

**THE ROLE OF WOMEN**

Many people think of the Church as a male-dominated, male-structured, anachronistic organisation and feel that it has not kept up with the times, especially in these days of 'women's lib' and other similar movements. If that appears to be the case it is certainly the result of human sinfulness rather than anything else. For one thing that comes through, reading the New Testament, is the place given to women in the revelation of God's message of Love for the world.

We are reminded of this each March as the Feast of the Annunciation draws near. Otherwise known as Lady Day (25th March) we witness God's chosen method of revealing Himself to mankind through the willingness of Mary to be the mother of Jesus. And particularly in St. Luke's Gospel we see Jesus going out of his way to move among women and bring them into close contact with Him. As well as Lady Day the church has developed a much more homely and low-key celebration on the middle Sunday in Lent which has gained the nickname of Mothering Sunday. (Fairly recently it has, due to transatlantic influence, gained the name of Mother's Day!). We shall have our own brand of Welcome Service at 4.30 on 21st March in which the emphasis will be on The Family.

It would not be difficult to produce a long list of women whose lives have been shot through with the Love of God and who have changed the life of the Church in one way or another. Hilda, the great seventh century Abbess of Whitby, *chaired* perhaps the most influential church meeting this country has ever seen. She must have been a formidable person indeed! In the prayer life many women such as Dame Julian of Norwich and Theresa of Avila have led the way. And in our own day Mother Theresa of Calcutta has been able to cut through the western cloak of apathy and indifference to the sufferings of the poor in India and achieved great things both in actual relief of need and in inspiration of others. In a different sphere Sue Ryder has done the same for the sick and suffering. Perhaps we are suffering from a hang-up (to use a rather unlovely phrase) about the differences between men and women when we should be concentrating more on how they complement each other.

In this way all the arguments about the proper place and functions of each sex fall into proportion and that goes for the ministry of the church as much as for other matters.

Nicholas Chubb

**VISIT OF REV. SIGQIBO DWANE**

Of course I was aware that our visitor was black. And I would wager that everyone else in the congregation was, too. Black clergymen, after all, are still enough of a rarity in the Church of England for that of itself to attract our attention. And when someone we haven't met before comes to join a service, well, we give them just that little extra look anyway.

And there, I supposed, the thought would rest. With Dr. Dwane installed in the chancel, why should I or anyone else give his colour any more thought? He is welcome, he is one of us, we all look forward to what he will tell us from the pulpit.

But the sermon when it came was the greatest shock of all. For it was Sigqibo Dwane, black priest from South Africa, who took up the issue of his colour, and threw it back at all of us.

I asked him later over a cup of coffee whether he could ever confront his political masters with the issue of apartheid – the utterly deliberate separation of black men into an inferior category – on purely Christian grounds. Could he not make his white masters feel ashamed as fellow Christians for what they were doing to him, a Christian priest. Dr. Dwane smiled his gentle smile, and answered with the patience of one who has had to explain it so many times to those who haven't experienced at first hand what living under apartheid means. "That argument", he told me, "makes absolutely no impression on them whatever. They believe their truth, as they believe God reveals it to them. Separate development. The races shall not mix. Shall I find you a text from the Bible to prove it?"

And that is what Dr. Dwane's sermon was all about. The horror of white Christians telling black Christians that they are not acceptable, that they have no place alongside each other. The callous way in which the authorities could decide that a theological college would have to move because it was training black priests in an area where white people had now come to live. As Dr. Dwane put it, "We quite literally became a black spot". A black spot. The words sank home. The words we use to describe a place where danger lurks, or where something has happened of which we are ashamed. Well, both those ideas apply to what is happening to people like Sigqibo Dwane in South Africa. But when he uses the words, he knows that they have an extra meaning for those who use them against him. A black spot. Literally, something that's dirty. Something that has to be removed. That was the shock of hearing those words from a Christian pulpit to be told how they are used by Christians against a fellow-Christian, in today's South Africa. Now we know just a little of what living under apartheid really means.

Michael Brunson

What struck me most about Dr. Dwane's sermon, was how the negative action of the South African Government had resulted in something very positive indeed. God has used evil to bring about good. Dr. Dwane came to us on the occasion of the week of prayer for Christian unity. And Christian unity is the outcome of the political persecution in South Africa. Because not only the Anglican but also the Methodist Theological Training College was forced to move out of their premises, there now exists a joint seminary for training clergy. These Christians have had to come to terms with the problem of a differing understanding of their historical past, of the sacraments, liturgy and all those elements that constitute the differences between denominations. It seems that through a great deal of good will and faith they have gradually learnt to trust each other enough to achieve a very large degree of unity.

Hilde Bucknell

## **UNITED SERVICE**

At 6.45 p.m. on Sunday, January 24th, the United Service to conclude the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was offered at the United Reformed Church in Hampton Hill.

United services in Hampton and Hampton Hill are happy occasions and this latest service was no exception. A large congregation representing the member Churches of the Hampton Council of Churches was present. The Reverend

Beryl Bennet, who is Minister of the Church, delivered a memorable sermon in which she outlined the approach of the United Reformed Church to Christian Unity. Essentially this approach is one of welcome to members of other Christian traditions.

Mrs. Bennet's exposition must have found a very favourable response among the members of the congregation. Beyond the problems between different theological viewpoints which characterise different traditions, there is an essential unity among Christians, and upon this common conviction there is tremendous scope for prayer, thought and action by individuals.

The service was followed by coffee and tea in the newly-decorated hall which adjoins the church.

David Dore

## **D'OYLY CARTE WAS NEVER LIKE THIS!**

The coach was due to leave at six o'clock. Pleasurable anticipation of those then aboard slowly changed to concern as H-hour came and went, leaving us some six souls short (try that instead of the Leith police dismisseth us!) – including Joe Brownlee with THE TICKETS!

Ten anxious minutes brought us the latecomers, plus Nicholas with the welcome intelligence that Joe had beaten a walk-out at Waterloo, and would be waiting for us at Richmond. Huge relief, not least from Joe as we took him panting aboard upon which he promptly set to, like a bus conductor, taking money and issuing tickets (remember bus conductors?).

At Sadlers Wells ("Side entrance, please!") we climbed flight after flight after endless flight of stairs, eventually reaching our lofty seats via the strategically placed, well patronised, upper circle bar, and then – the show!

Swift-moving, brilliantly colourful, the threads of Joseph's story were skilfully and amusingly woven by Tim Rice's lyrics into a splendid musical pastiche by Andrew Lloyd-Webber in which Beatles, the Boy Friend, Piaf and the calypso were easily recognisable, but quite eclipsed by Pharach's 'Elvis' – a virtuoso performance indeed! All too soon we saw Jacob re-united with his lost son, resplendent in a glittering coat comprising literally dozens of coloured panels covering what seemed to be half the stage: a series of encores, then happily to to the coach again.

Here the music came from the back seats where the C.Y.C. were spurred on and occasionally led (?) by David Friswell. Older hands at the front found some of the songs unfamiliar at first, but soon 'Ilkley Moor' was heard, and by the time we skirted Mortlake, we were surprised to find ourselves joining in 'Tipperary'! The quality of the singing was duly noted by Olive, who would not, however, be drawn as to whether recruitment to the choir might result.

My hat, proudly new from Simpson's sale, was pressed into service for a well-deserved collection for our driver, and then, tired but happy, we were home.

Thank you, Social Committee, for a very enjoyable, well-organised evening.

Jack Gostling

**LOST** – A pair of brand new eyeglasses; bifocal, pinky flesh coloured frames with gold side pieces. Margery Orton, 30 St. James's Road 979-5868

## **A MODERN DAY GRACE**

O Lord, make us not like porridge, firm, stiff and hard to stir,  
But more like cornflakes, crisp, fresh and ready to serve.

## PARISH QUIET DAY – 13th February, 1982

*“Lord Jesus . . . . most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen”*

Nicholas started each one of the three sessions with this beautiful prayer and the 21 people who came to the peaceful convent on Ham Common to spend some precious hours together in contemplative silence, could not but be, at the end of the day, more refreshed and nearer to God than they had felt at its beginning. Constant refreshment; thirst for and experience of, the spiritual water of life, was Nicholas's theme for the day.

Session 1: Our attention was drawn first to Old Testament references and we were directed to consider Psalm 42 which starts, “As a hind longs for the running streams, so do I long for thee, O God. With my whole being I thirst for God, the living God. When shall I come to God and appear in His presence?” Psalm 23, so familiar that we perhaps miss the message it carries “ . . . . He makes me lie down in green pastures, and leads me beside the waters of peace, he renews life within me”. Isaiah 55, which starts “Come, all who are thirsty, come fetch water;” and Isaiah 49 “ . . . . they shall find pasture in the desert sands . . . . they shall neither hunger nor thirst . . . . for the one who loves them shall lead them and take them to water at bubbling springs . . . .”.

Plenty to ponder about, pray about and to learn from until it was time to join the Sisters in their midday prayers, and then to cross the peaceful garden to lunch, either reading or listening to some very inspiring music provided by Nicholas.

Session 2: The New Testament references chosen were to the water which slakes our spiritual thirst. John 4, v 1-15 contain the familiar story of the Samaritan woman who encountered Jesus at the well, and who, in her spiritual blindness could only answer Jesus with practicalities. It was suggested to us that a large majority of people tackled spiritual questions in the same pragmatic manner, not really understanding what it was they were trying to achieve; the Law had given them practical guidance but left their inner needs unsatisfied as they had lost sight of their objective which was – and is – God Himself. The Samaritan found, in contact with Jesus, something she had found in no-one else. The disciples too had been searching and had found in Jesus one who had a more definite relationship with God, and through God, with people, than anyone they had ever met – they were just waiting for the invitation to get up and follow Him. A lot of people today are looking for an invitation to join today's disciples. We, who are disciples, must be sure we do not let go of the source of supply; once having tasted the pure water which is Jesus, even if it is only a sip, we must go on partaking of it or its lack will show in our arid lives. In the Eucharist we find the spiritual water we need. Many people wonder what it is all about but feel that “they would not fit”. We have constantly to be alert for people who are just waiting to be invited to come and quench *their* spiritual thirst. The first thing for us is to form such a relationship with God and through Him with people, that they will *know* they are welcome. (It is a sobering thought that if the Samaritan woman had met the disciples first, and not Jesus, perhaps she would never have found what she wanted or that she was wanted!).

Session 3: After quiet study and meditation on the above themes Nicholas spoke on the dryness we all feel from time to time in our prayer life. One hurdle is the transition from the prayers learned in childhood to more mature

prayer. We are not alone, Jesus had to wrestle during his forty days in the arid wilderness and with temptations to forsake God for worldly gain. In the garden of Gethsemane his disciples let him down; in his time of greatest need He felt very much on his own. "I thirst," he cried on the cross – literal and spiritual thirst, feeling forsaken by God, suffering in every conceivable way, but in the end committing His Spirit to God.

When we get bad times ourselves we are alongside with Him and He is with us. Very often we don't know what to do, and then "into Thy hands I commend my spirit" is the best prayer of all and we can offer our helplessness to the Almighty. Some people find it most helpful to use set prayers but there are times when these do not meet the need, becoming "vain repetition". Then courage is needed to try to 'chuck overboard' structured prayer and to launch ourselves into the stream of direct contact with God in our own words. Extemporaneous prayer comes more easily to some for whom formal prayer is unsatisfying and difficult. Here again a different approach is often a good thing and the ordered, well tried prayers can become a solace and a strength. Ideal prayer is probably a mixture of both. **BUT DO NOT GIVE UP PRAYER**, for in this lies disaster.

We are grateful to our Vicar for his devout yet practical leadership – which was not so much a leading as a sharing with us of himself and his faith. We thank too, all those others who gave of their time and thought to arrange this re-newing day for us.

Margery Orton

**TAIZÉ** On the morning of the 31st December, a meeting took place at St. James', which surely made history in the parish, and very probably was unique in all Britain. Even, maybe, in all the world: who knows? It was during the annual European Pilgrimage of Reconciliation organised by the Taizé community, when 20,000 pilgrims had converged on London and fifty had come to the Hampton area, staying with various families, attending local activities each morning, and helping to fill Westminster Cathedral to overflowing at services each afternoon and evening – Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's were packed to capacity too. One of the local activities was to meet with other cultures, and we had arranged a session with the Sikh community of Kingston. About twenty were able to come, turbaned men, women and girls in traditional dress, even little children. With all the Taizé pilgrims, plus some local people, the south aisle of St. James was as full as Westminster Cathedral. We met there so that some of us might sit on the floor – a Taizé and a Sikh custom – with others on chairs all around. We started with Taizé chants, mostly in Latin; then the Sikhs sang, accompanied by two small drums and an accordion-like instrument, teaching us the chorus – in Punjabi. A young boy read from the Sikh scriptures, and we prayed together. Then there was a lively discussion, via an excellent interpreter. Finally we all adjourned to the church hall, where a good lunch had been marvellously laid out, and where earnest and cheerful conversation continued.

The Sikhs have many points in common with Christianity: belief in One God and the Divine Spirit, in salvation by grace, the reality of sin and the need of forgiveness, in sacrifice in service, in baptism and the Communion meal, in the brotherhood of all mankind; the Sikhs have tithes, lay readers, and are organised into congregations or parishes. And they have congregational hymn singing and worship by all, men, women and children – as we learnt, to our delight, that morning at St. James.

Humphrey Fisher, St. Mary's, Hampton

*P.S. . One outcome of the Taizé meeting is a Prayer Meeting on Tuesday evenings at various venues in the area.*

## AFRICAN PALMS

On Palm Sunday each year we are given palm crosses at all services. You might be interested to know that these are made in seven mud villages in the Diocese of Masasi in Tanzania, where they provide a very important contribution to the limited income of the villagers. Recently profits from the sale of the crosses paid for the roofing of a new school building. All the work on the buildings was done by the villagers without pay. The crosses are distributed in England through the church of All Hallows on the Chertsey Road, where most of the work involved is done by volunteers.

## AUSTERITY LUNCH

As usual, on the Wednesday of Holy Week an Austerity Lunch is held at Wayside between 12 and 2pm. For many years now, Mothers Union members have done the catering, but **ALL** parishioners are warmly invited to this lunch. All proceeds go to Christian Aid.

## WEDNESDAY, 28th APRIL, 1982

Here is an advance notice, if not an early warning. Book this date for 7.30pm and come to the Parish Hall to start the evening with coffee and biscuits in the company of your church friends: the occasion – the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

The Church Meeting itself is preceded by the Meeting of Parishioners which any one resident in the parish may attend, but to take an active part in the Church Meeting itself, (as we hope you will), you must be on the Electoral Roll. This will be revised early in April and so, if you are not already on the Roll, please complete an application form (available in the church) and hand it to our Vicar or to our Electoral Roll Officer, Mrs. Margaret Lawrence (Tel: 98 41269) as soon as possible. The only requirements are that you should be at least 17 years old, a baptised member of the church and either living in the parish or a regular worshipper at our church for the last six months.

Ron Bridges

## UPKEEP OF THE CHURCHYARD

Much work was done last year in clearing areas of the churchyard and now a lot of the grass can be cut with mowers. There is still more work to be done and we would like this year to have working parties in the churchyard once a month on a Saturday afternoon from 2pm.

We shall already have had one Saturday at the beginning of March and are continuing on the first Saturday of each month until the Autumn. Refreshments will be provided. The dates are:-

3rd April	5th June	7th August	2nd October
1st May	3rd July	4th September	6th November

There are all sorts of jobs to be done, not necessarily heavy work. We know of several people who would be prepared to help if a party is organised but are not keen to work on their own in the churchyard. We hope that by organising monthly working parties we shall get some support to try and keep the grounds tidy.

David and Janet Nunn

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

As Christians our aim must surely be to make all newcomers to our church welcome, and to witness that Jesus Christ is alive today and cares for each one of us. Therefore the importance of our Sunday School cannot be exaggerated, as for many children and indeed parents it is their first contact, and perhaps their only contact, with the Church.

The Sunday School provides an introduction to Christianity for children aged between 4 and 11 years. Young minds of ten possess a great sense of the spiritual and accept the baby Jesus and the figure of Jesus on the cross into their lives.

Our thanks must therefore go to all those Sunday School teachers who have over the years – and in Betty Stewart's case very many years – extended a loving and caring welcome to all those children who have come to them. And a very special thank you to Gill Gostling on her temporary (?) retirement from active service. Gill has for seventeen years, ever since her confirmation, played a special role within the Sunday School. We count ourselves very fortunate that she will continue to play an active part in our life around the Spire.

Pam Atkinson

**A MEDITATION** Lord and Father, grant me the peace of thy presence:

Blessed are they whose minds are stayed on me for the nearer they approach to me, the nearer I approach to them. I am always there at the gate of each man's soul, but it he who must approach and bid me enter.

Does a man's heart experience a fugitive desire to approach? then that man is my chosen; that man receives my invitation to my feast. Alas, many are invited but few listen to the invitation of their hearts. They are too busy with the world's affairs, often over stressed and unhappy in the midst of seeming plenty, too busy in the acquiring of wordly needs – knowing in their hearts but turning their backs on the knowledge, that I, the Lord their God, am their greatest and only need, for he who has me and answers my invitation with a humble and contrite heart, shall find that the nearer he shall approach to me, the more his real needs shall be supplied.

Consider earthly relationships. Do they spring from a void of inaction? Is there not first an approach, then an acceptance or a rejection? Nothing springs from nothing; but first sow the seed of a relationship, tend that seed with care and love and then shall a man reap the beauty of the flower and the reward of the harvest.

Consider above all the children. Have I not said "Suffer little children to come to me, forbid them not, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven?" You are all as children in the sight of God the Father, but how are the smallest to come to me if the older ones do not know the way?

In life there are many troubles, many hardships. How blessed are they that know that the Lord is with them to give them His strength, and how forlorn those who have no such knowledge, no such comfort, no such strength. "Come unto me all ye that are heavily laden, and I will refresh you". The operative word is "Come" – that is the choosing, the invitation to as many as will hear it. The "I will" is the fulfilment of the promise to those who answer the call. Come first in longing, then in prayer and in worship and "enter ye the joy of your Lord". You have found through a long period of years that these are true words and 'worthy to be believed'. Do not be ashamed to confess the faith that is in you but speak of it, in all humility, in the face of the people. Praise be to God.

Margery Orton



## DATES TO NOTE

- March 13 14.00 Jumble Sale in aid of Bishop Wand School, Methodist Church,  
Percy Road, Hampton
- 14 3rd SUNDAY IN LENT  
Services as usual  
19.00 "Announcement of the Good News", Church
- 15 14.30 Ladies Choir, Vestry
- 16 10.00 Holy Communion  
10.30 Editorial Board, 75 St. James' Avenue  
20.00 Tuesday Club, "Salvation Army Music", Wayside  
20.15 Liturgical Committee, 63 Park Road
- 17 20.00 "Announcement of the Good News", Church  
20.00 Good News Group, 75 Burtons Road
- 18 10.30 Lent Study Group, 63 Park Road
- 21 4th SUNDAY IN LENT, MOTHERING SUNDAY  
Morning services as usual  
16.30 Welcome Service  
19.00 "Announcement of the Good News", Church
- 23 10.00 Holy Communion
- 24 10.00 Liturgical Dancing  
20.00 "Announcement of the Good News", Church  
20.00 Good News Group, 75 Burtons Road
- 25 LADY DAY  
10.00 Mothers Union Holy Communion  
10.30 Lent Study Group, 63 Park Road  
20.00 Properties Committee, 151 Uxbridge Road
- 27 14.00 Mothers Union Jumble Sale, Hall
- 28 5th SUNDAY IN LENT  
Morning services as usual  
18.30 Evensong (Summer Time!)
- 29 14.30 Ladies Choir, Vestry
- 30 10.00 Holy Communion  
20.00 Tuesday Club, Mr. Keering "History and Work of Kew  
Gardens", Wayside
- April 31 20.00 Good News Group, 75 Burtons Road  
1 10.30 Lent Study Group, 63 Park Road
- 4 PALM SUNDAY (Distribution of palm crosses at all services)  
8.00 Holy Communion  
9.30 Parish Communion with Parade Service  
18.30 Evensong (with Liturgical Dance)
- 5 MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK  
20.00 Holy Communion
- 6 TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK  
20.00 Holy Communion
- 7 WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK  
12.00 – 14.00 Austerity Lunch, Wayside  
20.00 Holy Communion
- 8 MAUNDY THURSDAY  
19.30 Parish Communion  
Augmented Choir sings "The Last Supper" by Eric Thiman  
Followed by Agape with Hot Cross Buns

- 9 GOOD FRIDAY
  - 10.00 Children's Service and preparation of Easter Garden
  - 12.00 – 15.00 Three Hours Devotion: "The seven words from the [cross"
- 10 HOLY SATURDAY
  - 19.00 Quiet Hour of meditation and preparation for Easter
- 11 EASTER DAY
  - 8.00 Holy Communion
  - 9.30 Parish Communion
  - 18.30 Festal Evensong
- 13 9.45 Editorial Board, 75 St. James' Avenue

**Regular Weekday Events**

- Monday 10.30 – 13.30 and 20.00 – 22.00 Monday Wayside Centre
- Tuesday 19.30 Choir Practice, Vestry
- Wednesday 20.00 Catechumenate
- Thursday 10.30 – 12.00 Young Families Group, Wayside
  - 19.15 Holy Communion
  - 20.00 Koinonia (during Lent special study course)
- Saturday 19.00 Catechumenate
- Sunday 19.30 Church Youth Club, Wayside

*Dear Reader,*

*The distribution list for the Spire has remained unchanged for a very long time. We feel it is now necessary for it to be updated. In many cases the Spire is delivered to houses which have changed hands, and we do not know the name of the present occupier. In order to help us bring our records up to date we would be very grateful if you would fill in the reply slip below and send it to one of the following addresses:*

*Alison Thompson  
21 Laurel Road  
Hampton Hill*

*Hilde Bucknell  
75 St. James' Avenue  
Hampton Hill*

*If anyone feels they could help as magazine distributors, we would be very pleased to hear from them.*

*Thank you for your co-operation.*

*Yours faithfully,  
Hilde Bucknell (Editor)*

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