in the bodies of the injured repairing the damaged flesh, mind and spirit, God is praying, God is donating and helping ... that’s where I believe God was when the wave struck and is now as life must go on.

God invites us to be a people of hope. Seeing God at the very heart of us and all that there is, knowing that God is at work among us - healing and restoring; sensing God’s love at all times - in the midst of heartbreak as well as in the mountaintop experiences. And there is a lesson in the enormous generosity shown by our church and the entire nation towards this disaster - the overwhelming ability of man to rebuild overcomes nature’s ability to destroy. May we use this strength in participating in the “Make Poverty History” campaign already begun by Christian Aid, for an equal number die in Africa weekly due to poverty.

May you be blessed with a new year that is filled with the life and love of God’s Presence.

John

QUOTE - UNQUOTE

[For Candlemas 2 February]

Our bright shining candles are a sign of the divine splendour of the one who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of his eternal light.

Sophronius of Jerusalem 7th century.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH - FEBRUARY

February is my birthday month. If God gives me another two years I shall become an octogenarian and be entitled to another 5p or so a week on my pension.

Birthdays come and birthdays go, but isn't it strange, however old we are we still feel young inside. I came across a thought which suggested that when we die the youngster inside us will burst into new life.

I don't feel old inside, but my body reminds me that it is not as young as it used to be. I'm getting to the stage when I'm made up of more spare parts than me - one artificial hip and another to come before long, a pacemaker, two new cataracts, glasses, false teeth and two hearing aids, quite a collection!

We should think in terms of GROWING old rather than of GETTING old, because growing conveys the idea of developing, maturing, flourishing. One of our main fears when we pass our allotted span of three score years and ten is that of becoming senile and dependent on others. I readily echo the prayer of John Wesley -

"Lord let me not live to be useless"

Remember, too, the words found in 1 Samuel Chapter 16 verse 7 -

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"

It is the REAL you that is important to God, however old or however young you may be. Have a happy birthday when yours comes around and, don't forget, GROW older rather than GET older. One final thought -

What you ARE is God's gift to you. What you BECOME is your gift to God.

Bill Cox

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the million or more people who won't survive the week.

If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet or purse, and spare change in a dish somewhere, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you can read this, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read anything at all.

You are blessed in so many, many ways need I say more?

BIBLELANDS - 150 YEARS OF HEALING AND HOPE

As most of you know Mary and I have been involved with BibleLands since 1988 when with others from Martin Way we visited the Holy Land. It was a special time for us and ever since then we have been involved in supporting the work of BibleLands in one way or another, mainly by hopefully giving pleasure to many through talks or film presentations. So what a thrill it was for us when we were invited last October to join in the week of celebrations for their 150 years work..

For us it started on Tuesday 5 October when we attended a dinner in a large ancient barn out in the wilds of Buckinghamshire. The Trustees and many staff and friends were present. At the end of each course the staff moved to another table, so that we met many people. They included Bishop Riah of Jerusalem, Suad Yunnan Director of the Helen Keller Centre, Derek Thompson Chief Executive of Nazareth Hospital, Bishop Mainsel of Egypt, Riaf Shwarji Director of Al Kafat in Beirut and Ssvan Balabarien Educational Coordinator for Armenians in Lebanon. And many others , most of whom we have met over the years.

The following day saw us at head office in High Wycombe to collect Mrs Sevan Balabarien who was to stay with us. What a treat for us and it was her first visit to the UK. So a round about trip home via Windsor Castle and Wisley.. The evening was one of great happiness. We'd invited our friends Suki Tchilingirian and his wife Wendy from St. Martin's he having been born in Jerusalem but of Armenian heritage. What a treat for these two folk to meet, going back in their history to forebears living in the same or nearby villages. It was an emotionally charged wonderful evening.

Saturday 9 October was the climax to the week of celebration and for us it started at 9am at the Friends' Meeting House Euston Road where I was a steward for the day. It was followed by a Service of thanksgiving led by Rev. Baroness Kathleen Buchanan with prayers by our two guest bishops. Then at 3.30 there were two seminars given on the Holy Land, Lebanon and Egypt when we were told of the good news, the worries and how many see the future for the area After an evening meal there was a concert in

the Grand Hall presented by Diane Louis of Jordan (Songs of Praise fame) and what a bubbly person she was; Garth Hewitt singer and song writer director of the Amos Trust and a singing group "Nite for a child"

I think the most important message we received that week was a massive thank you from those of the Lebanon, Palestine/Israel and Egypt for your continued prayers for those countries and for the financial help to the disabled poor, young and old. So this now gives Mary and I room to say Thank You for the support you've given us over these years helping those less fortunate

Mary and Derek Heaton

QUOTES FROM OUR ARCHIVES - FEBRUARY

17 February 1932 Martin Way Sites Committee (at Merton Road): a plot of land in Green Lane, belonging to Merton Borough Council should be purchased if suitable terms could be arranged.... £8-10s per foot inclusive of road charges

7 February 1934 Tender from Messrs Somerford and Sons accepted. London Mission and Executive Fund Committee approved and promised 10% on the building outlay

7 February 1938 13th Morden Group Scouts: the section is hit very badly by the homework bugbear which greatly reduces the average attendance at parades

10 February 1939 It was agreed that tenders be obtained for fixing rails in all rooms to prevent damage by chairs

28 February 1940 Mr Norton proposed and Mr Bellwood seconded that in the event of the war continuing until the autumn, the main hall and Primary room should be "blacked out"

16 February 1941 Ladies Social and Working Party: this meeting had been extremely busy. To the end of December over 600 garments had been sent to the forces and evacuated children.

An open air meeting was being held on Good Friday when we would combine with St. Saviour, St. James, Holy Cross and Merton Park Baptists. This would take the form of a procession ending on Cannon Hill Common

23 February 1941 The local residents in conjunction with the ARP wardens, were including the church premises in their scheme. Mr Denton the warden, holds a key to facilitate entry in case of need... It was proposed that "we purchase a stirrup pump and sandbags"

19 February 1959 Annual Society Meeting: Wives Group: the group meet at the manse on alternate Fridays. The total membership is 22 and there is an average attendance of 12 ... Mr Tagg suggested a letter should be circulated to encourage members of the congregation to join the envelope scheme. The superintendent reminded the meeting of the refund of income tax scheme.

28 February 1962 The congregation of St. James will join with us when the Bishop of Southwark preaches at our anniversary service in May

KITE FLYING

From Lahore to Karachi and Delhi to Madras, the Indian subcontinent is buzzing with expectancy and excitement as people clamber on to their rooftops and litter open spaces, all locked in combat: this is the ancient art of kite warfare. The Guddi (Doll), the Muchar (Mosquito) and the Pari (Fairy) bob and weave, dip and dive to avoid enemy sorties as their specially sharpened strings (dur) cut and pluck an opponent out of the sky to the victory war cry of "Bo Kutta".

The Hindu festival of Basant is here again, the air is filled with sounds of music and dancing, along with thousands of yellow mustard-seed flowers, which blow in on the warmer winds at this time of the year. People young and old dress in yellow too, as they celebrate that spring is on the way.

"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going.. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John ch3: v8)

The Lord himself blows into our lives by his Holy Spirit. Yet we may feel we're bobbing and weaving, ducking and diving as we duel with the pressures of day-to-day life, school, friends and family, which threaten to cut us down.

But there's no need to worry-With God at the strings of your life, catch the thermal and let it carry you.

AIDS

The life expectancy of Rwandese people which was 58 before the 1994 genocide has dropped to 44 years and is expected to drop even further because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and general poverty. HIV/AIDS prevalence is 14% in the rural areas and 16% in the towns. It is estimated that 400,000 children have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Nearly one million will be orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS in the next 4 years.

TSUNAMI APPEAL

At the time of going to press the amount collected for the appeal by Martin Way church is £725

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARVE BROTHERS

Have you booked yet? Performances on Thursday, Friday and Saturday 17-19 February all at 7.30pm. You know how good the previous pantomimes have been, so don't risk missing this one!.. Get your tickets now.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 14 March: Women's Network Event: District Day at Redhill: Elaine Turner, President, will be the speaker on the theme "Building Bridges". Details from Joyce Plant.

WHAT USE IS A USED STAMP?

Answer - a great deal of help! Save your British stamps for Bill Cox who needs them for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and your foreign stamps will always be welcomed by Derek and Mary Heaton for BibleLands.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 4 March

Everyone (gentlemen as well as ladies and children) is warmly invited to attend any of this year's services on Friday 4 March. The services have been compiled by the women of Poland and have as their theme "Let our Light Shine".

The morning service will be held at 10.30 am at Raynes Park Methodist Church, when the speaker will be Rob Frost. The evening service is at 8 pm at Merton Park Baptist church.

MIDWAYS 2004

We have had a very successful beginning to our year raising £136.81 for the Baby Simba Project at our October Coffee Morning and sending 19 boxes for the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. A new departure this year, prompted by Pauline Riley, was that at our Christmas Meal instead of bringing a gift for £1.50 to be put in a sack and then everyone taking a gift home, we donated £1.50 for Good Gifts. We raised £37 and were able to buy a bike for a midwife helping mums and babies in Ethiopia (via the Good Gifts catalogue) and a stethoscope to help a local health worker in rural Cambodia diagnose problems such as TB (via Christian Aid).

We meet fortnightly at 7.45pm in the Coffee Lounge on a Wednesday, have a varied programme and welcome anyone to join us.

Maralyn Loft

CHURCH DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

| | | | |
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| Tue | 1 | 10-12 pm | Coffee and Chat |
| | | 8.00 pm | Time for Prayer |
| Fri | 4 | 12.30 pm | Lunch Club |
| Sun | 6 | 10.30 am | Morning Service led by Rev John Nyota |
| | | 6.30 pm | Communion Service led by Rev John Nyota |
| Tue | 8 | 10-12 pm | Coffee and Chat |
| | | 8.00 pm | Time for Prayer |
| Wed | 9 | 07.45 pm | Midways (Mary and Derek Heaton - Alaskan Adventure) |
| Thu | 10 | 2-3.00 pm | Seekers' Group |
| Sun | 13 | 10.30 am | Morning Service led by Mr David Morgan |
| Tue | 15 | 10-12 pm | Coffee and Chat |
| | | 7.30 pm | Men's Supper Club AT ST. MARTIN'S (Peter Wellman - Oil Rigs) |
| | | 8.00 pm | Time for Prayer |
| Thu | 17 | 07.30 pm | Snow White and the Seven Dwarve Brothers |
| Fri | 18 | 12.30 pm | Lunch Club |
| | | 7.30 pm | Snow White and the Seven Dwarve Brothers |
| Sat | 19 | 7.30 pm | Snow White and the Seven Dwarve Brothers |
| Sun | 20 | 10.30 am | Communion Service led by Rev Barrie Tabraham |
| Tue | 22 | 10-12 pm | Coffee and Chat |
| | | 8.00 pm | Time for Prayer |
| | | 8.00 pm | Finance & Property Committee |
| Wed | 23 | 7.45 pm | Midways (Grace Ashwood - My Army Days) |
| Thu | 24 | 2-3.00 pm | Seekers' Group |
| Sun | 27 | 10.30 am | Morning Service led by Rev John Nyota |
| | | 8.00 pm | Service led by Janet and Bob Hamblin |