

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 4

For 19 April 2015

Dear Friends

During a recent week three things came together:

No. 1 was a friend telling me about their reaction to seeing the film ‘Selma’.

No. 2 was a radio interview with a black American lawyer about the ingrained racial attitudes which still run deep in the current culture.

No. 3 was coming across Martin Luther King’s letter from Birmingham City Jail.

To cap it and give these three events an even greater impact was the video, taken by a private citizen, of a white policeman shooting and killing a black man running away from him. An incident which began with the policeman pulling over his car because a rear tail-light wasn’t working.

Martin Luther King Jr said that when he went to be a pastor in Montgomery he had not the slightest idea that he would become involved in a crisis in which non-violent resistance would be central. When the protest began his mind, consciously or unconsciously, went back to the Sermon on the Mount, with its sublime teaching on love and non violence. In 1959 King and his wife went to India and spent time with Gandhi learning about his methods of non violent resistance. It wasn’t long before we find him in a situation which illustrated how deeply he had embedded this attitude in his own heart and mind. A march was planned for Chicago. A permit had been granted and police protection promised. But the tough mayor double-crossed them. In a meeting of the planners of the march the mood was hostile and bitter. At last after others had spoken Martin Luther King spoke. Here is some of what he said:

“Let me say that if you are tired of demonstrations, I am tired of demonstrating. I am tired of the threat of death. I want to live. I am tired of being beaten, tired of going to jail. But the important thing is not how tired I am; the important thing is to get rid of the conditions that lead us to march. Now gentlemen we don’t have much. We don’t have money, much education, and we don’t have political power. We have only our bodies and you are asking us to give up the only thing that we have when you say ‘Don’t march’”.

His words changed the mood and led to a new arrangement with the mayor. But it was a brave and costly decision.

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 20 April:	119:17-24	Acts 6:8-15	John 6:22-29
Tuesday 21 April:	31:1-5,16	Acts 7:51-8:1a	John 6:30-35
Wednesday 22 April:	66:1-6	Acts 8:1b-8	John 6:35-40
Thursday 23 April:	66:7-8, 14-end	Acts 8:26-end	John 6:44-51
Friday 24 April:	117	Acts 9:1-20	John 6:52-59
Saturday 25 April: ANZAC Day	116:10-15	Acts 9:31-42	John 6:60-69
Sunday 26 April <u>Easter 4</u>			
Ps 23; Acts 4:5-12; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 27 April:	42:1-2, 43:1-4	Acts 11:1-18	John 10:1-10
Tuesday 28 April:	87	Acts 11:19-26	John 10:22-30
Wednesday 29 April:	67	Acts 12:24-13:5	John 12:44-end
Thursday 30 April:	89:1,2,20-26	Acts 13:13-25	John 13:16-20
Friday 1 May:	119:1-8	Isa 30:15-21	John 14:1-14
Saturday 2 May:	98:1-5	Acts 13:44-end	John 14:7-14
Sunday 3 May <u>Easter 5</u>			
Ps 22:25-31; Acts 8:26-40; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 4 May:	118:1-3,14,15	Acts 14:5-18	John 14:21-26
Tuesday 5 May:	145:10-end	Acts 14:19-end	John 14:27-end
Wednesday 6 May:	122:1-5	Acts 15:1-6	John 15:1-8
Thursday 7 May:	96:1-3,7-10	Acts 15:7-21	John 15:9-11
Friday 8 May:	57:8-end	Acts 15:22-31	John 11:52-12:17
Saturday 9 May:	100	Acts 16:1-10	John 15:18-21
Sunday 10 May <u>Easter 6</u>			
Ps 98; Acts 10:44-48; 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17			

WE HAVE ONLY OUR BODIES/ ... I HAVE A DREAM

The Short View

When Martin Luther King said to his friends “We have only our bodies”, it was a profound and prophetic comment.

Like the prophets of old he was emphasizing that our daily actions—what we do with our bodies—our hour by hour behaviour indicates our inner attitudes, our motives and deepest beliefs more accurately than anything else. King believed a complacent nation would only shift its view when people saw ‘the evil of racism displayed in its ugliest extreme’. King said he had to do this to bring the hatred and injustice into the open.

Historians agree that the evil exposed in the cold light of the Selma march was a major turning point. It happened when the Sheriff, Jim Clark, turned his police loose on unarmed black demonstrators. The mounted troopers spurred their horses at a gallop into the crowd, lashing them with their batons, cracking heads, riding over bodies. White onlookers whooped and sneered as tear gas was fired into the crowd. Thousands of Americans suddenly saw the scene on TV when the ABC television interrupted its special programme on the Nuremberg trial to show what was happening. Viewers were shocked partly because it had a horrifying closeness to what they had been watching about the brutality of the Nazi rule.

The Wider View

Protestors, marchers, supporters, found it a hard road. Their bodies were beaten and bruised. They needed an attitude, a hope, a sustaining spirit. King provided that in his brilliant speeches.

When the Selma march finally got to Washington he spoke:

I know that you are asking today ‘how long will it take?’ I say to you this afternoon, however difficult the moment, however frustrating, it will not be long, because truth pressed to earth will rise again.

How long? Not long, because no lie can live forever.

How long? Not long, because you still reap what you sow.

How long? Not long, because the arm of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice.

How long? Not long, cause mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord... His truth is marching on.

One writer has said: “A prophet who can convey both these messages with power just may change the world.” (P Yancey)

THE LONG JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

- * A 72 year old volunteer who joined the civil liberty movement and worked with Martin Luther King Jr was inspired and energised by his courage, and his dynamic words, said with a weary smile on her face:
“My feet is tired, but my soul is at rest.”
Hatred and bitterness can never cure the disease of fear; only love can do that.
Hatred paralyzes life; Love releases it.
Hatred confuses life; Love harmonises it.
- * King’s family often questioned his wisdom in following the policy of non-violence.
Hatred darkens life; Love illuminates it.
– John Perkins, a black minister, a friend and co-worker with M L King Jr.
- His father, Daddy King, commented as his son was once more shackled, beaten and thrown in prison:
“Well, you didn’t get this non-violence from me. You must have got it from your Mama.”

On the night before his assassination, and planned big rally the next day King addressed a huge congregation:
- Martin Luther got it from the spirit behind the words of the Sermon on the Mount, AND—in the attitude and practice of Gandhi, who discovered the essence in the same words of Jesus.
“Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. But I’m not worried about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over, and I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land. So I’m happy tonight, I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory.
- King, as one journalist wrote, “stayed faithful, in the short view by offering his body as a target, but never as a weapon, and in the long view by holding before people a dream of a kingdom of peace, justice and love.”