

Have you noticed how occasionally something just leaps off the page and grabs your attention as you scan the newspaper? Today I was assailed by an article written by Salman Rushdie in TheGuardian. I have a considerable admiration for Mr. Rusdhie, both because of his gifts as a storyteller and because of the way he has had to bear years of almost total seclusion because of the threat to his life. I don't know anything about Salman Rushdie's personal beliefs, other than what one can glean from his writings. In blistering form this piece, entitled Hypocrite Christians, attacked the hypocrisy he finds in the current rush towards the millennium. Celebrating the millennium on 31st December 1999, he writes, 'Will put us in the odd position of [Jesus] having two birthdays in a week, [while] all serious scholars and church leaders now agree he wasn't actually born on either of them'. But 'millennium or not, this is the only one we are going to get'.

Rushdie then goes on to point out a few more inconsistencies before throwing down a challenge to members of the christian community. He argues that if we really want to return to the roots of our faith and take Jesus seriously in today's world, then forget spirit zones and candles, instead do something that will give people a chance to start again; for example by cancelling the debt of the world's poorest nations. As you will have read before in The Spire this is something which many of us at St. James's wholeheartedly support. The Jubilee 2000 coalition aims at cancelling the unpayable debt of the world's poorest countries owing to the world's richest countries, wherever measures are in place to ensure the beneficiaries of such debt relief truly are the poorest of the poor. Yes, Mr. Rushdie, I couldn't agree more.

My mind just happened to be open to this as I was, at the time of reading the article, also thinking about Lent this year, which begins on **Ash Wednesday, 17th February - Parish Communion & Imposition of Ashes at 8pm**. Micah, the prophet of the Old Testament, like Salman Rushdie, wasn't prepared to mince his words in the face of threatening opposition. He too was fed up with religious hypocrisy, with people fasting and making a great show of their piety without a fundamental change in their lives, so he says

*Shall I come before the Lord with burnt offerings,
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams
and ten thousand rivers of oil?
He has showed you what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?*

So I ask you not only to think about how to keep Lent this year, in terms of self denial, focussing on what God might just want, which first requires

abandonment of all selfishness, but also to ask whether it might not be time to begin again, to let go of the false securities to which we cling and to think not so much about Dome and Party, but in Micah's words about doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with our God. And if it's good enough for a Lenten New Start its certainly good enough for every day, in Micah's millennium and in both of ours.

Brian Leathard



ALL SAINTS CELEBRATES

In November, our neighbouring Parish of All Saints marked its 90th Anniversary. The Church was consecrated in 1908 following a growth in housing in the north of Hampton, but was not completed until 1970 when a permanent wall was built at the west end!

The celebrations culminated with an anniversary weekend, a parish party, a family communion service at which Bishop Michael presided, and a festival evensong at which the preacher was the vicar of St. Mary's, the parish from which All Saints was formed.



*Thank you, Lord, for 'being there'
And being truly 'You'.
This is a very simple prayer
And is, simply, very true.*

*It means that God is never 'not'
And does not cease to 'be'
Asleep, awake, 'to be or not'
He's always here with me . . . and thee.*

Margery Orton

IN THE NEWS



AUCTION OF PROMISES

The Young Church will be holding an "Auction of Promises" on Sunday 7th March at 10.45am in the Church Hall in aid of their charity. Details will follow. Please come along and support them.

COMPETITION!!!!

Calling all children.

Design a cover picture for the Easter issue of *The Spire*
All entries to be submitted to Brian by Sunday 7th March

WORDS AND MUSIC FOR PEACE

Join us for an evening of songs, some familiar, some written by the singers, Sue Gilmurray and Tony Kempster. This is music with a message, but, at times, fun. It appeals to a wide range of people - so young and energetic or old and tired, THIS IS FOR YOU!

Tony and Sue are members of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, and have agreed to join us for refreshments afterwards, so they would be available to talk about their songs, pacifism, or just friendly conversation!

THEY'RE GOOD, BE THERE!

6.30pm on Sunday 14th February, in the Church.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS - 1998

Many thanks to all who contributed to the following special collections:-

Amnesty International £150

The Children's Society £467

Christingle service and
Candle collecting boxes

SPEAR £250

(Single Persons' Emergency Accommodation in Richmond)

SOME GOOD NEWS AND SOME SAD NEWS FROM MOZAMBIQUE

Many of you will already know that the Diocese of London is now linked with Mozambique (and Angola) through the signing of a covenant in St. Paul's Cathedral last July. So it is all the more important for us to develop contacts and keep aware of what is happening in these two countries.

The good news is that we have contact with an excellent charity called Vila Maninga, which cares for orphans and destitute children in Mozambique. We have a wonderful young lady as our contact here in England and she has lent me some photos which are on display in church. Do please take a look at them. They will explain what the work of this charity is all about. There are also some leaflets.

The very sad news is that at the end of last November Berta Sengulane, the wife of Bishop Dinis of the Diocese of Lebombo, was killed in a road accident whilst on Mother's Union business. Berta and Dinis have been at the forefront of helping the church to lead on peace initiatives in their country and were warmly received by many during their attendance at the Lambeth Conference last summer. Berta was only in her early forties and there are four teenage children.

Ann Peterken

PARISH WEEKEND

The next Parish Weekend will be at The Grail, in Pinner, from Friday, October 22nd to Sunday, October 24th. Please resolve to come, put this date in your diary, and start saving. (It will cost £65. If anyone would like to start saving, please talk to me.)

Those who were hoping for a summer weekend at Wychcroft - sorry, it wasn't available. The Grail is lovely, with beautiful grounds - and, I'm told, good food! The staff certainly seem very friendly.

Ruth Mills



CHILDREN'S SOCIETY CHRISTINGLE COLLECTION

A big thank you to all those who took "Candle" collecting boxes at the Christingle service in December and returned them over Christmas/New Year. A total of 37 "Candles" and 1 Ice Cream box were returned and £156.18 collected for the Children's Society. This has been added to collections from all services on our "Christingle" Sunday raising over £460 in all. If you have not been able to return your Candle and would still like the contents to go to the Children's society please bring your box either to the Church or the Vicarage or ring me up (Tel: 892 4736) and I will collect it. This reminds me that I did not write the usual note in the Spire concerning the collection for 1997/8 although totals were put up in Church. A total of 22 box holders contributed

£407.15. This was a magnificent achievement from those concerned, and if any of you who had a Christingle candle box would be prepared to have an on going box for your loose change I would be very pleased to hear from you!

Pip Rowett

NEWS FROM MOROCCO

A letter from Jeanette, Andy, Jessica, Oliver and Abigail Lawson.

We have now lived here for four years with six months left of our tour to go. "Morocco?" I shouted when Andy first told me. "Why not somewhere like Paris or South America?" "Where's your sense of adventure?" he said and what an adventure it's been. Living in Morocco at first was very difficult. I had never lived abroad before and so far away from my mother I felt homesick. The children, of course, settled with no problems at all. Jessica was travelling on a school bus 24 hours after arriving here. Oliver loved the large garden with all his toys. I was the one who was so unsettled. I found myself in a very large house with three staff, not knowing how to deal with them. I had a lot of problems with maids, but after nine months I found a wonderful woman called Zohra. Zohra not only cared about the children, but also cared about me.

As I became more settled I started involving myself in a number of charities, which ranged from a children's orphanage to SPANA (Society for the Protection of Animals and Nature in North Africa). I thoroughly enjoyed this. Morocco is a beautiful country. It has been inhabited since very prehistoric times. Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Berbers, Byzantines, Romans and Vandals before the Arab invasion that took place in the 8th century. Today Morocco is a constitutional monarchy. King Hassan II came to the throne in 1961. A descendant of the Prophet, he is also the 'Commander of the Faithful'.

In Rabat where we live, there is one Anglican church that is small and led by an American lay preacher, with a communion service every quarter. I'm afraid I am not an active member although I have a very good friend who keeps me in touch with what is happening.

Although Morocco is very close to Europe it is still very much a developing country. With a population of twenty-six million you can imagine the poverty, unemployment and housing problems it has. There is no such thing as social security, people have to survive on their own. They are very proud and will do anything for the FAMILY.

We are able to buy most things here but at a price, especially imported goods e.g. a small box of cereal can cost up to five pounds. There is also a company offering to ship goods from England to Morocco for UK based personnel.

As we come to the end of our tour I can honestly say that we have had four wonderful years. Having developed many new friendships and having our beautiful little Abigail here, I'm sure we will return in years to come. "Inshallah" (as the Moroccans would say)! After all we will have to show Abigail where she was born.

We are looking forward to seeing you all in 1999.

Jeanette

NO ORDINARY BUS!

Remember we told you about the Bishop's Millennium Bus a few months ago. Mary Hawes, the Diocesan Children's Adviser has been out on the bus which is visiting Church Primary Schools in the Diocese, asking the question "*2000 years since what?*"

She writes:

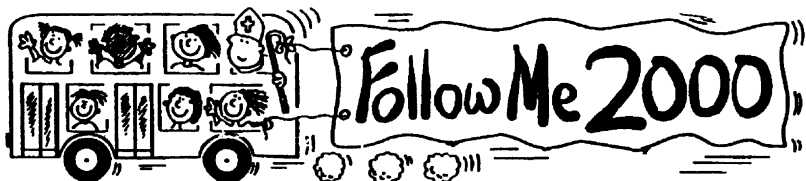
I joined Bishop Michael, Rob Gillion and the enthusiastic volunteers who form the Millennium Bus's 'crew' on a frosty November morning at St. Peter's School in Hammersmith. The Millennium Bus was parked up in the playground, with excited children playing round it, waiting for their chance to explore.

Just before half past nine, 250 children aged between four and eleven, crammed into the school hall for assembly. The Millennium Bus Crew used sketches, songs and a puppet called Mitch to create an assembly which spoke of our need to use a bridge to reach God. Bishop Michael, thoroughly enjoying his younger-than-usual congregation, chose a human 'pointer', clad in orange gloves, to move along his 'BC - JC - AD' time-line. Every child was absorbed by the fast-moving performances, and the assembly flew by!

Throughout the rest of the morning, each class came back into the Hall for their own time with the Millennium Bus Crew. They were taken on a journey round three bus stops, each of which spoke of part of Jesus' life. They discovered that the Christmas story is about 'no ordinary baby'; the time when Jesus was 'lost' in Jerusalem showed he was 'no ordinary boy'; and his adult life of miracles and parables showed he was 'no ordinary man'.

And to complete what was 'no ordinary morning', each class climbed the steps of the Millennium Bus to its carpeted upper deck to watch a video of the Resurrection and recap on all they'd heard that morning. A party bag to celebrate the Millennium, with booklets, badges and cards to remind the children of their day, completed the experience.

'2000 years since what?' Any child who's been on that extraordinary Millennium Bus can tell you that answer! (Which is more than many Londoners could do!)



The Bishop of Kensington's Mission Drive

London Calls
for
JUBILEE

A debt-free start for the world's poor

Sunday March 7th, 1999
to mark 300 days to the new millennium, at

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

6 to 6:30pm **ACT OF REFLECTION** led by Bishop of London. A time for all Londoners to engage with the spirit of Jubilee.

6:45 to 9pm **PUBLIC MEETING** with music, drama and speakers:
Ann Pettifor - Director, Jubilee 2000 Coalition
Senior HM Government Minister (to be confirmed)
Senior African politician (to be confirmed)

*Followed by torch-lit procession to the Treasury and
10 Downing St with all night vigil (optional!).*

Jubilee 2000 is an international movement calling for the cancellation of the unpayable debts of the poorest countries by the year 2000. "London Calls" is organised by the London Jubilee 2000 Network and is part of a world-wide series of events beginning in January 1999 and culminating in Cologne, Germany in June 1999 at the G8 Summit. Our aim is to link individual and group actions to create an unstoppable force for change. So - come to St Paul's on 7th March and bring banners, friends, family and colleagues -

Join the Global Chain Reaction!

For further information and group registration forms (10+) contact:
Chris Brice - Tel: 0171 932 1121. Email: chris.brice@dlondon.org.uk or
Liz Day - Tel: 0181 673 5002. Email: lday@jubilee2000uk.org
Website: www.s.qnet.co.uk/users/Vondon/2000network

**JUBILEE 2000
COALITION**

BOOK AND TEN PENCE - A PROJECT FOR LENT 1999

MILLIONS OF CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA HAVE NO BOOKS



The **BOOK and TEN PENCE** project is a way for people in the UK to make a huge difference to the lives of millions of children in South Africa by donating books. It aims to send one million books all over South Africa and has already shipped about 170,000.

We need books for children up to the age of 16, but **NOT** school books! The kind of books we give to children on their birthdays and at Christmas. Books to entertain. Books of fantasy. Books of how things work. Books about growing up. Books about the natural world. Books with pictures and with words.

The books should be in good condition with no pages missing. Collecting boxes will be available in church from Sunday 21st February 1999 until just after Easter. There will also be a jar to collect **TEN PENCE** for every book you give. This is to cover the cost of shipping.

Information fliers will be available in church in February for you to take and give to friends. Let's really try to make a difference.

Please contact Julia Warrens (941 4768) or Ann Peterken (891 5862) with any queries.

HAMPTON HILL ASSOCIATION

Beat the winter blues tea-party! Come and join us in a cheerful get-together. Excellent entertainer and the usual splendid tea!

SATURDAY 27TH FEBRUARY in the Church Hall.

Tickets £4 from Joan Catt 979 9475, Vi Cudmore 979 5101, Joyce Doughty 979 2839, Dorothy Weston 979 6673

KNEELERS PROJECT

Work is progressing very well, with some splendid results, which you will be able to see soon in a small exhibition one Sunday! We thank all the needle-women both for their work and for contributions which they are making to pay for their materials. The kneelers will be appreciated by many people for many years and will enhance the beauty of the church.

WALK THE PARISH

During Lent Bishop Michael and the Archdeacon intend to walk round every Parish in the Diocese. They will be visiting St. James's Parish on Tuesday 23rd February, and will start their walk (after visiting All Saints' earlier in the morning) at about 11.00am, walking down Dean Road by Rectory School, over the Longford River into Uxbridge Road, along St. James's Road, turning right into Park Road and then along the High Street. They will finish with lunch at the Parkside Café at about 12.15pm. You will be most welcome to join them on any part of their walk or for lunch, after which they will walk onto the Parish of St. Mary's!



Judging by the number of people who attended St. James's over the Christmas period, going to church is thankfully still a very important part of the Christmas celebrations in Hampton Hill. A total of 2000 attended over the period from the Carol Service on Sunday December 20th to Parish Communion on Christmas Morning. Thanks to Geoffrey, our excellent organist, and the Choir for all the wonderful music they gave us, and thanks to all who contributed to Christmas at St. James' - to those who created the beautiful decorations, donated greenery,

cleaned the church, to the sidesmen, readers and to all who helped in many other ways.

To complete our joyful celebrations, we are delighted to report the birth of Henry Nettleton on Boxing Day, a son to Susannah and Charles and a brother to Olivia and Isabel.

As the New Year starts it is good to report that David Nunn is now home from hospital after suffering several strokes, and that Bill Young has settled in at the Royal Star and Garter Home in Richmond. Alan Taylor tells us that he is much better, and thanks everyone for their good wishes.

Sadly we also report the deaths of Ernie Platt of Willowbrook, who died suddenly at the end of December, and Phyllis Giles of Holly Road. Phyllis will be known to many as she lived in Holly Road all her life until a few years ago when she went to live in Marling Court.

Pam and Trevor Atkinson, Jeremy and Hannah, have been seen around the Parish recently on a visit from Australia.

Congratulations to Moya Meredith Smith who has become Professor of Evolutionary Dento-Skeletal Biology at Guys, Thomas's and Kings United Medical College.

Many happy returns to Margery Orton who celebrates her birthday on 31st January!! Margery is a long-time contributor to *The Spire*, and you will find one of her poems elsewhere in this issue.

Our informal services on the first Sunday of each month are always enlivened by joyful and enthusiastic music from *The Travellers* group of musicians and singers, thanks to Prill and Martin Hinckley who co-ordinate and lead the group. If anyone is interested in playing in the group, whatever instrument, age or accomplishment, please speak to Martin or Prill.

Those who attended the Christingle Service will have seen the amazing and wonderful scales which Andrew Craig used to illustrate his talk on Stewardship. The scales were made by his son Oliver, who is clearly a skilled and gifted potential engineer!

And finally Kath Holmes has moved to the Sussex coast to be nearer her family. We shall miss her and thank her for her faithfulness as a parishioner and resident in St. James' Avenue.

FROM THE DECEMBER REGISTERS

Baptisms

6	Kasey Laura Harriet Steel	}	31 Pigeon Lane.
	Saphron Darcy Ellen Steel		

Funerals

7	Jean Welch, 17 Lyne Grove Avenue, Ashford, Middlesex.	66
16	Edith Maud Cornwall, 10 Ringwood Way.	79
	Christina Mary Price, 45 Edward Road.	67
18	Reginald Charles Tickner, 31 Myrtle Road.	85
29	Patricia Elsie Totty, 36 Hanworth Road	56

DATES TO NOTE IN FEBRUARY

1	12.30 - 2pm	Parish Table at White House Community Centre Lunch.
2	9.30am	Presentation of Christ in the Temple. Holy Communion.
4		Gilbert of Sempringham, 1189.
6		The Queen's Accession, 1952.
	10am - 1pm	PCC Away Day, House of Prayer, East Molesey.
7	9.30am	Informal Service.
14	6.30pm	Songs and Prayers for Peace at St. James' with some members of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.
17		ASH WEDNESDAY
	8pm	Parish Communion and Imposition of Ashes.
23	11am - 1pm	The Bishop of Kensington and Archdeacon of Middlesex Lent Walk through our parish. Join us anywhere on our route or at Parkside Café from 12.15pm.
24		Ember Day.
26		Ember Day.
27		George Herbert, Priest and Poet, 1633.

COPY DATE FOR MARCH MAGAZINE: 14TH FEBRUARY