

Martin Way Methodist Church

Newsletter - April 2005

Minister - Rev John Nyota

MINISTER'S LETTER

Jambo rafiki

Lent is generally thought to be a season in which Christians seek to move from Ash Wednesday all the way through to Easter as though we did not know how the journey will end. Like re-reading a novel or watching a film over and over again, it can help to pretend you don't know the ending, even though you do. It can make Lent more meaningful if we put ourselves in the shoes of the disciples who lived the last days of Jesus' earthly life without the assurance of the resurrection.

However liturgically correct that might be, the reality is that sometimes Easter just can't wait until Easter, even during Lent. Sometimes God's Spirit grants us experiences that offer glimpses of Easter and the Spirit simply >moves where it will' without regard to the church calendar. And sometimes the hard human truth is that things happen, even in Lent, so that we simply can't wait until the calendar date of Easter to have an Easter epiphany. When our hearts are heavy and our souls are sombre, we just flat-out need some Easter.

So it has been for me this Lent, and from what a number of you have been telling me, so it has been for you. Depression, disturbance, disease and death have come visiting our overly busy lives that are so full of worry and anxiety already. But like rays of sunshine that come streaking through foggy skies, so does the hope and promise of Easter come to lighten our sometimes dim and dreary days. And it happens right here at Martin Way ...right here in the life we share ... in your life and mine.

Actually it was a few weeks before Lent, but it was a solemn time, what with all of us having been inundated with weeks of heartbreaking pictures and stories from across South Asia of the devastation caused by the tsunami that struck across that region on the day after Christmas. The ever-increasing death toll was itself more than most of us could take in - a quarter of a million people dead and counting. So we took up a financial

offering and received a most generous response from our congregation. And as I was writing this piece I was reminded that this month without any notice I received the news early Sunday morning that one of our beloved friends here at Martin Way had died. What a sad day it was for me personally and all of us here! And that was just but a beginning of many more brothers and sisters who left us that year. But lest we forget

We have entered Lent, a period in which we recall the climactic last weeks of Jesus' life. Escalating conflict culminates in crucifixion and then resurrection. Lent is a time to delve deeper into the >what and why' of Jesus' self sacrifice. If he was divine why would he suffer (and would he actually suffer?). Why would God allow this to happen? What does it mean to say that "Jesus died for our sins?". What difference might that make as I think of my own relationship with God? Lent is a time of wonder at Jesus' love and then to take a look at ourselves and ask how we might live more faithfully and be more grateful for God's love and grace.

I'm thinking perhaps this year in particular, we are really going to need Easter. And on Easter Sunday 2005 no matter how >down' we may have felt this Lent, when we celebrate the resurrection of Christ with an early sunrise morning service at six, no matter how >down' we may still be, when Easter comes, we ...will ... rise. Thanks be to God for the gift of the resurrection and the promise of life eternal in our Lord Jesus Christ! God bless you!

*Ahsante
John*

QUOTE - UNQUOTE

It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis grows or diminishes, whether a person's humanity grows or diminishes. If we treat people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them to become what they are capable of becoming

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

THE FELLOWSHIP

There seems to be a question as to whether we still meet or how often. May we assure everyone that we meet every Monday at 2.45pm in the Parlour, excepting Bank Holiday Mondays and during the month of August. We are at the moment without a Secretary (would anyone like to volunteer?), but we are endeavouring to have a speaker at least one Monday in the month. Everyone is assured of a warm welcome, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Eileen Handy for the Fellowship

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARVE BROTHERS

It's been four long years since we last saw a Martin Way pantomime and this one, specially written for us by Bernard Doswell, was more than worth the wait. The lucky audience was able to sit back and enjoy the show, their only task to boo, shout warnings or compete in songs about food. Congratulations and many thanks to all those who took part, the performers, the musicians and the indispensable back-stage crew. It was a truly splendid show which well repaid the many hours and days spent on its production. Please Anne, may we not have to wait quite so long for another!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 21 May: 9-12 noon: Big Brunch in aid of our Kenya Rafiki Trust project to help to build a school house for Baraimu village

Sunday 22 May: 1-5.15pm Raise funds for Christian Aid and help the world's poorest communities. Walk through the City starting and finishing at All Hallows by the Tower (thanksgiving service at 5.15); and for those of you who are feeling really energetic you can cycle from All Hallows to Greenwich (15km in all, mainly on cycle paths and quiet roads).

Information from our Tony Loft or Alan Morris of St. Mary Merton

A Prayer

O Almighty God, help us not to give place to self-preoccupation, which, snake-like and venomous, winds its way so effortlessly into thought and action; but to take it into the desert with Christ and to throttle it. Amen

*[a prayer based on some words of Temple Gairdner of Cairo, Egypt]
CMS Prayer News 13 February 2005]*

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH - APRIL

I've had a bit of an 'off' day today. You know what I mean. Several things have gone irritatingly wrong; the weather has been cold, dreary and wet; the pain in my legs has been more pronounced than usual; when I switched on my computer the screen remained blank, apart from a brief message I didn't understand and so I could go on adding to the list. It was 'one of those days'. We all have them, especially as we grow older.

But then I remembered hearing Rabbi Blue giving a 'Thought for the Day' at ten to eight this morning and that's always a bonus. I'd had a couple of chatty phone calls from friends. I'd watched 'Countdown' and had managed to do just as well as the winning contestant. My daughter, Chris, had come in to see me for a few minutes, as she does every day.

Prince, my cat, had come to me several times, just wanting a cuddle. We looked out at the dismal gloom and the obstinately persistent sleet. It was obviously very cold out there in the garden, but a pot of miniature daffodils still looked beautiful despite the weather. I said to Prince, "Aren't we blessed to have this warm, comfortable home!". Later Prince reminded me in his cat-like way that he wanted some food. I was able to give him some and then prepare a meal for myselfCome to think of it, the day hadn't been so bad after all.

Looking back on what I had thought of as an 'off' day I realised that it had contained many, many blessings, but I had just accepted them and taken them for granted. So, if you are feeling a bit disgruntled or sorry for yourself, just remember the words of the old chorus ...

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done,*

Bill Cox

P.S The next day dawned bright and sunny with clear blue skies!

Who's counting?

Count your gains instead of your losses,
Count your joys instead of your woes,
Count your friends instead of your foes,
Count your courage instead of your fears,
Count your health instead of your wealth,
Count on God instead of yourself.

Anonymous

THE TWO GREAT WAVES

Three months have passed since we learnt a new word - tsunami. For two or three weeks the great wave and its devastating after-effects dominated the news. Now it has ceased to make the headlines but the questions raised remain unanswered. Many thousands of people died, many are unaccounted for. Thousands who survived have lost virtually everything, something which is beyond our comprehension because, thankfully, it is beyond our personal experience. Does it make sense to you? It certainly doesn't make sense to me. In fact the questions it raises in my mind are disturbing, worrying and nagging questions. Some people lost their faith in God as a result of the tsunami. Why did God, if he is indeed a loving, caring God allow it to happen? That's an unanswerable question. I came across this thought many years ago. WHAT GOD ALLOWS HE ALSO USES. So we need to look for what good, if anything, came out of that unprecedented disaster.

We were reminded that we are imperfect people living in a flawed, imperfect world. Scientists tell us that the wave was caused by movement in a crack in the earth's crust. So the very planet on which we live is flawed and we who inhabit it are certainly far from perfect. We may be led to wonder why God created a world with so many dangerous defects and people who leave so much to be desired. Perhaps because we are not ready for perfection in our present state of existence. Perhaps we need to experience imperfection before we can fully appreciate perfection. We have to allow ourselves to be guided towards perfection, echoing the words of St. Paul, "Not that I have already been made perfect but I press on..." (Philippians Ch 3 v 12)

Then the tsunami gave us a lesson about the stewardship of money. We have been given enough knowledge to enable us to set up early warning systems, thousands of lives might have been saved had one been in place. The reason given for not having a warning system was lack of money.. Yet we can easily find money to fight unnecessary wars and send space probes to far distant comets. It should make us think more about priorities.

Another good thing coming out of the disaster was that it brought many of the richest nations together in an effort to provide speedy aid to those who have suffered. It may also have helped us to realise how

affluent we really are. However generous your donation to the disaster fund was, I'm sure that you still have enough left in the bank to meet your everyday needs, You may be planning a holiday. The amount you spend on your holiday would probably keep a family going for years in some of the stricken areas. We are given a reminder, too, that there is a great difference between what we NEED and what we WANT. Certainly in all the areas affected by the wave there are ongoing NEEDS to be met. The basic necessities of life are far more important than the extra >wants' which we have allowed to become thought of as needs.

The great wave was indiscriminate. People of all religions or none were among those who lost their lives or lost everything. Differences of class, religion or race did not matter. It was a reminder that we are all fellow human beings, all children of God, all part of God's creation, all not yet made perfect. And yet we were shown that there is some good in all of us. That was shown in the second great wave - a wave of compassion, sympathy and generosity shown in practical giving on an unsurpassed scale which swept across many countries.

God does not act without purpose although that purpose may be far beyond our very limited understanding. There are many other lessons to be learnt from what happened. We can only accept by faith, that, despite all appearances to the contrary at times, God does love and God does care. There is a spark of divine love in each and every one of us. When that love is allowed to grow and flourish, the world becomes a better and happier place.

Bill Cox

AN UNLIKELY CHOICE

Do you remember those awful moments at school, waiting to be picked for the team? I remember with dread the pain of standing and waiting to be selected. The fastest runners and the wittiest, most confident people all got chosen first. The waiting crowd got smaller and smaller, until you became more obviously a part of the unpopular group, for whatever reason you were the outcast, the reject.

The bible is full of rejected and outcast people who, against all odds, were selected by Jesus. Zacchaeus was a rich and unscrupulous tax collector, not a popular guy, who climbed up a tree to get a better view of Jesus as

He passed through Jericho. Jesus singled him out, telling him that He planned to stay in the tax collector's home that night. The crowd started to complain at Jesus' bad choice, but they must have been amazed as Zacchaeus promised to give half of his belongings to the poor and repay those he had cheated.

Jesus loves everyone without exception. He befriended, healed and saved many ordinary people in the bible, and continues to do so, as people give their lives to Him. How fantastic it would have been to be any one of these unlikely people who met Jesus face to face and personally experienced his healing touch.

[from Holy Trinity Sydenham Park magazine Autumn 2003: Sue Ajmal]

QUOTES FROM OUR ARCHIVES - APRIL

25 April 1933 approval of draft letter to be sent to residents bounded by the following roads:- Kingston, Poplar, Kenley, Circle Gardens, Maycross Avenue, top of Arundel Avenue, Martin Way, Cannon Hill Lane

The statement will bear the names of the Superintendent, Minister and Resident Minister (Rev A C Parker), Circuit Stewards and Secretary

The four ministers should distribute to about 400 houses in close proximity to the site and the remainder should be delivered under arrangements made by the secretary

14 April 1934 Stone-laying Ceremony

There were about 250 friends at the Stone-laying and nearly 200 at the Public Tea, which was provided and served by the Ladies Association of the new Church.

Amount collected and promised at the Stone-laying totalled £1,503 3s 0d

[comprising : Collection £27 19s 0d; local residents £68 19s 2d; Upper Tooting, Worple Road and Cottenham Park churches each £100; and South Wimbledon church £60; Friends Afar £46 14s 0d; Anonymous £1,000

29 April 1945 Mr Jarvis had resigned as organist and choirmaster ...Miss Vida Brown had been acting as choir leader since Mr Jarvis left and Mrs G John had been helping as pianist. The choir members had voted in favour

of Miss Brown becoming choirmaster and Mrs John becoming church organist

30 April 1951 A special church meeting had been held ... on a show of hands the majority desired a new church in preference to an extension of the present premises

22 April 1954 Mrs F E Warren resigned leadership of the Youth Club. Miss Margaret Skinner appointed Assistant Leader. A service of dedication for all interested in work among children and young people should be held at 8am on October 17th ... to be conducted by Rev Erastus Evans

For the morning and evening services on October 17th the council hoped that Dr Waterhouse would find it possible to conduct services of a kind appropriate to a young people's day as well as the Church anniversary. If Dr Waterhouse should think fit at the evening service to make an appeal to young people to record a decision to dedicate their lives to Christ this would be appreciated by the Council

17 April 1957 Mosaic panel over the main entrance

Mr Maggs had prepared several sketch designs which were considered. It was decided to accept his picture of the Good Samaritan which was to be forwarded to the architect

THINGS WILL CHANGE

When you get to the end of your tether
And your energy seems to have gone;
When you're weary and wondering whether
It's worth while to keep struggling on;
When the fire has gone out of your spirit
And you armour has fallen apart
LET GO AND LET GOD DO THE FIGHTING.
BE STILL IN YOUR HEAD AND YOUR HEART.

When the music goes out of the morning
And you cannot keep pace with the drum;
When the flowers in the garden stop smiling
And the birds do not sing when you come;
When the sun never peeps through your window

And you look for the rainbow in vain
ASK SOMEONE TO HELP AND TO HEAL YOU.
LET HIM TAKE THE BRUNT AND THE STRAIN.

When you get to the end of your courage
And there's nothing much more you can do,
Try folding you hands for a moment
And letting God's guidance get through...
Life cannot be altered by worry,
Stop trying to push it away.
JUST LET THE GOOD LORD TAKE OVER.
YOU'LL FIND THAT THINGS CHANGE WHEN YOU PRAY..

WHAT YOU HAVE IN COMMON WITH A WOODCARVING

Woodcarving isn't as straightforward as it seems. You don't begin with a block of wood, you begin with a piece of paper. The first step is to draw a plan of what you want to carve, and only when you've got that right do you start to shape your piece of wood.

The carver then works his block with his plan alongside it, He cuts those bits of wood away that he doesn't want, and shapes what's left until it ever more closely resembles the original plan.

Only when the design on the wood and the paper plan are identical has the carver finished his job. He's then made exactly what he'd hoped for, while working all along from that original plan.

It's the same with our lives. God is the master carpenter. He has a unique plan for each one of us, which is a blueprint of what he hopes we will become.

As we go through life, God shapes us, cutting away those bits of us that He doesn't want and which would spoil what He hopes we'll come to look like. He then gradually moulds what's left until we look ever more like that original blueprint, Only when the two are identical will God's work be over.

But there's one big difference between a human being and a block of wood. A block of wood has to sit impassively on the carver's bench while he works at it. The wood cannot help the process along and has no idea what's happening to it.

God very much hopes that we'll help Him in the process of being moulded and shaped to His pattern. That's why we read the Bible and worship and pray: to find out just what his plan is for each one of us. Only when we have some idea of what He wants us to be can we help him in the process.

Yet however often we get it wrong and fail to live up to God's hopes, there's one promise we have.

God will never give up on us, until He's shaped us into exactly what He's planned for us to be all along.

[Parish Magazine of St. Cuthbert Wells, February 2005]

CHURCH DIARY FOR APRIL

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 Barrie Tabraham
Tue	5	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club - Annual Service with Rev Colin Wood
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	6	7.45 pm	Midways (Lynn Hazen - Flexibility is Fun)
Thu	7	2-3 pm	Seekers' Group
Sun	10	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev John Nyota
Tue	12	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	15	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sat	16	9-12 noon	Big Brunch [in aid of MCW Rafiki Trust]
Sun	17	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev John Nyota
Tue	19	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club (Rodney Cooper - Mouth and Foot Painting Artists)
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	23	7.45 pm	Midways (Paul Thompson - Army Padre)
Thu	21	2-3 pm	Seekers' Group
Sun	24	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Brenda Cannon
		8.00 pm	Service led by Janet and Bob Hamblin
Tue	26	10-12 pm	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	29	12.30 pm	Lunch Club