

FORA CHANGE

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Aboriginal singer
Archie Roach page 8



The hostages speak
out on hate

EAR TO THE GROUND

by Andrew Stallybrass, recently in Beijing



Fast plane to China

As we fly to Beijing, a screen in the cabin plots our progress. Sverdlovsk, Omsk, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Lake Baikal: names to conjure with. My great-great-grandfather was a missionary here in Siberia. A journey that takes us hours took him weeks of danger.

On our return, we fly over Burma-Myanmar, Iran and Iraq, Kurdistan, Balkan wars and bloodshed. Sad that progress, which speeds up our journeys and widens their range, so often multiplies the suffering we can inflict on one another.

500 million bells

A first, and lasting, impression is the tinkle of bicycle bells. 500 million bicycles! It takes some courage for a foreign pedestrian to cross the street. Amazing what one can carry on two or three wheels, ranging from wife, child and grandma, to prefabricated concrete building blocks and TV sets.

150 years of pain

Few nations have suffered as much as China over the last 150 years. Famines and wars; humiliations at the hands of the imperialists; 20 million dead in the war with Japan; countless more in the disastrous 'Great Leap Forward'.

'We are the lost generation, we have nothing to live for,' says a 30-year-old of the terrible Cultural Revolution years. Another talks of his mother, a soprano, persecuted for her attachment to bourgeois music. A third tells us, 'Here there are hates but they don't show, people

don't talk about them. People often have to work with those who persecuted them in those days and who have not been punished.'

Can a nation's past be healed?

Anti-corruption

The Secretary General of the Communist Party strongly attacks corruption. But if the 'socialist market economy' reforms accelerate, the gap between miserably paid civil servants and getting-rich-quick street vendors, taxi-drivers and free-marketeers will only widen. The civil servants, who hold power over permits and paperwork, may with luck rise one day to earn 400 Yuan (£47) a month. The others can already earn five times that much.

Landscape gardening

We visit the traditional gardens of Suzhou. The Japanese learnt the arts of bonsai from their Chinese neighbours. In Chinese it is called *pen jing*, 'a landscape in a tray'. The aim, we are told, is to make a miniature view in your own

home, with rocks and water and plants.

We visit the 'garden of the humble administrator'. Our guide explains that a better translation would be 'humiliated'. The 16th century Ming civil servant who created the garden was fired for corruption. The problem's not new.

Zest for life

In Xi'an, we are captivated by the army of terracotta figures buried around the tomb of the first Emperor of China, made never to be seen, except by the dead. There are thousands of clay figures, all different, some with beards or moustaches, some clean-shaven, young and old. They mirror the present day faces in the streets.

On the national day, we walk the Great Wall with a friendly horde of Chinese tourists. Another powerful impression is the zest for life, the appreciation of good food and a good laugh. Perhaps the inscrutable orient is something of a myth?

We never see a begging child. The one child policy

may produce 'little emperors' spoiled by parents and omnipresent grandparents, but the children are wanted and seem happy.

In a busy street, a boy runs in front of our car. 'He doesn't know he's an only child,' laughs our guide.

Fear of chaos

Strange, in a country which puts such emphasis on building friendship between peoples, that efforts to deepen friendships between individuals are regarded with some suspicion.

Those who suffered in the cultural revolution have been marked with a fear of chaos and may now prefer the order, stability and economic progress which the Communist Party offers to the great unknowns of change and Western-style democracy.

The events of Tiananmen have destroyed people's trust in their leaders, a diplomat tells us. Now they only want to make money. Something is needed to fill the vacuum of values and ideals, he says. An area of shared need between East and West, it seems.

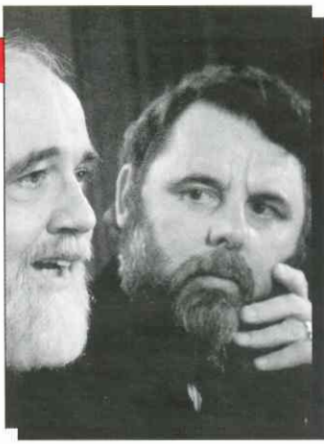
Coins and bamboo

Old Chinese coins have a square hole in the middle. We were told that this is a symbol for the Chinese: round and smooth outside, but square inside. A favourite classical image is the bamboo, amazingly strong and straight, but ready to bend with a violent wind rather than break.

We have a lot to learn from this people, so far from us, but such an important part of the human family. ■



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COVER:
Former hostages Father
Lawrence Jenco and
Terry Waite
photo:
Rex Features

FOR CHANGE

IN MY VIEW

Strength in variety

by Paul Williams

It has been well said that unity without diversity leads to tyranny, whereas variety without unity ends in discord.

The secret of combining unity and diversity is being sought by countries across the globe. The President of Canada's Council for Unity, Pierre Jeannot, summed it up when he wrote, 'Everywhere there is a growing desire for the recognition of linguistic, cultural and ethnic identities, but at the same time a necessity for economic and political coming together.' At the time, April 1992, he was hoping that Canada might prove 'that these two tendencies can be harmonized'. She has yet to succeed.

Unless the formula can be found, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali fears that the world will splinter into 400 or more mini-states. He says that only moving the question of the rights of minorities 'to the top of the international agenda' can prevent such economically calamitous fragmentation.

As one who lives in Wales, where one of Europe's oldest minority languages is miraculously alive and well, I hope that the United Kingdom will not be afraid of its own diversity and national differences. They can be seen as a problem, a nuisance and a costly irrelevance ('The Welsh all understand English don't they? Why waste money on expensive bilingualism?'). They can, on the other hand, be seen as a plus factor – not least because they count us in on the world's common quest to marry unity and diversity.

If we in the United Kingdom are to make a worthy contribution to a world of increasing ethnic tensions, we will need the special gifts and insights of the Welsh culture, the Scottish heritage and the rich but painful Irish experience, alongside the best qualities of the English. To this we can now add the priceless asset of our recent enrichment as a multiracial society. We will also need the humility to see ourselves as others see us – to recognize where our actions, ignorance or indifference have made it hard for us to live together.

For the UK, as for every country, the secret of finding the best unity/diversity formula (whatever political form it might take) will lie in having the confidence to acknowledge our historic variety. ■

- examines the changes engulfing the world, what's going right as well as what's going wrong.
- focusses on people, many motivated by faith in God, who are making a difference to the world around them.
- explores the changes needed in attitudes and actions – as well as structures – which are crucial to peace, justice and the survival of the planet.
- was born out of the experience of Moral Re-Armament and draws its material from a wide range of sources.

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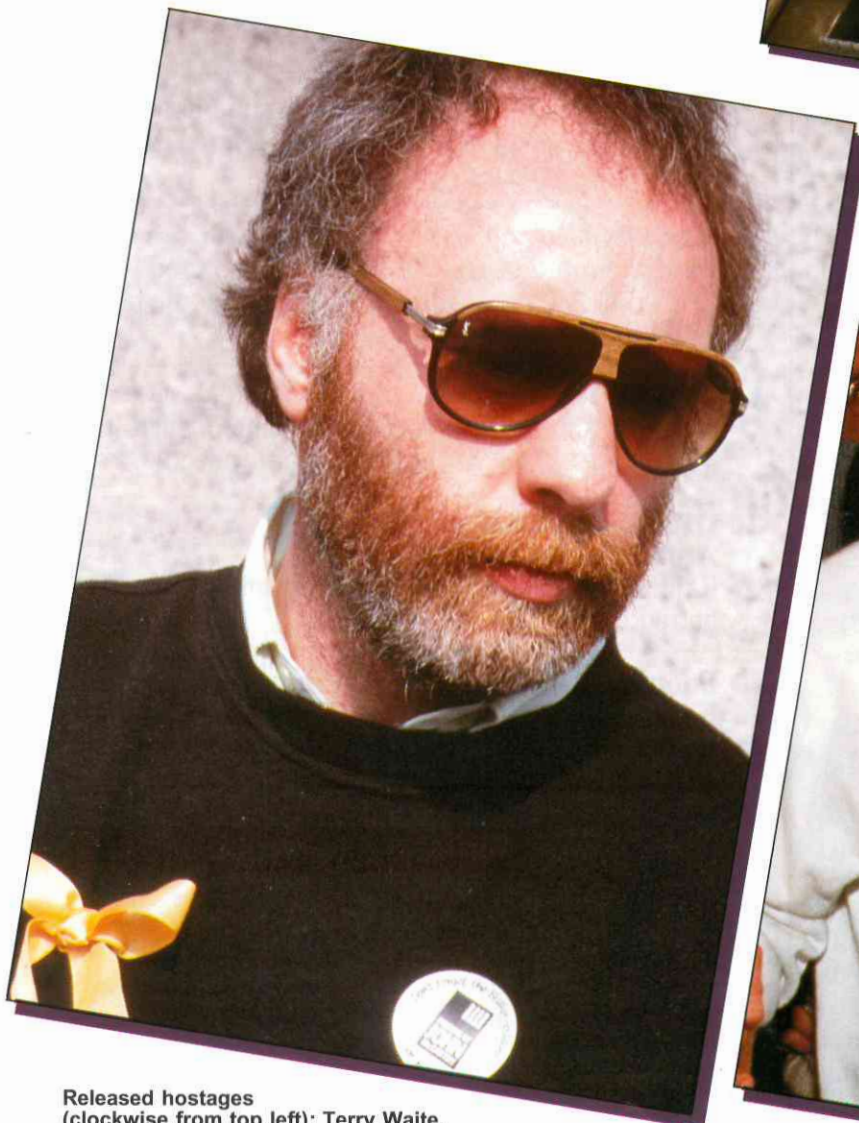
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A NOTE ON MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

Moral Re-Armament was launched in 1938 when Europe was rearming. Frank Buchman, MRA's American initiator, called for a programme of 'moral and spiritual rearmament' to address the root causes of conflict, and work towards a 'hate-free, fear-free, greed-free world'. Since then people of all backgrounds and traditions have been active in this programme on every continent.

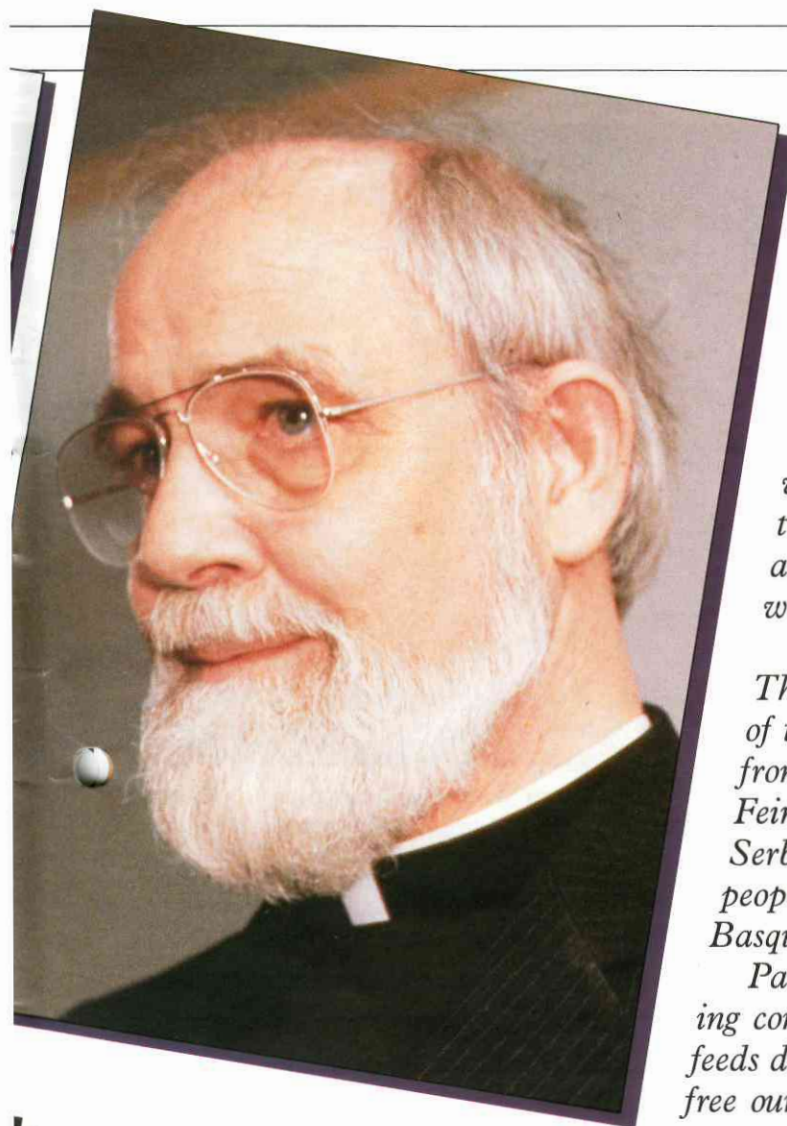
MRA is open to all. Its starting point is the readiness of each person to make real in their own life the changes they wish to see in society. A commitment to search for God's will in daily life forms the basis for creative initiative and common action. Absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love help to focus the challenge of personal and global change.

The hostages speak out on hate



Released hostages (clockwise from top left): Terry Waite, Father Lawrence Jenco, Terry Anderson and Brian Keenan

All photos: Rex Features



It was a unique occasion: four former Beirut hostages sharing a platform in the Guildhall in Derry, Northern Ireland, writes Peter Hannon.

Terry Anderson, Father Lawrence Jenco, Brian Keenan and Terry Waite had shared an ordeal unimaginable to most. Some in the British media had taken it on themselves to question their wisdom or their motives. Now they spoke for themselves, at the invitation of city leaders, addressing a conference on 'Beyond hate – living with our deepest differences'.

The large audience reflected Ireland's divisions. The Mayor, who introduced the evening, is a follower of the radical Protestant, the Rev Dr Ian Paisley. In front of me, from the opposite political pole, sat Sinn Fein leader Martin McGuinness. Also taking part were Serbs and South Africans, Jews and Arabs, and people from Vietnam, El Salvador, Uganda and the Basque country.

Paddy Doherty, chairman of the conference organizing committee, spoke of hate as 'the witches' brew which feeds destruction and which we ourselves create'. 'Can we free ourselves from its chains, forged by the certainty of our own particular cause?' he asked.

Each hostage responded from his own experience.

Terry Anderson

American Terry Anderson was Chief of the Associated Press Middle East Bureau till the start of his 2,454 days' captivity:

Beyond hate? My nose was rubbed in hate for seven long years. They hurt us, humiliated us, and hardest of all was what it did to those we loved at home. And there was nothing I could do about it. Nothing I could do to remove the chains.

It was a time that justified hate, and I did hate – for a while. The power of all that anger overwhelmed me. Yet I had to deal with those men. They led me blindfolded every day to the bathroom.

Over the long months we began to talk of our countries and our families. Slowly they became people to me. Some were bad, and even the better ones chained us.

When you have nothing but a blank wall to look at you start to probe yourself, to look inside your own motives, your own actions. And that is where healing begins; where you begin to understand and to move beyond hate.

It is not something you do just once and then walk away. It is a process that will go on all my life.

My experience is, of course, just my own. But I know this now: that if I am in confrontation with another person, another group, I cannot first ask *anything* of the other side, even if I feel that I am the victim. It doesn't have to be the oppressor who has to take the first step; it is the oppressed who can say, 'I forgive'.

Father Lawrence Jenco

Father Lawrence Jenco, an American priest, older than the others, with his white beard and thinning hair, had been serving in a relief agency in Lebanon when captured:

I lived on the floor, chained to a radiator. I would cry out to myself, 'No, I am not a dog!' And I would complain to God, 'I am not Job. I want to go home now.'

I would lie there and try to look into my mother's eyes, into the eyes of Jesus. If you ask what kept me going, read Psalms 116 to 118.

One of my guards came to me one day and asked, 'Do you remember those first six months?' I remembered only too well! They had been horrible, cruel, and this man had been the worst.

Now he said, 'Abouna, dear Father, do you forgive me?' I looked at him. 'Saeed,' I said, 'I hated. I need your forgiveness.' At that moment I was free.

A few days before my release, as I was waiting, blindfolded, and uncertain what would happen, another young guard came up behind me. I knew his voice. When I had first been captured he had burst out to me in his passionate bitterness, 'You are dead!' Now he put his hands on my shoulders and gently massaged them. I wished I could have looked into his eyes, which on that first day had been eyes of hate, for I felt that his had become the touch of love.

Terry Waite

Terry Waite was the Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy, trying to negotiate the others' release when he was taken. He is six and a half feet tall. The others affectionately teased 'the big fellow'.

The culmination of those early months of physical torture was when one torturer told me, 'You have five hours to live.'

I said to myself, 'Can this be true?' I

The hostages speak out on hate

prayed and then fell asleep from exhaustion.

The man returned with a companion. 'Have you anything to say?'

'Yes,' I said, 'I need to write a letter.'

I sat facing the wall and wrote the most extraordinary letter of my life to my family, to the Archbishop and to my friends. I could only say, 'I am sorry to leave you. I want you to know that I am well. I want to try and remember that those who have killed me have done so because they have suffered humiliation and other hurts. I want you to know that I forgive and I ask that you do too.'

The man put the gun to my temple. It was cold against my skin. Then he said, 'Another time.'

Once, later, I was taken to the bathroom. I suddenly noticed that the guard had forgotten his gun and left it right there on top of the cistern. It had its silencer on.

I immediately began to picture how I could escape. It was a real possibility. But then I said to myself, 'If I take this I've got



Father Lawrence Jenco, Terry Anderson, Terry Waite and Brian Keenan with the Irish President, Mary Robinson, at the conference in Derry

to shoot that young man,' and I realized that there was no way I could kill. So I pulled my blindfold down again, called the guard and said, 'You've forgotten something!'

There were another three or four years after that. Difficult years in the solitary darkness, with loneliness and fear. I had to face within myself the whole range of despair, hope, anger. After a long time I got a Bible. It made me angry. I read in the Old Testament of wars and killings while here, three thousand years later, people outside were still knocking hell out of each other. I read in the New

Testament of prisoners who seemed just to have to pray and the ceiling cracked open and they were free.

While I cannot understand the mysteries of God, I did begin, slowly, to understand Christ's wisdom. 'Love your neighbour' is hard when it lands on your own shoulders. The growing up to faith through the darkness happens slowly, in God's time. And a deeper touch with God and with others grows. Even my mother-in-law now says, 'You're a bit more human!'

I am sure now that it takes no courage to put a bullet into your enemy. It takes much courage to believe that light and life are stronger than darkness.

Brian Keenan

Brian Keenan was a lecturer at the American University in Beirut. Having grown up in divided Belfast, he knew his Derry audience. He spoke quietly, almost as if to himself, looking into the distance of those terrible years of imprisonment.

I cannot condemn a man because he is different from me. By the degree he is different I am enlarged and expanded.

We have talked here of the need to reassess history. True. But I know now that I make history in every touch I have with people, even how I greet people in the street.

At one point one of my captors pressed a gun against my blindfolded face and said, 'There is only one life.' Unexpectedly I laughed because those words, without his knowing, were a gift to me. I thought to myself, 'Better than that you do as much as you can.'

Another man, disturbed and confused, beat me. It was not just once. It happened



Beirut - scene of captivity

often. I didn't like it. I was angry. I'm Irish and it makes me stubborn and aggressive. After one such time he came and stood outside my cell and cried out, 'Look at me!' My Irish stubbornness made me refuse. I wasn't going to take an order. Then I realized it was a plea: 'Recognize me!' I heard him weep and cry out to Allah. I found I wanted to take him and hug him. It struck me some days later, 'If I ever can look that man in the eye I will recognize myself.'

There is a Muslim saying, 'Give them the Qu'ran and they will take away more than they have.'

I am not a religious man, in the accepted sense, but in that room, six feet by four, with only a mattress and generally with two hours of light a day, I had a long, long look inside myself.

Hate has its roots in alienation, confusion, frustration. We long for acceptance but hate isolates us. We hide ourselves behind recriminations, blaming others for our inadequacies. We are imprisoned in ourselves.

Blazing into my mind came the inscription which is carved in stone over the entrance to the university in Beirut; 'To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield'. I began to find that captivity had recreated freedom for me. Not a freedom outside to be hungered after, but another kind of freedom which we found to our surprise and relish within ourselves.

Those two words 'beyond hate' are intriguing. They hint at something the other side of hate.

The antidote - love - is itself ultimately about conflict, not the absence of conflict. It must be experienced first on the deep level of what we are inside ourselves, and then communicated from the centre of our existence, not the peripheral things. It is a constant challenge, not passive, not a resting place but a moving, changing, growing together.

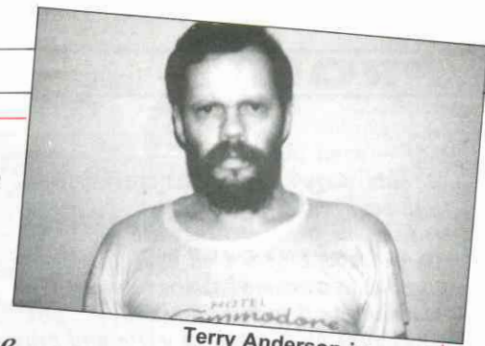
How do we make it work? If I draw from my own experience I would choose one word - discipline. You had to be very disciplined in those conditions in prison. You can't always be, but it can grow. Otherwise that terrible illness sets in and the mind goes off on its own weary, impersonal, lunatic path.

It's about becoming independent. It's about listening. It's about going beyond self-preoccupation, a futile narcissism. We begin to experience the world not just through the eyes of our own needs, our own concerns, but through those of other people as they *are*, apart from our own fears and desires. Without that objectivity, in national terms, we create an idea of cultural superiority.

When one talks of love one meets catcalls or the silence of cynicism. Such nihilism is the unresolved despair from which the poison of hate will flower.

To move beyond hate means to commit myself without guarantee. It bears no deceit, hides nothing, with constant thought and action for the object of my concern. Then it is a revolutionary love. ■

**Encouraged by Brian Keenan,
Terry Anderson read a poem
he had written:**



Terry Anderson in captivity

*Satan is a name we use
for darkness in the world,
a goat on which we load
our most horrific sins
to carry off our guilt.
But all the evil I have seen
was done by human beings.
It isn't a dark angel
who rigs a car into a bomb,
or steals money meant for others' food.
And it wasn't any alien spirit
that chained me to this wall.*

*One of those who kidnapped me
said once: 'No man believes he's evil.'
A penetrating and subtle thought
in these circumstances, and from him.
And that's the mystery:
He's not stupid, and doesn't seem insane.
He knows I've done no harm to him or his.
He's looked into my face
each day for years, and
heard me crying in the night.
Still he daily checks my chain,
makes sure my blindfold is secure,
then kneels outside my cell
and prays to Allah, merciful, compassionate.*

*I know too well the darker urges in myself,
the violence and the selfishness.
I've seen little in him I can't recognize.
I also know my mind would shatter,
my soul would die if I did the things he does.
I'm tempted to believe there really is
a devil in him, some malefic,
independent force that makes him
less or other than a man.
That's too easy and too dangerous an answer;
it's how so many evils come to be.
I must reject, abhor and fight against
these acts, and acknowledge that
they're not inhuman - just the opposite.
We can't separate the things
we do from what we are;
Hate the sin and love the sinner is not
a concept I'll ever really understand.*

*I'll never love him - I'm not Christ.
But I'll try to achieve forgiveness
because I know that in the end,
as always, Christ was right.*

*This story's right, this story's true
I would not tell lies to you
Like the promises they did not keep
And how they fenced us in like sheep
Said to us come take our hand
Sent us off to mission land
Taught us to read, to write and pray
Then they took the children away,
Took the children away,
The children away
Snatched them from their mother's
breast
Said it was for the best
Took them away.*

Archie Roach's songs have caught the imagination not only of his fellow Australians but of audiences on the other side of the world. When he toured North America last year with the Jamaican-born singer Joan Armatrading, the media hailed 'the arrival of a stunning talent' (*Billboard*), the 'almost frightening intensity' of his performance (*San Francisco Examiner*) and his 'exquisite writings on personal and political struggles' (*City Pages*, Minneapolis).

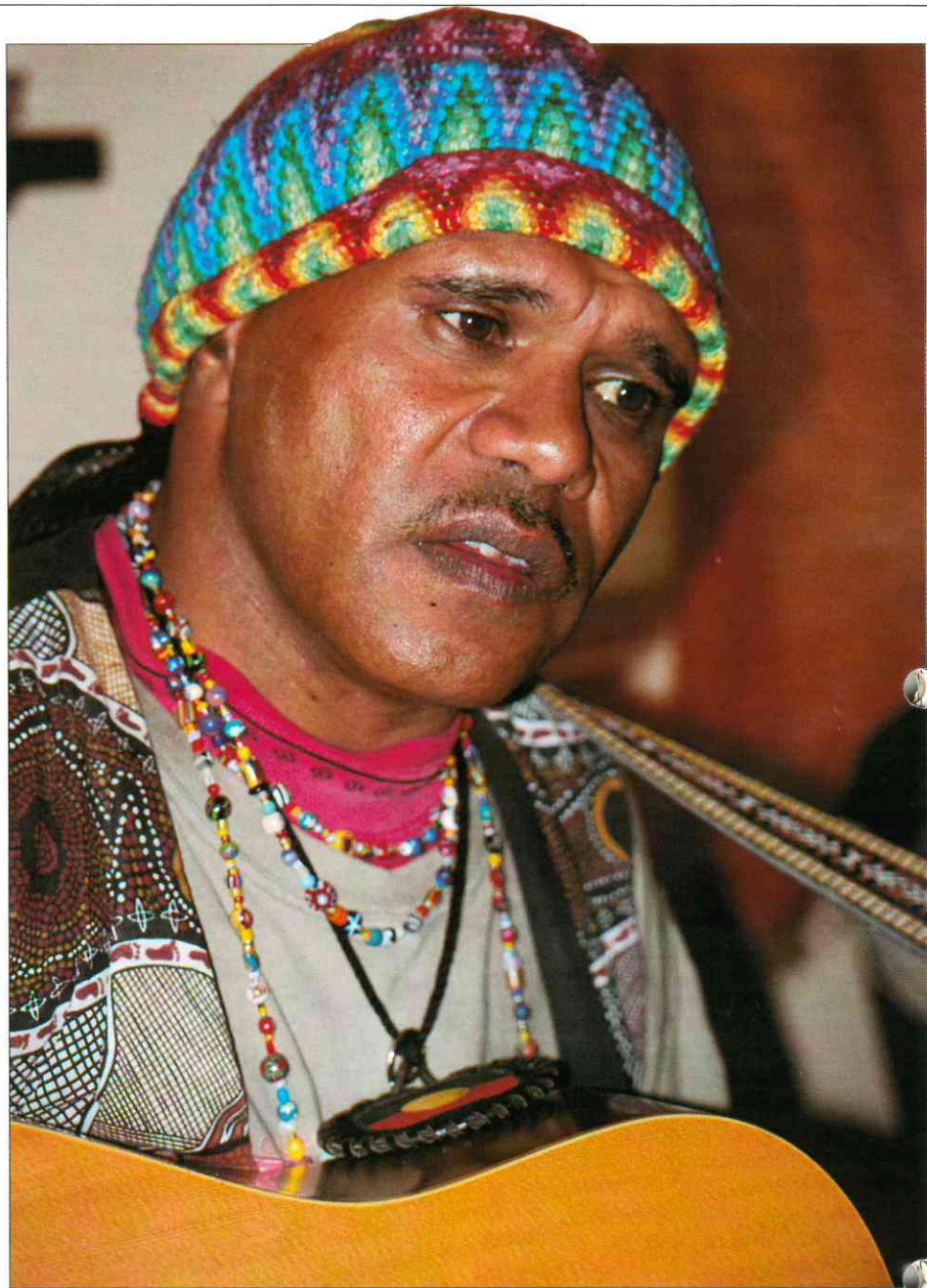
Roach's lament for Aboriginal children comes from his own experience. He was taken from his parents in 1958 when he was three, and never saw them again.

The Victorian state government, which as successor to the original colony was then legally responsible for Aborigines, had a policy of 'assimilation'. Some 40,000 children, it is now estimated, were taken from their families over several decades. The aim was to teach them to 'live life worthy of a human being' in white society, and the police usually came without warning. Roach talks of schoolroom desks being torn off by youngsters trying to resist.

It seems incomprehensible today that any government in Australia could have done such things so recently. Roach points out that his people had been herded onto mission stations without money or building skills and had had to make houses out of tin and hessian, and white visitors would say, 'You can't bring children up in those conditions.'

Roach does not now recall how many institutions and homes he was sent to. One set of foster parents forced him to eat raw potatoes (he'd once said he liked potatoes so much he could eat them raw), flogged him with saplings and sent him to sleep among the wheatbags in the barn. To hide the welts, he would wear long trousers and a long-sleeved shirt to school the next day. Eventually the law caught up with these foster parents, and Roach was sent to a Scots-Australian couple named Cox who treated him with affection, which he returned.

'Nobody told me I was Aboriginal,' Roach recalls. When he was 11 a school-friend asked him why his parents (the Coxes) were white and he was black. Roach had just thought some people were darker than others. When he asked Cox about it, they had a 'good talk' - Cox had assumed he knew his origins.



J Williams

Songs of freedom

Taken from his parents at the age of three, Archie Roach expresses a people's suffering through his music. John Williams meets an Aboriginal singer who is hitting the big time.

Three years later, the loudspeaker system at his highschool called for Archibald Roach to pick up a letter at the office. He had been calling himself Cox, but as he was the only Archie in the school, he picked up the letter. It was from someone in Sydney, who called herself his sister Myrtle and wrote, 'Mum passed away a week ago...'

Roach knew nothing about any sisters or brothers, nor about his parents, and the letter set off an explosion inside him. From being 'a studious type', he lost all interest in schoolwork and became angry and rebellious. When he confronted the Coxes with the letter, they said nothing. Years later he discovered they had been as ignorant as he. But at the time he took their silence as guilt: 'I thought they'd been lying to me.' Furious, he ran away.

Searching for his family, he drifted into life on the streets and started drinking. 'I got into trouble, was locked up for a couple of months, things like that.' When he reached Sydney, 800 miles north, a year later, he found Myrtle had moved and left no forwarding address.

He made friends among the homeless, and one day in a pub someone asked his name. He had been living under an alias, but 'without thinking - I was that drunk', he answered, 'Archie Roach'.

At that, a woman came over and demanded the names of his six brothers and sisters, his mother and his father. He had memorized them from Myrtle's letter, so he 'rattled them off'. The woman 'hit me fair on the chin and knocked me flying off my chair, and I was lying there thinking, who is this crazy woman? Get her away from me! Then she grabbed me and started crying and said, "I'm your sister Diana."'

And so Archie Roach met up again with his family. Diana had hit him because she was shocked to see him in Sydney not Melbourne, blind drunk at the age of 15.

But he went on 'drinking like a fish under water' in the slums of Sydney and Melbourne. Somewhere along the way, he met his wife, Ruby Hunter, who had also been taken from her parents as a small child. They have five children, and their love has survived many pressures. At one stage when there was no drink to start the day with, Roach would beat Ruby up. Then he stopped that and wrecked the house instead.

One day he had a seizure and landed

*He was on the streets for many years
No one ever knew his pain or saw his tears
He took to using drugs and booze just to escape
Then one night they arrested him for murder and rape*

*Troubled woman, troubled man
Doesn't anybody out there give a damn
And an old man's voice calls from afar
Who will shed a tear for Munjana.*

*His one true mother who searched in vain
For her son she never thought she'd see again
She received a phone call from Florida
They found her son and more bad news for Munjana*

*Hello Russell this is your mother calling
Please forgive me I can't stop the tears from falling
You come from this land and sun above
And always remember the strength of your mother's love*

*They took you there when you were five
Now you're in some jail trying to survive
And if the truth be known when all have testified
Another crime committed here was genocide.*

From *Munjana*

up in hospital, strapped to a bed and with a rubber tube down his throat. The doctor told him if he liked he'd lend him a gun so he could blow his brains out: 'a lot quicker killing yourself that way than the way you're doing it now'. This pulled him up with a jolt.

He says it took 'a great deal of support from a lot of people', including AA and Al-Anon, to win his battle. After a couple of years he went on a bender but now hasn't touched alcohol for nine years.

Meanwhile Ruby had joined an actors' workshop. He was entranced by how well she acted, and this started 'an incredible awakening'. 'My growth had stopped when I started drinking. I realized that nothing in this material world can hurt me. I have certain tools in my spirit and the Lord will protect me. I love people. I love their cultures because I've been deprived of my own for so long. I said to myself maybe I can do something.'

He started singing for his community, and one day his uncle asked him, 'Why not write a song about your experience?' The result was *Took the children away*.

One of the most powerful songs in Roach's first album is *Beautiful child*, about a boy who committed suicide in custody, as hundreds of young Aborigines have done in recent years. Another, *Munjana*, tells the true story of a man taken to America as a child and now jailed for life for murder and rape.

Roach's songs express shatteringly difficult experiences in hauntingly joyful tunes. Words and music seem at odds: yet there is a humanity in his songs - springing no doubt from his spiritual experience and the fact that drink has not killed him

'as it could have' - that takes you beyond rage to the hope of something better.

Perhaps even towards a new chapter in the long, troubled relationship between Australia's races. Many from both sides have worked hard at this - a reality overlooked when visiting journalists write off all white Australians as racists.

Several Aboriginal musicians are now hitting the big time. *Bran nue dae*, a musical about a boy's flight from the city to his traditional land, has been shown on national TV at prime time. Yothu Yindi, a band which mixes traditional music and modern rock, has sold more than 140,000 copies of its latest album, *Tribal Voice*.

No treaties have ever been signed between

the two races, and a top-level attempt to create one at the time of the Bicentennial in 1988 failed. Yothu Yindi's song *Treaty* was written, says the band's founder, 'to bring about understanding in order to make it easier for the white man, to give them access to our world'. The song has had teenagers in dance clubs yelling 'Treaty now!'

The refrain of one of Roach's songs goes:

*Don't listen to the heartbreakers
Find comfort in your staff and rod
Blessed are the peacemakers
For they shall see God.*

'I hated all white Australians,' says Roach. 'One of them only needed to look sideways at me and there'd be trouble. Now I don't hate or feel angry: I'm just sad. I want to be one of those who help repair. Some of my people talk of compensation. I say to them, we don't need that. All we need is one person in power to say, "We're sorry."'

Took the children away ends:

*One sweet day all the children came
back
The children came back
The children came back
Back where their hearts grew strong
Back where they all belong...
Back where they understand
Back to their mother's land
The children came back...
Yes I came back.*

Lyrics from the album 'Charcoal Lane' copyright 1990 Mushroom Records P/L. Roach's second album, 'Jamu Dreaming', is released this month. ■

● How Tony Budell became an unlikely angel of mercy to rebalance the Earth ● Why Sam Kinuthia gave up his job

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by
Choice Okoro

● Tony Budell is one man who believes in putting his money where his mouth is. He says the world will be a better place when people learn to care for their fellow human beings in need, and he is doing just that.

One September evening he turned on his television, saw destitute women and children in Romania and a week later got in his truck to deliver food and clothing to them. 'I meant to do it for that one time,' he said. But he has not looked back since.

The last seven months have seen him in and out of Yugoslavia giving food and clothing to refugees in Croatia and Bosnia. When I met him, he was organizing 'the largest peacetime convoy ever to leave Britain' – 100 vehicles laden with food, clothing and medical supplies. It was to be his ninth trip in a year. He called it the Convoy Of Hope. For thousands of refugees in Yugo-

slavia his visits are the only ray of light in the religious crisis that has engulfed the country.

But Budell (48) does not see himself as an angel of mercy and he does not look like one either. A burly, good-looking man he looks like the truck driver he was 'until God led me into a life of serving people'.

Budell recounts his story in such an unpretentious manner that one cannot imagine him ever being anything else but a man who would risk his neck to come to his neighbour's aid.

He never knew his father, a Canadian airman, and his mother left him when he was four. His childhood was spent in foster homes 'and most of them were very unpleasant I must tell you'. Ten years in the army, 24 as a truck driver and three divorces left him depressed and lonely. 'For three years I found myself going down

and down. I started avoiding people. I felt bad about the way I had hurt the women I married. I had become so bitter they could not live with me. But I could not bring myself to undo the damage. I was in a spiral going round and round. It was hopeless. I even contemplated suicide.'

Then something happened which shook Budell out of his despair. 'In May 1988, I was sitting on a bench at the Dover bank waiting to make my crossing when I heard somebody call my name. I listened and realized it was a call in my head. After the third call the voice said, "Tony, I have called everyone to carry a cross, some big and some small. You carry the cross of humanity and I will carry your cross for you."'

The voice was loving and commanding. 'It was so caring I sat there and cried. I felt I was no longer alone. As each tear dropped, a hurt in my life evaporated.'

He left his job and got one as a hospital porter. 'Then I spent six months searching for God and learning how to listen to him. I realized he had been there all the time, only I had failed to listen and obey.'

Budell believes his experience shows that anybody can change: 'I was the lowest jerk and God picked me up.'

Now married to Valerie, an estate agent he met in the church choir, he says his only regret is that he has no contact with his five children from his previous marriages. 'I don't know what they do now or where they are.'

His organization – Humanitarian Aid – is growing fast and will soon be registered. 'People have not only been very willing to give food and clothing, they have also started signing on to come with me on my trips. There are good people in this world still: out of every bad case you hear of, there are hundreds who care.'

So while the world clucks at the horrors of war, and



Tony Budell: 'the largest peacetime convoy ever to leave Britain'

*Romania, Croatia and Bosnia ● The man who wants to
and his home ● Father George Edelstein's turning point*

others deliberate over who is guilty and who isn't, Budell is doing what he sees as right. 'I don't know if they are Bosnians or Croatians, Christians or Muslims and I don't care,' he says. 'All I care about is that they are people and God said we should love one another.'

Creating an economically balanced world may seem a tall order. But this is just what Felix Leisinger is trying to do through Equal Earth, a movement 'for people who will live change as well as talk it'.

When he bought his first sports car in the early Seventies, he says, it did not give him the satisfaction he expected. Thinking what he sought would come with more possessions, he worked hard as a home humidifying expert. His craving cost him a separation from his wife. 'I had thought buying the family new homes in the country would make up for the way I neglected them.'

He began to search for a new source of fulfilment – and became aware that 'the world economic system was ruled by the survival of the fittest, usually at the expense of the victims'. Many people, he says, believe change is out of the question – 'it would affect our comfortable existence to expose the economics of injustice'. He realized that if he did nothing he would be

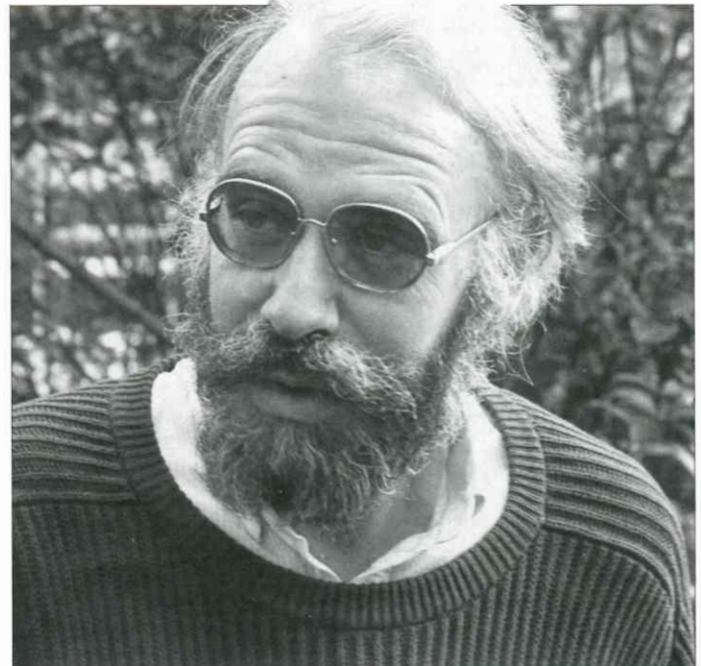
as guilty as those he criticized.

The challenge was so great that he tried to escape through painting, but when he emerged from his cocoon some years later, nothing had changed. 'The fact that I had stopped reading the papers and watching the television did not mean people had stopped dying through starvation and war.'

The movement organizes lectures and seminars and draws a response from all over the world. They also present 'what we believe to be the answer to injustice, oppression, iniquity and exploitation' to the authorities concerned. It has offices in Paris and London and is financed mostly by Leisinger. He can do this, he says, because he has curbed his 'self-indulgent' spending.

While Leisinger recognizes that inequality is inevitable, he advocates a world where people 'can generate a spirit of responsibility for the damage that has resulted from our greed' – and thus 'limit the differences to manageable and acceptable proportions'.

● Until 1974, Sam Kinuthia's life was dominated by alcohol and womanizing, he says. 'But after I responded to the call of the cross of Christ, I started to see both the spiritual and physical needs of society.' Today he runs a



Felix Leisinger: working for an equal Earth

centre for handicapped and landless people in Kenya.

He began by asking people in Nairobi to donate clothes and money for the destitute in his home area of western Kenya. Then after a devastating drought in 1984, he decided to leave his job in broadcasting to serve the community fulltime.

He collected donations to feed 4,000 people during the drought and then set up his own non-governmental organization, Santa Grace Development Ministries. Since then he has set up a primary school for destitute children and a centre for the landless, handicapped and elderly.

Kinuthia's service to his

community has meant personal sacrifice. Apart from leaving the security of his job, he has chosen, with his family, to leave his beautiful home to live in a mud house without piped water and electricity. But he has no regrets. 'You cannot understand how painful life is for poor people when you live in a maisonette. Our service has reached people who would never think there was someone to care for them.'

Kinuthia's spirit has touched many lives in rural Kenya. He is struck by how far his obedience to God's call has taken him. 'God has done wonders in my life,' he says. ■

**TURNING
by
Paul
Williams** **POINTS**

To this day Father George Edelstein does not know why, on 8 August 1955, he took the most decisive step

in his life.

Then a third year student in Foreign Languages and Linguistics in St Petersburg, he was sitting on a tombstone listening to a church choir rehearse for the feast of the Virgin Mary when he had a sudden compulsion to be baptized. He got up and made his request to the first priest he saw.

The priest, an old man of 70, asked him why he wanted to be baptized. Father Edelstein could not answer the question and though his

request was met he is still unable to say why he made it. Until that moment he had never read the Bible or attended a church. 'The truth is I don't know. I just felt that I must.'

Trying to find an explanation for his sudden impulse, he thinks of his mother who was a Catholic and used to cradle him to sleep with religious songs. He is sure she must have prayed for him. He thinks such giants of Russian literature as Dostoyevski may have had an influence. He had

thought privately about God and religion, but had never discussed it with his friends.

The following year the Vice-Principal of St Petersburg Theological Seminary turned down his application to enter. It was to be the first of many such refusals – he approached 20 seminaries in all.

Twenty-four years later, in 1979, he was ordained and he is now priest of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Resurrection in Karavbanova, a village near Kostonova on the Volga. ■

Aids: getting the strategies right

Dr Yaw Adu-Sarkodie specializes in the treatment of Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases. He directs an Aids and VD clinic in Kumasi, Ghana's second city, and serves on regional and district Aids control committees. He talks to Philippe Lasserre.



How recently did the Ghanaian government become aware of the problem of Aids?

I should say that Aids isn't a major problem in my country yet. But we believe that when a disease is sexually transmitted nobody should waste time in instituting a control programme.

Aids is the biggest killer of adults in our neighbour, Ivory Coast. The first Aids patients we saw in Ghana were prostitutes who had gone to work in the Ivory Coast and come back when they fell ill. But we now see people who have caught the disease within Ghana.

We have many health problems in Africa, especially malaria and other parasitic diseases. But while there is a treatment for all these diseases, none yet exists for Aids.

Why has the epidemic spread so rapidly?

The major modes of transmission are through sexual intercourse, receiving infected blood, being injected with an infected needle, or by a mother passing it on to her baby.

On the face of it, all these means of transmission can be contained by proper behaviour. Almost every new case of Aids could be prevented if we had our strategies right. For example, we must adequately test and sterilize all the blood we use for transfusions.

Then there are people's sexual practices. In the West, Aids first became a problem in the homosexual community. In Africa it is more common in the heterosexual community. It's not easy to change human behaviour. Even today when we all know there's no cure for Aids, people still go in for high-risk behaviour. It's like being told that if you stand in front of a train, the train may hit you – and then standing in front of it.

Why have prevention campaigns failed?

It's a question of health education. In Africa not everybody has a radio in his house, not everybody has access to modern means of communication. Some people in the rural areas still have not got the message. But on the whole, people in Ghana know about Aids.

Prevention campaigns basically push two main messages: safer sex and health education. Safe sex messages stress having sex with an uninfected partner, somebody you know and trust, somebody with whom you have had a relationship for a long time. You can't just take anybody on the street and say that is safe sex.

Are you talking about faithful marriage?

Yes. Faithful marriages.

So the slogan 'safe sex' doesn't take people far enough?

No. The other aspect is the general idea that condoms prevent HIV infection. A condom can never be 100 per cent safe. The methods used to test condoms' efficiency are just not adequate: they cannot correspond to what happens in real life. Research is now suggesting that the HIV virus is even smaller than the smallest particle used in the tests. Even couples who have used condoms for birth control have found they fail.

Most of the condoms we receive in developing countries come as aid. They are manufactured under foreign conditions and the heat in Africa makes them less reliable. Although condoms in England, for instance, have expiry dates on them, a recent delivery to Ghana had none. So how is someone to know if they can be used? It looks like dumping.

Prevention campaigns have not ham-



Aids research

mered the moral issue. People are warned against injecting drugs, but if you talk about homosexual practices and casual sex, people brand you as a moralist.

In spite of all these campaigns, HIV/Aids cases are increasing worldwide. This shows that pushing condoms and leaving out morality doesn't work.

Why do these campaigns confine themselves to condoms?

Today people feel that we must let people do what they want. The sex industry is very powerful. Most governments and institutions don't want to say, 'Take away some of this freedom.'

I liken this to the anti-drugs campaigns. If you tell someone not to use heroin, are you limiting their freedom? You do it because you think that drugs offer him a bleak future. Isn't it the same with Aids? Aids connotes death.

Is the moral approach more readily accepted in Africa where there is not such a systematic sex culture?

Even in Africa, people think you are just telling them about Aids because you want them to modify their sexual behaviour.

Africa has been known to be polygamous. If one member of the polygamous relationship is infected, that infection can be passed on to everybody. But what I don't accept – and what the West is trying to maintain – is that Africans are promiscuous. I don't think Africans are any more promiscuous than anyone else. I've studied in England and I know how casual people can be about sex – sometimes it's just like having a cup of tea.

When the epidemic started in 1981, people thought it was an African problem or a homosexual problem. But now the disease has reached the heterosexual community in the West. When it affected Africans and homosexuals, people didn't think they were at risk; now suddenly people are concerned. I find that sad.

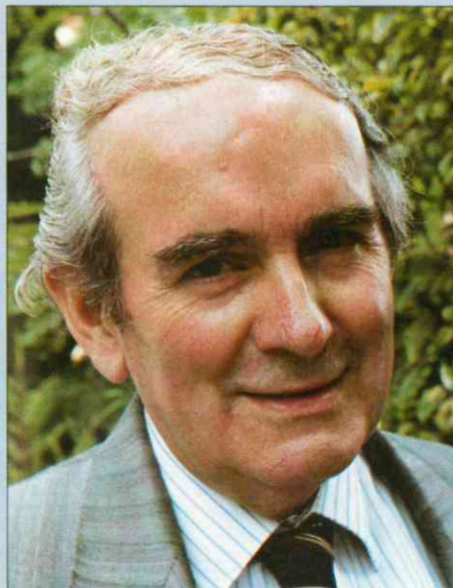
I don't care two hoots where Aids started. What I do care about is the whole world working together to find a common solution. If you see a snake in the house, you don't ask where it came from, you kill it.

What lies behind the Aids-prevention campaigns? Fear? Or humanitarianism?

Fear only works in the short term. Then something happens and you forget the fear. I think people get involved in fighting Aids because they are genuinely concerned at what will happen to mankind if this epidemic is not checked. Because it is spreading like wildfire.

How are your campaigns received in Ghana?

Those of us who want to cover the moral aspects are not in the majority. But little drops of water make a mighty ocean. ■



M. Smith

Touch and go for my heart

Tommy Lovesey, who has won an award for his services to sport within the civil service, found unexpected inspiration from a TV programme when his health gave out.

For 26 years I have been Secretary of the Civil Service Boxing Club in London, sparring in the ring every Tuesday and Thursday evening, with five-a-side football on Fridays. I also take the teams to jails for football tournaments against prisoners, such as the lifers in D wing at Wormwood Scrubs.

At 67 I thought I was fit as a fiddle. Then last February I developed a cough and suffered 'indigestion' pains in my chest. At the hospital the specialists were so alarmed by my condition that they wouldn't allow me to walk home, but insisted I go by taxi. I urgently needed a triple bypass heart operation: one artery was 85 per cent blocked, one 95 per cent and a third completely. Only pressing work commitments prevented me from staying at the hospital for surgery there and then.

Back at hospital the surgeon told me that the operation would be tricky. I was so agitated, I couldn't think of eating or drinking. I was that far gone it was touch and go. I was scared, and worried about the family. My wife also suffered from a heart condition and my daughter had only recently recovered from cancer. I wondered what would happen to them.

As I sat up in the hospital bed the evening before the operation, I watched a TV interview with a Falklands War veteran. Major Chris Keeble of the Second Paratroop Battalion was telling how, in the middle of the battle for Goose Green, he had lost his fear after reading a prayer he had in his pocket (see *For A Change* Vol 5 No 3).

I was so engrossed by what he was saying I totally forgot my predicament. It was all making sense. If he could pray in his situation, which seemed a lot graver

than mine, then so could I. As he finished speaking I started to pray. I have often prayed before – but this time I really meant it. I wanted to get well instead of feeling sorry for myself.

I remembered that I too had a prayer in my pocket, laminated in plastic, which I had picked up at my local Catholic church. I hadn't read it but now I did so. It was the Prayer of the Sacred Heart: 'Heart of Jesus... I offer you this poor heart of mine. Make me humble, patient, pure and entirely obedient to your will... Protect me in the midst of danger; comfort me in my afflictions; give me health of body, assistance in my temporal needs, your blessings on all I do.'

The prayer gave me new heart. Within half an hour I felt a completely changed person. When my family came to see me later that evening they couldn't believe it was the same bloke. I felt so uplifted that the operation didn't seem such a big deal after all. I've had more apprehension going to the dentist. All the time I was praying I was feeling good. I have never felt anything like it before.

The anaesthetist was amazed how calm I was. And as we went into the operating theatre, the surgeon, who knew I was praying, told me, 'We'll pull through this together.'

Four days later I was out of hospital. Now I am back training in the ring and playing football on Fridays. But I also spend more time with my family and even on sports nights I'm home by 8 pm.

That prayer changed me. It made me more aware of how to behave. I was let off with a message – to think more of my family and to be tolerant towards other people. ■

Where the abused find a family

Ann Davis has turned her home into a hostel where over a hundred 'problem' young people have found long-term care. She talks to Kenneth Noble.

Copperdale, a welcoming suburban house with a cheerful front garden, gives no hint that it is home to arsonists, victims of physical and sexual abuse, former drug-takers and others with a police record.

Ann Davis, the no-nonsense Manchester woman who owns Copperdale, has been taking in homeless young people since 1981. She and her assistants aim to provide a family-style environment in which a dozen single adults can come to terms with their problems and reshape their lives.

Not one of her 'family' has come from a stable home, she says. Some arrive 'so damaged that they don't know how to communicate'.

She talks of Freddy, a gangling young man who is sitting in the common room. 'His mother didn't like him for some reason and tried to kill him - his neck is still awry from her last attempt to strangle him.' At the age of five he was put into a home where the warden kept him apart from the other children. When the warden died, ten years later, the authorities asked Ann to take Freddy in. 'He was smaller than my son Greg, then nine, and acting like a two-year-old,' Ann recalls. 'He used to have tantrums, lying on the floor, kicking and screaming.' Psychiatrists said that he would always be retarded. Now he's 25, 'quite normal and sensible'.

Ann treated him as she treats all her 'family', as an equal. 'I had to make up my mind that I wouldn't let him sit on my lap as he wanted to,' she says.

Freddy's 10-year stay in Copperdale is exceptional. Most residents come aged 16 to 18 and leave at 21 to 23. But no one is pressured into leaving before they feel ready.

Ann expects all the 'family' to play a full part in the housework and cooking. They pay their way from earnings or social security benefits. The fact that many ex-residents now have homes of their own is a mark of her success.

Copperdale's story is as chequered as that of many of its residents. Situated in Wythenshawe, said to be the largest housing estate in Europe and a byword for social problems of every kind, it started life as a police station. When Ann and her husband André first saw it in 1970 it had been badly vandal-

including seven coach drivers and many of the exchange group leaders.

At this time, Ann took on a 'difficult fostering case' to bring in more money. It was opportune as André suddenly went off with another woman, leaving Ann with no other income, two young sons, a house which had deteriorated badly and a full programme of student exchanges. 'It was a maelstrom!' she says.

A retired Manchester teacher, sensing Ann's need, started taking her out into the countryside every week or two. They talked things over and took time to be quiet and search for God's direction. 'I realized the exchanges, valuable as they were, were no longer my objective,' says Ann. She told the drivers that the programme would have to stop.

As Christmas drew near, the drivers had left and Ann and her boys were on their own. 'Our open fireplace was the only source of heat, but I had no coal. I got three letters in the post, all red: cut-off notices for gas, electricity and the phone. Then I heard this strange caterwauling sound. I suddenly realized it was me, screaming.'

She said to God, 'I'm just wiped out. I don't know what I'm doing.' Then she felt 'picked up' and God saying to her, 'Don't be so silly. Why should I let you down now.'

'Christmas was wonderful,' she goes on. 'It was just as if the gates had opened.' Someone from the church came with a turkey, and a man gave her two fish he had caught. Someone brought coal. The gas board agreed terms not to disconnect her. The electricity took care of itself - when she lit the lights on the Christmas tree there was a bang and all the power went off.

“He would never have coped, he'd have gone insane like his father.”

ized. Yet Ann's immediate reaction was positive.

They set about converting the prison cells and offices. The wiring was so bad that in some places sparks flew from the walls. André, a youth worker, enlisted help from local young people - some of whom had damaged the building in the first place.

After three months, Ann and André moved in with their two sons. Within a few years they were organizing exchanges for young people from all over Europe. By 1980, there was a constant stream of people staying in Copperdale,



Ann Davis with some of her 'family'

Two friends offered to rewire Copperdale for the cost of the materials, which Ann raised by selling a vandalized minibus left from the exchange programme. She also took on another difficult fostering case. It was becoming clear to Ann that God wanted her to go on using Copperdale, and she wrote to the probation and social services offering accommodation.

One who came was Andrew, who had been abandoned as a two-year-old by his mother. His father was criminally insane. In his teens, his probation officer refused to see him on her own because he shouted and banged the desk so much. At 18 he was put into a flat but he couldn't cook or pay the bills, and was invaded by drug pushers. He kept asking the authorities to find him somewhere else. Finally he burnt down the whole block of flats.

On Christmas day, before his trial, he visited Copperdale on bail from Strangeways prison. At dinnertime he just sat looking at his plate, unable to eat. 'I could see he was expecting me to be angry,' says Ann. 'I knew that he wasn't just being awkward. I said, "I'm sorry, Andrew, you're overwhelmed. I couldn't eat if someone did that to me."'

At his trial, to Ann's relief, the judge didn't send Andrew to jail – 'he would never have coped, he'd have gone insane like his father' – but put him on probation. Andrew stayed at Copperdale three years. His healing was gradual. 'I've seen him pick up the fridge and chuck it across the room,' she says in a matter-of-fact voice.

When someone gets really distraught, Ann tries to calm them with general conversation and a cup of tea. 'Most of them have known only professional counselling – all head, no heart. You've got to reach out to them so they know you feel some of the pain they've got. You've got to keep going, even if they reject you 10 or 20 times.'

Andrew seems to prove her point. Now 24, he has a regular job.

Not all the tough ones have been boys. 'Don't take her in, she's terrible,' the girls in Copperdale said to Ann when Jan arrived. She had killed her first baby and broken the pelvis of her second. Ann knew that Jan had been taken away from her own home when neighbours saw her mother beating her unconscious with a stick. 'She hit her children because she didn't know how to treat them,' Ann explains.

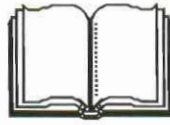
During the years she spent at Copper-

dale, Jan responded to the atmosphere of love without demand, and found healing. Now she has a family of her own. She was allowed to keep her children because Ann was willing to share responsibility. 'She's coping well, though she's stricter than I would have liked,' Ann says.

Ann is not a big woman. Does she ever feel fear? 'Yes, sometimes,' she says, 'but you can work with the fiercest boy or girl if you can see the hurt inside them.' She remembers Lester, who had killed someone with a knife. 'He used to play with knives deliberately near me. I knew that if I showed any fear he would nick me.' She tries to make a joke when such incidents happen. 'Boys have waved a knife and said, "I know how to use this." I've said, "Sure you do. I can peel potatoes, too."'

'It's important you're not shocked,' she stresses. 'When they first come here, they'll boast, "I did such and such." Then, instead of saying, "You're great," one of the others will say, "You must have been mad." In the end they often regret what they've done themselves. That's a great step towards healing. Very few go on from here to offend again.'

The names of the young people in Copperdale have been changed. ■



BOOK REVIEWS

SIGNS AND PORTENTS

The last tsar: the life and death of Nicholas II

by Edvard Radzinsky
Hodder and Stoughton,
London

The assassination was 'supposed to have remained a secret for ever'. Radzinsky's fascination with 'that inhuman night' in 1918 when the Russian imperial family were killed motivates his biography of the last tsar. He draws on an array of very obscure archival sources, and uses them to create the atmosphere of a thriller. His message seems to be that evil deeds will always come to light: Bolshevik violence cannot in the end conceal its true nature.

As a playwright, Radzinsky's approach is artistic rather than academic. There is too much conjecture about events for this work to be entirely reliable. When he suggests that the massacre of Bloody Sunday in 1905 may have been a right-wing plot, and that two of the imperial family may have survived the shooting of July 1918, he offers speculative rather than historical evidence. His argument that Lenin was directly responsible for the assassination order is more convincing.

Rather than a serious historical assessment, this is a magnificent attempt to capture the tsar's life and world. Nicholas is portrayed as a good man who is unfit for leadership, a poor judge of people and too easily swayed by his mother and his wife, Alexandra. She, through her diary entries, reveals a religious craving for a 'Deliverer' who will instantly solve her family's and nation's problems. The result is Rasputin. There is a peculiarly passive religious consciousness, where submission to Providence could easily be confused with fate.

Into this gentle, human and very

isolated world bursts the revolution. Later the executioners vied for the honour of having been the one to kill the tsar, yet the murder was also considered a class act: the result of 'proletarian vengeance'. Radzinsky shows us the tsar as a vulnerable man: not as the representative of a system. And the gap between these two tsars, the personal and the political, is seen as Nicholas's tragedy.

Radzinsky is fired by the drama and mysticism of history – and perhaps even gets carried away by it. He suggests that many of the fatal events of the reign are associated with the number 17; he points out that the first and last

Romanov tsar both had links with buildings called 'Ipatiev' and with priests called 'Hermogen'. He sees this as a 'sign' – 'History had come full circle.'

Radzinsky's world is full of signs and portents. In a century where the Russians have often felt as if they were acting out some cosmic war-game, who can blame him? Quoting Obadiah in her last diary entry, Alexandra holds to a belief that history has a meaning: 'Though thou exalt thy-

self as the eagle, I will bring thee down, saith the Lord.' In the end it is the mystery of history which Radzinsky wishes to communicate.

Philip Boobbyer

WISE WOMEN

Unveiled: nuns talking

by Mary Loudon
Chatto & Windus, London

When she was 18, Margaret Walsh announced she was going to be a nun. Her family were shocked, the nuns at the local convent surprised. 'I thought the sisters would be delighted if I just turned up,' she remembers with wry amusement. But of her contemporaries, she is the one who stayed.

Now 45, Margaret shares a flat with two

other nuns on a council estate in Wolverhampton. When she first arrived, people hid behind closed doors for fear of attack. One who did open up had a knife. Slowly she won their trust, and her flat now provides a heart to a community where before there was none. Many come there who cannot accept the Church.

Margaret is one of ten nuns featured in *Unveiled*. They talk very frankly to Mary Loudon about their childhood, friends and careers. Their vocation is presented in the context of their whole lives. Far from conforming to the popular stereotype of sub- or superhumans, they come over as rounded individuals who have laughed and loved, women in their own right.

Compelling

What unites these women is the fact that they all came to a point when they felt impelled to take vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience. Yet they are all very different – in personality, in what brought them to the religious life, and in their vocation once they got there.

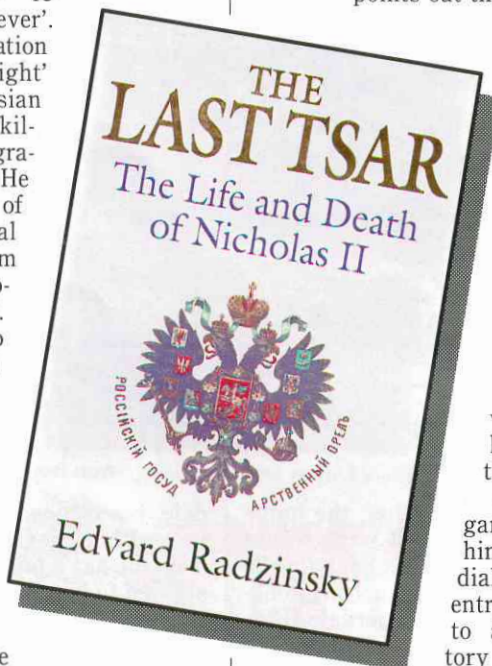
There is the Jewish girl who fled both Nazi Germany and a violent father, and now counsels Aids patients. Another left an active order, in favour of strict enclosure and prayer. A third leads a hectic life running a hospice for sick children, giving talks and being foster mother to a four-year-old.

Mary Loudon asks each about her vows and how her perceptions have changed. Sister Felicity talks of how she used to think God had her life all mapped out. For her, God's will is now more about constant searching for the truth. Several talk of the problems of falling in love after taking vows of celibacy. For some this has led to growth. 'We all have needs,' says one of them, 'and I don't think you can be human and avoid walking in grey areas.' Others find they need to limit the people they see so as to be available in a special way for the ones they do see – holding their pain and struggle before God and acting as a channel for him.

These nuns – in particular the contemplatives – have a depth that is unusual. It comes, I think, from spending a lot of time with God, and from accepting suffering, their own and others', and so accepting themselves before God. They have allowed their perceptions and their faith to change and mature over the years.

This is a rich and compelling book. I was left wishing I could meet some of those featured. But then, in a way I have. For they talk in the way you talk to a friend – and a good friend at that.

Catherine Hutchinson



Teaching the hardest subject

Jon Henden, the Headmaster of Vevelstad Youth School near Oslo, writes about their innovative approach to moral education.

According to Norway's Education Act, the purpose of school education is 'to help give pupils a Christian and moral upbringing, to develop their mental and physical abilities, and to give them a good general knowledge so that they may become useful and independent human beings at home and in society'.

Moral education is regarded as at least as important as teaching knowledge and developing the intellect.

In my school of 400 14- to 16-year-olds we started a programme for moral and character education ten years ago. This was given further impetus by new curriculum guidelines in 1987.

In staff discussions, we decided that pupils should learn to care for other people, to be honest, and to be responsible for their own lives and society as a whole. Agreeing on an aim is one thing, seeing how to make it work in the classroom is another. My staff of 40 and I have discovered that moral education is the hardest subject to teach, yet the most inspiring when you succeed.

Many teachers felt that they had not been trained for this work. So we started study groups and arranged courses for the whole staff. Recognizing the relevance of teachers' personal attitudes to their pupils to each other, we had seminars on such subjects as 'how to solve conflicts among adults in the school'.

One problem we faced was to find the balance between moral education and communicating knowledge. We decided to integrate the teaching of moral values into the curriculum of all subjects - languages, social studies, mathematics, physical education, natural science, religious instruction and aesthetic subjects - stressing aspects where an ethical viewpoint is important and can be integrated naturally.

When you teach mathematics and languages you first communicate some basic knowledge. Then you let the pupils practise applying it. This is elementary to all teaching - except moral education, where we often think that preaching is the same as teaching.

To evaluate progress during the first year, we used control groups and held tests. These showed that the pupils were profiting from the programme.

Exercises vary from being 'a secret friend' to someone else in the class to planning and carrying through a project to help a school in Ecuador or Peru. Or



E. Flygind/ Dagbladet

'How satisfied are you with your personal work?' and 'What must be altered and done better when you continue?'. They are asked similar questions about their relationships with their classmates: how do they evaluate their own behaviour and the way they treat other pupils in the class and school?

We also use another technique which is popular in Norwegian schools, 'ring talking'. Pupils sit in a ring on the floor facing each other. Everybody is encouraged to speak frankly about what they are thinking and feeling. Both methods encourage pupils to be honest, about themselves as well as others, and sometimes to ask for forgiveness.

Scientific research has found that nine per cent of pupils in primary and lower secondary schools are victims of bullying, while seven per cent bully others. In one of our classes last year there were three 14-year-olds who had been badly bullied for a long time. The form teacher says that log writing and ring talking helped greatly. Over the course of several months the atmosphere of the class changed. Many of the pupils befriended the boys who had been bullied, helping them to feel happy in the class. Their work in different subjects improved remarkably.

Our school is not unique in our methods, nor in the results we have achieved. But we are in the forefront of schools that give moral education a high priority and we are learning as we go.

perhaps a teacher will say to his or her class, 'Tonight's homework is to wash the dishes after dinner. I want a report tomorrow morning.' The pupils are responsible for organizing the removal of litter from the school. The key thought is 'learning responsibility through taking responsibility'.

One technique we use is 'log writing'. At the end of a day or when a project is finished, the pupils are asked to write their personal evaluation in their log-book. They are asked to write answers to:

Correction

We regret that the map of the changes in Germany's borders printed with our Nov-Dec lead story omitted East Prussia and the free port of Danzig. The north of East Prussia was given to the USSR after World War II, the south to Poland; Danzig became Polish Gdansk. Polish fears that Germany might try to reclaim former German lands were allayed by a treaty of November 1990, which left these areas in Polish hands for good.



New course for Louisville races



Dennis Mayor

by Michael Henderson

Let me introduce you to a new acronym, NETWORK – New Energy To Work Out Racial Kinks. It may be a little contrived but it does match what Maxine Brown and her friends are bringing to the problems of Louisville, Kentucky, with its 30 per cent minority population.

Maxine is black and successful and, though a little bruised by politics and the system, does not believe her experiences have made her racist. But she contests the idea that Louisville has made the progress towards racial harmony many white people assume – if they think of it at all.

She finds the Southern politeness of a society that won't talk openly about how stratified it is more intimidating than cross burnings or violence. 'I don't understand why people don't get bored talking to each other,' she says. She wants Louisville to deal with 'the unfinished business of race'.

Maxine grew up near Louisville, just across the Indiana state border, and was the only black person in her class. Her background was one of integration. In fact, earlier this year she was honoured as a member of one of Indiana's founding families. After graduation she moved out of the area and into work with philanthropic foundations where she established a national reputation. She became the first black

person to head a community foundation. Twelve years ago, back in Louisville, she ran into difficulties as a woman and as a black person in a leadership role. Having reorganized the Louisville Foundation, she found herself driven out of office. She had to go to court to win a racism and sexism claim and retrieve money owing to her. 'It

meet. There are no dues – those attending pay for their lunches. Maxine handles the administration and expenses through a small foundation, the Fund for Women, which she now heads.

Looking back on two years of 'networking' Maxine Brown can point to modest but tangible gains. One forum with editors and TV executives, for instance, cleared up misunderstandings that arose over a black convention in the city. This helped prepare the city to be more welcoming to such conventions in future.

A survey of NETWORK members shows that 76 per cent of those who responded had been motivated to initiate changes in racial attitudes and sometimes policies in their own domain. Examples included job openings, church link-ups, cultural diversity becoming part of a staff retreat, interracial friendships built, articles on minorities written, and personal behaviour more closely monitored. *The Courier Journal* headlined an account of Maxine's work, 'At last somebody may be doing something to unify Louisville.'

Maxine Brown is looking forward to the day when she can disband NETWORK because it is no longer needed.

Michael Henderson is a British journalist living in the USA.

'It gave me a glimmer about the community.'

was so shocking and so brutal,' she says, 'it gave me a glimmer about the community.'

She conceived the idea for NETWORK after a white friend who had moved from another city commented that she didn't seem to have made black friends as she had elsewhere. This echoed Maxine's experience. A committee of four – two black, two white, two male, two female – started a monthly lunch meeting where dialogue on race could be carried forward in a semi-social, unthreatening setting. There are now 200 members and 50 to 75 people, roughly half black, half white, who

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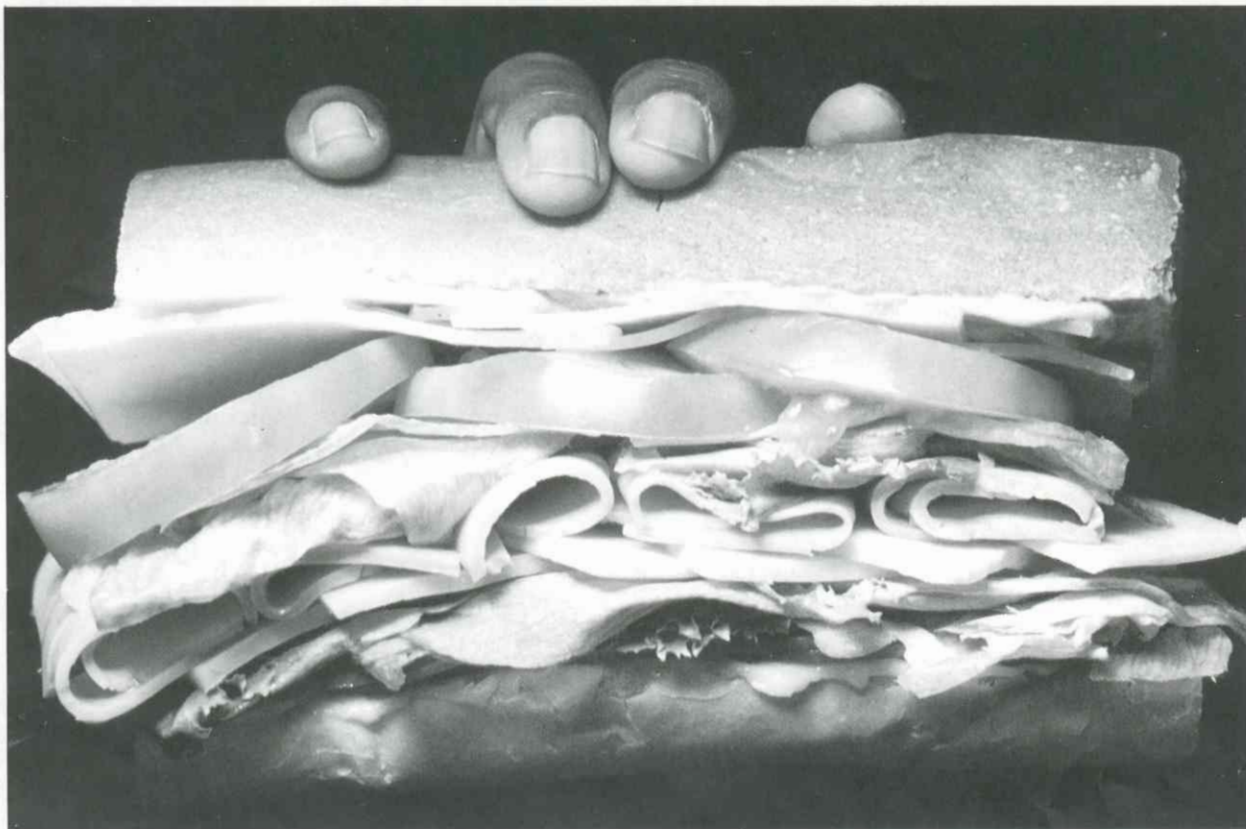
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by Jean Brown



D. Humstein/Colorific

No way to fill the hole in the heart

Jesus Christ started life in a food trough and his work at a feast. He fed thousands and completed his ministry at a Passover supper. Food and drink were recurring themes of his attempt to invite people into a new intimacy with God and the Kingdom of Heaven. The way to a man's heart, it is said, is through his stomach. And women are not immune. Jesus's appeal was on a gut level, offering himself as spiritual sustenance.

It is one of the tragic dilemmas of our enlightened age that gluttony and starvation still exist side by side. Food is stockpiled over here and non-existent over there. The will to answer human need is connected to the heart and the heart to the stomach. And the affluent world, with all its needs able to be met, is still hungry and unwilling to share.

We are all born with a hole in the heart, and it is God-shaped. Often it is felt to be a hole in the stomach that is food-shaped, or interpreted as drug-shaped or sex-shaped. We may seek to fill it with money or success or good works or right political thinking. But the hunger remains.

It is estimated that about three quarters of all Americans feel lonely much of the time. About one

quarter are always on a diet. We are obsessed with food and busyness, but the deeper hunger is for love and hope. The deeper hunger is for a relationship with God.

'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness,' said Jesus, 'They shall be filled.' It is one of the many paradoxes of faith that one can experience emptiness as an ongoing blessed state, and experience filling at the same time.

I remember an occasion of feeling overwhelmingly lonely and immediately looking for a palliative, someone to phone, shopping, something to eat. And then deciding to carry on with what I was doing and accept the loneliness and to invite God into it with me. I experienced something very profound both in my relationship with my loneliness and with the loving embrace of an understanding God. The loneliness did not last.

St Augustine who experienced it all said, 'Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in thee.'

This hunger is never satisfied at the levels of groin or gut. The real 'soul food' is injected by faith and digested with love. And we can feed one another as we embrace our emptiness and share from our abundance. 'Take, Eat...'

A child and the ethnic wood

In the summer of 1956 I was 21 and for the first time in Europe. England was playing Australia at cricket, the stands were full, I was the lucky possessor of a ticket, and Jim Laker was bowling deadly off-breaks. Suddenly I realized what was strange: the mass of pink faces surrounding the field. In India I was used to a darker backdrop.

Later that year I was in an Edinburgh shop, trying, along with scores of others, to decide what to buy, when I felt a tiny hand move firmly into my hand. I saw that it belonged to a child of about three, but before I could say anything to her she had spotted her father, for whose hand she released my fingers as swiftly and naturally as she had grasped them a moment earlier. By innocent mistake she had sent me a message of dependence and trust; my encounter with the 'white world' changed into a link with a person; the forest of pink trees gave way to distinct individuals. Humanity conquered ethnicity.

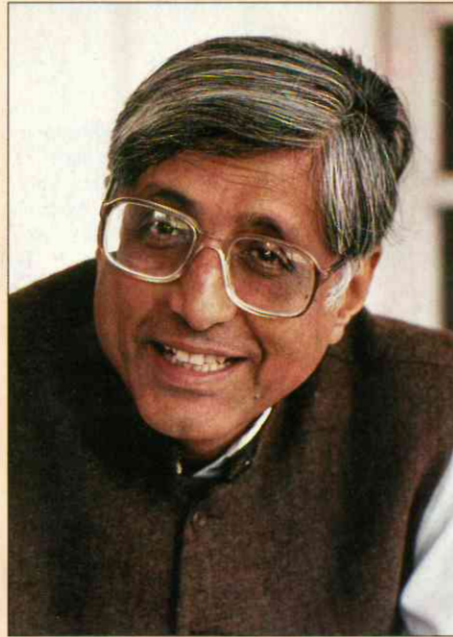
'The guilty are guilty,' says Elie Wiesel, who seeks to preserve for posterity the facts of the Holocaust, 'but the children of the guilty are children.' I did not call any race guilty in 1956, but I thought of people as a mass, until my anonymous child guide proved that they were individuals and human. I cry and pray in 1993 because children too are being killed or tortured for the crime of belonging to 'them' rather than to 'us'.

Xenophobia

'It's raining in the summer, it's snowing in the winter, and I'm being beaten up.' This is Wiesel recalling the normalcy of the persecution of Jewish children in more than one country in the 1930s. In almost every country, ethnic beatings or taunts seem normal today. To justify persecution, history is distorted. Thus Indians are told, falsely, that the Aryan founders of Hinduism were indigenous to Indian soil and, equally falsely, that the ancestors of Muslims were all aliens. And, even if both propositions are true, does it matter?

To some, apparently, it does. 'Xenophobia looks like becoming the mass ideology of the 20th Century *fin de siècle*,' says Eric Hobsbawm. 'What holds humanity together today is the denial of what the human race has in common.'

This troubling perception is widely shared. Jacques Attali, president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, believes that a 'clear potential exists for five, 10 or even 20 Yugoslavia-type civil wars' in East Europe and the former Soviet Union. An



by Rajmohan Gandhi

American study quoted in the *Herald Tribune* refers to '3,500 groups of people around the world that describe themselves as a nation' while recognized nation states only add up to 180 or so.

'We are told that you cannot love your nation unless you hate someone else's.'

Assertive ethnicity tends to swallow up individual identities; and in violent ethnicism whole tribes, races or nations can lose their identity in the louder identity of the gun or bomb. Moreover, history offers no evidence that members of an ethnic group have natural feelings of love for one another. Even if feasible, creating ethnically homogeneous nations will not promote peace within or between such nations.

Class war adherents used to insist that unless the rich were eliminated or hated, the poor could not be helped. The

argument is seldom heard today, except in lands of extreme poverty and rich-poor gaps. But we are told with increasing vehemence that you cannot love your nation (or tribe or race) unless you hate someone else's.

Ethnic enmity commands respectability. It wins applause, votes and prime ministerships. Tomas Masaryk, who helped create Czechoslovakia after the First World War, held that 'love of one's nation should not entail non-love of other nations'. But we seem to have travelled a good way beyond non-love.

Sanity

Anxiety and vigilance are thus in order, but we can take some heart from the decline of communism and class war. Today we face a similar battle against ethnic enmity.

Intellectuals, the media and the man in the street could do four things. One, expose the illogicality of ethnic enmity and superiority. Two, disentangle the noble emotion of love of one's own people from dislike of another people. Three, question false histories. Four, report, interpret and disseminate the incidents of sanity, reconciliation and forgiveness that do occur.

I was stimulated by some words of Vladimir Zelinski, the Russian religious thinker. Behind true communication and communion, he says, lie 'springs from the depths of silence'.

Echoes from these depths say to me: 'You are the son of your forebears and the son of your soil. Your ethnicity I gave you, just as I gave others their ethnicity. I am the author of every tribe, race and nation. The pot is not greater than the potter, and a robe is not greater than the weaver. Nor is a gift greater than the giver, or the receiver. You, a unique person I fashioned, are more precious than the robe of ethnicity I gave you. And everyone else, each a unique person fashioned by me, is more precious than the robes I gave them.'

Rajmohan Gandhi is an Indian journalist and author.

NEXT ISSUE

Lead story: *For A Change* asks what lies at the root of Britain's intractable economic and social problems, and what can be done.

Profile: Sunderlal Bahuguna, founder of the Chipko movement