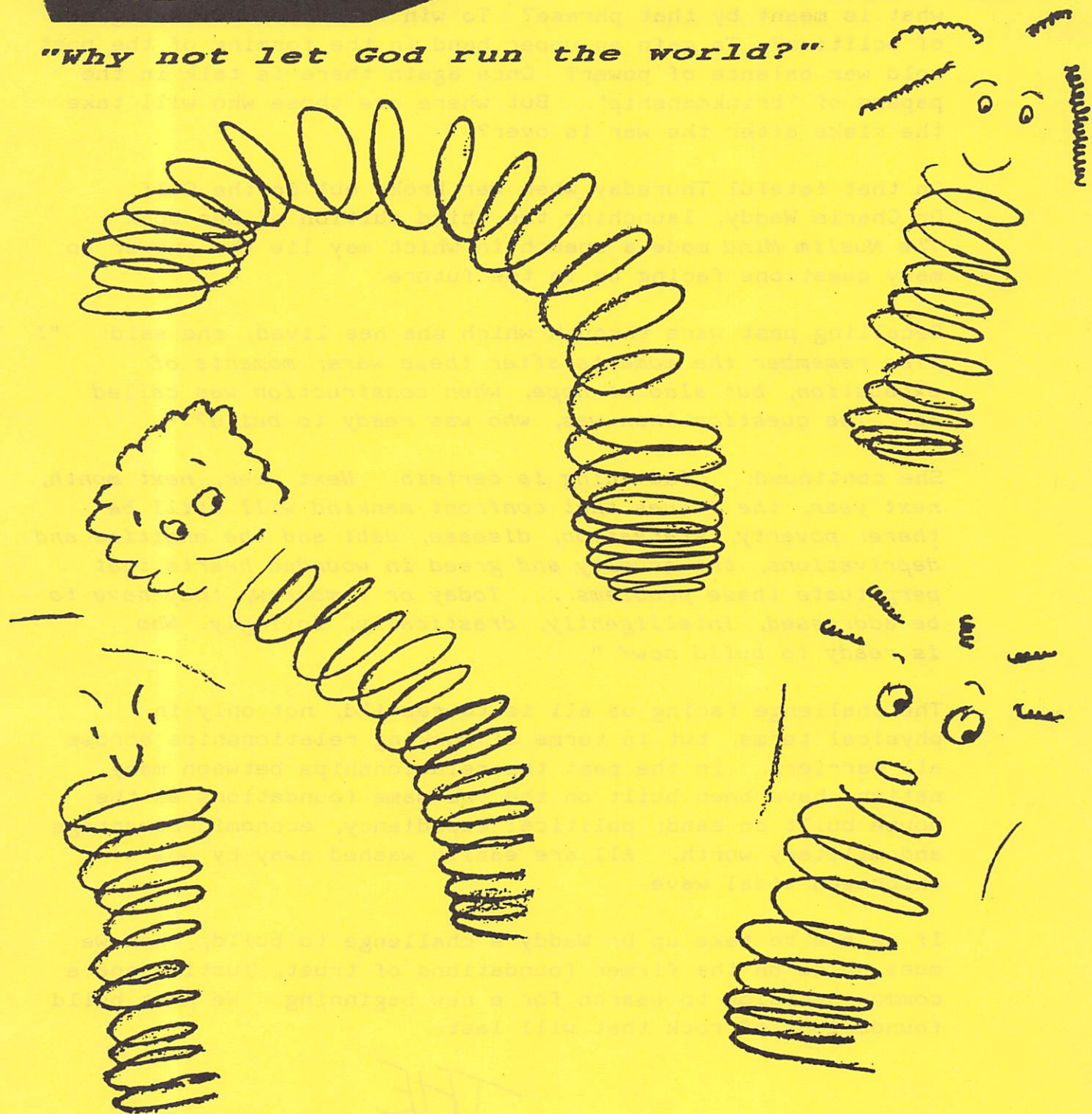


February 1991

# FREEMAN

Vol 5 No 3

"Why not let God run the world?"



Spring Issue



How does one react when war breaks out in a far off area of the world? For our friends who are not so far from the war, who are in the Middle East, we would like you to know that our thoughts and prayers are with you, not only now, but also for the times that lie ahead.

Many talk of how important it will be to 'win the peace'. But what is meant by that phrase? To win the international game of politics? To gain an upper hand in the forming of the post cold war balance of power? Once again there is talk in the papers of 'brinkmanship'. But where are those who will take the risks after the war is over?

On that fateful Thursday when war broke out in the Gulf Dr Charis Waddy, launching the third edition of her book *The Muslim Mind* made a speech in which may lie the answer to many questions facing us in the future.

Recalling past wars through which she has lived, she said: *"I also remember the moments after these wars; moments of exhaustion, but also of hope, when construction was called for. The question then was, who was ready to build? "*

She continued: *"One thing is certain. Next week, next month, next year, the issues that confront mankind will still be there: poverty, starvation, disease, debt and the enmities and deprivations, the cruelty and greed in wounded hearts that perpetuate these problems... Today or tomorrow, they have to be addressed, intelligently, drastically, lovingly. Who is ready to build now? "*

The challenge facing us all is to rebuild, not only in physical terms, but in terms of working relationships across all barriers. In the past the relationships between many nations have been built on the the same foundations as the house built on sand; political expediency, economic advantage and military worth. All are easily washed away by one unforeseen tidal wave.

If we are to take up Dr Waddy's challenge to build, then we must do so on the firmer foundations of trust, justice and a common decision to search for a new beginning. We must build foundations of rock that will last.

THE  
EDITORS



# faith in practice - faith in practice

I am still officially classed as a young lawyer. I practise in a (Scottish) Highland town, specializing in court work. Sadly much of my work involves family breakdown.

It is hard to find time to listen to one's 'inner voice' in the rush of the work place. Recently I saw a client who had been violently abused by her husband late on a Thursday. I had to rush to have my writ ready for court at 2pm on Friday. Time was short. However that little voice was nagging away at me.

Rather reluctantly I paused to listen. I felt I should insert three new craves (legal requests to the court) into the writ. Rather against my will I put them into my draft. On appearing before the Sheriff at 2pm that day, I was granted immediately the three craves I had inserted, but was going to have to wait another week for the other items. I hope my look was not too surprised!

by *Duncan Henderson*  
pictured here in  
the Scottish  
Cairngorm mountains



Happily this particular case would appear to have a happy ending. Due to the swiftness of events the husband faced up to the difficulties in the marriage. A brave man, he is presently undertaking both psychiatric treatment and marriage guidance.

While not at work I like to spend as much time as possible in the outdoors. One weekend in mid-winter, I set off late on a Friday night into the notorious Cairngorms. We were heading for the Sinclair Hut in the Lairig Ghru pass, a difficult place to find. Temperatures had dropped to about -20°C and a storm was threatening to break. We had intended to ski in. While there was inadequate snow cover for the skis, yet there were often patches of soft knee-deep powder.

Deep into the pass it became obvious that my friend was in a serious condition of exhaustion. I realised that if we did not find shelter soon, we were in trouble. I left my friend to rest. Meanwhile I tried to dig a snowhole in a large snowbank. The depth was not sufficient. As I looked up in despair, I asked God for help.

Suddenly in the black night a light shone out from a little mound. It was as if someone had opened the door of a hut, letting the light out. I pinpointed the position in my mind amongst the other outlines. I felt encouraged and strengthened - my prayer was answered. Collecting my companion we staggered on.

An hour later I can remember dragging my friend out of another hole in the snow, almost at the source of the light. It was now almost 2am and bitterly cold. Suddenly the hut was before us, exactly

where I had seen the light. We crashed through the door.

There was no-one there. Yet we would have seen anyone passing us that night. How had that light appeared in a deserted hut at just the right time for me to notice? Too tired to puzzle the question, I crawled into my sleeping bag. With a weary "Thank you" I was soon fast asleep.

Coincidences? Or were these two small lessons from God? In answer to the statement, that answers to prayer were purely coincidental, a friend said, "Fine. When I pray, coincidences just happen, so I will keep on." Were these coincidences, or were they the result of God touching my life? I leave you the evidence and let you draw your own conclusions.

I however believe it was God.

# faith in practice - faith in practice

by *Margrit Schmitt-Gehrke* from  
Heidelberg, Germany, who works as a  
physiotherapist in a rehabilitation  
centre

I WAS WAITING with my patient in the wheelchair in front of the elevator and hoped it would come soon. The nurse had made me so furious and I was 'boiling inside'. But the elevator took a long time to come that day and so I started to think about what had happened.

It was just one of those instances which focussed the rivalry between nurses and physiotherapists. As a 'physio' I have a fixed schedule and a certain timeslot for each patient. I have to rely on the nurses to get the patients out of bed and dressed in time for treatment.

Maria, sitting in her wheelchair, was totally unaware of what had been going on around her because of a severe brain injury. She had been dressed but not fed. But now was the time for her physiotherapy with me and it was the nurses' fault that Maria had not had her meal. So I took her with me, because I was right! Maybe I was, but who had to suffer from it?

I remembered that my aim in my profession has always been to work together with others; colleagues, nurses, doctors etc. and for the well-being of our patients.

In a world where it is popular to talk negatively about everybody else outside one's own peer group, it has not always been easy to create an atmosphere of understanding and teamwork. And here I was, finding myself trapped in the same way of thinking and acting which I had tried to prevent.

Suddenly I felt ashamed. As the elevator door opened I turned round with Maria and went back to her room. The

nurse was still there. It cost all my pride to apologise to her for my outburst. We talked it all over, Maria was fed and her treatment that day was slightly shorter than usual.

What does all that have to do with faith in God?

Jesus said: "I make all things new." And He means all! Including those very human reactions and strains on relationships. As a Christian I try to listen to Him and find out what He wants me to be and do; not only once a day but in every situation.

"Leading a prayerful life" someone once called it. I am still learning, but faith becomes real to me when it has to do with my everyday life.

By the way, that nurse has in the meantime become one of my closest teammates!

*Nitin Shukla is a careers advisory officer in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England.*

HINDUISM IS VERY SIMILAR to MRA, in that it is a matter of practising 'what you preach'. There's no point in having standards/beliefs if one doesn't practise them. So Hinduism is very much a 'way of life'.

Therefore to me it means:

- respect for elders - that could be in the work place, schools, with parents I meet, etc. I have got to respect them just as I would be expected to respect my elders;



# faith in practice - faith in practice

by Matthew Wilson from Leicester, England.

TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION in a state secondary school is a very strange business indeed. On the one hand, you wish to pass on all those values which you hold dear, on the other, if you appear to be biased in any way, they will hear none of it. I am not there to convert, I am there to stimulate thinking on moral and spiritual values.

Some lessons work and others don't. Because I wish to present myself as one who succeeds in his chosen career (please forgive me) I shall present one that did.

The top third year. Full of bright young things with the world before them. Question: How do you make the parable of the Prodigal Son relevant and interesting? Into my mind came two words, 'acceptance' and 'rejection'. Do we accept others or reject them? Does God accept everybody or just some? I get them to work.

Andrew (name changed) is not working, he never does! Do I scold or sympathise?

- to serve the 'community' - that means giving my very best to the people I'm working with - caring for them by opening my heart to everyone, even those youngsters who mock and sometimes verbally abuse (racially) people from different backgrounds. So instead of using my authority in order to put them in their place, spending time with them, helping them in their decisions and also listening to their problems, even if there isn't a quick solution.

Finally Hinduism teaches me to be a law-abiding citizen - to care, share and serve the whole community that I live in.

Despite wishing the former I opt for the latter.

"A quick word, Andrew, outside." Tears and utter fear. It is strange to have a teenager cry before you without having said a word! His best friend, John, has turned against him. The 'after-school' challenge is evident. His friend is in the same class, as is Jenny, the object of both desires. He talks it through, and he seems better for having done so. Sadly at this point I was able to offer little, if any, constructive advice.

For this class, the subject of rejection and acceptance in relationships became immediately relevant. Not only family, boyfriend/girlfriend, enemy/friend but also other issues - racism, the conflict between peoples of different faiths- the list is endless.

It just so happened that I had a song about the conflict between black and white on tape for my next class so this became relevant also. Andrew, John and Jenny could have been left in no doubt that the lesson applied to them. Would they accept or simply reject one other?



photo: Ian Healey

Would they forgive?

When a lesson goes well, teaching is a joy. I hope that as a teacher of Religious Education that I am sensitive to the beliefs and feelings of others. The revolution in values that we all await must be like the proverbial mustard seed. In some small way I am contributing to it's growth.

# faith in practice - faith in practice

*Peter Vickers is Vice-Chairman of Benj R Vickers, manufacturers of industrial oils, Leeds.*

SOME PEOPLE THINK that you cannot 'live out' your Christian commitment in business. They assume that business and industry are so full of 'grey areas' that it is impossible to be (for example) absolutely honest.

I take the reverse view. Frankly, a commitment that does not work in practice, and that will not stand up to the pressure of 'normal life' is not worth having.

I believe passionately that God's guidance and the marking-stones of the absolute standards are essential to help me to do my job better. Many ideas come during the day, often I do not write down very much in an early morning quiet time, but I do find that God guides me throughout the day, if I stay 'tuned in'.

It opens a channel so I get ideas different from those which I would think of myself; and it gives me the strength I lack when things are difficult.

There have been several recent examples of this leading and courage-giving in my responsibilities for personnel but I would rather not give details in public since the conversations I have with

individual employees are, and should remain, confidential!

It is also interesting to try to combine both carrying out the ideas that I have during a quiet time of thought and prayer, and working in teamwork with others whose motivation does not have the same source. The two do not always coincide!

But as a team we do have recognised standards of behaviour in the firm: No bribes or false promises; people before profitability; accepting when mistakes are made; endeavouring to improve working conditions; operating responsibly and carefully with regard to the environment; encouraging further education and training among all employees; treating all staff in the same way, so far as ever possible; making decisions on the basis of 'what is right, not who is right'.

The above pledges are not mere words; I could give more details of how we have implemented these policies.

Three weeks ago, the factory manager (who is an ordained minister, known as 'the vicar at Vickers' Get it?) and I talked about several seriously-ill employees and/or relatives. At the end of our talk, looking out on the industrial heart of Leeds, we prayed together for them. It seemed the most natural thing in the world.

*by Matthias Freitag, who is training to become a civil servant in the Department of Labour in Mannheim, Germany*

RECENTLY, I READ in the letter of James 3 v 17 that divine wisdom is impartial. That reminded me of an argument I had in the train from Hannover to Mannheim.

A lady who was no longer in the first flush of youth joined the train at Göttingen. She had a reservation, but someone was already in her seat. The man didn't want to move, and had good reason to stay (the reservation notice was wrong).

I got quite annoyed about his refusal to get up and started arguing on behalf of the lady, without considering his side of things. Some passengers

supported me, but others didn't approve of my blunt Berlin expressions.

Eventually the man moved somewhere else, but I didn't feel very satisfied. Instead of creating peace, my favouritism and demanding behaviour had caused division. I later apologized to them both, which they gratefully accepted.

In this context I found this prayer-extract helpful:

Give me your peace, Lord,  
And set me free from fear....  
Help me to lay down my arms,  
The cutting words,  
The evil looks,  
The wounding tongue,  
The poisonous attacks  
And all the things  
With which I wage the daily battle.



# IT'S TIME TO FLY!

A PREACHER ONCE illustrated his sermon  
(entitled, 'It's Time to Fly') with the  
following poem:

**Down in the farm there's a tame old duck,  
Dibbling round in farmyard muck,  
Fat and lazy with useless wings;**

**But sometimes when the North Wind sings  
And wild ducks hurtle overhead,  
It remembers something lost and dead,  
And cocks a weary puzzled eye  
And makes a feeble attempt to fly;**

**It's fairly content with the state it's in,  
But I think of the duck it might have been!**

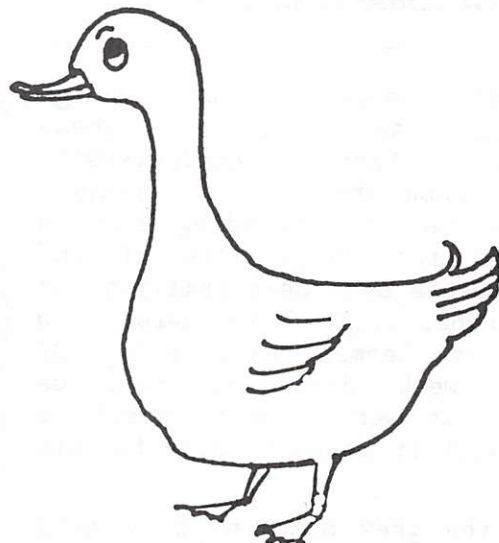
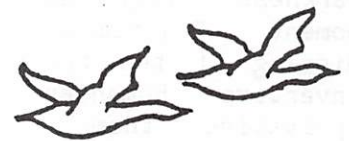
**Author unknown**

Do you dare to fly; or do you just want  
to waddle?

Will you risk leaving the security of  
your farmyard for the open skies?

Are you content to be tame, or do you  
want to be wild?

Just as a duck is made for flying, so we  
are made to be a part of God's  
adventure. Life is for living - dare to  
live now!



Rachel Charvett

HC

# When does the future

17th NOVEMBER 1.38 pm. I am sitting in the plane to Bucharest. Finally. I am excited about what this will bring, but also a little bit nervous. For this will be my first visit to a country of the former 'Eastern Block' and I realise once again how much I am still influenced by the way of thinking in 'blocks' and 'Eastern Europe = Communism and Dictatorship' that was taught at school and university up to now. It just doesn't seem normal yet for me to travel to a country like Romania.

But I am not on my own with such difficulties. My Romanian neighbour on the plane looks at me: "You want to go to Romania?" "Yes", I say. "Well what on earth for?" This non-understanding question which I will be asked several times during my stay is quite revealing. My neighbour reflects for a while, then she says "Good !".

About three hours later we have arrived; I am already expected by my Romanian host family. They put me into their shaky "Dacia" (it is quite surprising how many people plus luggage fit into this Romanian national car) and one of the first things they tell me is that there is running water just two times a day and they only have a black and white TV set. I promise to accept both.

The first impression of Bucharest is darkness - light bulbs are rare at the moment. Sometimes there are bulbs missing at the traffic lights... some inventive Romanian has taken and "privatised" them.

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## *new understanding*

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The next days give enough opportunities to broaden these impressions. Many controversial impressions, some shocks come together, but also a new understanding and an insight into the daily life of the Romanian students and their families who our group (consisting of one Swiss, two English and one German) is visiting. Of course one week does not make us experts, but we were able to start to understand what it means to live in this country.

There is the grey monotony of a city

with many beautiful houses which are now run down; everywhere there are the same empty shops, begging gypsies and on the other side Dollar-shops in which goods are paid for in hard currency (which makes them as unreachable for the ordinary Romanians as they were before). Sometimes it's a strange feeling to feel somehow different because we have DM and Dollars. And sometimes I don't really know if I should cry facing all these people queueing daily for about two hours in front of empty shops, or if it is anger rising up in me... it just doesn't seem fair. Mihail, a medical student expresses it differently: "Romania had bad geographical luck after the Second World War, that's all."



One year after the fall of Ceausescu seems for foreign visitors often confusing and not very clear. But one thing becomes obvious through contacts with Romanians: one year ago all the Romanians were against Ceausescu, now the public opinion about the present government under Ion Illiescu and Petru Roman is very much divided, a division which goes deep into the Romanian society, even into families and friendships. Several times during our visit there were demonstrations for and against the National Front of Salvation (FNS) under Illiescu.



# begin?

by Ulrike Ott

The most impressive part of my visit to Romania was the contact with Romanians, either the ones I saw again

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## *division goes deep*

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(after a group of students came to Caux last summer) or those I met there for the first time. Their hospitality is so 100%, without any limits, that it was extremely touching. Sometimes I even have to struggle with a bad conscience because I can imagine that what they

reason to think: "My parents have studied, are intellectuals, they belong to part of the population that normally should be busy with rebuilding and restructuring our country. But they have to queue for toilet paper and have no running water. In a daily life like this there is no time and energy to be active and to commit themselves..."

We ask if they have hope for the future. The answers are sometimes hesitant. Yes, principally Yes! But they think it will take some more years... Sometimes it sounds like a dutiful optimism towards the foreign visitor. Basically the younger ones are hopeful, those Romanians who still have their life before them. "We older ones are a little bit tired", says my hostess.

Similarly impressive is a meeting with three old men in their seventies. In 1937 they attended an MRA conference (then the Oxford Group) and had only just come into contact with MRA again. One of them expressed his hope for Romania's future in the cooperation between young and old: "Youth has the enthusiasm and energy to do something, we old ones have the experience." And he tells us in perfect French ("I haven't spoken it for 50 years now") about the influence this conference had on his life.

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## *cooperation*

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The departure day is so foggy that I have to wait for 6 hours to leave Bucharest. A lot of time to think over past days. A German businessman, also waiting, asks me if my stay was 'nice'. I have difficulties in answering this question. 'Nice' is not the word best suited... It was a week full of new impressions, full of discussions, sight-seeing, visits; a week which definitely removed a great deal of my naivety about Eastern Europe; a time in which I have found new friends, in which I have learned, but also laughed a lot.

I don't think it was my last visit to Romania, however the situation there develops. A country is not just a territorial or economic collective, but also consists of people. These people are important and we are not to forget them.



gave us to eat, for example, is not easily found - especially after the prices for food, clothes and shoes shot up... whilst salaries remained the same.

And these talks and discussions with my host family and the students, sometimes just small sentences or remarks, help me to understand them and their situation better and with open eyes. There is, for example, the talk with my hostess about her fear that her children could leave the country like so many others. The remark by a student about the situation of the country gives



# The Art of

I HAVE JUST READ *Martin Chuzzlewit* by Charles Dickens. In the first paragraph he underlines the self-importance of the Chuzzlewit family and their 'immense superiority to the rest of mankind'. He describes the family as 'jealous, stony-hearted, distrustful, who were all shut up in themselves and had no faith in anybody'. They disliked each other mainly, he said, because they belonged to the same family, and they disliked everyone else because they did not!

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## 'self, self, self'

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Martin Chuzzlewit in his twenties was as selfish as the rest. He has a feud with his grandfather and goes off to America, taking with him a sort of valet, Mark Tapley, a delightful unusual person. The result of Tapley's influence is that Martin begins to face his own selfishness. He saw that his life was 'self, self, self' and determined to root it out. On their return, Martin goes to his grandfather and says these remarkable words:

"Upon that subject which first occasioned a division between us, my mind and heart are incapable of change. But that I might have trusted to your love, if I had thrown myself upon it: that I might have won you over with ease if I had been more yielding and considerate: that I should have best remembered myself in forgetting myself and recollecting you: reflections, solitude, and misery have taught me. I came resolved to say this and ask your forgiveness: not so much in hope for the future but in regret for the past."

This surely must be one of the great apologies of literature. Grandfather is astonished, but only responds slowly. In fact it is only after some time that he responds totally. "The curse of our

house", he says, "has been the love of self".

The old man changes, and becomes unrecognisable.

I suggest that the supreme art of life is to learn to do for others what Mark Tapley did for Martin; to help people find a new centre for their lives.

Our younger son, at present in Australia, sent his family five religious books for Christmas. At the moment I'm reading one of them, *Christ in Isaiah* by F B Meyer, a splendid commentary on Isaiah chapters 40-55. Meyer heads his first chapter with the famous first words of Isaiah chapter 40, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people' and the sub-heading is this poem by

A E Hamilton:

Ask God to give thee skill  
in Comfort's art:  
That thou mayest consecrated be  
and set apart  
Into a life of sympathy.  
For heavy is the weight of ill  
in every heart;  
And comforters are needed much  
of Christlike touch.

To comfort means not just to console but to fortify, strengthen.

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## 'delicacy of touch'

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Meyer says, 'To bind up a broken heart requires a delicacy of touch which is a divine art'.

In chapter 43, Isaiah writes 'Thou hast brought me no sweet care'. Commenting on this Meyer says, 'It is possible to do right things from a hard sense of legalism in which the sweetness and loveliness of true religion are painfully wanting. How often we do things because we must and because we will, united to the law instead of to God whose service is perfect freedom.'

In helping people we may need salt and



# Encouragement

sweetness. Salt brings the flavour out of food and people. One of Gandhi's favourite pieces from the Bible comes from Mark's Gospel chapter 9, 'Salted with the fire of the discipline'. But too much salt is forbidding. You can rub salt in people's wounds, overwhelm them with your own rightness.

Sometimes I make a list in my mind of all the people through my life who have given me encouragement or spur, starting with my father. It is a long list and I keep adding to it, suddenly remembering old incidents or conversations.

For example, in my first cricket match for Oxford, we were playing against Yorkshire. I failed in the first innings and in the second I was nervously trying too hard and mistiming the ball. I looked and felt very frustrated. The Yorkshire captain, **Norman Yardley**, fielding close to the wicket, said, "Don't worry, you're doing alright".

I only remembered that years later.

Encouraging people in the battle of life, even helping them to choose God's road, is not a technique. It is an art built round a love and vision for people.

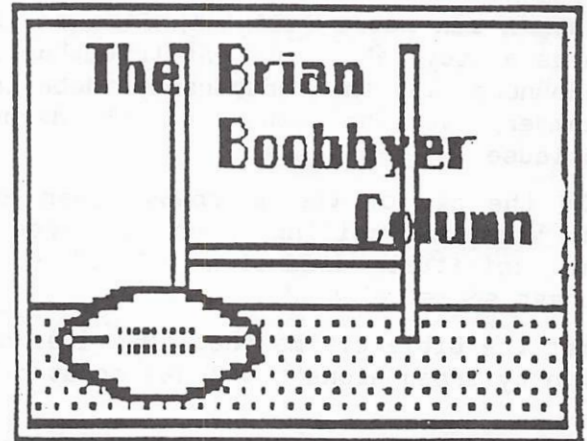
In his Introduction to *Martin Chuzzlewit* the editor says, 'Dickens had never shown the imaginative insight in which he now sent his humour and his art into the core of the vices of his time'.

Humour and art.

Helping people requires the lightest of touches. Heaviness can easily discourage or crush.

Dr **Charis Waddy**, from Oxford, has just seen her very topical book *The Muslim Mind* republished for the third time. She quotes Dr **Jamali**, former Prime Minister of Iraq, who has been primarily a teacher throughout his life. He says, 'To bring out man's essential humanity is the aim of education. Intelligence and conscience are the pinnacle of evolution. Faith, profound and sincere, is the highest aim of the educator.'

Dr Waddy quotes the great Sufi



philosopher **Abu Hamid Al Ghazali**, who was at the height of his power and fame round 1100 AD. 'The way of the Sufis lies in overcoming the appetites of the flesh and getting rid of its evil dispositions, so that the heart may be cleaned of all but God'.

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## a divine spark

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God and greatness are waiting to be drawn out of everyone. People can be released from the life of self to enable this to happen. We can act in the certainty that there is a divine spark in everyone waiting to be lit. Of course in multitudes of people it has already been lit. But the winds of the world can blow candles out very easily, and our friendships may be able to keep some candles burning. And in the words of Dante, 'a great flame follows a little spark'.

**Isaiah** says in chapter 50, 'The Lord has given me the tongue of a teacher and skill to know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakes me morning by morning to hear, to listen like a disciple'.

Skill - in season - morning by morning - listen. We can learn from God how to talk to people and when to be silent.

A recent collect in church appealed to the Lord 'to look with compassion on the anguish of the world and by your healing power make whole both men and nations'.

In today's dangerous world, we can choose to help that process.



# Spiritual Vacuum

'LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, to sum up my argument: Religion is something of the past. A man needs religion, like a fish needs a bicycle', a student triumphantly announced in the university debating chamber, to the sound of thunderous applause.

In the age of the microwave oven and the 'just add boiling water' pot-noodle, the spiritual dimension of life no longer seems relevant.

Yet the Bible claims that 'Man does not live by bread alone'. God has created us

To the student in the debating chamber, religion was nothing more than an institution, and an inefficient one at that. He did not see religion as the search for truth, the search for the very basic fundamentals of existence. To him, the word 'religion' conjured up images of early morning mass, church choirs dressed in white robes, and hymns which seemed never ending.

Maybe someone should do him the favour of telling him, in the most kind and



cartoons: Rachel Charrett

not only as physical beings but as spiritual ones as well. But it is often the case that man chooses to neglect or even ignore the spiritual dimension of life.

In a linux meeting, which is a forum for discussion, the guest speaker asked which religions were represented at the university. Among the ones which you would expect to be represented, it was suggested that the religion with the greatest following might be termed, 'apathy'; an attitude of general lack of interest in matters of the spirit!

loving way possible, that going to church every Sunday does not make you a Christian, just as going to McDonalds does not make you a hamburger.

The one greatest culture shock when I had come over from the small Mediterranean island of Cyprus to a university in the UK was the way that the bar seemed to be the nucleus of university life. Even the Tuesday evening Bible studies are held in the bar (before it opens I hasten to add)!

For a long time I could never



## by Richard Ramsden

understand why the average student put so much importance on drinking, chasing members of the opposite sex, and amassing material wealth. It seemed totally foreign to me, coming from a culture which although not oblivious to such activities, attached little importance to them.

After a great deal of 'middle of the night arguments', I came to the conclusion that by ignoring the spiritual side of life, students were creating 'the spiritual vacuum'.

Subconsciously or even consciously, people seem to realise that they are not complete. Something is missing from their lives, so they turn to what they think will make them happy. They turn to alcohol. They experiment with sex.

And after experiencing the 'short-term highs', which they can offer, in many cases they have to face up to the sad after-effects which their activities can bring about: unwanted pregnancies, financial difficulties and even a dependence on alcohol.

The fulfilment for which we all crave has not been found.

I wish I could say at this point, that then man turns to God -in my belief - the only source of true fulfilment. But in too many cases, people pin down their unhappiness to a lack of material possessions, or a lack of sex and become involved in the rat-race of 'more' which seems to be accepted in western culture.

Perhaps the picture I have painted is grim, and by no means represents the entire student population.

But now I have realised that, as a Christian, it is of the utmost importance not to get involved with a small clique of friends and look around and criticise the activities of those who you do not approve of, merely bothering to come down from my perch and share with them the change which God has made in my life.

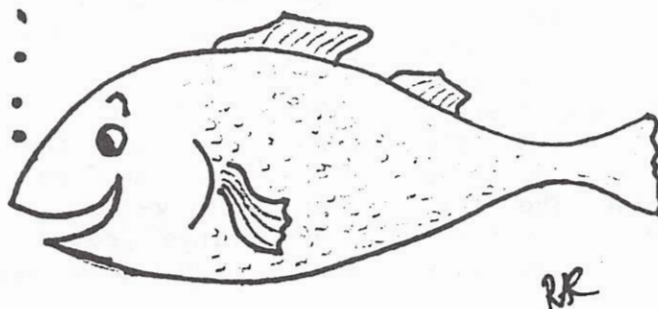
Christ's most quoted phrase is probably 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. The word for 'love' in Greek is 'agape' which means unconquerable goodwill; always to seek out man's highest good, no matter what his action towards you is. It is not a romantic word as it would seem to suggest in English, but an attitude of practical love which we should all be striving to radiate to those who know us and need us.

Christ did not criticise. He went to the prostitutes and the tax collectors and befriended them. He went to the outcasts and lepers and showed them the love and kindness they needed.

During the occasions on which I have managed to talk to some of my neighbours on a personal and meaningful level, as opposed to the usual: 'Where do you come from? And what is your UCCA number? I realise what a relatively trouble-free life I have had.

I realise how fortunate I am to have had a religious education. Also I realise how desperate some of them are feeling trapped in a down-hill slide.

Perhaps the student in the debating chamber was correct when he said that a man with religion was like a fish with a bicycle but a man without God is like a fish without water.





## Conflict resolution

HISTORY HAS SHOWN and recent events have underlined that conflict resolved by repression of one sort or another, without dealing with the fundamental causes, has a habit of resurfacing years later. In the 1960s such was the case in the South Tyrol, a storm-centre of conflict between Italian and German speaking people.

For a thousand years South Tyrol had been German territory. In 1918 at the end of the First World War, on the defeat of Germany and the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian empire, it was ceded to Italy which had fought on the side of the Allies. As can be imagined it was not a happy arrangement. The Italian state under the fascist regime did everything it could to absorb the minority. The minority did everything possible to preserve its identity and freedom.

South Tyrol, or Alto Adige, as the Italians call it, is the ideal of every package-holiday tour-operator who wants to entice tourists through pictures in their glossy brochures - ancient monasteries, sun-drenched valleys of flowers, with picturesque chalets and chapels, the craggy snow-capped Dolomites standing guard in the distance.

But years of enmity had built up to a point when, in 1968, troops were in the streets. There was a spate of bombings and assassinations. It was the culmination of demonstrations and riots over 50 years. The immediate dispute involved the moving of the German-speaking area into a larger administrative region creating an Italian-speaking majority.

Dr Karl Mitterdorfer MP representing the German-speaking minority in the Italian parliament came to Caux in 1968 with two Italians sent officially by the President of the Regional Parliament. Dr Mitterdorfer was on his third visit, with successive delegations of Italian and German speaking politicians. "Here," he said, "you can sort out the priorities among the many problems to be solved in a country like mine. The first precondition is the acceptance of inner change in ourselves. Through this

change in myself I find I get clarity on how to deal with the things facing my country. "

This conviction came out of personal experience. He recalls, 'Once I wrote in my notebook in a time of asking God for guidance, " You must have a talk with the leader of the other wings in your own party". It was not easy, for it is a basic principle for a politician that he must never admit that he has done anything wrong. But after some inner struggle and many postponements I decided to have this talk. I apologised for the many wrong things that had been between us. The result was remarkable.'



photo: Arthur Strong

Dr Armando Bertorelle, President of the South Tyrol parliament

'My attitude and relationship with this opponent became quite different. This affected our relationship with politicians and parties outside our ranks.'

The Catholic Bishop of Brixen, commenting on the visit of the politicians to Caux said, "I observed that a change had happened to them. I heard things from the mouths of these men which had never been said before".



## Letters...

We often ask people to write for us. Sometimes the replies aren't quite what we expect!

Dear FREEWAY,

I want to say that I am terribly sorry, absolutely shattered, broken and on my knees to beg for your forgiveness and magnanimity (my goodness, what a word!!) - no seriously: a few days ago I got a medium sized shock when I remembered the "order" I got to write an article for FREEWAY. I know it is virtually unforgiveable, but I must admit that I forgot about it. Not really forgot, but when I got home I just didn't have the energy to write it immediately and I always thought there

was plenty of time left. But suddenly I realized that you gave me a fixed date, and that we are already there! So all I can say is 'sorry' and I hope you can forgive me and that it is nevertheless possible to publish the next edition...

Actually I don't feel too good about this whole thing, in fact my conscience is knocking quite heavily but I'm really sorry. I just promise to make it different next time.

I hope FREEWAY hasn't lost all its trust in me - I am absolutely willing to write something next time even if this time wasn't a big 'success'. Sorry again.

Anon

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### Conflict resolution (continued)

Dr Guido Lorenzi, President of the Democratic Party in the South Tyrol parliament said, "My job now seems clear... I will fight for unity between German and Italian speaking people."

Dr Silvine Magnano, Governor of the South Tyrol, speaking on another occasion at Caux said, "Next time we meet together to continue our negotiations, the bitter words of the past will have been cancelled".

Five months later on 1st December *The Times* in London reported: 'The Foreign Ministers of Italy and Austria today agreed in talks here on a package deal to end the eight-year-old dispute over South Tyrol (Alto Adige)'.

'The deal was approved by representatives of the 230,000 strong German-speaking population last weekend after being prepared by an Italian Government commission. The area has 130,000 Italian speakers.'

'There has been sporadic violence and sabotage since the area was incorporated into a larger administrative region, which gave it an Italian-speaking majority. This change will be reversed, putting the German speakers in the

majority again.'

Dr Mitterdorfer responded to this settlement. "The question is not to replace the old law with a new law but to replace the old spirit with a new spirit. We South Tyroleans are as responsible as the Italians for overcoming the old nationalism."

Dr Armando Bertorelle, President of the South Tyrol parliament, speaking in London a month later, expressed great hope for the future of South Tyrol. After referring to the stormy past, he said, "We brought the leaders of our language group and the German-speaking group to Caux. There we met, not in our own home region. We talked about what we felt in front of the whole world. We saw that there was something big enough to participate in. That is why I am grateful for Moral Re-Armament. The foundations have been laid and now the new house of South Tyrol can be built."

As the new Europe, both East and West, wrestles with questions of minorities there maybe elements worth considering in the experience of South Tyrol.



# Competition

Our front cover shows some of the members of the *FREEWAY* Editorial Team, busy about their work preparing for the *Spring Issue*. All you have to do is guess which editor is represented by which '*Spring*'.

Send your answers on a postcard to the *FREEWAY* address, and the first six correct entries will receive a full-size autographed copy of the cover!

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## WORK WEEKS 1991

This year there will be yet another chance to join in the widely-acclaimed **work weeks** at the Moral Re-Armament centres at Tirley Garth, UK, and Caux, Switzerland.

Put into practice those digging and painting skills. Make new friends and enjoy knocking down walls together. An ideal opportunity to do something completely different for a week!

Please come for Easter on **March 30th** until **April 6th**. Book early to avoid disappointment by contacting **Jim Wigan** or **Christoph Keller** a.s.a.p.

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Invitations for this summer's conference in Caux are available. Please write in for your copy now.

## Caux 1991

### *Democracy Starts With Me*

5-10 July:	A New Europe in the Making
20-24 July:	The Family and the Health of Society
25-30 July:	Creators of Peace
3-10 August:	Living - For What?
14-18 August:	Moral Foundations for a Market Economy
19-25 August:	Regions and Communities in Crisis

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## Deadline For Next Issue: April 10th 1991

Subscriptions can still be paid now in order to receive the next two issues. £2.40 or equivalent either in hard cash or by International Giro, through your Post Office, to Girobank Account (Postgiro/CCP) number 29 206 0807.

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