

FREEWAY

"Why not let God run the world?"

Andrew Smith

meets Attila

.....



Hundreds

of bright
ideas

inside.....

'America has won the Cold War', Mr Bush told the American people in his State of the Union address. At the same time in Britain there was a TV programme on the wartime experiences of Winston Churchill. The juxtaposition of these two images emphasized that in many ways the Cold War was a continuation of the Second World War in a different form. Now the generation which fought to free Europe from Nazi dictatorship, has just succeeded in freeing it from the Communist dictatorship which resulted.

The significance of the end of this era is only now beginning to sink in; the wall that the West has been pushing at has finally collapsed. But what now? So much of the West's thinking has been in terms of countering communism that we don't seem to have much idea where to go now.

Frank Buchman identified materialism as "the mother of all the 'isms'". Now the 'isms' may have gone, but materialism certainly hasn't - it might almost be said to have won, it seems so all-pervading. But if Buchman's analysis is correct, materialism is always a threat to democracy however secure one's society may presently appear.

'Democracy' is today's buzz word for maximum individual liberty and minimum central authority. However, when individual liberty is exercised without responsibility, people get hurt, and central authority expands; dictatorship lies at the end of that road. Conversely, the more responsibility is voluntarily exercised by citizens, the less central authority is necessary.

Responsibility is a spiritual quality. It is a fruit of a lifetime habit of controlling the impulses in us which damage those around us, and nurturing those impulses which build community. This is not the effect of a commitment to materialism, rather the opposite. The only antidote to materialism is that total obedience to God that leaves no place for reliance on anything else.

The Editors

Apology: The Editors apologize to Peter Hannon for having missed several lines of text in his article in the last issue.

Front cover and all cartoons by Rachel Charrett

One thing leads to another

I WOULD LIKE to call it a story, because most of it is past now.

I grew up in a loving musical family, the fourth of 13 children. Later my father took a second wife and I could not see the sense in that. So I took it upon myself to punish him for that decision and I did it in such a subtle way that he did not even know that he was being punished.

Because we like singing a lot, as soon as I heard his car horn at the gate, I would go into my mother's sitting room and start singing and then everybody would drift to where I was, to sing. Then when he got in there would be no one waiting to welcome him home. This went on intermittently for about four years, whenever I was at home.

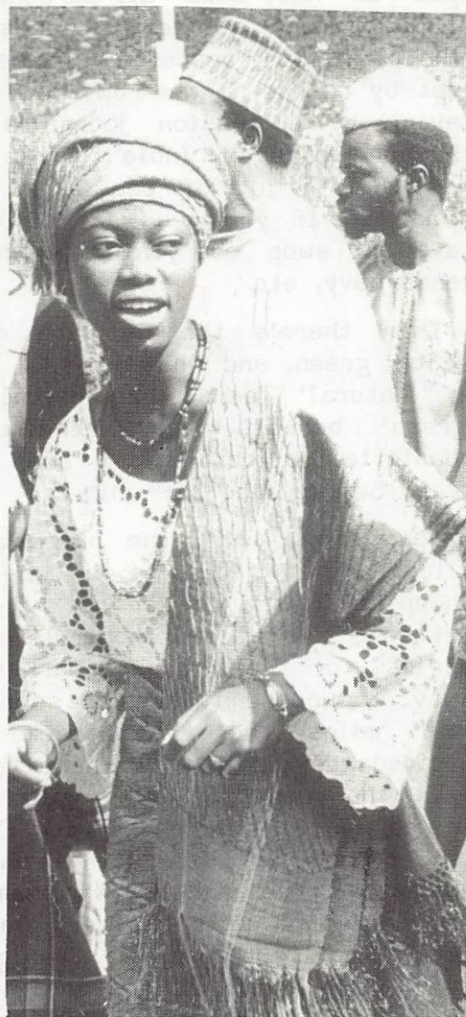
On two occasions my father called us all and painfully told us what agony he was going through in his own home. But I felt he brought it all on himself and might as well enjoy it.

Three years into this crisis, I was introduced to Moral Re-Armament by one of my lecturers at university. I felt I didn't need it because I was good. I neither drank nor smoked, I had no boyfriends and I gave money to the poor. This I told my lecturer in a rather conceited manner, to which he replied, 'Maybe we need saints like you to teach us how to be good'.

That convicted me. After a long time of evading the issue of having a 'quiet time', I tried it and the thought I had was to put right my relationship with my father.

This was very painful. I tried writing but lost courage halfway through. Eventually, I travelled home and did it verbally, practically crying, in the presence of both my parents. I began to see myself in a new light. I felt I had the right to be loved and cared for - after all, they brought me into this world, so why shouldn't they look after me properly? But I had no idea what amount of responsibility was required of me.

That same year, 1984, my parents went with me to Caux. I am sure my father did not believe that what I had done was true and would last long. Anyway, seven or eight years later we are still working things out. My attitude towards my



father's other wife and her children is changing, but there is still a long way to go in the family.

One decision led to another and I began to realize that, active as I was in Students Union Politics at that time, blaming the government and others for corruption, I wasn't quite free of the vice myself.

For instance, I used to take much more money from my father than I needed for school. This was corruption at a small level which could grow into bigger things if I ever got into the helm of affairs in my government. I changed on this, and some of my brothers and sisters whom I had introduced to this way, changed too. Now, at least four members of my family are actively involved in listening to God and seeking what is best for all. Some families around us are benefitting from our experiences already and we give the glory to God.

'Robo Ukoko

In the Pink

IN THE LAST ISSUE I said opinions could be seen as navy-blue all-purpose ones, or slightly more subject to personal taste, like pink. Well, yesterday in the newspaper, just by chance, I was reminded of a famous saying by a fashion journalist, 'Pink is the navy-blue of India'. (What she meant was that a lot of people in India wear pink.) So if you read it in India, you'll have to swop everything around so pink reads navy, etc.

Then there's the delicate question of what's green, and what isn't. I have a pair of 'natural' jeans that definitely aren't 'green' because they require enormous quantities of biological soap powder to keep them looking off-white.

Apart from that, the biggest ecological dilemma that faces me is whether to go shopping in the car or not. The choice is between the local shops, expensive and useless, or the big supermarket two miles away. I suppose it doesn't sound very far. Four miles there and back. Anyway, I decided the way out of the dilemma was to fill the car up, so regularly take a friend. Who hasn't got a car. The trouble is, neither has she got a phone. So we have to go at exactly the same time, on the same day, week in, week out. Unless a week's notice is given. We got out of synch last week, and I fear I'm in her bad books because I refused to lend her some cassette tapes to copy. Oh, these moral issues.

What am I going to do about her? I suppose I'll have to go round and be cheerful and absorb any grumbling that comes my way. Without pointing out what a nuisance it's been to me all this time. When people are worse off than you, you don't rub their noses in it. On the other hand, I wish she'd get herself to a pay phone and sort it out.

We have a neighbour downstairs who has a reputation for being difficult about noise. So we've taken (light) steps to be quiet and understanding. This has meant listening to various complaints, and curbing my temper in the process. But you know, it's paid off. She now thinks we're lovely neighbours and keeps coming up with generous offers, like 'You know dear, any time you need to put on your washing machine after 9.30 at night, that would be quite all right'. Humble pie pays. I'm learning.

The Mad Hatter

Reflections on fear . . .

IT WAS QUITE A SHOCK to wake up one Saturday morning to find that our kitchen window had been forced open and a handbag stolen from the table.

Being burgled was bad enough, but the thought of someone intruding into our home while we were asleep in the middle of the night was very scary.

Fear creeps in easily after that. Once the lights are out, I find myself straining my ears to pick up any unfamiliar noises downstairs.

I was reading about Jesus curing the man who was possessed by a legion of demons. When the people saw the man transformed afterwards, they were not overjoyed as perhaps one might have expected, but they were overcome with fear.

Were they afraid that Jesus might try to transform their lives?

How many times during the last week have I given in to small, niggling fears? Those fleeting moments of unease, mistrust and feeling vulnerable.

When the disciples were with Jesus in the boat and they woke Him up in a frantic panic because of the raging storm, Jesus said to them, "Where is your faith?"

Where is my faith when I feel lonely or frightened?

If I turn to God in these moments instead of battling on alone, He not only can take away my fears of being burgled or being lonely, but He can transform my life and help me to find that peace 'which transcends all understanding' and which He promises will guard my heart and my mind.

by Angela
Willoughby

No going back

Take a photograph of me, while I'm yet young,
Catch my golden hair dancing in the sun
Set down my carefree smile, unfurrowed brow,
My eyes still clear, with memories bright of yesteryear
And full of hope for all the days to come.

For with the dawn I fear that I will see,
Reflected in the glass, another me;
My golden hair streaked through with whiter hue,
And eyes sunk deep in shadows grey and blue -
Skin that creases with each smile or frown.

So take a photograph, and take it soon
Catch me unawares on a summer's afternoon
For as I grow I'll wonder who I was, right now, this day,
And long to take a peek at what the years have washed away.

I'll set it on the mantelpiece, or keep it in a book,
And every now and then I'll take it down and look
And long for my beginning or, perhaps, my end...

Maybe I'll cry a little, for I never can return
To this sunlit cliff above the sea, this garden seat in June
This early morning sunlight, piercing the frosted air
Or the fireside glow and warmth of this December afternoon.

So take a photograph of me while I'm yet young
It may help me to remember who I am and what I've done.

Rachel Charrett

The Killer-Instinct

WATCHING TENNIS MATCHES, I've always hoped that great artists, like Vijay Amritraj of India, would triumph over fierce hitters, like Jimmy Connors, but they seldom have - although the Indian was often leading 2-1 before finally losing by three sets to two. Power plus the killer-instinct overcame grace. It became more of a test of stamina than skill.

Does that always have to be so?

In my sporting days, the amateur approach was much more pronounced. To be ultra-dedicated to win, including winning at all costs, was not so common. Of course there was plenty of dedication too. When Oxford played Cambridge at Rugby for instance, it was not played in the mentality: 'It does not matter who wins as long as it is played in the true spirit'. And once the big game was over, the main focus was to prepare to win the next one a year later. Besides, 50-60,000 people would witness the event.

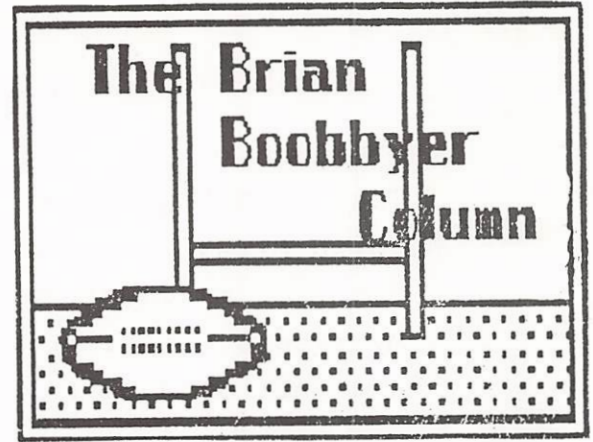
Recently there has been a series on TV on the life of Winston Churchill. You see his courage and his dynamic leadership. You also see his weaknesses and mistakes. But what is unmistakable is his all-out spirit - and that inspired a nation.

In his fascinating book *My Early Life*, Churchill addressed people in their early 20s with these words. 'Do not be fobbed off with mere personal success or acceptance. You will make all kinds of mistakes. But so long as you are generous and true and also fierce, you cannot hurt the world or even seriously distress her. She was made to be wooed and won by youth. She has lived and thrived only by repeated subjugations.'

Elsewhere, he wrote about 'The rut of inertia, the confusions of aim, the craven fear of being great.'

What an arresting expression, 'the craven fear of being great'.

I suggest that greatness involves having a big enough aim in life, which is unselfish, and going all out for it. I say



unselfish because it is very common to see people going all out for something but being totally in the middle of it themselves so that nothing and nobody can grow around them.

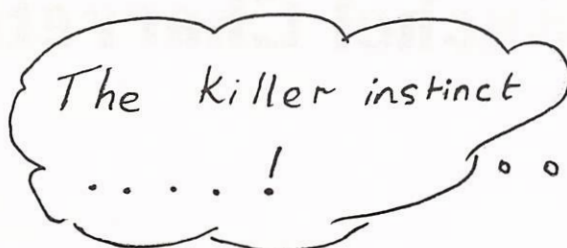
It has been said of the British that they are sensible of the need for hard work in every sphere except religion. To take religion seriously was going too far; it was even bad form, presumptuous. So then religion tends to become a respectable performance rather than an abundant life.

In 'England before and after Wesley', written by Bready about 50 years ago, he writes 'Wesley was finally directing a band of 700 local and itinerant preachers. Most rose at four and preached at five. Their day was eight hours sleeping and eating, eight hours study and meditation, eight hours preaching. Wesley enjoined all his preachers the necessity of spending at least five hours a day reading the most useful books.'

Sounds like a strenuous life!

But the historians I've read, say that Wesley's work changed the country. In the Cambridge Modern History, Trevelyan wrote: 'There appeared a movement heralded by a mighty leader who brought forth water from the rocks and made a barren land live again.'

Bready wrote 'Wesley's revival was in fact a revolution which had at its heart a love of humanity, not a hatred of class.'



Is there such a thing as a professional approach to the life of faith? People like Wesley through the centuries have answered that question emphatically 'yes'.

Gandhi is an example in this century. His purity and discipline gave him the inner freedom to fight without bitterness for India's independence.

Frank Buchman, when asked what was the secret of his life, replied, *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the strength of my own discipline"*.

Ignatius Loyola from Spain, who founded the Jesuits in 1540, started his day with one hour's meditation, then attended mass for half an hour and more, then had two more hours' meditation. He said *"Humility is truth"* and he made that his cardinal virtue.

Such an approach would seem to forestall fanaticism and fundamentalism.

I'm not suggesting that people who read this should rise in the middle of the night! - although some have small children and have to rise at all hours. But I am suggesting that if God and His will come first, there is always room for them. It is an obvious point, but it is also where the killer-instinct comes in. You kill everything in yourself that is not of God, so that you are free to be receptive to his spirit.

Sportsmen can take their fitness so seriously that they are always at their best and hopefully bringing out the best in others. This does not prevent staleness and you have to deal with that too, by relaxing. Each in our own way.

The servant of God can have the same thorough approach.

Another 16th century Spanish saint, St John of the Cross, wrote 'God is like a spring where everyone draws according to the vessel which he carries'. A thimbleful is better than nothing, but a bucket is better. Five minutes with God is a good way to start each day, but an hour and five minutes enables a friendship with God

to be built, which also frees the mind to move beyond the immediate.

In a quiet time, you can read the scriptures, lives of the saints or other spiritual books. In the last years I've read several of the great classics of literature and in them I've found many thoughts and insights which I've copied down: then I like to pass them through my quiet time. I do the same with comments from the newspapers. There are people and nations I can think of and pray for, prompting perhaps letters of encouragement to be written. We all have our different ways our minds can be fed, our spirits released.

Ecce Homo by Seeley, described by Henry Drummond as the greatest religious book of the 19th century, has this remarkable insight. *'Criminality certainly appeared to Christ more odious than to his contemporaries. But he treated it more leniently. He who thought more seriously of the disease pronounced it curable, while those who thought less seriously of it pronounced it incurable'*.

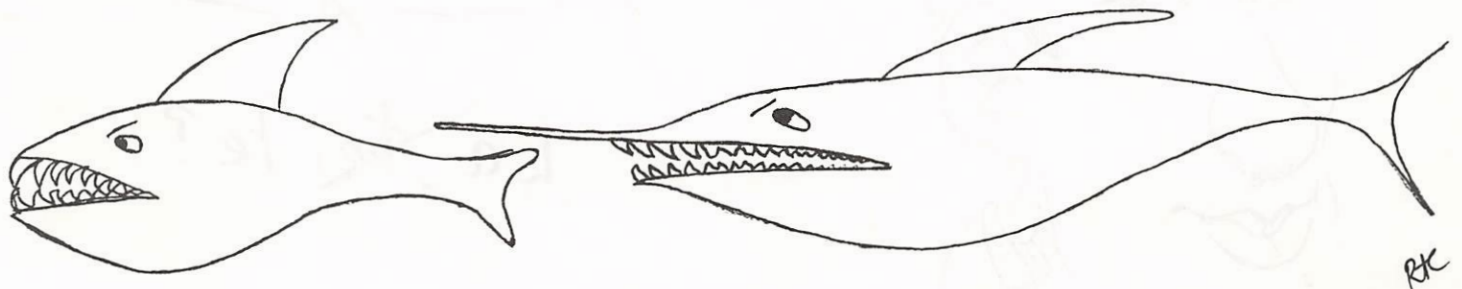
How unfashionable that is.

The most selfish thing I can do is to condemn people to stay the way they are.

The following is arguably the strongest and most startling passage in the New Testament. It comes from 1 Corinthians 6 vv 9-11. *'Don't be under any illusion - neither the impure, the idolator or the adulterer, neither the effeminate, the pervert, or the thief; neither the swindler, the drunkard, the foul-mouthed or the rapacious shall have any share in the kingdom of God. And such, remember, were some of you. But you are washed, sanctified, justified in Christ's name and by the spirit of our God.'*

I do not need to stay the way I am, and I can offer the same hope and certainty to others.

This is the killer-instinct in the life of the spirit.



Smith & Jones

by Chris Baynard-Smith



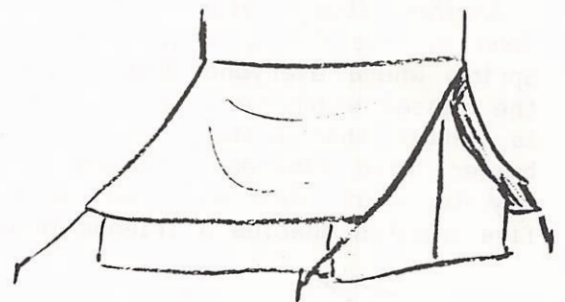
50 KILOMETRES TO THE SOUTH of Paris lies a mediaeval town named Etampes. Nearby, in the surrounding countryside is a village called Ormoy la Rivière at the edge of which stands an old farm known as *L'Acacia* - after the magnificent tree in its grounds. The farm is the focal point for a challenging and fascinating initiative that is beginning to take shape. It is also where we have spent the past three months (Chris) and first of six months (Richard) living and working.

L'Attente is the name given to the association which two families - the Gigands and the Duckerts - felt led to create here. Both have a Christian commitment, and having been closely involved in the work of Moral Re-Armament for many years, felt they wanted to put into practice some of the conclusions they had reached.

Both families have worked a lot with those who, for various reasons - often because of drink problems, find themselves on the margins of society, unable to find employment and caught in a vicious circle of suffering. One of the aims of *L'Attente* is to establish a framework whereby such people, along with others, can learn to find an independent discipline, without being sheltered from reality by the sometimes false security of community life. For this reason, accommodation will be organised in individual, self-sufficient studios, and those who come here will pay a rent as they would anywhere else.



For many, such as ourselves, the financial means necessary for this, will be earned by working for Gérard Gigand and Jean-Marc Duckert's building firm which, as well as carrying out the very necessary complete renovation of the farm buildings, will earn its keep by working for outside clients.



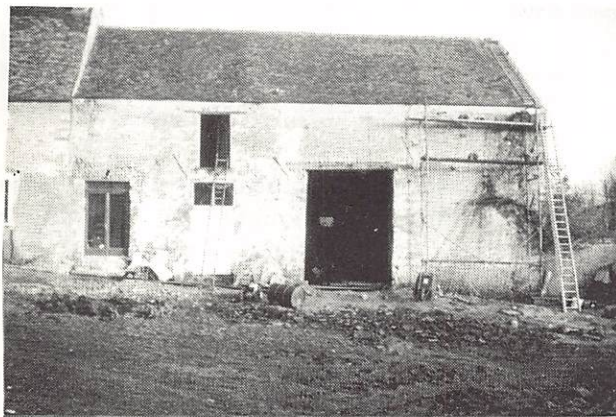
~~La Tente?~~

in France

and Richard Jones

Central to the scheme is the idea that the purpose of work is to meet real needs and foster growth in people. On the practical side, *L'Attente* will provide for two of society's real needs - employment and housing. It also aims however, to meet the real spiritual needs and aspirations of those who come to be a part of the community here. Above all, it is a place where it is hoped to do things not so much for people as *with* people.

There are many ideas for the future, once the project gets off the ground: other small firms may be set up to meet needs in the surrounding area; on the ecological front, some of the land may be used to grow organic vegetables; and it is hoped that solar power and heat-exchange systems will provide a substantial proportion of the energy consumed by those living here. It is also hoped that the role of art and creativity in society can be explored in a meaningful way. The present arrangements here are of course somewhat different from those envisaged for the future, although we try to incorporate as many of the basic ideas as possible.



The farm's present state is, at first glance, one of disarray, as half is a building site where the Gigands' future home is being built. At the moment, the Gigands, Elin Masen (a young Swedish woman) and ourselves live in the other half in the semi-completed studios. As we all live and work in such close proximity, tolerance of each other and honest self-appraisal become very important!

Photos of the reroofing, before, during and after - by Chris Baynard-Smith



We enjoy the work itself (usually!) and find it satisfying to see the Gigands' house progress each day. Building work is physically very demanding - you feel it each evening, and as the scale of the project is so vast, it is often hard to see beyond the present to what one is trying to create. But then isn't that what life's all about!?

Altogether our stay here has been one of learning. On the superficial level, our French and our building skills have improved, but on a deeper level it has been interesting and a privilege to work and talk with the people who have said yes to this enterprise.



Long Road to Recovery

The following is written as it was told in Panchgani during the 'time of reflection, healing and reconciliation' 4th-14th January 1992. The speaker has asked us to withhold his name.

"I am from Nagaland and I am a recovering drug addict and alcoholic.

In 1979, when I was 12 years of age I experienced my first drugs and drinks. My main reasons for going into drugs was fear of rejection by friends - if I didn't take drugs, my friends would reject me. The other was curiosity. For the first few years it was really fun. I thought I found the answer for all my problems - fears, pride and everything.

But I started taking marijuana and by 1981 I had become a fully-fledged drug addict. By 1982 I had to give up school. I just found out that I couldn't continue my schooling. I got into all sorts of troubles.

'83 - that was one of my major drawbacks in my life. In '83, due to excessive use of marijuana and alcohol and cough syrups and all kinds of drugs, I found that I started having strokes, fainting - I forgot everything and memory was really painful for me.

I was taken for treatment, to Madras for brainscanning. When I got back to Nagaland, I had that major fear in me that people will reject me now - this is the end. I'm an epileptic and I felt I was rejected among friends and society.

With that great excuse, I went very heavily into alcohol. (I found I couldn't take marijuana any more, I went crazy.) Without alcohol I couldn't go to a shop to buy a box of matches for myself - even a pack of cigarettes. I found I was going crazy. I felt as if walls were coming to squeeze me and take my life - all sorts of hallucinations and things happened.

It was in the year 1989 - I call this a fateful year. In '89, due to a 'miss' in my arm - I still have the scars - I found I had landed up in hospital, helpless, unconscious - and it was in bed in hospital that all my life came to me. I

was taken to hospital, helpless, totally powerless, I had heroin in my pocket but my arm was paralysed, and I didn't know how to take it in my left arm.

It was at this time, when my arm was being operated on - the stink was so great, my arm was getting rotten (seven minutes later, the doctor said, and my arm would have been amputated) - I was struck that time, I was really struck. I started feeling, maybe there is still hope. It was when I saw my Mum. The stink was so great everyone in the room had to leave - they couldn't stand the smell. Except for my Mum who I had terrorized for nine years, cheating, lying, conning, even breaking things at home, selling family properties, all my clothes (the only thing I had was a dirty pair of jeans, a very dirty coloured shirt, and a brown muffler, that's all I had - and a pair of chappels (sandals)) - and it was that time when I saw my Mum, she was holding my left leg, she was not looking at my arm, but she was crying and praying for me, and her tears were dripping on my left leg.

That time I made a decision which was the turning point in my life. I thought I wouldn't survive the operation and maybe this is the end, but before my life ends, I would like to do something good for my Mum. I will say yes to please my Mum, everything, anything. She suggested, 'do you want to go for rehabilitation?' I said OK and April 21st 1989 I was admitted to rehab.

I expected an instant recovery - one or two months I thought of staying in. I thought I would recover and come back and enjoy life - but that was not so. I had to undergo eight months of tough treatment. It was a treatment of a different kind, not the kind doctors give. It was a programme called 'Twelve steps of living' Alcoholics Anonymous programme. And following that eight months I had to come to Bombay for five months, again to Goa for eight months, and so forth.

In all these experiences I had discovered many things during my treatment months. Two things I value today. One is that pain is a blessing in disguise; because that pain motivated me to change.

Without that pain I have been through, I think it would have been impossible for me to go 100% into trying the new way of life that I tried. And it works. The other is persistence.

Today physically I may be an epileptic, with weak eyesight, mentally imbalanced, emotionally sensitive as a child, spiritually still an infant, academically a dropout from school, and financially totally dependent on my parents - but today I have something of great value, the memory of my experience, which is the strongest defence God has given me against drugs and drinks.

One thing that it is most important for me to remember is that I am an alcoholic and a drug addict - and the moment that I start thinking that I did it on my own, that is the time I will fall and I may never come back. I must never forget that God did it for me; it is entirely by the grace of God, it's not my own doing. My security against drugs and alcohol will come one day at a time from God, through helping others like me. That is one very strong point that I feel I need to commit myself to. Helping drug addicts like me back in Nagaland. Everywhere I may be.

I would like to add something, from a prayer of Gandhiji: 'the greatest prayer is the cry of a repentant heart'."

The speaker is now a counsellor for drug addicts and works in a rehabilitation centre in Nagaland,

Quotations

'Purpose is what gives life a meaning... a drifting boat always drifts down stream.'

Charles Pankhurst, The Pattern in the Mount and other Sermons

'The hell to be endured hereafter, of which theology tells, is no worse than the hell we make for ourselves in this world by habitually fashioning our characters in the wrong way.'

William James, The Principles of Psychology

A Prayer

Almighty God and Father of us all,
Have mercy on this troubled world of ours
We are a pilgrim people,
Men of clay,
Captives of our own greed and frailty.
And yet,
We are the work of your hands.
You have made us in your own image
And we bear within us
Your spirit of life,
The seeds of immortality.
Give us, we pray,
A stronger faith
So that we may walk joyously into the
unknown,
An unshakeable hope
So that we may comfort the despairing,
And a love
As vast as all the oceans
So that we may hold all mankind
In our hearts.
All powerful God,
Look in your love upon us, your pilgrim
people,
As we struggle towards you.
Be our food for the journey,
Our wine for rejoicing,
Our light in the darkness,
And our welcome at the journey's end.

Sheila Cassidy

from her book, *Prayer for Pilgrims*,
published by Fount Paperbacks

Tea with Attila

ATTILA THE HUN and a large bunch of his friends caused rather a lot of trouble on their extended European vacation in the 5th Century AD. Civilized Romans were shocked at the ferocity and cruelty of this strange looking horde of asiatics, so barbaric that they owned no slaves, had never been to a good gladiator fight, and unfairly fought on horseback against the poor, defenceless Roman legionaries.

There were other barbarians of course, the Germans for example. They, however, quickly became Romanized, Westernized and settled down integrated as part of Europe. Odovacer and Aetius, the great German warlords in fact lost their Barbarian status and became rulers of the crumbling Roman Empire itself. The Italians thought the Germans were alright, after all they were good at football, but the Huns? They were complete nutters!

The Germans succumbed to the lure of Roman, Western culture - they liked Pizzas, Attila did not. He died a barbarian, an insulting term we Westerners have always used to describe people who cling to their own culture in the face of ours. Attila bled to death on the plains of central Europe, his body laid out in a silk tent while his loyal Asian Horse warriors rode round, singing his funeral song and disfiguring their faces with cuts so that their blood mingled with that of their beloved leader. Attila was Asian and he died an Asian.

Yet for that very reason he has always been considered the classic, evil, Barbarian, enemy of the civilized world. Throughout history the name of Attila has signified death, terror, horror, rape and carnage. For centuries in Western portraits Attila was portrayed as the devil himself with dog's ears and goat's horns.

The nice friendly German barbarians meanwhile became local heroes celebrated in legend, literature and even unbelievably - opera. If there ever was a German Barbarian called Siegfried, and if we could bring him forward in time to see how his murderous, bloody career was portrayed in Wagner's Ring Cycle, what would his reaction be? He would see himself portrayed as a glorious and chivalrous

Knight and he would probably die laughing. "What's this about rescuing a fair lady," he would say, "I thought I raped them all!"

A fellow German Barbarian, Charlemagne, gained an even greater image. Charlemagne, a man who casually butchered his way through thousands of innocent people became the Holy Roman Emperor crowned by the Pope as God's representative on earth. God I'm sure must have died laughing at that!

Attila was not a nice person I must admit; people who kill their own brothers and encourage their men to collect severed heads rarely are. Yet Western history has decreed that Attila was a devil and Charlemagne a saint - why? Admittedly Charlemagne was capable of culture, but so was Attila.

A rare report has survived written by Priscus, a Roman envoy to Attila in AD 445. He had a drink with Attila and even stayed for dinner. According to Priscus, Attila was courteous and served him with very nice wine (chateau Mongolia perhaps) served in gold and silver cups. Attila was to be found sitting on a couch in front of his bed which was draped with ornate fine linen.

According to Priscus, Attila was a self-disciplined and unpretentious man dressed simply without ornamentation, a man who Priscus claims looked on his children with gentle eyes. The Romans were entertained with a sumptuous banquet and the men of the Western Empire were toasted by the Huns.

Attila was clearly no devil, he was ruthless, but also a great charismatic leader who united the warring hun tribes into one nation, a great achievement. The West has never understood that; we did not understand Attila because he came from a very different culture, a culture strong enough to resist Westernization. He was in our xenophobic eyes, a no-good foreigner.

Charlemagne was a European King therefore he was great and noble; Attila was an Asian King therefore he was savage and barbaric. Simple really isn't it! Yet in reality was he any worse than us?

by Andrew Smith

The fall of Roman civilization was largely our own responsibility, we Europeans brought it crashing down on our own heads. Yet Attila and his horde took much of the blame. It is so easy to blame others for the wrongs of the world especially when that other person belongs to a different race, faith or culture. Attila was a scapegoat for our own sins.

What hypocrites we can be in the West. Throughout history we have always been in the right, yet have caused more wars than anyone. We blame other civilizations for the evils of this world and celebrate our own glorious achievements - like creating a gigantic hole in the Ozone layer! We refuse to understand or appreciate other peoples' cultures, instead we force our own culture on them, confident in it's superiority - we can be terribly self-righteous.

One Roman envoy refused to talk about his Emperor to the leader of the Huns, "I cannot compare God with you," he said. To the Roman the Emperor was god, the Huns were scum. Understandably the Huns were outraged by this attitude and here lies a good reason for them to be so anti-Western.

Similarly Moslems today feel the same sense of outrage at the haughty self-righteousness of Pax Americana, the new Rome. Attila lies dead and in his place lies Saddam Hussein, a new devil - yet the West still does not understand and causes hatred through it's lack of understanding. God is still firmly on the side of our new legionaries - the US marines and whatever we do is always right. We may try to help, but you can only truly help if you truly understand, otherwise it is so easy to create more hatred and hostility.

I talked about the Middle East recently with some Canadian friends. I was shocked to discover that they firmly believed all Moslems and Arabs to be terrorists intent on world domination. They blindly see the excesses of the Ayatollah, Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein and assume the whole Moslem world to be evil.

In the same way Attila was to the Romans clear evidence of the barbarity of the whole of Asia. We in the West need to

be discerning, we must stop criticizing and condemning and start understanding and learning. We need the humility to recognize our own very great mistakes, to be apologetic for the harm we have done to other cultures. We need to see that there are beautiful and noble cultures the world over.

When will we Westerners see the true potential greatness of Islam or Buddhism or Hinduism? When will we learn of the culture, faith and deep morality of many Asians? When will we learn that this planet is not ours to do what we like with? Millions of people, half the world do not want to accept our Western culture, even our Christian faith. Yet we must learn to live with them, understand them and work with them if we are to have any chance of building a better world and we must do so now.

There is great evil and great good in all civilizations. Let us learn in all humility to encourage the good in each other. Perhaps the spirits of Attila and his Roman enemies wandering old battlefields on the grasslands of Hungary would rest peacefully if they knew the long bitterness and lack of understanding was coming to an end.



Attila...

Such a nice chap

Steeling Industry

'PERESTROIKA', 'RE-STRUCTURING', 'market-economy' are buzz words which have broken into our lexicon. They indicate a process of change in response to the challenges of industry and the economy. One of the most successful illustrations of restructuring occurred in the Llanwern steelworks in South Wales 11 years ago. It became 'the standard of restructuring the whole British Steel Corporation', and attracted world-wide attention.

In 1979, the government-owned British Steel Corporation (BSC) provided most of Britain's steel production. Yet, in that year the Corporation was losing £2 million per day. Obviously no economy could stand such wastage.

For three decades, demand for steel had slowed, as more nations around the globe went into production and selling on the world market. Obsolete equipment and working-practices all contributed to the crisis in British Steel. Management, backed by Government, had started closing loss-making plants. In 18 months during 1978/9, eleven were closed with the loss of 120,000 steelworker's jobs and many more in associated industries such as coal mining.

Llanwern steelworks, although a modernised plant, was on the list for closure. Its record was bad; it had never turned in a profit since its opening in 1962. Yet from mid-1980, without a penny of new investment, performance started to improve. What brought this about?

To all who analysed the development, it was clear that there had been a change in attitudes before there was a transformation in performance.

The then-Chairman of BSC, Sir Ian Macgregor visited the plant and was so impressed with what he saw, that he ordered a reprieve from closure. Questioned later, he said that the changes in Llanwern were the result of its employees and managers '*looking into the abyss and not liking what they saw*'.

Yet a threat to livelihood alone could not have produced the result. Many other industries faced with a similar situation went under. A creative response to danger was only possible because management, labour, government and customers accepted a share of responsibility for the overall situation and thus implicitly, for the creation of the problem. Finger-pointing and blame-apportioning were out - largely due to the leadership of a few individuals who were determined to spend their energies on working unitedly for a solution.

A detailed survival plan, code-named *Slimline* had already been drawn up by BSC management. It was drastic. Half the 9000 work-force were to become redundant, (with generous severance pay), and unheard-of flexibility and output was to be demanded of those who remained. There was no guarantee that it would prevent closure, and everyone knew that it could only be successfully implemented with the cooperation of the workforce.

John Foley, South Wales regional secretary of the main steelworkers' union, put their dilemma clearly. '*The union had three options. The first was to lie down and die. The second was to dig in and oppose the changes. The third was to grapple with the problem by involving*



Llanwern Steel Works

Story of MRA - No 26

ourselves in the process of change. We settled for the third option.'

The fact that *Slimline* was implemented without delay or disruption undoubtedly saved Llanwern steelworks. Plans for closure were postponed as productivity rose from 10 to 3.27 man-hours per tonne of steel.

As impressive as the statistics, was the spirit in which such radical changes were carried out. The *Times* wrote, 'Management-union relationships have never been better, craft and process-worker demarkation lines have dissolved and a commitment and determination to succeed is evident everywhere. The vigour and vitality, which is almost tangible, seems paradoxical at a time when the steel industry is experiencing its deepest crisis since the thirties.'

David Williams, Worker Director (representing the workforce on the Board) at Llanwern, was responsible for negotiating *Slimline* at plant level. He summed up his team's view of their mission: 'Faced with the threat of closure, we trade unions at Llanwern are prepared to accept our share of the blame for what has gone wrong in the past, and our share of responsibility in order to survive in the future, by helping achieve customer satisfaction in the critical areas of quality, reliability, delivery, service and price'.

Listening to these words, at a specially-convened working dinner in 1980, was a unique audience of managers, trade unionists and customers of the South Wales steel industry. The story of how they came to be dining together is an indication of the extraordinary spirit abroad at the time.

At the height of the national steel strike in the spring of 1980, a Llanwern computer operator and trade union branch secretary, Gwilym Jenkins, telephoned Harold Williams, a local steel stockist and spokesman of the Confederation of British Industry, suggesting they meet to discuss the future of Llanwern. They had never met before.

Williams was initially taken aback but, to his credit, accepted, and he used the occasion to express considerable frustration at the steelworks' performance



Gwilym Jenkins

- poor quality, late deliveries etc. However Jenkins persuaded him to meet some colleagues, and their sincerity prompted him to arrange the working dinner. To it he invited other dissatisfied customers. 'We will tell you why we no longer buy your steel and you can tell us why we should', he proposed to the Llanwern men.

During 1980-81 several such meetings took place. In the following months Jenkins watched the orders beginning to return to his computer print-outs.

This audacious action on the part of Jenkins stemmed from a deep change towards people at the other end of the political spectrum. Always a convinced socialist - and 'brought up to believe you did not even sit next to a Tory, let alone talk to one' he found his 'them and us' view being shaken when, in the mid-1970s, he met industrialists who were as concerned as he that industry should work for the benefit of all.

However, it was a shock when in early 1980, some friends asked him to meet an MP of the Conservative Government to discuss informally the crisis in the steel industry. His decision to accept the invitation - and to set aside his hatred of the Establishment - was the beginning of a chain-reaction which led Jenkins to play a significant role within the team which helped save the Llanwern steelworks.

The clear message is that a deep enough change in the hearts and wills of a few can make an significant difference for a great many. This is where restructuring begins.

by Rex Dilly

Time for prayer

IN OUR MODERN WORLD we seldom leave ourselves time to think, let alone to pray; a fast life requires rapid decisions.

What part should prayer play in our daily lives? If we do not even know how to decide when to pray, then how can we use prayer as a means of decision making.

St Clement of Alexandria once wrote that: "Prayer is keeping company with God."

Imagine walking through life with a friend beside you who is continually at call to both answer the questions we cannot, and to ask the questions we will not ask ourselves; to offer ideas, and what's more, to share his own strength when called to do so. Perhaps this is too simple a description of God, certainly it is only one aspect of a many-faceted jewel. However if prayer is keeping company with our God, then what could be

more natural than talking to Him about our lives, and at least including Him in the decisions we take.

Below, are some quotations I have noted down on the subject of prayer.

"Pray as you can and not as you can't."

Abbott John Chapman

"O God, early in the morning I cry to you. Help me to pray, and to concentrate my thoughts on you; I cannot do this alone."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, from prison.

"If any be afflicted, let him pray, and if any be merry let him sing Psalms."

James 5:13

"I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me."

John Henry Newman.

Warren Buckley

WORKWEEKWORKWEEKWORKWEEKWORKWEEK

There will be WORKWEEKS in CAUX, Switzerland and TIRLEY GARTH, UK over Easter both starting on Saturday 18th April until Saturday 25th April.

This is a good way for the UN-skilled (as well as the skilled) to make a practical contribution to these centres. It saves them lots of MONEY, and is GOOD FUN.

Details from the appropriate centre - but LET THEM KNOW IN TIME.

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