

Recently I have asked prospective parents of children for Baptism if they notice or would expect to notice, any difference between those who call themselves christians and those who do not. Sadly the reply has sometimes been 'No'. I tell them that if this is the case then christians have failed to a large extent in their expressing of their Faith. For christians should present an attitude to life that is in many ways distinctive; quite contrary to much of what is considered 'ordinary'. Pre-eminent among the qualities a christian should reflect is Joy. And this stems directly from the Joy in the Risen Christ, the Christ of Easter Day. One of the hallmarks of all the Gospel accounts of Easter Day is the Joy which was obvious once the disciples had realised that Jesus really had left the tomb in which He had been buried. The Joy was of course mixed with fear and unbelief and incredulity. But at the end of the day it was the Joy that prevailed as the news travelled further and further. It was one of the hallmarks too of St. Paul's life and writings as he travelled round the world.

As we celebrate Easter this year on 7th April I hope we shall come too with great Joy to the Festival. We can look back and know the outcome of the battle which raged in Jerusalem round that particular feast time when Jesus was challenging His own people and causing a headache to the Roman Government. But it is healthy to reflect that those who did not know the result in advance showed fear, anger, a feeling of loss and betrayal at the time. The Joy did not appear before much suffering had been experienced. We also have the opportunity to share in that pain in the week before Easter, which is commonly known as Holy Week and begins on Palm Sunday, 31st March.

In our daily lives we should not expect to avoid suffering if we are Christians. Quite often we should expect to experience it just because we shall be behaving or thinking differently from the majority of people. But we can rest in the Joy of knowing that in the last resort we have the Risen Lord as our companion.

At the same time christians should exhibit Trust and Faith to a greater degree than other folk. This is not the same as a wishy-washy optimism. It is born of the knowledge that the Risen Lord will overcome in His own time. It is this that strengthens so many of the worlds unfortunates in every continent of the world. Those who are oppressed often show a degree of Faith that puts western christians to shame; so do those who are suffering from cruel poverty and hunger. In another place you will find an article on Christian Aid Week, which starts on 12th May, and what the organisation attempts to achieve. The enormous problems can only be tackled with any chance of improving the quality of life when the christian faith in the Risen Lord is the guiding factor.

A very happy and joyful Easter to you all.

Nicholas Chubb

FAITH AND OUR VISION

I suppose that more people are thinking deeply about the basic tenets of Christianity than have done so for a long time; and for this we can thank David Jenkins, the Bishop of Durham, and some other contemporary theologians. One of the consequences of the current debate was a one-day conference for our Deanery led by Canon John Halliburton, a member of the Church of England's Doctrine Commission. This was attended by about 60 people, including several from St. James's, who enjoyed meeting those from other churches and found it a most interesting day.

During the morning, we were reminded of how the gospels came to be written — of how, some time after Paul had written his letters and some 40 to 70 years after the crucifixion, their authors set down in their different styles, the oral, living traditions of the early Christian communities. It was explained that they should be regarded not so much as accurate day-by-day biographies (precise in the way that an engineering drawing is precise) but rather as an oil painting with layers produced by the different evangelists to give an overall impression of the life of Jesus.

After our shared lunch, came the time (all too short a time, in fact) for us, in groups, to tackle some specific questions on two very fundamental issues in the light of selected readings from the New Testament. Some groups studied the incarnation, considering such questions as how do we interpret the narratives of the virgin birth, and how significant is that to the teachings of John and Paul and the Letter to the Hebrews? Other groups studied the accounts of the resurrection, and Paul's references to dying with Christ and rising with Christ; and looked at the possibility of believing in the "resurrection life" without necessarily believing that Christ rose bodily from the tomb in that earthly body which suffered crucifixion. Finally, we all came together again for a discussion of those issues under the skilful guidance of Canon Halliburton.

It would not be right to say that conclusions were reached — that was not the objective; but there was a growth of understanding. No doubt many still felt that the literal interpretation of the gospel accounts of the birth of Jesus and of his resurrection remain for them the cornerstones of their belief, but all were led to appreciate that it is not unreasonable, on the basis of the New Testament and our knowledge of how it came to be written, to take different views which, it was submitted, might well make Christianity more acceptable to the present-day majority of non-believers and which do not necessarily run counter to the basic truth of Jesus, his relationship to God and his significance for mankind throughout the ages. Faith there must always be, but reason can illuminate faith.

THE WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER MARCH 1st, 1985

In Hampton this year the two services took place at the Methodist Church in Percy Road, at 2.30 p.m. and at 8.00 p.m., and were both well attended.

The theme was "Peace through Prayer and Action", and the form and content of the service had been produced by the women of India. Unmistakeably it came from a Third World country, and I felt that we were privileged to take part in the cry "How can there be peace?"

The opening prayer was from the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, and set the note of the main appeal: how can there be peace when there is so much anguish in the world, injustice, exploitation, discrimination, poverty, unemployment, frustration, and much more?

"O Lord of the Universe
Liberate us from all bondage —
from the bondage of fear, poverty
and unhappy mind.

Show us your light
for without it
we are blind travellers
in the darkness of the night.

O Lord of the Universe
Grant us freedom from selfishness
and strengthen our hearts
with your love.

And make our minds strong
for without it
we are blind travellers
in the darkness of the night."

The five "Voices" spoke for various countries and communities, but they all had a distinctive Indian background and many common concerns. I found the most moving was the 5th Voice who spoke directly for India. The Leader says: "Tell us friend, is there peace in your land?" The Answer: "How can there be peace when there are so many problems in our homes and in our society? Incomes are low and many in our country struggle to eke out an existence. Half the urban population lives in slums or on pavements Some Indian women may be burned to death when dowry demands are not met. Can we have peace when there is so much unemployment? There is no peace in our homes and in our society."

The Litany of Repentance followed: We acknowledged that we had failed to be builders of peace; failed to be messengers of peace. Our prayers ended with the prayer of St. Francis "Make us instruments of your peace".

The service (I attended the afternoon one) had been very moving, our Methodist speaker excellent, and we all felt that we had shared in the weeping of many women in our troubled world.

Hannah Stanton

THE FAMILY PARADE SERVICE

Sunday 3 March saw the change from the familiar Parish Communion to a new style Family Service.

For some time it had been felt that the Parade Service and Family Communion which takes place on the first Sunday of each month needed to be replaced by a shorter and simpler service more suited to the younger members of the congregation.

The Service began with the rousing hymn Lord of the Dance and with the choir present set the scene for a most interesting and in my opinion, enjoyable service.

The readings and prayers were read by members of the Cubs and Scouts, who were not in the least put out by the microphones and could be clearly heard by everyone.

The Vicar gave a talk illustrating the reading from Galatians Chapter 5 referring to the fruits of the Spirit. He called upon six young members of the congregation to assist him. To the first five he gave examples of the fruits of the Earth, an apple, banana, grapefruit, lemon and orange whilst the sixth was given the Bible to hold, signifying the fruits of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Fidelity, Gentleness and Self Control.

The simple message being that as we grow up and mature like fruit trees we should try and be full of the fruits of the Spirit.

The Service concluded with everyone singing from Hundred Hymns for To-day, "When I Needed A Neighbour Were You There".

I am sure that the Service was just what had been needed and by letting the children take a prominent part in the proceedings their attention and interest was held to the end.

I hope we can repeat this style of Service again in the future.

D. Lloyd

I must say that I arrived at the Church for the Family Parade Service on March 3rd with some misgivings. A Sunday without a 9.30 Communion Service! Unthinkable! It had become part of my life and I wondered if I was getting old to be so disturbed by change. The noise in church made me feel worse. Then I saw all the young faces and many new faces. God wants to welcome each of these his children I thought, and if this service is his means of doing it who am I to feel put out.

I was pleasantly surprised to see the choice of hymns. Two of my old favourites — 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God' and 'To God be the glory' with its wonderful chorus praising the Lord. The Vicar taught them to the children with the help of the choir and everyone sang wholeheartedly. I suspect that many older members of the congregation knew them already. Viewers of Songs of Praise and listeners to Sunday half-hour will have heard them.

Being agreeably surprised by the high standard of reading I reflected that as a regular reader how difficult it is to speak slowly, distinctly and with feeling. Congratulations to the two cubs and brownie who read so well.

The reading from Galatians on the fruits of the Spirit was echoed in the address: six young eager volunteers were to receive amongst them a grapefruit, a banana, a lemon, an apple and an orange. The sixth volunteer was asked to hold the Bible from which he later manfully read the appropriate passage: "The harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control". It was a difficult passage to use but came over quite admirably in the enjoyable address.

The content of the cub's prayers was good and all embracing but it was a pity that it was difficult to hear them. It was delightful to have the choir amongst us.

Contrary to my expectations I thoroughly enjoyed the service and reflected that I had had the opportunity to go to Communion at 8 a.m. and later in the day too at 4.30 p.m. It crossed my mind that one of the roles of the church is to provide regular times when young and old alike can give praise to God and I think it is essential that we should accept that all talent is God given and encourage efforts by our young people. After all we can learn much from them! In the words of the hymn 'Praise the Lord'.

P.S. It would be nice if the regular members of the congregation were to invite a new face to coffee and make them feel full members of our worshipping community and its fellowship. We once prided ourselves on this and now unfortunately I think its something we are neglecting. I saw too, several lonely looking people in our established congregation and was saddened by this. It is no time to be resting on our laurels when Nicholas has made such great efforts with his visiting and welcoming new people.

Janet Jeffries

EXPLORING THE OLD TESTAMENT

John Slater is a brilliant teacher and his talk on the Old Testament, followed by lively questioning, was absorbing, informative and entertaining. He showed us that we could not really understand and appreciate the writers of the Old Testament unless we knew something of the current political and cultural background and of the particular purposes for which their books were written. The Old Testament is of great importance to Christians because of its influence on the very character of the teaching of Jesus himself. Some appreciation of its significance for the Jews of his day can deepen our understanding of his mission.

The range of the Old Testament books is immense. John Slater divided them roughly into narrative history, the books of the law, the teaching of the great prophets, the books of wisdom, the apocalyptic literature and the symbolic erotic poems like parts of the Proverbs and the song of Solomon. The first five books, known as the Pentateuch, which was not, as believed by some, written by Moses himself, although they embody his teaching and wisdom. At least four strands can be discerned including the Jahwist the Priestly, which emphasised the ritualistic side of religion and the Deuteronomic, describing the law. The narrative writings stem from the time of David when a need was felt for a written unified history to reinforce the royal dynasty and the common origins of the formerly scattered tribal peoples. The historians did a masterly job in blending the tribes diverse histories and heroes. The Priestly trend had particular importance at the time when Israel was no longer a political community, when the majority of Jews were exiled or enslaved, and the rest formed a relatively small community, centred on Jerusalem and subject to one or other of the great pagan empires. Then strict religious observances were necessary to keep together the remnants of David's empire. The "Book of the Law", no doubt Deuteronomy, was worked out during the Babylonian exile and brought to Jerusalem by the great teacher and scholar, Ezra, who came from Babylon and read and explained it to the faithful.

The concept that God created the world was incorporated in the Scriptures after the acceptance of God to be one God and God for all peoples. There are two different accounts in Genesis of the creation, derived from, two traditions and apparently the narrative explanation is much influenced by Babylonian concepts.

John Slater emphasised how amazing was the resilience and influence of the early Hebrew people composed of small, fluid tribes roaming over the country-

side, united only by their God and sustained by their primitive morality. They were often conquered, enslaved, persecuted and scattered by more sophisticated pagan and politically powerful nations. They were overcome by and under pressure from Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Greece and Rome and influenced by those they themselves conquered, like the Canaanites. Although they often succumbed to paganism and vice, reneged on the covenant with their God and lost his support they rose up again, and appealed for his clemency and remained convinced of his active intervention in their lives.

The Old Testament traces the development of the Jewish faith from its primitive ritualistic origins to a more spiritual and ethical concept, influenced by their experience and by the divine insight of the great prophets. The ten commandments were the first statement of the moral base of the faith. The Jews came to see that their God was not just the greatest among other gods, but the only God, whose significance and concern was world wide, and not confined to his chosen people. Early concepts concentrated on the wrath and judgement of God, but gradually his loving, forgiving character was perceived. Apparently the Jews had no belief in an after life until the comparatively late time of the Maccabean war (167-160BC) and the slaughter of so many righteous young men.

The constant failure of the Israelites to maintain their earthly kingdom, and the need to reconcile this with God's covenant had led the prophets, particularly the Second Isaiah, to begin to visualise a spiritual rather than a worldly kingdom. He foresaw that the Messiah, to whom the Jews looked to lead the people to victory, might be a spiritual leader. However most of the Jews still earnestly hoped and expected that the Messiah would be a military leader. They were already disappointed that Zerubbabel, who was thought to be that leader, had faded into the background. When Jesus began his Mission he was aware of the danger that he would be accepted as a political figure and that his spiritual ministry would be jeopardised by the consequent pressures, temptations and distractions. Hence his desire, until the right time came, to avoid the limelight and to be cautious about stating that he was the Son of God.

The Old Testament is indeed the prologue of the New Testament. John Slater's teaching must have revived the interest of those already aware of the canvas on which it was painted. To those of us with less knowledge his talk was a revelation. May we have more, please?

Margaret Brammel

A MEDITATION WITH GOD

Now come to me and be with me in silence. Be still with me and know that I am God. Come into my presence and let my Spirit quieten your Spirit. Compose yourself naturally and peacefully — Say 'Lord I come'. Think of the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit. To inspire — to breathe in. Think of the opposite of breathing in — breathing out. Inspiration — breathing in; expiration — breathing out. Taking in — expelling out. Breathe in deeply — draw in the Holy Spirit. Hold easily, imagining that inspiration going into every part of you, lightening dark places, cleansing unholy places, expelling all that is not of God from them. Then breathe out — expiring, expelling — getting rid of — being freed from — the powers of darkness — letting in light.

Breathe in love — breathe out hate:

Breathe in peace — breathe out anxiety and discord:

Breathe in hope — breathe out fear:

Breathe in forgiveness — breathe out guilt and resentment.

Continue to breathe in your need and breathe out that which is standing between you and that need. Breathe in God — breathe out Satan.

Now continue until thought stops. Gently and peacefully breathe in . . . breathe out. Consciousness even of your breathing will recede. All is the Holy Spirit and the Beauty of Holiness.

Be still then and at peace and know that I am God. Should the world fleetingly intervene, push it gently back — breathing in again of the Spirit — inspiring a phrase which will come to you Holy, Holy, Holy My peace I give unto you Be still and know that I am God.

This is the heart of prayer. Silence and worship before the throne of Grace. Praise be to God.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK MAY 12 – 18

The slogan for Christian Aid Week this year is: "This week charity begins with the homeless". We have all heard much about Ethiopia's plight in recent months, but the Christian Aid appeal organisers think it is important to realise that Ethiopia is just one of many countries in north-east Africa seeking famine relief. Across the world, an estimated 15 million people have been forced into the role of refugees because of drought, war or oppression. Even greater numbers are forced to leave home for other reasons, such as the need to find work.

Their needs — like those of foreign workers in our own communities — are the focus of this year's appeal by Christian Aid, a group which in fact started up after the war in response to the plight of refugees. Its work does not stop at short-term emergency relief. Long-term development aid is what it sees as a more important means of securing everyone a more just and less hazardous future.

Two thoughts to end on: Jesus was a political refugee before he could stand. And, even if you are more generous than the average, and pop 50p or so into the Christian Aid envelope, at our prices you are only providing the world's needy with a loaf of bread for the coming year.

Locally, the week will begin with a United Service at Percy Road Methodist Church at 6.45 p.m. on Sunday May 12.

ST. JAMES'S ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING WEDNESDAY 24th APRIL 1985 — 7.30 p.m. for 8.00 p.m. PARISH HALL, SCHOOL ROAD

Time is fast approaching for our important Annual Parochial Church Meeting, so please book the date in your diaries now. The ACM is formally preceded by the Meeting of Parishioners at which the two Churchwardens are appointed for the next twelve months. The Annual Church Meeting, which all those on the St. James's Church Electoral Roll are entitled to attend, elects 20 persons to the Parochial Church Council (PCC), of which as a general rule at St. James's, not more than 12 should be of the same sex. We are always looking for new blood, so if you are willing to serve please look out for the nomination forms to appear shortly at the back of the Church. The annual meeting will hear reports on the proceedings of the PCC, the financial affairs of the parish, the fabric of the Church, and the proceedings of the Deanery Synod. There will also be reports from various church organisations and their representatives will be available to answer your questions. In the meantime please check with Mrs. Jennifer Lloyd that your name is on the Electoral Roll. Coffee will be served before the Meeting. Do come. It's far from boring!

RLB

P. C. C.

At the P.C.C. meeting on 5th March we heard that we have financial problems ahead due largely to the raising of the Parish Share to the London Diocesan Fund by a colossal £4,800. Compared with 1983's figure of £8,068 and 1984's £12,009, the £16,810 asked for this year seems unattainable at present. The matter is made worse by the continuing loss made by the Magazine. We have therefore arranged an extra meeting for 18th April to discuss the whole problem. We also discussed at length a request to withdraw our account from Barclays Bank because of that Bank's heavy involvement in South Africa and the implicit support of Apartheid. We resolved not to withdraw because opinions were very much divided. Amongst other things *every* Bank has dealings with South Africa although Barclays is the most publicised. Furthermore Barclays has positively helped with unemployment in this country. The Bishop of Kensington has asked every parish to discuss Mission before he comes to the Deanery Synod on 21st May. We are therefore inviting everyone to a meeting after the service on Sunday evening **5th May**. (This will be a shortened Parish Communion). On that same day the morning service will be another non-eucharistic Family Service. First reports of the experiment on 3rd March seemed so favourable that it was decided to hold another soon. Bill Robinson was nominated for another spell of 4 years as Trustee of the Hampton Parochial Charities (the charity which administers the Almshouses in Hampton). And finally we accepted the offer made by Teddington Choral Society to sing various religious works on Sunday 28th April at 6.30 p.m. instead of Evensong. Altogether a hard night's work!

The Questions on Mission are printed now so that all can read and pray and think about them: What does mission mean?

1. What would the Church look like if it were a Missionary church? Would its emphasis, its work and the impression it makes on you and other people be any different from now?
2. In what ways is your parish a missionary parish at present? What are its strong points and its weak points in terms of mission?
3. What should be your parish's priorities for mission in view of its geographical area and the local community?
4. In your opinion, is it worth while to give time (a) to evaluating the life of your parish in terms of mission and (b) to setting priorities in the light of this? Who or what might help you to do this?

Quote from the Bishop of Kensington's covering letter: 'At times Bishop Gore's description of the Church as an ingenious entity for defeating the object it was designed to effect can seem only too apt'.

FORTHCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

It seems a little early to say the least to be thinking about Harvest time already, but the social Committee thought that it would be nice if we could give the Harvest Supper a slightly more 'home produced' look if the wine and beer makers among you would be prepared to make more of your product, to be consumed at the Supper, hence the premature nature of this notice. If anyone is interested in taking part in this venture would they please give their name to Charles Dobson, and later on tell him what they would be able to supply.

As a further contribution to the same idea we shall also be looking for people to make rolls instead of buying bread and for others to donate some homemade chutney, piccallilli, etc.

The date of the Harvest Supper will be Thursday October 3rd and we are also hoping to have a short dramatic item as we did last year, very successfully, but so far we have not been able to fire anyone with much enthusiasm so come on some of you talented people out there, this is your great opportunity. Names to me, hurry, hurry, hurry!

The Summer Outing this year will be to Oxford and Blenheim Palace and the date is provisionally set for July 13th. Before that, however, we have two other engagements for which we shall be looking for participants, a cricket match against All Saints on May 18th and a Tug-of-War against several other churches to be held at All Saints Fete on June 22nd, names for these events to Jo Brownlee, spectators also required for these dates as well.

Helen Taylor

AROUND THE SPIRE

Once more this month we have had the sad news of the death of one of our old friends, Charles Belcher, at the magnificent age of 95. All the children at Windmill Road School knew and loved Mr Belcher, mostly for the sweets he bought for them every day and also because he was always ready to listen to their tales of woe or laughter, Freda has written below about Charles so suffice it to say that all Hampton Hill will miss his cheery figure stomping about the place.

Chrissie is now much better and getting around again. Coral McCarthy and her two sisters are all together once more but feeling rather under the weather, we hope that with the Spring coming they will soon be better again.

The death of Charles Belcher at the age of 95 came as a personal loss to a large number of people in Hampton Hill.

His personal charm, old world courtesy and unflinching good humour made him a much loved and respected character.

The school children who visited him to see treasures from his world wide travels, his family, friends and neighbours enjoyed his jokes, his anecdotes and tricks which he loved to do.

To Charles his Church was a source of great comfort and joy.

Though he was always content to remain in the background he gave out a radiance which endeared him to all his fellow worshippers.

He often recalled his time as a Church Organist until he lost the top of a finger in an accident.

His career as British Vice-Consul in Mentone was full of great responsibility and interest.

He joined the Yeomanry just before the outbreak of World War I and during World War II he worked with the A.R.P. services.

He had a long and happy marriage and celebrated his Diamond Wedding in 1975.

