

ESSENTIAL FOR 1984

MANKIND IS LOSING CONFIDENCE that there is any other way to regulate world affairs than by a terrifying balance of brute forces. East and West are both seen as capable of unleashing war but incapable of unleashing peace.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau of Canada said of East-West relations recently, 'Missing is much trace of political craft and creativity directed at ameliorating the intentions of the other side. There is a disturbing readiness to adapt to the worst rather than to exert our influence for the better. We are depoliticising the most important political relationship we have.' His five-capital tour of Europe was intended to convince politicians to re-enter negotiations that they often abandon to generals and technicians. He seems to be trying to reinject some of the hope and trust which is needed if the polarisation between Reagan and Andropov is to be reversed.

Polarisation is not confined to relations between the superpowers. In Canada home after home is breaking up. And British Columbia is deeply divided between the government and the unions. On a nationwide broadcast, the Premier said, 'We must turn confrontation into consultation and cooperation.'

To resolve confrontation—this is the crucial need, not only in Canada but all over a world faced by inflation, unemployment, hunger and disintegrating home life. Such problems stem from our materialistic way of life. The free world has lost much credibility, characterised as we are by indifference, greed and even exploitation in the face of the Third World's poverty. Sometimes Western policy in the Third World seems aimed to quieten areas down so we can go on neglecting them.

The Communist world has also lost credibility. The Soviet aim is seen to be power and control rather than the ending of human suffering.

So are the dominated and underprivileged nations wrong to hope for some alternative to the materialism that has robbed them of help?

The alternative is a moral ideology that leads each person to combat materialism in his own life; gives him a role in answering materialism in society; and equips him with a vision for the future.

For, while some people's vision of the future is a world devastated by nuclear bombs and others' is Communism contained while the free world gets ever richer and more comfortable, the vision Christ offers is of 'the Kingdom of God' where God's will is done on earth as completely and wholeheartedly as it is done in heaven. The strategy to fulfil that vision is a gift of God. It is given in silence to anyone who listens for the voice of Truth inside them.

Those equipped with this moral ideology may be used to build up the resources of character which will rid the nations of corruption and reconstruct national life. It is just possible, too, that with this ideology future 'Falklands' and 'Grenadas' will be anticipated and cured before the military are sent in.

There is an answer. There is no work more essential for 1984 than making this known.

Paul Campbell

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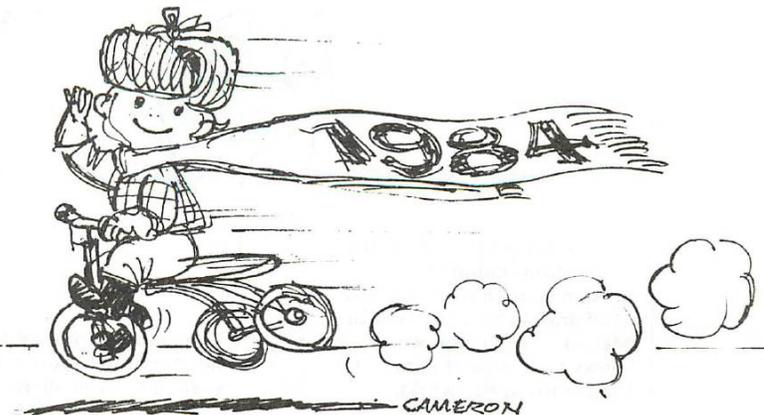
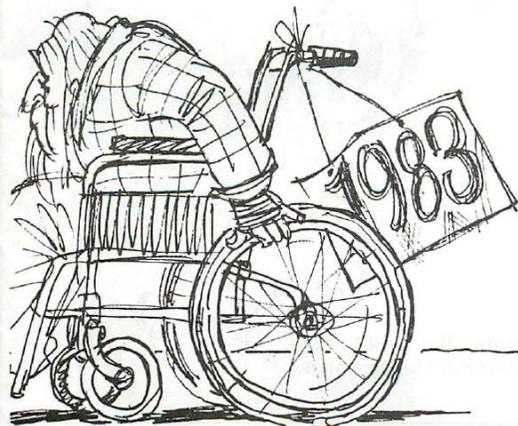


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Cummock

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CAMERON

Two weeks into 1984, most Western nations can be grateful that in spite of Orwell's predictions human rights still flourish within their borders. But there is no room for complacency, JENS-J WILHELMESEN from Norway writes:

SHARING HUMAN RIGHTS

ON A FROSTY WINTER EVENING I was standing in front of Oslo University with a flaming torch in my hand. So were two or three hundred others. We had gathered to demonstrate our solidarity with Andrei Sakharov and his wife, Elena Bonner. Five years earlier she had received the Nobel Peace Prize on her husband's behalf in the Festival Hall of this very university. Now they were both banished, sick and isolated, to the distant Soviet town of Gorki. The Norwegian Government had invited them to come to Norway, but the Soviet Government had refused permission.

Russian author Eduard Kuznetsov addressed the torch-bearers. He had himself spent 14 years in a Soviet prison camp. At a time when his hope and will to live were burning low, the Sakharovs travelled to the camp where he was held and lived in a shed outside for 11 days, trying to establish contact. Finally a friendly guard let Kuznetsov know of their presence. The fact that they were there for his sake renewed Kuznetsov's hope. A year and a half later he was sent to the West in exchange for some Soviet spies.

Am I ready to give up 11 days to nourish the failing hope of a friend? Or am I, like the priest in the parable of the Good Samaritan, too busy to get involved? Someone suggested that the priest could not stop because he was only just in time to deliver a sermon on mercy in Jerusalem.

Many of us adopt the Russian dissidents as our heroes, as modern prophets of truth. Heroes they are, and some of them are prophets. But are we equally ready to commit our lives to challenge the wrong in our own countries? Do we even face what that wrong is? Or are we comfortable in the belief that as democracies we are better than the rest? Freedom and human rights are indispensable values. But the misuse of them is as morally abhorrent as the tyranny we condemn.

Lion's share

The West's misuse of freedom is a subtle evil. We seem to have grabbed the lion's share of human rights for our own benefit.

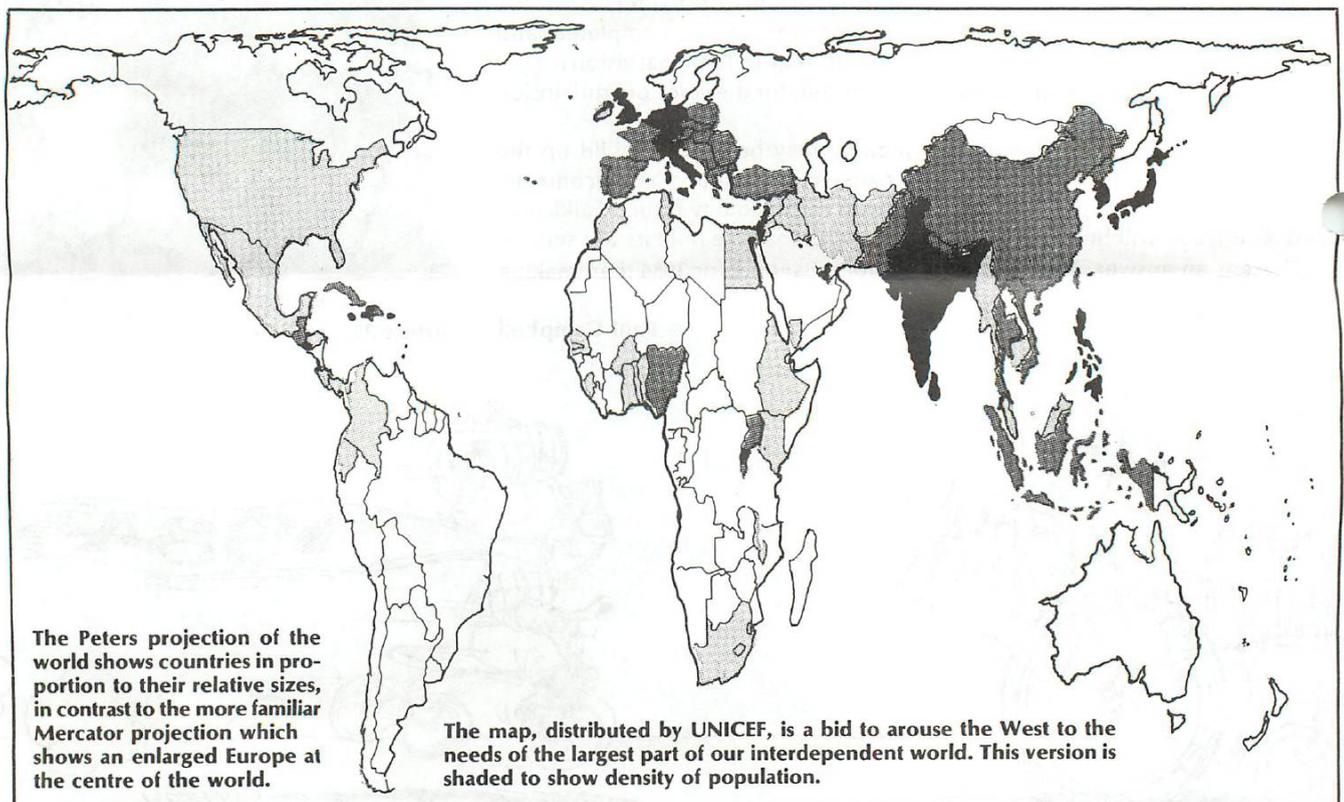
For instance, Article 25 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights states, 'Everyone has the right to a standard of living sufficient for their health and well-being.' Any infringement of this right in the West is rightly met with a howl of protest. But we also protest when measures to help poorer nations cut into the affluence to which we have become accustomed.

Similarly, Article 26 states that everyone in the world has the right to education. In many countries, this right has not been realised on the most basic level. In the rich world we spend billions on higher education. Are we as determined to fight illiteracy in the Third World as we are to see that our own children get the opportunities they deserve?

Identification

To share may be more of a human duty than a human right. Failing to do so does not blacklist you in the records of Amnesty International. But the effects are cruel enough.

According to Amnesty International about half the member states of the UN use torture. Against this background most



nations in the West can take pride in their human rights record. But what about identifying with those who cry in pain or wither in poverty?

Christ knew torture and suffering. He shares the pain of millions, going through their ordeals with them. If we want to fight for human rights, we must do the same—as the Sakharovs did outside a lonely prison camp; as we all can do, by the way we live and the responsibility we take for the rights of the people next to us and those far away. ■

A MILLION INDIVIDUAL SOLUTIONS

by Mohan Bhagwandas, Australia

MANY OF THE DEVELOPMENTS in science, industry, space technology, telecommunications and transport in the last two decades seem to have left the greater part of humanity untouched. Having spent a year in rural India, 100 km from the large industrial city of Pune, I have seen ample evidence of this. I have sometimes waited six hours for a phone-call to be put through to Bombay, just 267 km away.

In the nearby villages most people live much as they did a hundred years ago. An electric light and a bus service are the major changes many have seen this century. The more fortunate may own a bicycle, which they use to carry more than one person as well as goods.

Recently I stopped my car to help Mangal, a 10-year-old girl who was struggling up a steep incline with a huge jute sack on her head. The veins on her neck were strained, her jaws tight, her body thin. I could barely carry the load to the car! I felt deeply about this because I could do little to better the life of the millions like her.

Boost

One of the key issues facing our world in 1984 is: What is progress and what is development?

Few ideas in recent times have been given so much respectability as 'development'. Societies—and individuals—have been judged against a yardstick of development, which assumes that the 'developed' world is the goal to which all societies should aspire. This misconception has been held by both the rich and poor worlds. It has led some to argue that accelerated economic growth will answer poverty. Yet in the 'poor' world this policy has only seen increased poverty—and in the rich world pollution, arms and consumerism. It appears that 'development' as we understand the term may be a fake ideal. For we have come to the point of realising that without some moral, social and cultural infrastructures we are at odds with our own planet. We are running counter to the basic laws of the earth and its environment.

The long-term solutions to the hardships faced by Mangal and millions like her may not come from exotic technopackages, modelled and computerised by experts and isolated from 'real life' conditions. Solutions may rather depend on the industrial nations understanding and accepting to some degree the simple lifestyles that have



Channer

sustained many underdeveloped peoples. To study the achievements of the poor may be as important as seeking to provide them with material help.

What could those brilliant minds engaged in creating ever more destructive weapons achieve if they sought rather to answer poverty and unemployment? While so much is spent on arms, *there is little chance of creating the conditions for ending poverty and giving education, health and other basics to millions.*

After an eight-week tour of the Indian subcontinent, Katharine Whitehorn of the London *Observer* referred to the 'furious cacophony of striving' she had witnessed. 'India's problems may be too enormous to think about, but a million individual solutions are born every day,' she concluded. Indeed, there is cause for optimism in the sight of the apparently chaotic but eminently productive activity in the hole-in-the-wall workshops, the backyard repair establishments and those food stands and 'roadside Hiltons' which proliferate among the shanties ringing the cities of India. When it costs anything between \$6,000 and \$20,000 to create a single modern industrial job, and a billion jobs need to be created by the end of the century, you see the relevance of such activity.

I see two major tasks facing the world in 1984. The first is to alleviate poverty in cooperation with the individual initiatives of people in the developing countries. Secondly, to encourage the growth of what can be called human development in the West, where the creativity of people can bring 'a million individual solutions every day'. Then rich and poor can jointly give a major boost to the kind of development the world needs. ■

In front of the mirror



by David Forbes, Florida

IN THE SPRING OF 1983 I experienced the power of change in the human heart. When subjected to absolute standards of honesty, unselfishness, purity and love, attitudes and motives which I'd never seriously questioned were shown to be selfish, dishonest, unloving and hurtful. I had suppressed feelings of resentment, jealousy and rivalry towards my stepfather which had helped to poison the atmosphere in our family for many years. I realised that these feelings were wrong and apologised for them, knowing that I could not demand reciprocal apologies or changes in attitude from other members of my family.

This apology was costly, but its effect was extraordinary. It revolutionised my family's relationships and galvanised us into a tightly fused unit, with deeper love and commitment to each other.

This experience had focused my attention on the importance of absolute morality in society, which is a mirror of our individual values and of the manner in which we deal with our problems. Division at home leads to an inability to agree on priorities on the national level. Suppressed bitterness against others translates itself into ideologies which exploit frustration, bitterness and hatred for the purpose of political and economic leverage. When selfish individuals wage power struggles in their homes, is it any wonder that special interest lobbies can dominate the nation? Self-interest weakens the emphasis on giving and sharing unconditional love; encourages lower standards of honesty; breaks down family cohesion and morality; and creates the inability to form consensus on vital social, political, economic and international questions.

Ramifications

The corollary of this is that an individual who assumes moral responsibility in his personal life can make a positive contribution to society. I spent three months in Europe earlier this year on an intensive personal programme of discovering, learning and applying absolute moral standards in practice. This convinced me that when we let the heart speak and direct our actions in an absolute framework of right and wrong, society changes. I have found that the

A new year is a time for new beginnings. It is also the season into February. In the face of this, we have asked people to write still flourishing in 1984. We devote the next four pages to

change in my life has given me a much greater sensitivity and concern for people than I had before. This has important social, economic and political ramifications.

I and others of my community have been working to resolve a major industrial dispute in Miami. Labour and management are exploring new avenues of cooperation in an atmosphere of reconciliation, where earlier negotiations were plagued by suspicion, antagonism, confrontation and open threats.

During my travels in Germany I saw the need for a new German-American partnership based on personal friendships between ordinary citizens of each country. With others, I am committed to improving relations between the USA and West Germany in the next generation, by involving young Americans and Germans in a programme which will foster leadership and moral responsibility for themselves and their societies. ■

Taking off the dark glasses

by Anne Rabourdin, France

I THINK OF 1983 as 'the year of the unexpected'.

At the beginning of the year I accepted a post at an English school as an *assistante*, thinking of it as just one more valuable experience. In November, something very simple happened to me—I decided to give my whole life back to God.

I had been reading K D Belden's book, *Reflections on Moral Re-Armament*. At chapter 5—*Commitment, the God who asks everything*—I suddenly had to stop; it was too much. I started doing my washing-up (a relaxing activity when you are struck by a disturbing thought).

I saw clearly then that I was a hypocrite and a very ordinary girl, that I could not be called a Christian any more unless I changed my way of life completely. It was a bit of a shock at first!

So I gave my life to God....a wonderful step forward. It was as though someone had taken off the dark glasses which prevented me from seeing the light and the truth.

But then people started asking embarrassing questions—why, how, what next? This showed me the need to recommit my life every day and decide never to put my dark glasses on again. I realised that whatever I do or wherever I go, I am watched, tested, loved and looked after by the Lord.

So many fears have suddenly disappeared. Why, for instance, should I be afraid of death if at every second I am ready to do anything (even to die) and if I do everything with the intensity that I would devote to my life's last moments?

Now I know that whatever gifts I have must be developed fully and given completely for others.

Recently I directed a play called *Charlie's trowel* which

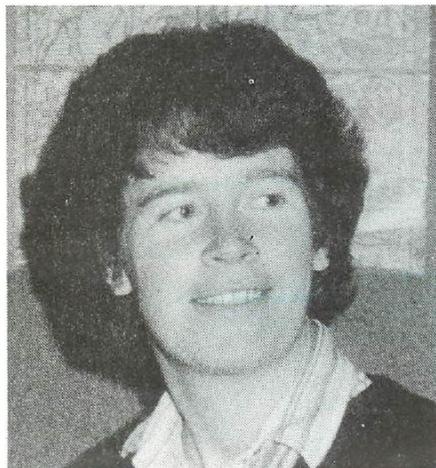
for cracks about resolutions and diaries which don't survive write about the new beginnings they made in 1983 which are his theme:

tells how a down-and-out spreads a new spirit among the people in a high-rise block of flats when he takes a trowel and starts working on the flower-bed. During the rehearsals I thought several times, 'Good, you've done enough; now you can have a rest!' But every time something cropped up and I felt that I had to give much more to the production. The love and care the cast were giving to the play made me realise how selfish it would be to stop when I wanted.

Now, I will go back with my trowel to my garden which still needs much work and love.

'Reflections on Moral Re-Armament' by K D Belden is published by Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, paperback £1.95, with postage £2.25; hardback £4.95, with postage £5.25. ■

Bombshell at half-time



Cummock

by Jane Harrison, London

LITTLE DID I REALISE in January 1983, as I typed away in my settled job as a school secretary and led a busy social life in Oxford, that by January 1984 God would have whisked me away and placed me somewhere I disliked intensely—London!

As the summer of 1983 drew nearer I became less and less satisfied with my job and eventually handed in my notice. At the same time I had an invitation to spend two weeks in August in London, helping to run one of the large MRA homes while streams of people stayed there on their way to and from the MRA conferences in Caux, Switzerland.

The two weeks turned into six months and then in November God really dropped a bombshell. I felt that when God had asked me to do His work full-time for six months, living without pay on 'faith and prayer', he had been asking me to do this with 'an open heart and mind'. However as half-time approached, little musings would come over me now and then such as 'What shall I do at the end of six months?', 'I'd really like to go back to Oxford', and 'I don't want to be a secretary again, so what really important work shall I do?'

Road

One morning I woke up and suddenly knew that God was on the verge of saying something important. I was so apprehensive about what He might say, that I seriously debated whether I shouldn't close my notebook, put down my pen and switch on the radio and Terry Wogan. All the warning signs went up when the first thought that came to me was, 'Don't be afraid of what I shall ask you to do.' God then seemed to say very clearly, 'This is what I want for your life. Give your all to me. Be free to go and do the work that I need from you. Your six months will not come to an end. You have started on the road to real freedom. Do not wander off it. I only want a willing heart.'

I accepted that I had to be free of my own preconceived ideas of what was good or worthwhile work; to leave my mind and heart as open as humanly possible to His guidance; and from now onwards to trust Him above all else in the direction my life took. ■

Searchlight

by Sheila Rivers, Suffolk

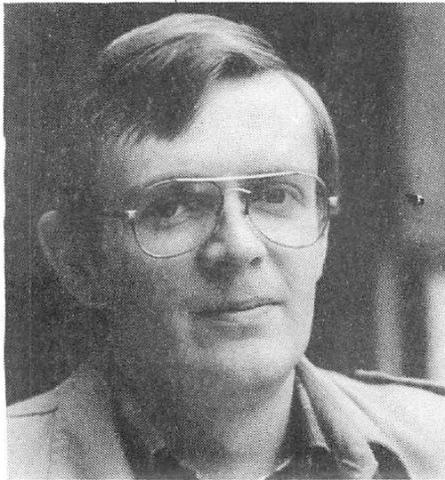
AFTER BEING A COMMITTED Christian for many years, God has led me, during the last two years, into a new dimension of living through MRA. Perhaps you could call it the fresh commitment of an already committed life. I soon realised that the searchlight of the Holy Spirit, operating through absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, could probe deeply into my life.

I am married to a minister, fully involved in church life and in the wider fellowship of the churches, with a part-time teaching job and two daughters and a son to look after. So I have plenty of opportunities to see the relevance of these standards. As I try to apply them in every area of life I am increasingly aware of how all-embracing, penetrating and practical they are. Through them God can pinpoint wrong in me, and then there can be deep repentance, forgiveness and the joy of a restored fellowship with Him.

I was used to having a daily 'quiet time' when God could convict, bless and strengthen me, enable me to counsel others, as well as answering innumerable prayers. I had occasionally recognised thoughts as God-inspired and had certainly known His guidance in general and sometimes specific ways. But I now realise that I had often neglected to listen to Him. It seemed strange, to start with, to sit with paper and pencil during the first hour of the day and try to listen and write down the thoughts which came. Could I really expect regular, detailed guidance for my daily life?

I soon found that the things I wrote down were very relevant. In addition to ideas on the practical details of daily living, God gives thoughts concerning the situations and people for whom I am praying. I have to discern what is His will, not just what I want. Sometimes thoughts come which urge action or restraint, inspire courage, warn me, show me the need to change a wrong attitude or give me a new realisation of God's love. Time spent in this way with God each morning makes it possible to go forward into the day with assurance—concerned to do only His will and knowing the reality of His guidance throughout the day. ■

Giving you and me a chance



by Howard Bird, London

IF ONE LOOKS AT 1983 in terms of the achievements of institutions, ideologies, nation states and communities it's hard to see much improvement on 1982. As far as Britain is concerned unemployment is still high, credibility in the EEC is low, Anglo-American relations unsteady and there is little proof that the economic corner has been turned. Yet for all that, for me 1983 has not been a year of despair but quite the opposite.

I have done a great amount of travelling this year, with plays in the United States and Britain. I have learnt to stop seeing other nations and communities as a faceless 'Them' and to look at them as groups of individuals. For instance, I shall no longer think of Americans as if they all thought, ate or dressed the same—views in Portland, Oregon, may be totally different from opinions in Chicago and New York, and of course not everyone in Portland thinks the same, either! Even in my own country I have discovered the real differences of feeling between the North of England and the South.

When you stop thinking of people as individuals you start making generalisations which are invariably bland and ultimately inaccurate. Personally, I think the invasion of Grenada was a diplomatic gaffe. But for me to blame every American for that is plain silly—there was no more of a common viewpoint in the States than there was in Britain. Not only is generalisation silly, but it can be dangerous. Do we break up long-standing friendships with a nation because one action of one administration upsets us? Is this why we saw cracks in international institutions in 1983?

When one group discusses another as a whole it can lead to misunderstanding and conflict, and has a tendency to preclude mutual appreciation and education. For instance, an English policeman told me that the force in his city had a very constructive attitude to race relations. So why did a Rastafarian in the same city tell me that 99 per cent of the city police were racials? Could it be because they were talking in terms of 'Them and Us' rather than 'you and me'?

1983 has taught me to be more specific, more individual when discussing world affairs. Other groups are not 'They'. They are made up of individuals who, I have discovered, are often not so dissimilar to me.

In talking to many people this year I have noticed that whilst they may have reason to be pessimistic when they look at the situation around them, they have often had a strong feeling of hope. I have faith that God will shine through the bleakest of conditions and by so doing act as the lighthouse which will guide us from the rocks. This year provided me with a resolute affirmative that other people feel that way.

In Chicago for example I met a couple whose faith is so strong that they have overcome breathtaking problems. Without knowing anything about theatre, they invited a Christian play to their city for a week, filled a downtown theatre, accommodated and fed the production members and to top it all managed to arrange a fifteen minute interview for the company with one of America's most controversial figures, Chicago's Mayor, Harold Washington.

I can't be sure, but I believe that many problems would evaporate into hot air if we stopped saying 'They' and 'Them'. That's why in 1984 I'm going to give you and me a chance. ■

Walking through fire

by Edna Magor, Australia

SOME TIME AGO I read what C F Andrews said of his Mother, 'She lived always in the conscious presence of her Lord.' Knowing that was not my experience, I determined to seek it whole-heartedly. I rediscovered Brother Lawrence's book, *The Practice of the presence of God*, which became my greatest treasure.

Little did I know what was ahead of me. I found myself facing two major operations together. I memorised as many supportive verses and hymns as possible. A verse from Philippians was my main comfort in hospital: 'Be not anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, our Lord.'

I can only describe the whole experience as a spiritual high. With fear removed, I only had to cope with pain. Jesus was with me all the way. I have always believed in Him; now I know He is alive and lives within me.

Later I was told that some malignancy had been detected and that further treatment was needed. All my life I had feared such news, yet remarkable as it may seem I found myself singing an old chorus:

'Joy, joy, joy, with joy my heart is singing,
Joy, joy, joy, His love to me is known.'

While all this was happening, the health of my husband, Cliff, was deteriorating. The day I left hospital, he was to be operated on to remove a clot of blood from the brain at another hospital on the other side of the city. The two hospitals communicated, and ten minutes before he was taken into the theatre, I was wheeled in a chair to greet him. He has made excellent progress.

The greatest shock was hearing that I would need five unpleasant chemotherapy treatments at three-week intervals to deal with the malignancy. When the specialist told me, he commented on how calmly I took the news. I told him of my faith, relying as I was at that time on the verse of

Isaiah, 'Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned. For I am the Lord, thy God.'

I have also experienced the truth of Brother Lawrence's words—'The soul finds her joy and contentment in His companionship, talking humbly and lovingly to Him always and at all times. He responds at once to a lifting up of the heart.' I continue to work at always living in the conscious presence of the Lord. ■

Touching the silence

by Ann Ford, Dorset

MY HUSBAND, Ken Evans, is a painter, and I am a writer and poet. A few years ago a copy of Garth Lean's book *Good God, it works!* was given to us and lay on our bookshelves unread. One day last spring it 'spoke' to me, urging me to read it.

Ken and I both read it. It inspired us to start listening to God each morning, writing down any thoughts that came to us. We both gave ourselves to God and we renew this commitment frequently.

Very soon we found that God could direct our lives and, in particular, our work. Ken's paintings have become more spiritually inspired, as has my work. As well as this, powerful urgent 'messages' come through from God.

He seems to be telling us that one of the responsibilities of artists of all callings is to point out what they see—what they see as going in the right direction, and what in the wrong. They should both observe the world and become involved in sensing its 'soul': its fears and joys, horrors and wonders. They should portray these inner 'emotions' of the earth and its inhabitants.

Artists should try to show these in forms that can be contemplated, both with the eye and with the heart; because through their work they are reaching out to the silence within people.

We are also being made aware that there will soon be a great renaissance in the arts. For many years they have been pushed aside as unnecessary in this materialistic, 'realistic' world. Unhappily, many artists have forgotten their responsibilities to the world and have become caught up in personal self-seeking. However, God seems to be saying to us that when artists are inspired by Him, they will speak again with great force of what really matters—the spirit.

Ken and I have both spent a few years in Africa. For part of my time there I was a nun, both teaching and nursing. From Africans we have learned about the riches of the spirit, how body and soul are one and how important it is to 'sense' God.

Through listening to God, we have come to a fuller understanding of this. Recently God has shown us that He wants to mobilise people everywhere into spiritual action. As we learn more about God's power working through us, He and we will be able to move mountains.

'Good God, it works!' by Garth Lean is available from Grosvenor Books price £1.20, with postage £1.60. ■

Cloud of knowing

by Marguerite Horn, South Africa

LAST YEAR I broke my leg for the second time within six years. As a result I have had to spend a long time in hospital.

As I lay in hospital in Pretoria waiting for another big operation, I had plenty of time to read and think. I had been warned that this leg could break easily. But one day my husband said to me, 'Do you realise that both times it happened when you took things into your own hands? When you thought you knew best?' Of course I reacted against what he said, but I knew there was truth in it.

Then I read an article on discernment, something I've always lacked and prayed for. The author, Dr Charis Waddy, wrote, 'What blocks discernment...is "I know best".' I could not help crying as I realized how I had hurt my husband and children by being so sure that I knew best and as I saw what it was costing them and others in care, money and upset plans.

And that is exactly how whites in South Africa have hurt, and go on hurting, other races, because we feel that after all we do know best—having more experience, better education and more know-how.

God may use one's experience. But when it comes to real insight and discernment it is the heart that is open to Him which gets the message most clearly—and it most likely belongs to the person who is not relying on his own wisdom or experience. As Jesus prayed, 'Father, thank you for holding the truth from those who think themselves wise and revealing it to little children.' That is what we need in South Africa—men and women who are not blocked by the colour of their skin, by their resentments or fears, and who can be the growing points of the future. ■

NEWSBRIEF

AN ARTICLE in the 'Personally speaking' column of December 22's *Methodist Recorder* was headlined 'Christian heart of MRA'. The article, by John S Lester, describes the association of his grandfather, former President of the World Methodist Council Dr Benson Perkins, with MRA, and its influence on two African nationalist leaders, P Q Vundla of South Africa and Arthur Kanodereka of Zimbabwe.

Dr Lester describes the synthesis between personal evangelism and the social gospel brought by Frank Buchman, the initiator of MRA. 'His relationship with Christ came first; he was also a born evangelist with a gift for "fishing"; but his social passion that "Thy will be done on earth" was fulfilled in the recognition that the primary Christian route to social change lies through men and women who find an experience of Christ and begin to seek His will.'

The article concludes, 'Moral Re-Armament through the years has been an entity which has brought the truths of our faith into sharper focus for many; it has led many, like Vundla, to the Church, and enabled those in the Church, like Kanodereka, to bring the riches of the Church to bear on national situations. This will, I trust, continue ever more strongly. But my greatest wish is that the moral and spiritual re-armament of the world will be vigorously taken on as the task of the whole Church.' ■

EDWARD GOULDING reviews 'Din börda är min' ('Your burden is my burden') by Paul Gundersen:

BUSINESSMAN'S BURDEN

A BUSINESSMAN who cares as much about the starving millions as about his own affairs—and who believes that it is the job of businessmen to do something about their needs?

Such a man is Paul Gundersen whose book, *Din börda är min*, has just been published in Swedish. He is the purchasing director of a Finnish industrial company, and as such travels constantly to four continents. His convictions make his book deeply moving and challenging. An Archbishop wrote of it, 'I find it a powerful and conscience-shaking text about the responsibility of a Christian in this world. Your book is a true service to the cause of the Gospel.'

'And who is my neighbour?' is the age-old question. As I write before Christmas, we are in the midst of 'the biggest shopping spree ever', in our welfare state of which we are so proud. And while we shop and are looked after, our governments solemnly discuss if foreign aid should be reduced.

'We all have alibis for doing nothing,' says the Brandt Report. Today our alibi is the recession and the dread of what may happen tomorrow. Gundersen's theme is that we 'rich' countries are morally bound to help the poor countries. This, however, needs 'a moral infrastructure' in the rich nation. It is the job of every businessman to create this. 'This is the whole purpose of life, to play a part in remaking the world. This simply means becoming a fellow-worker with God, so that God's purposes are realised in every land and in every international relationship,' he writes.

Bribes

We are given horrifying statistics of the amount of starvation, homelessness and suffering in the world, but as the present Swedish Prime Minister has said, 'No statistic can express what it is like to watch a child die.'

The many organisations that set out to distribute aid all say that what is needed is political will. Gundersen points out that they rarely say how this will is to be generated. There is a common belief that the individual is powerless to affect events. With passion and a wealth of cogent examples Gundersen refutes this.

Many businessmen say that you cannot operate honestly, that 'bribery is the only way to get any business in some countries'. Gundersen points out that bribes cannot be taken unless given, and cites a former Cabinet Minister in Zimbabwe who says, 'When I was Minister in our newly independent state a white man offered me 3 million dollars in a foreign Bank if I would give him a contract worth 50 million dollars. Imagine it—here was I, a man from an



Paul Gundersen

African village. The temptation was almost irresistible. But you cannot build up a nation on that basis.'

So how is this political will generated? Gundersen from his own experience gives a simple but tough solution, open to any man or woman—absolute moral standards and attentive and obedient listening to God's voice. 'Such new men and women will bring about the new, just and unselfish society and create the new world,' he writes.

A fellow-businessman writes in one of the main technical papers of Finland, 'This book is a real and shaking challenge to businessmen. It all starts from us understanding that we can interest ourselves in the world beyond our own business. It is not the masses that change the world, but it is individuals who start the ball rolling and set the masses in motion.'

'Din börda är min' by Paul Gundersen is published in Swedish by Schildts, Helsinki (1983). ■

Everyone's part in RENEWING THE FACE OF THE EARTH

The international conference for Moral Re-Armament at Mountain House, Caux, Switzerland, next summer, will run from 7 July to 2 September. Special themes will be discussed on the following dates:

7-15 July	Europe
27 July - 3 Aug	Re-inventing the family
6-13 Aug	The Americas and Europe
17-23 Aug	Africa
24-29 Aug	Creativity—the answer to crisis for people of industry, the trade unions and those concerned with economic and political affairs
30 Aug - 2 Sept	Renewing the face of the earth

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