

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear friends,

From the school gates to the pension queue, the hum of conversations can be heard everywhere. In coffee shops, pubs and restaurants; on aeroplanes, trains and buses; in offices, factories and supermarkets, people can be heard talking with one another. The hum of conversation provides the background music for all our lives and, because we overhear the conversations of others and participate in conversations ourselves, we know what these conversations are mostly about.



On a daily basis we either overhear or share in conversations about sport, politics (anyone still want to talk about MPs expenses?), television programmes, family members, friends, health or illness and even about the unreliability of trains or the price of petrol.

But how many of these conversations talk of God?

The Jesus we encounter in the gospels spends much of his time in conversation with others about God. He converses with his disciples, with those who approach him for help – often women or outsiders – and with those who oppose him/his message. At the heart of all these conversations is God: Jesus talks of his own special relationship with God, of God's yearning for humanity, of God's kingdom.

In the days after Easter, the disciples would try to make sense of all these conversations for themselves: they would attempt to discover the meaning of them for their lives. To begin with they would of course struggle but in time, and helped not only by some encounters with the risen Jesus but also by the coming of God's Spirit upon them at Pentecost, they would find a collective and strengthened voice to continue these conversations. They grew to understand, you see, that the work that God had started in Jesus was to continue in them.

At the recent General Church Meeting, a number of people expressed a

desire to share in conversations with one another, using as a starting point the Conference report (2005) Time to Talk of God. This well-received report recognises that, whilst we're often comfortable with socialising and prioritise being a welcoming church, we are often much less comfortable seeking out or providing contexts of conversation that allow us to go really deep, and to 'get real' with each other about our faith and its implications for living. If we are not comfortable – or cannot find places – in which we are able to talk of God with one another within the church, the report asks, how are we ever going to be able to talk of God with those outside the church and then what does that say about us as witnesses and disciples of Jesus Christ?

So in the coming months we'll be looking to see how we might best facilitate these conversations - and they will be conversations with one another not discussions. At its root, the word 'discussion' means, 'to shake apart' or 'to smash apart' whereas at its root the word 'conversation' means, 'an act of living with', 'to keep company with' and even 'to turn about with'. The distinction is then an important one. A conversation is a shared journey with an unknown destination. If this is something that you think or feel would interest you, please mention that either to a member of the Leadership Team or to me.

With every blessing

Paul

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Got any rivers to cross, you think are uncrossable?

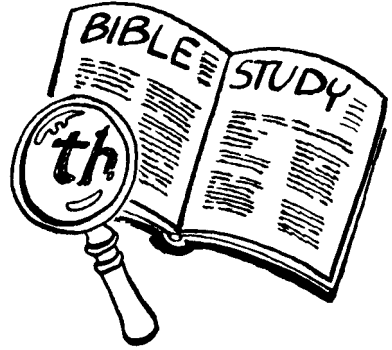
Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?

God specialises in things thought impossible.

He does things others can't do.

O. Elizson

A NEW BIBLE STUDY GROUP



Myself and Penny came back from Spring Harvest with an idea to start up a Bible Study Group. We understand there are House Groups at Martin Way who do this already but we felt that they are already well attended, and although they would welcome people to join them they could become too large. Also we wanted to reach out to others who may want to join a Bible Study Group but haven't for many different reasons.

There are a lot of things to think about with this group, such as;-

- † How often should the group meet
- † What night to meet on
- † Times
- † Different styles of Bible Study
- † Who would lead each session

We are planning to meet on Thursday 4th June at Jane Smith's House (183 Pembury Avenue, KT4 8BY) at 8pm to discuss what people want and how we can achieve this.

If anybody has any questions or would like a lift please speak to Abby Herring, Jane Smith or Penny Osborne.

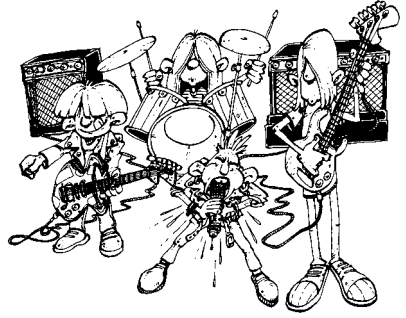
Abby Herring

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If a man is not familiar with the Bible, he has suffered a loss which he had better make all possible haste to correct.

Theodore Roosevelt

JOIN OUR MERRY BAND



Hello to All,

Below are dates for band and New song practices for the next month or so. It is mainly for a service the Platform are planning with David Somers (and his last Service at Martin Way) on Sunday 5th July but we would welcome as many people along just to learn the songs even if they don't want to join in with the band on Sunday mornings.

The band members include Caroline Johnson (Clarinet/Sax), Jack Pallister (Piano), Marie Randall (Flute), Colin Smith (Bass Guitar), James Smith (Drums), Natalie Johnson and Alex Pallister (Guitar). Our vocalists include Katie Budd, Abby Herring, Tony Loft, Ann Conquest and Andy Smith. Feel free to speak with any of them to find out more about the band.

We did use to have new song practises one Sunday afternoon a month but these haven't happened lately - it will be back again more regular. Until then please feel welcome to join us at these practices and bring your instruments or voices.

These are the dates we going to practice for the Cafe Worship:

Saturday 6th June 5pm

Sunday 7th June, after the AAW we'll just practice the two new songs briefly - Adoration and Amazing Grace (My Chains are gone).

Saturday 20th June 4.30pm

Saturday 4th July 4.30pm

Abby Herring

HOW IS OUR FINANCIAL POSITION?

Because there were not as many attending the General Church Meeting on the 10th May as we were hoping to see there, I have been asked to supply a few comments for people to read, mark, learn and hopefully, where possible, do something about it!!



At the time of the meeting we were 35 weeks into the current Methodist year (which runs from 1st September to 31st August) – Sunday collections, including payments by Banker's Orders and cheques, were marginally below the average for the whole of last year, and sadly two of our members who both made substantial contributions have died over the past few months.

At the expense of once again repeating what I have said so many times in the past, the question of Gift Aiding can have a considerable effect on our income without any cost to the donor. The only requirement is that tax is paid to at least equal to the amount reclaimed, e.g. if, say, £2 per week is donated then over 52 weeks tax of £17.68 can be reclaimed taking £104 to £121.68 or if it were £5 per week, then the amount reclaimed would be £44.72 taking £260 to £304.72.

We now have 34 Gift Aid donations to the General Fund and 8 to the Building Fund, against a membership of 83, plus a number who attend regularly but are not actually members – not a very good response? However, it is interesting to note that tax returned last year on the General Fund was £5816.45 and on the Building Fund £842.45, so just imagine how this could be improved. Strangely, with the recent Easter Offering Envelopes there were two cases which were Gift Aided by people who do not Gift Aid their general giving. I wonder why? It is not even necessary to sign your name on the form to fill in to join the Gift Aid system, and I have always got some of the forms with me – any applications please?

One of the effects of “credit crunch” is the reduction of the amount of interest we receive from the money we have invested with the Central Finance Board. At best we were receiving interest at 5.48%, but the latest figure is 2.67%, i.e. less than half! (Note: this figure has now dropped to 1.92% since John passed me the report and the completion of the Newsletter!)

We have to thank Pete Boyd for all he does in producing income from donations for the use of our premises, which go towards helping to meet our various expenditures.

I have recently been advised that our Circuit Assessment (which deals with the Circuit expenses such as the payment of Minister’s stipends and expenses, staffing costs, pension provision, maintenance of Manses etc. etc.) for 2009/2010 will be increased from £31000 to £31240 which is an amount of £240 a year – just under £5 per week, and the cost of gas, electricity, insurance, cleaning, etc. continues to increase, as it does in our own homes.

If anyone wants further comments, information or details, please have a word with me.

John Butland

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The Helpful Spelling Checker!!

Eye halve a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marques four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.
Eye strike a key and type a word And weight four it two say
Weather eye am wrong oar write It shows me strait a weigh. As
soon as a mist ache is maid It nose bee fore two long And eye can.
put the error rite Its rare lea ever wrong.
Eye have run this poem threw it I am shore your pleased two no Its
letter perfect awl the weigh
My chequer tolled me sew.



Circling the City for Christian Aid

It must have been at least the year 2000 when Mike Rusbridge persuaded Tony and I to join him on this walk, so at 6 miles each year we have walked at least 56 miles around London in many different weather conditions, raising quite a few hundred pounds for Christian Aid.. I remember one year taking people from Brisbane, Australia on the walk and it rained all the way!!

This year we walked on our own for the first time but have still managed to raise over £200. We started at St Mary-le-bow in Cheapside, made our way to the millennium bridge, on to Southwark Cathedral, over London Bridge, around the city finishing back at St Mary-le-bow which took us two hours.

Next year we would like more people to join us, it is a great afternoon exercise, enjoyed by many people of varied abilities.

Maralyn Loft

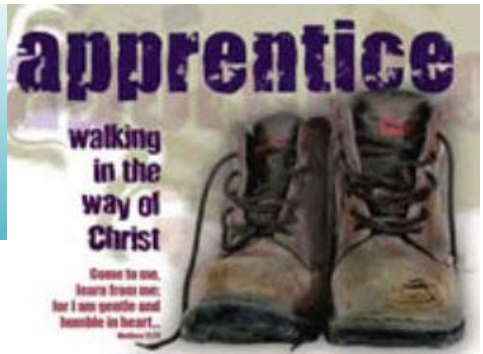
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To Drive or Not to Drive

A 6th former had just got his driver's licence and asked his dad if they could discuss his use of the car. His father said he'd make a deal with his son. 'If you bring your grades up from C to B, study your bible and get your hair cut... Then we'll talk about you borrowing the car' The boy decided he'd settle for the offer and agreed on it.

After about 6 weeks his father said 'Son, I'm really proud of you. You've brought your grades up and I've seen you studying the bible but I'm a bit disappointed that you haven't had your hair cut'

The lad paused for a moment, then said ' You know Dad, I've been thinking about that and I've noticed from my bible studies that Samson John the Baptist and Moses all had long hair and there's a strong argument that Jesus did too.' - to which his father replied 'But did you also notice they all walked everywhere they went'



SPRING HARVEST 2009 At Minehead

With all the joys of Butlins, the beach and the brightly-coloured fun of the fairground, you might think that one would be hard pressed to find any reason to do anything remotely religiously-focussed or holy during an event such as Spring Harvest. But for a few short days a year, these resorts at Skegness and Minehead are purely incidental and their features become merely the backdrop for a Christian experience that continues to inspire thousands, year after year. The challenging seminars that broach life's important questions, the variety of worship that can touch the heart in so many different ways, and the uplifting preaching, makes Spring Harvest an event I am proud to be a part of. I feel that all those who attended from our circuit this year will testify that something valuable was gained, that comes home with you and activates in your day-to-day living.

The six day week is a tiring one, but one which "equips the church for action" by facilitating it with God's message in fresh words. All in all, it is hard to quantify what Spring Harvest can achieve, as the experience is different each time for each person. But, if you appreciate lists, this one is a good start on the benefits of the event:

Laughter and kinship

Renowned preachers and speakers

Endless books and resources

Open space

Challenging seminars

Focus on God

Charitable information

Music and worship

Prayer space

Christian vocation information

Butlins' fun!!!

Ducks, geese and seagulls

Coffee and chat

Sport and recreation

Meet new people

Arts and creativity

Practical advice on reaching the community

Yet, amongst all this, the most common thing to come across is people finding God, people falling in love with God, people falling in love with God *again*, and lots of people basking in the joy of God's grace, and if you're really lucky, like me, you'll come away moved by one of the key themes from this year's Spring Harvest, that God's message is mainly just ... Love, actually.

Tom Linton-Smith



'I think it was an amazing experience for all of us to be at Spring Harvest. We've never really experienced so many Christians in one place all being perfectly open about their faith. I think for me it was a tiny bit of a relief and a shock to the system to see others of our age being able to talk about how God speaks to them in their lives, praying for others and worshipping openly without any inhibitions.

Spring Harvest was a brand new experience and a brand new challenge to us all!

Ellie Budd



'I really enjoyed Spring Harvest this year - not only was it great fellowship with friends from around our Circuit, but it also was a wonderful time of personal reflection.'

Abby Herring



'This was the first year I had been to Spring Harvest since I was very small however not much is remembered from that early visit!

During the day, we often visited the fairground and went to various seminars related to different things as well as attending the morning worships. Ellie and I though did find ourselves browsing the shops quite a lot but it couldn't be helped!

The youth worship aimed at 15-24's was really enjoyable. They started with something amusing relating to the youth of today and the sort of things we enjoy such as dancing to familiar songs and watching the leader's versions of various TV shows. At one point, we were all sitting down and about to go into prayer when they decided to blast out the Grease medley at very high volume; this led to the whole room splitting into boys and girls and erupting into dancing!

The speakers talked to us about relevant things in today's society in a way that wasn't hard to understand but also wasn't too childish. They would often get us involved by making us write something down and then we would attach it to a large board usually covered each day with a different piece of art. This was our way of responding to the speaker and what has been said.

In the evenings we would watch the evening entertainment or end up in the pool for a late night splash. One of our favourite memories from the evening entertainment was when we volunteered Alex to go and join the band on stage. He had to create a sound which looped to create an ensemble of sounds. I'm pretty sure by the end of it; all of us were in tears due to the amusement of Alex's words and actions!

If anyone was considering going this year but didn't end up going in the end, I would thoroughly advise you to go next year as it's bound to be just as amazing as this year. After we came home from Spring Harvest, I realised how much of a good experience it was and so I cannot wait to go again next year. '

Jenny Smith



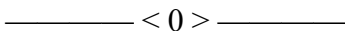
'I went to spring harvest for my first time, unsure of what to expect, would it be excessively cheesy or boring? I was pleasantly surprised. Not only was it neither, but there was complete freedom over what kind of thing you wanted to do, ranging from musical worship, to seminars, to swimming. For this reason, spring harvest is exactly what you make of it, with the opportunity to have an amazing time. I definitely want to go again and would recommend it to anyone, no matter how sure or unsure they are of their faith.'

Katie Budd



The dates for next years Spring Harvest will be Tuesday 6th until Sunday 11th April at Skegness Butlins. (Next year Easter weekend is 2nd to 5th April). We need to book our places in the middle of June so please consider joining us. There will be Fund Raising to assist people with the cost so please don't let costs put you off.

All are welcome to join us and please let Tony Loft know if you would like to come along by Sunday 14th June 2009.



The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity when it comes.

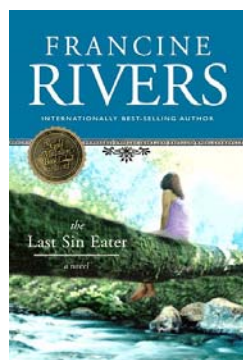
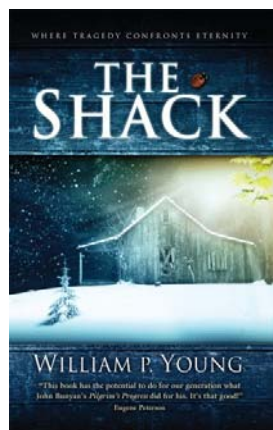
Benjamin Disraeli

BOOK REVIEWS from RE:FRESH BOOKS

The Shack by William Young
256 pages, paperback, RRP £7.99

The Shack has rightly been described as a “publishing Phenomenon”. A Christian book, initially rejected by all the major American Publishers, it went on to occupy the Number One Position on the New York Times Paperback Trade Fiction list on June 8 last year and retained that position for 11 months.

It is a novel about a man whose daughter is abducted; he receives a letter from somebody claiming to be God inviting him to return to the scene of his daughter's death. Some readers will be uncomfortable with the way in which the book represents God, but the dialogue as the hero, Mack, confronts God conveys the message powerfully. It tackles a variety of issues, but paramount is “how can God allow such suffering?” Young himself knew abuse as a child. The frequent references to a time known as “the Great Sadness” in the hero's life will strike chords with many readers and the message about forgiveness carries a hard but necessary challenge.



The Last Sin Eater by Francine Rivers.
336 pages paperback, RRP£9.95

Cadi lives in a secluded mountain community, where the people still believe in a Sin Eater, who takes on himself the transgressions of the deceased so that they may have peace in the afterlife. Cadi first meets him at her grandmother's funeral. Sometime later something happens in her family that leaves Cadi with a terrible burden of guilt. She decides to search for the Sin Eater so that he can take it away. In doing so she goes against all traditions and rules of her world. Together with the Sin Eater she discovers that the only way to forgiveness is through Jesus.

This is an adult novel written from the perspective of a 10 year old girl. This enables Francine Rivers to deal with very serious subjects in a subtle way. Cadi does not always understand exactly what is going on, or what has happened, yet for the viewer it is clear.


Both of these books are available from re:refresh books & christian resources, 23 The Broadway, Tolworth, Surbiton KT6 7DJ

PUZZLE CORNER

Double Puzzle

Eight words have had their letters rearranged.

Rearrange the letters into the boxes to make the correct word, then copy the numbered letters into the correct boxes in the grid below to make a verse from Ecclesiastes.



FEOLWR									
	28	31	30	16	5				
SEONT									
	14	25	26	24	1				
TSIXY									
	18	17	2						
SEWRO									
	8	12	19						
NAOMR									
	29	20	15	9					
WATNI									
	3	21	23	13					
NUEIT									
	11	22	7	6					
DYATO									
	10	4	27						

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26			
27	28	29	30	31										

With thanks to Bible Wordgames which can be found at www.biblewordgames.com

CHURCH DIARY



Tue	2	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	7	10.30 am	All Age Worship led by Rev Paul Timmis
Weds	10	7.45 pm	Midways Group - <i>Larry Barnes</i> - Pearly King
Thurs	11	8.00 pm	Church Council - Appointments and Pastoral Matters
Fri	12	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	14	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Valerie Ashcroft
		6.30 pm	Healing & Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	16	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club (joined by members of Midways)– <i>Sing Along Open Evening</i> - Ken Hagon & Graham Currie lead the evening
Sun	21	10.30 am	Communion Service with Baptism led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	23	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	24	7.45 pm	Midways Group – <i>Fish & Chip Supper</i>
Fri	26	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	28	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Dr Arthur Miller

Tue 30 10.30am-noon Coffee and Chat
 8.00 pm Time for Prayer

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:

Simon Ward on 3rd June

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**PUZZLE
 CORNER
 ANSWERS**

Solution to the
 Wordsearch from last
 month's Newsletter

The mystery name
 was JESUS

N	H	O	J	H	J	J	M
H	A	U	H	S	O	J	A
J	A	H	E	E	E	E	O
O	A	N	T	B	L	T	B
S	S	M	O	A	U	H	O
E	S	S	E	J	N	R	R
P	J	O	B	S	S	O	E
H	A	I	M	E	R	E	J

HELP WANTED



In the summer the 1st Merton Park Rainbows will be losing one of their leaders. As Girlguiding UK requires there to be a leader for every five girls there is the risk that the unit will have to reduce its numbers. There is already a waiting list and a constant demand for places.

Would you be prepared to help?

The unit of 20 girls meets from 5.30pm to 6.40pm every Wednesday during term time. If you can spare time to help from September, or know somebody who could, please speak to me. I will be happy to tell you more about what we do and what would be asked of you – or come along and see for yourself.

Geraldine Ellis

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MORE HELP WANTED

Can you recommend a tradesman?



As with any property, the church needs to be maintained in good order and we sometimes need tradesmen with particular skills. Do you know any good painters, plumbers, builders, roofers, qualified electricians, carpenters, upholsterers, carpet layers or other craftsmen that you would be prepared to recommend?

If so, please tell me so that they can be considered next time we need a job done.

Roy Ellis

Items for the **July Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 21st June** at the latest