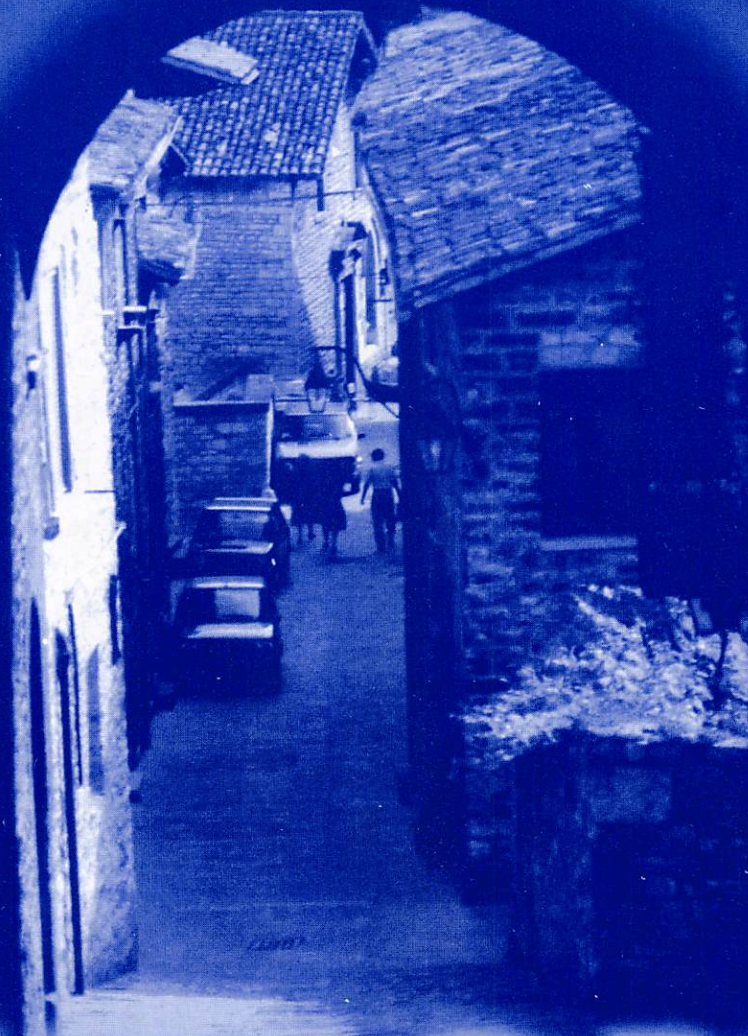


GLOBAL EXPRESS

No. 3 Vol. 2 1996



EUROPE

A VISION IN THE MAKING

AN INTERACTIVE QUARTERLY FOR THOSE WHO CARE ABOUT THE FUTURE

EDITORIAL

Editors Up-Over

The Australian editorial team have been trusting enough to hand over much of the editing of this issue to a UK team - Janet, Jeroen and Katy (and special thanks to Fiona). We're slightly "global" as between us we hold passports for four different countries (Belgium, The Netherlands, New Zealand and the UK), and we're learning to be "express". And learn we have! It has been stressful, exhausting, but amazing...to have so many valuable thoughts from people arriving on our doorstep. Enriching - or in the words of

Adrienne Rich:

*My heart is moved by all I cannot save,
So much has been destroyed,
I must cast my lot with those who
Age after age
Perversely and with no extraordinary power,
Reconstitute the world.*

The UK Editors

Janet (left) and Katy hard at work.



Photo: Jeroen Gunning

ETHOS

GLOBAL EXPRESS

seeks to:

- be an independent, culturally inclusive media service for 17-35 year olds
- understand and respond to a rapidly changing world
- connect personal and global issues
- encourage personal integrity and responsible attitudes
- be a medium to explore hopes and dreams
- encourage active response to creative inspiration

believing that:

- you matter
- you can make a difference
- goodness has an image problem and spirituality is marginalised
- genuine communication at every level is essential
- we are a global generation and have a lot to learn from each other
- peace and unity are possible if we confront the root causes of division and injustice in our own lives and communities
- time for reflection is essential to find direction

Why Global Express?

Global Express (GE) was started to link up young people who care about the future. Dissatisfied with what we were being offered by the media, we felt an alternative was needed.

Our aim is to inspire and encourage people to fulfil their potential. In GE you can question the way things are, and search for solutions. It is also a great opportunity to make contacts outside your 'comfort zone'.

Most of the GE team met through MRA (Moral Re-Armament), which is a world-wide network of people working for personal responsibility and conflict resolution. Ideals of honesty, integrity, unselfishness and love, together with a search for inspiration from a higher source are central to this way of life. MRA is a Non Government Organisation recognised by the United Nations. For more information visit: <http://mra.org.uk/>

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Global Express goes to:

Africa: Kenya and South Africa; Asia/Pacific: Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Western Samoa; Europe: Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Scandinavia, Serbia, Switzerland and UK; Americas: Brazil, Canada and USA.

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Not all opinions in GE are shared by the editors!

GLOBAL EXPRESS
An interactive quarterly for those who care about the future

Welcome to Global Express (GE) youth magazine. Global Express links up ordinary people around the world and gives them a voice. Click for more information, the GE ethos, to see comments people have made about GB.

GLOBAL
IDENTITY

The latest issue (No.6) focusses on IDENTITY. It includes features on Body Image, Post-Modernism and True Democracy. And with articles from Australia, Canada, England, India, Italy, Kenya, Korea, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa, Sweden, USA, and Vietnam, Global Express is starting to live up to its name. We particularly welcome articles from people in South America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.
 To see Fax-Think-Link questions for the coming issue.

Past Issues.....
 Read 'Scattered Thoughts' (a collection of interesting quotes).
 Our

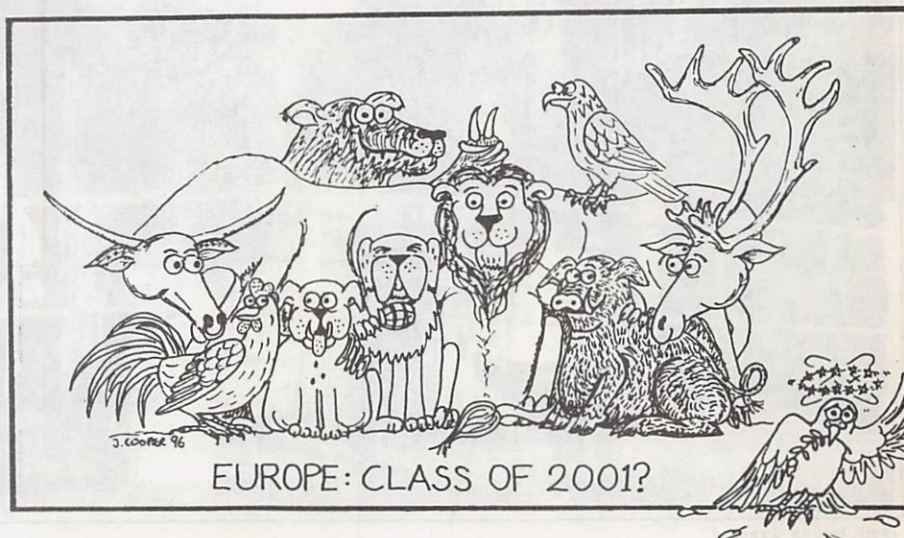
Regional Contacts across the world welcome your ideas and subscription. Please send your comments and articles to the Editors.

This web page was created by Brik Parsons (globalex@melbourne.dialix.oz.au) and Jit-Mun CHONG (jmchong@msn.com). This page is best viewed with Netscape Ver. 2.0.

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Art: Jo Cooper

e u r o p e



Photo: Jeroen Gunning

a
vision
in the
making

Europe is in flux. Politicians squabble over the merits of a single currency and political union, while the growing number of unemployed and homeless wonder whether they will share in the 'dream of Europe'. Fierce and exclusive national loyalties are on the increase. The economic benefits of unification are not shared by all - so French farmers resent British farmers, British fishermen resent Spanish fishermen. Where is Europe heading? Who will steer it? A unified Europe will be meaningless without a shared vision

Europe is my home. It is cathedrals standing out on plains and churches nestling in valleys. Europe is seasons - the eager signs of spring after long winter months. Europe is crossing five borders in a day without showing my passport. Europe is the quiet dignity of war cemeteries (French, German, British, Commonwealth, American), the rows and rows of crosses, the moving phrases chosen by mourning families.

Europe is not just being British or Swiss, it is being both this and European; a plus for my identity, not a surrender of the differences which make up the richness of our national cultures. What would we be without our rich variety of sausages?

Europe is a growing, a developing of something entirely new, with no model elsewhere. A coming together, an overcoming of differences. Not the United States of Europe, a new nuclear and economic superpower. A federation? A confederation?

So much energy is wasted in defining what we don't want. So little vision, compared with the early post-war years, is going into the Europe we do want to see - the things we could do better together than alone. The details may have to come later, when we have worked out more of the spirit. It starts with an end to our terrible civil wars that have cost humanity so much; it continues with the search for ways to create a global community and make up for our colonial past. Idealism and realism in harmony.

Europe is learning to live with neighbours, within a shared culture,

history, faith - and beyond. Europe is about relationships, healing the past, forestalling future conflicts. The Anglo-Irish relationship, the Franco-British love-hate, the Basques in Spain, Corsica and France; and now that the heavy carpet of Communism has been lifted, we see more clearly a host of fresh and potential conflicts.

There is much fear of the future, the present, the unknown, those unlike us; fear of domination by the faceless Eurocrats in Brussels; and in Switzerland, a strangely virulent fear of Germany. Why did Christ so often say, "Fear not"? We must name our fears, face them, and sort out the real from the illusory? The future, like the past, will be determined by those claiming a vision and struggling for it to become a reality.

Andrew Stallybrass, UK/Switzerland

Every inhabitant of this continent must ask themselves, 'Where is Europe heading?'. I write from my experience as an ordinary, and privileged, Frenchman, living in Lorraine.

When my wife and I went to Leipzig (in former East Germany) for the first time in 1987, I decided: 'Don't judge, but appreciate, listen and be honest.' The East-West wall fell in my heart while listening to a communist men's choir singing Bach. I came back certain these people hadn't lost their soul. It was then that European reunification started for me. Do we in the West take enough time to understand the deeper message from our brothers and sisters of Central and Eastern Europe?

Jean Monnet, one of the founding

fathers of the project to unify Europe, believed that uniting Europe would contribute to peace in the world. We all want our continent to live in peace. But I cannot ask my politicians to act differently if I am not ready to change my attitude towards fellow Europeans.

We still carry part of our nation's history, arrogance and fears in our subconscious. In President Mitterand's words, 'We must overcome our prejudices. We must overcome our history.' And we can overcome them if we accept and discuss them with humility and openness. We must leave our old securities and engage on an unknown road which will challenge and enrich us.

As Czech President Vaclav Havel said, 'Europe must not just be a kind of administration or organisation, it must also embody a spirit, an idea, an ethic, a charisma. It must include that necessary spiritual, moral and emotional dimension.'

President Roman Herzog from Germany said, 'Visions, unlike Utopias, are uncomfortable. For the materialisation of Utopias, no one is responsible, for the fulfilment of visions it is we ourselves.'

In Europe we are involved in a vision in the making. The vision of a peaceful and united Europe concerns each of us, and we have many tools at our disposal - political, cultural, social and economic. As a former Member of the European Parliament once said: 'This project is unique. We have no examples to follow, and even though we make mistakes, we move forward!'

Charles Danguy, France

The Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall may now be consigned to the history books. But there are still two distinct Europes. Prague and St. Petersburg are becoming haunts for Western backpackers and shady entrepreneurs alike, but have Western Europeans made the mental jump and accepted the East as equal partners in Europe's future?

The name of our continent was once written by a famous Romanian cartoonist as *EU-RO-PA*, with *EU* being the European Union, *RO* being Romania's symbol and *PA* meaning "bye-bye".

Only six years after the events of 1989, it appears Europe is again excluding us. Forgotten for decades after World War II somewhere behind the Iron Curtain, Romania has been an easy victim for the "Great Eastern Brother". Although our army was ranked fourth in the coalition against Germany, and in spite of the promises broadcasted on *Radio Free Europe* that the Americans would come to free us, we were abandoned and obliged to suffer the consequences of the Yalta treaty. Few people from the other side of the Wall knew what was happening here - but did they really want to know and do something about it?

December '89 brought a tremendous wave of sympathy for our country but not for long. Gradually the world ignored us, and only terrible events (such as the June '90 miners demonstration in Bucharest) made the news. While other ex-communist countries benefit plenty from international support, we feel that the Iron Curtain was only moved a short distance eastwards. It has been replaced by a barrier between the rich and the poor, between visa-free travel and humiliating queues in front of Western embassies, and between media coverage and total ignorance. It is difficult for us to understand why.

We have never ceased to consider ourselves as Europeans, and wish to be treated as such. We are Christians, descendants of the Romans, and our language is closely related to French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. Western countries have assimilated scores of natives from Africa, Asia and elsewhere - so why is it so difficult to include our

people in the great European family?

During my first trip to the West, after explaining the hard times we had lived through and how we felt about the lack of (political) intervention from the West, I was asked what the West could do to compensate for it. My answer was, "Let it never happen again".

Instead of discussing Maastricht and the "EURO" currency, I feel Europe should

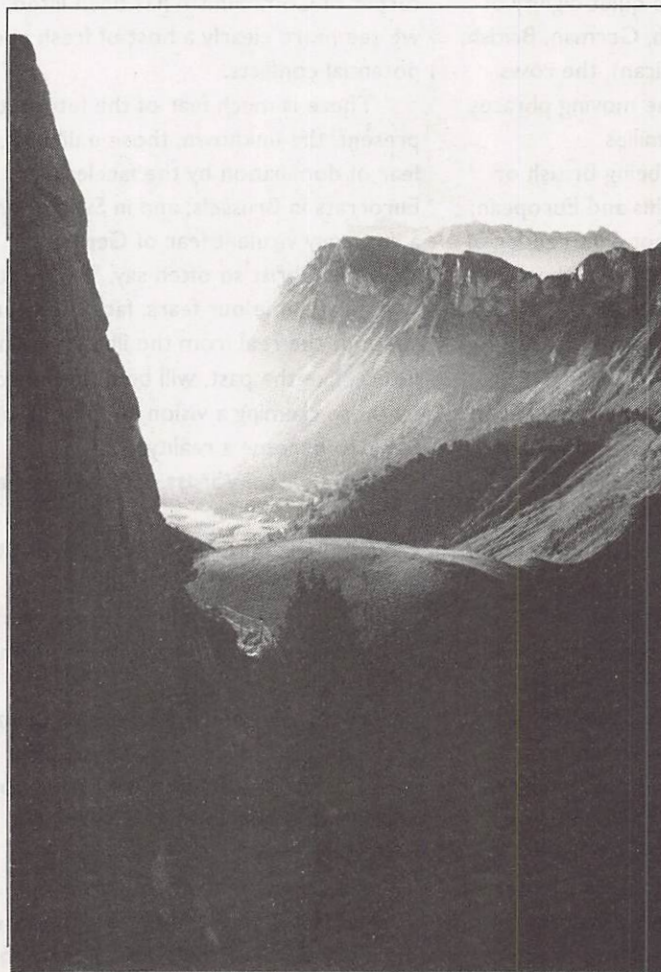


Photo: Erik Parsons

prove its unity in practice. By rejecting countries like ours again, the outcome could be a return to those days when, from one side of the Berlin Wall, *EU* waved *PA* to *RO* and Eastern Europe.

Petru Avram, Romania

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, DENMARK, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, IRELAND, ITALY, LUXEMBOURG, THE NETHERLANDS, PORTUGAL, SPAIN, SWEDEN, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM MAKE UP THE EUROPEAN UNION.

...IF THE PRESENT EUROPEAN UNION BECOMES A FEDERAL STATE IT WILL BE THE 3RD LARGEST STATE IN THE WORLD AFTER CHINA AND INDIA.

...THE AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY OF A DUTCH, FRENCH OR SWEDISH WOMAN (80 YEARS) IS 20 YEARS LONGER THAN THAT OF A RUSSIAN MAN (60 YEARS).

...GERMANY'S FOREIGN NATIONAL DEBT IS 10 TIMES BIGGER, FRANCE'S 7 TIMES BIGGER, THAN POLAND'S.

...ONLY 20% OF ROMANIA'S RIVERS ARE CLEAN ENOUGH TO PROVIDE IT WITH DRINKING WATER.

...MILAN HAS THE HIGHEST RECORDED LEVELS OF SULPHUR-DIOXIDE POLLUTION OF ANY CITY IN THE WORLD.

Western Europe has long advocated the joys of capitalism and democracy. But high levels of unemployment, homelessness, and anti-immigrant violence, coupled with a stream of public scandals and political resignations, have often left ordinary people feeling disillusioned and powerless.

Membership of society is portrayed as the ability to vote and earn a wage. Yet, without a permanent address you can't vote, and without a regular wage you seem valueless. And what of the growing immigrant communities? Clearly, value systems need rethinking.

Practical grass-roots initiatives all over Europe are trying to change society, and its values, from the bottom up. For example, in Belgium, Germany and Austria hundreds of thousands of ordinary people have been mobilised to protest against racist attacks on immigrants. And almost 60 'street papers' have now sprung up across Europe - paying homeless vendors a commission for selling them.



Photo: Omer Roucoux

they employ. Even the previously booming building industry is now offering fewer job opportunities as construction firms prefer to use cheap labour from Southern and Eastern Europe. The situation isn't much better for the rest of Germany. As a whole, its unemployment level is 11% (4.3 million) and in the Eastern parts they are faced with a level of 18%.

In response to this growing crisis, I started a self-help group called "Jobhunters". Within this group, unemployed people find encouragement, advice and new ideas to help them find jobs. It serves to support and inspire them in that often discouraging search. Many of our past members have succeeded in finding new jobs or at least further training.

If hands and minds remain unused, we end up with a wasted humankind. What can be done to avoid this? There are the obvious needs of decreasing the cost of employment and working out ways of job sharing. But we must also help the unemployed to get out of isolation and possible depression. Their self-esteem is often low, and they cannot always see the skills they do have. Ideas on how to spend non-paid 'spare-time' usefully - like exploring the second labour market (eg. community work) - are very much needed. It would be good to share our ideas and experience of employment initiatives in *Global Express*.

Matthias Freitag, Germany

(europe ... continued on page 15)

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...THERE ARE MORE MUSLIMS (1.72 MILLION) THAN PROTESTANTS (0.8 MILLION) IN FRANCE.

...18 MILLION PEOPLE WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION ARE HOMELESS, 10 MILLION IN SUB-STANDARD HOUSING, AND 40 MILLION ARE UNEMPLOYED OUT OF 350 MILLION.

...4000 OF SWEDEN'S 90,000 LAKES ARE SO POLLUTED BY ACID RAIN THAT NO FISH CAN LIVE IN THEM.

...47% OF LIVE BIRTHS IN DENMARK, AND 31% IN THE UK, ARE OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE.

...THERE ARE 7 MILLION RESIDENT FOREIGNERS IN GERMANY, OF WHICH 2 MILLION ARE TURKS AND 1 MILLION ARE BOSNIANS.

...OF THE POOREST 20% OF THE UK POPULATION - 95% HAVE A TV, 80% A VIDEO, AND 15% A COMPUTER.

...THERE ARE 50,000 HOMELESS IN ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA.

COMPILED BY THE EDITORS

SOURCES: HUTCHINSON GUIDE TO THE WORLD 1994; THE STATESMAN'S YEAR-BOOK 1995; BRITANNICA BOOK OF THE YEAR 1994

It is becoming increasingly difficult to find a job in Berlin. Nearly 300,000 are out of work. Jobs in the electronics industry and the public service sector in particular are being lost as companies are moving out of the city, or reducing the number of staff

BRITAIN IN THE 1990s: A MULTI-FAITH FUTURE

With 9 major religions, Britain has the most complex patchwork of faiths in Europe:

Christians.....	37 000 000
Muslims.....	1 500 000
Hindus.....	400 000
Sikhs.....	400 000
Jews.....	300 000
Buddhists.....	120 000
Jains.....	30 000
Bahais.....	6 000
Zoroastrians.....	6 000

(Source: 'Religions in the UK', by the Interfaith Network)

In addition, there are many denominational branches within each religion and other smaller religious communities. And yet, a large proportion of the population do not practice their religion, or do not subscribe to any religion at all. In fact, Britain is as much a secular society as a multi-faith one. However, the concept of a multi-faith society is important, as it is often entwined with issues of immigration, ethnic minorities and racial equality.

The UK has a specific religious status - the head of state, Queen Elizabeth II, is also head of the Church of England (the Anglican Church). With the 'establishment' and the church so closely linked, the UK is very much a 'Christian Country'. Many faith communities in Britain are therefore attempting to preserve their religious identity in a society with quite different established traditions.

Is it possible to live in such an environment without compromising one's religious identity? Full integration brings the danger that a faith and its associated culture will be diluted.



'Christ' by Tom Herring

It may then lose its meaning for successive generations. Total separation of a faith community may prevent this, but leaves society fragmented.

This integration-separation question is the key. For a multi-faith society to live harmoniously, a situation between these two extremes must be found - allowing people to integrate into society while maintaining their religious tradition. It's like balancing on a tightrope. But we must tread carefully, remembering that many scars exist, and that enthusiasm for reconciliation may not be shared by all. A trusting dialogue between those of different faiths is fundamental to change attitudes. Only then will a spiritual foundation be created for the practical changes needed.

As members of the host community, we must strive to

improve the quality of life for those who have come to Britain and contribute so much to our national life. An important debate at the moment is whether or not the state should fund Muslim schools in the same way it does Christian schools. If the British Government decides it should, then it would be establishing the right of religious groups, other than Christians, to free religious education. This would certainly help these religious communities maintain their integrity.

With legal rights must come respect. We should recognise the unity of spiritual experience and shared truth hidden beneath the outer garments of religious rituals, symbolism and tradition. But do people want to be open to insights from others? What effect does the acceptance and

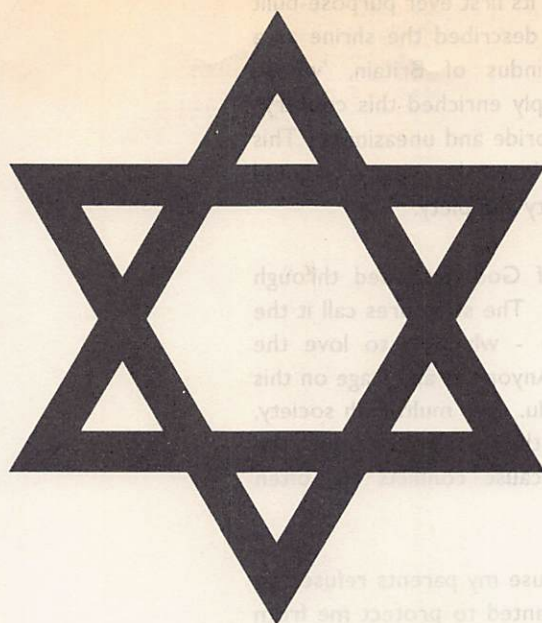
Multi-Faith

understanding of the value of other faiths have on the theology of each one... is it undermined or strengthened? How do we deal with our own faith in the light of all we learn from others?

Many fear that an over emphasis on a 'multi-faith society' will lead to a wishy-washy mix of religions: complete openness but no definition of belief. At the other extreme lies a society so divided by differences in belief that prejudice and violence become the norm: much definition but no openness. It is easy to be open to the bits of other religions we like but what about the rest? How do we deal with the parts which contradict our own beliefs? All religions have aspects which are inclusive and loving, and other aspects which are exclusive and judging. Tensions are inevitable. It is what we do with this tension that will make the difference. Tension can be vented destructively - or we can find ways to use it constructively, as a driving force for building bridges.

Perhaps one way forward is for religious communities to identify common goals in the modern world, such as dealing with poverty, housing and homelessness, and the creation of sustainable ways of living. Working together would not jeopardise religious integrity but would bring about mutual respect and understanding - perhaps leading to a discovery of shared values.

Katy Roucoux, UK



The Star of David is the symbol of Judaism.
It also appears on the flag of Israel.

THE VIEW FROM ...A SYNAGOGUE

It is difficult to define my belief in Judaism because it is so fundamentally rooted in my upbringing and my surroundings. Living in Britain in the '90s and being Jewish amalgamate totally and completely. This is probably because my family live in North-West London - the most densely populated area of Anglo-Jews in the country.

Only when I left London to go to university did I realise the importance of my roots. Being Jewish is not just about observing the Torah and the food laws. My belief involves a 'sense of belonging' and an ability to identify with other Jews. I fully immersed myself in the Jewish Society at university to preserve my identity and ensure that other Jews could too.

Jews in Britain today have assimilated into society well - perhaps too well. This is partly because of the growth of the more liberal Reform Judaism. The main idea behind this form of Judaism is that the 'Torah' is the word of God as defined by humans, whereas the traditional view is that the 'Torah' is literally the word of God. If the latter contributes to the preservation of the Jewish community, then I fully support it, although I don't think it's necessary to adhere to any specific division of Judaism to ensure your 'Jewishness'. Being Jewish is an inner feeling, and belonging to a world wide community.

Marée Glass, UK



Britain

...A TEMPLE

In July 1995 Britain saw the opening of its first ever purpose-built Hindu temple. The Home Secretary described the shrine as a remarkable achievement for the Hindus of Britain, 'whose presence within these shores has deeply enriched this country'. Watching the ceremony on TV, I felt pride and uneasiness. This was a landmark for our minority, yet I knew these pictures could be a misleading indication of our security and piety.

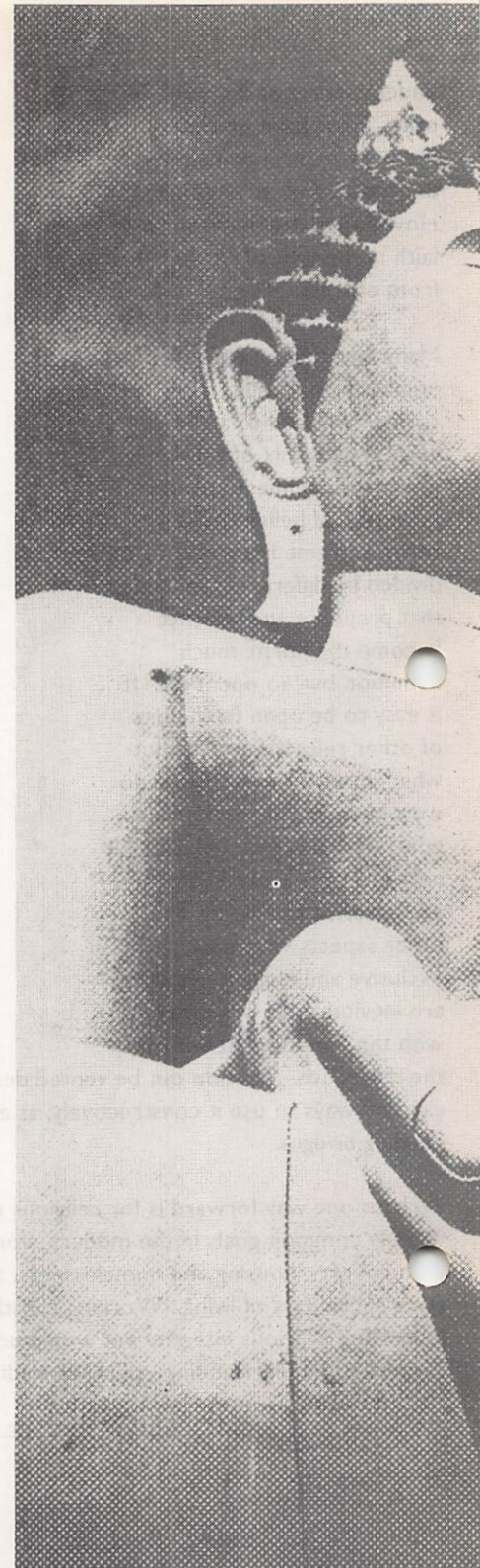
As a Hindu, my faith means love of God, practised through prayer, service and personal discipline. The scriptures call it the 'Sanatan Dharma' - the Eternal Path - which is to love the personality of God and His creation. Anyone at any stage on this journey may be legitimately called Hindu. In a multi-faith society, this is helpful - one focuses on the similarities, not the differences. The differences which cause conflicts are often cultural. Let me give three examples.

When at school, I felt much pain because my parents refused to allow me to go out at night. They wanted to protect me from the Western materialist recklessness they saw in newspapers and streets; I wanted to become 'free' and experiment with the prevalent norms. The clash was caused by our failure to communicate our perceptions rather than by my family being Hindu. When I convinced them they could trust me in the wider world, the clash was resolved.

Some years ago, several thousand Hindus destroyed a Mosque in India, causing violent communal clashes worldwide, including Britain. Many Hindus I met during this period openly declared their hostility towards Islam, justifying it in terms of a religious crusade, rather than jealousy and insecurity. To my horror, many of these self-proclaimed guardians of Hinduism practised aberrations like the caste-system which is not based on scriptures. I wish my community would practice its faith with integrity rather than blindly perpetrating centuries-old customs and biases.

Lastly, while one part of the Government welcomed the opening of the new temple, another was enforcing closure of a popular Hindu shrine in Hertsmere. Locals resented "Indians coming into our village by the bus-load", yet compromises, such as the proposal of a by-pass road, were rejected under mere pretexts, backed by a vote-hungry government. Hindus have to face such institutional prejudice.

For me, being Hindu in Britain is not extraordinary - here I



Kumar Raval



A statue of Buddha

Photo: Jonathan Lancaster

learned about my faith, Krishna and Rama, Gandhi, and about contributing to my country. The joys of choosing the best of both traditions are many - provided one approaches both with integrity.

Kumar Raval, UK

...A MOSQUE

Islamophobia is on the increase. Growing up as a second generation British Muslim, I have often felt marginalised. At school I was treated as a misfit, along with a girl who was overweight. Gradually I made friends, but as teenagers my friends became totally preoccupied with boys - and their close encounters with them. As a Muslim I found this upsetting. There were so many things we could have talked about, and yet these 'intelligent' girls were obsessed with sex. Again, I was a misfit and I made a conscious decision to become a hard, independent person who did not need friends, relying on family instead.

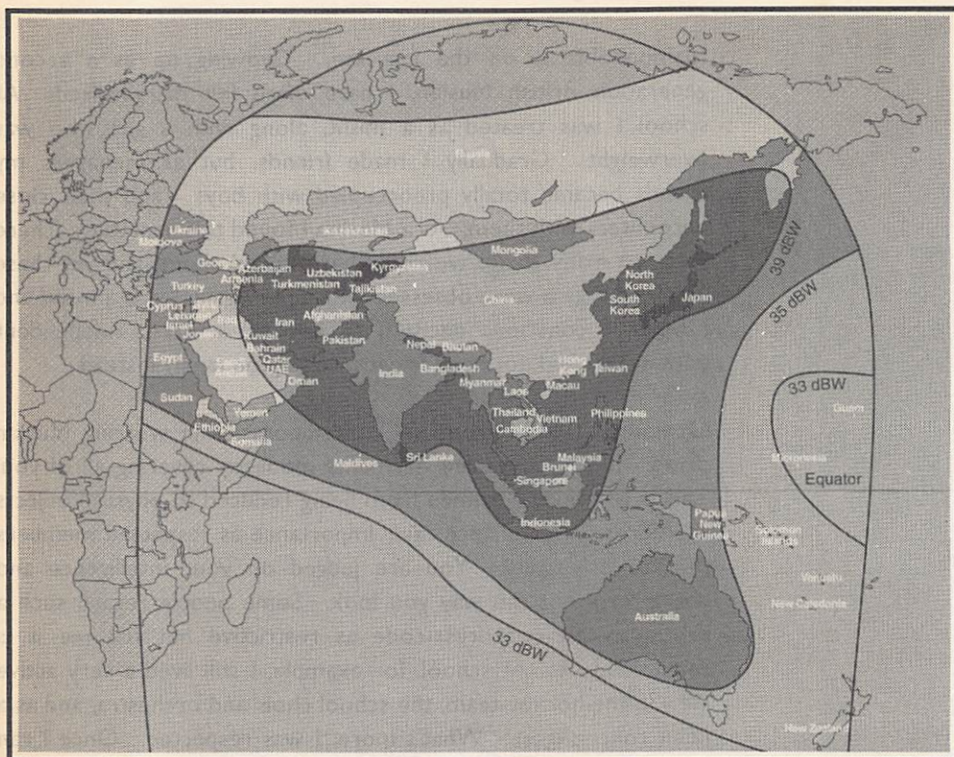
Obviously, I differ from my contemporaries in wearing Muslim dress - loose, concealing garments modestly covering all of you. This is to prevent women from being reduced to physical objects of interest, and enhance their importance as respected members of the community. You are judged on your intelligence and character - not the way you look. Some people regard such a religiously-inspired dress-code as restrictive but for me it is second nature. At school, for example, I still lived a very active life - in the hockey team, the school choir and orchestra, and as a keen roller-skater! What's more, I was respected. Once I ran into what I thought was a deserted classroom, when I heard two boys gasp. They were changing clothes for a school concert. One of them said: "Don't worry, it's only Rafiya. She won't look, she's decent". This really touched me.

University is a mixed environment. People accept you as you are, only questioning your beliefs on an intellectual basis, instead of branding you as 'backward' for following a faith they fail to understand. And yet, the Student Union banned Islamic Society meetings on topics that Christian and Jewish Societies were allowed to discuss. Although 'freedom of speech' justifies distribution of Rushdie's 'Satanic Verses', a book deeply offensive and blasphemous to Muslims, it doesn't seem to apply in reverse! Many Muslims feel that no matter what, they will be treated unfairly by the authorities. Disillusioned, they are seeking representatives within their own community. This is not to be feared but encouraged - only members of our own community can fully comprehend and serve our needs.

Rafiya Qidwai, UK



SPACE TV IN ASIA



Map and photos courtesy of Star TV

Sitting with my ancient laptop

computer in the even more 'dated' inner city suburb of North Melbourne, I have access to information from around the globe. Electronic mail can keep me more in touch with friends in Europe than with my shift-working flatmates. I guess this is 'life in the global village'. With borderless satellite TV, the Internet, international free-trade and cheaper phone calls, our likes, beliefs and occupations are becoming less and less dependent on where we live.

Satellite TV began in the 1960s, when a program was broadcast across the Atlantic. Today, it is big business. One satellite TV company, *Star TV*, broadcasts to 53 countries across Asia. Its beams form a blanket stretching from Egypt to Japan, and from Siberia to Australia. Its northern beam is aimed at China's billion-plus population, and its southern beam at India's 960 million.

Star TV is owned by the massive *News Corporation*, which has broadcasting interests on every continent. Chairman of *News Corp.*, Australia-born Rupert Murdoch, is one of the greatest pioneers the media has known. He has poured hundreds of

millions of dollars into *Star TV* in the conviction that, before long, it will be making massive profits. *Star's* Chief Executive, Gary Davey, says, 'We are determined to build our position as Asia's leading satellite broadcaster.'

What will the impact of this be on Asian society in the years ahead? Arundhati Nanavati, a Bombay lawyer, sees both a positive and a negative effect. 'Indians are better informed, as a result of *Star TV*, about other countries. We realise that our problems are not unique. And sometimes we see how other countries are overcoming those problems.' She is not so pleased, however, with many of the Western entertainment

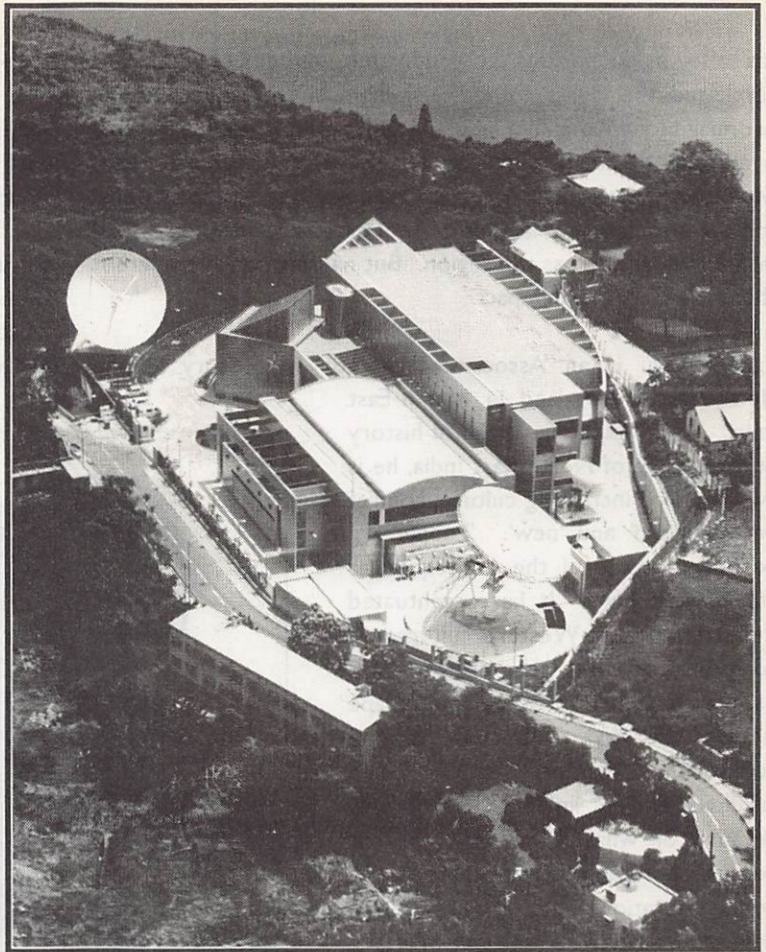


Star TV transmission room



Pari and Visier Sanyu

Photo: Dennis Mayor



Star TV Broadcasting Centre in Clearwater Bay, Hong Kong

programs. Much of *Star TV* is of Western origin. One channel is devoted to music videos, another to movies. On the 'Star Plus' channel, you can watch *The X-files*, *The Simpsons*, *Baywatch*, the *Miss World Contest*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Home and Away*, *Star Trek*, *Oprah*, *Santa Barbara* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

Many of these Western programs stress physicality, fantasy and sexuality over intellectuality, realism and self-sacrifice. They portray a life of easy success and instant pleasure. While attractive to young people, they do little to prepare them for the real world. Young Westerners can compare the lifestyles of *Beverly Hills 90210* with their personal experience of living in the West, but their foreign counterparts can not.

Many Indians fear the impact of these programs on their society. They see them as a threat to traditional culture, and an encouragement to a Western monoculture. When Murdoch visited India in 1993 he dismissed these fears. 'Indian culture can look after itself,' he said. Since then, however, *Star TV* has steadily diversified, and now includes a substantial

portion of locally-produced material in its programming. In 1993 it bought fifty percent of ZEE TV, one of the most popular Indian TV stations.

Quality local programs are vital in countries flooded with imported shows (though many developing nations cannot afford to produce them). ZEE TV proved a sensation when it first hit the screens; its lively Hindi programs offered a dramatic contrast to the then dull Government-controlled broadcaster Doordashan. As a result of this partnership, ZEE TV now receives more viewer mail at its Bombay headquarters than any other channel in the world - an average of 200,000 letters, cards and faxes per day.

Digital technology on new satellites enables *Star* to deliver many more channels, with crisper pictures and CD-quality sound. It now has four Chinese (Mandarin) channels, and a subscription channel in Japanese has recently been added. There are programs in various Indian, Indonesian and Philippine languages, and in Arabic for the growing Middle-East market. It

has also made various co-production agreements and has purchased the rights to material from sources such as the booming Hong Kong film industry and India's 'Bollywood'. This is all part of Star's effort to 'develop a sub-regional focus, where each market will have a tailored package of international and Asian language channels.' And there are now over 220 million viewers across the region. But nagging concerns persist about Star TV's social impact.

Visier Sanyu is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Nagaland in North-East India. As an expert in the oral history of the people of North-East India, he is aware of the increasing cultural conflict between 'old' and 'new'. 'People are becoming aware of the consequences Star TV can have. It has accentuated the shift towards Western culture. In addition, there is a general awareness of the need to protect and shape culture,' he says. 'Star TV is one accentuating factor, subtle and insidious, and its influence is not only because of what it is, as such, but because it is coupled with things like a poor education and economy, and political conflict.' His wife Pari, a teacher, writes that 'Normal interaction within the family is hampered by increased viewing. And, to some extent, young people have become alienated from the rest of society.'

Star TV has made young people more susceptible to the drugs culture, writes Christine Iralu who lives in Meghalaya in North-East India. North-East India lies on the Western edge of the Golden Triangle, and drugs are easily available as they

are smuggled West. The region has one of the highest rates of HIV infection in Asia, mainly from shared needles. 'A serious spin-off of certain TV programs is that drugs are considered a part of an "advanced" lifestyle. Many here see them as a sign of "Western progress", and adopt them wholesale as fashionable.'

Christine's husband Niketu works in drugs rehabilitation. Recently he interviewed 17 addicts individually, and asked each what had led him into drugs. Sixteen of them replied that they had wanted to follow the lifestyle of their Western pop idols whom they watch on TV. Satellite TV has brought the world closer together. But is exposure to Hollywood the main thing we now have in common?



Gary Davey, Chief Executive, Star TV

Countless youths worldwide are 'buying' Western identities, 'marketed' through TV, music, films and sport. Cultural interaction can be very creative; and the Internet offers new possibilities to bring this about. But there is also a danger that diversity will be undermined merely in the pursuit of profit and power.

This December marks Star TV's fifth anniversary. It may be a moment for stock-taking. With the influx of the new media, we must each learn to watch and listen critically, and then

participate. If we are to encourage excellence, we will need to speak out. And we will need to create programs which are more captivating than stereotyped characters and escapist themes.

by Erik Parsons, a student of Media at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia globalex@melbourne.dialix.oz.au

FAX-THINK-LINK

The Fax-Think-Link is a gathering of ideas and opinions. Next issue we look at: 'What is your favourite food, place, book, song and TV show? Why? What are your goals for 1996?'

IN WHAT WAYS ARE MEN AND WOMEN DIFFERENT?

Lauren Tate-Davis, Aotearoa / New Zealand

'Women's feelings are facts because they feel them.' How often have you felt you're too emotional - or been told this by a man? Your feelings are facts - accept them. Instead of hiding them from others, listen to what they are revealing to you about

your life, family, relationships and decisions.

Following an argument with Mike (my husband), I'll usually become enveloped by feelings of resentment and hurt, whereas he is able to continue with his next activity as if nothing has happened. My feelings tell me we need to resolve this disagreement so I can feel happy about our relationship again. I know I need to take steps in this direction because Mike won't. As far as he is concerned, everything is fine.

Men and women are different. As soon as we women acknowledge our feelings and accept them, we will be able to assert ourselves more positively in our relationships.

In the 1990s everything seems to come down to identity. And in Europe, identity seems to come down to history. The self-confidence, which so often comes across to the rest of the world as arrogance, is still visible, and yet beneath it Europe lacks a certain confidence and sense of direction.

As I start to reflect about Europe's future, I realise that to be European does not mean much! Travelling abroad I never tell anybody 'I am European', but 'I am French'.

Our national identity is much stronger than our continental identity. I compare the French character and culture to that of the Germans or British as often as to the Americans or Japanese.

Despite our growing European Union, Europe is still to be created in the minds of all Europeans. The issue at stake is our identity. If people do not want to continue with the European process of 'Unity', it is because they feel their identity is in danger.

This question of identity is crucial because we seem to be a bit lost at this stage of our history - looking for direction and meaning. We have pushed aside the Christian faith which gave us the values on which our society is still based. We realise that the market economy is less and less able to ensure the well being of all, and instead creates exclusion and injustice. And yet, we come from a long history, we are brought up in the middle of an incredibly rich cultural background, and we inherit centuries of thinking and creativity. The

answer can be found in the values inherited from our ancestors.

I believe Europe is not meant to become one of the big powers dominating the rest of the world. Rather, it should maintain and share the richness of its identity and values - a richness that each nation and continent possesses equally.

Christine Jaumes, France

I can picture the shape of Europe. I have seen it time and again during long geography lessons. I can list the capital cities and perhaps say a few words on each country's history and current situation but that is about it.

'Europe' has until now been a rather abstract concept. Politicians throw it around, and say it represents the future, but in my life it hasn't taken shape. How can I picture 'Europe' when I don't even know the furthest reaches of my own country? We do share history, literature and art, but will this suffice to generate a sense of belonging to each other?

Only once did I feel European. That was in India. My skin colour and clothes singled me out. I spoke English and could have been an Englishman, Dutchman or Swede but they said to me, "You come from Europe, you are a European".

I want to explore what else is involved. I already sense the direction in which to look; dismantling the deeply hidden barriers that exist within me because of a history of discord between the countries in Europe - especially between Germany and the others.

Heinz Krieg, Germany

I am a European but does that have any significance, apart from the geographical one, when there is so much to fear, and so many prejudices between the countries that comprise Europe?

I am a Dane, so I make jokes about the Swedes and am critical of the Germans. I fear being in, and outside, the European Union. As for Eastern Europe, it is still so new it has not yet been incorporated into my internal map of Europe.

I am a Dane. But I am a European. I perceive religious people as a minority. I accept it as natural that I should be allowed to travel to any country I wish and be welcomed rather than suspected, and my money can buy much more in the South. From the news, I know much about the war in Bosnia but I only hear about non-European crises when they interfere with European activities. I view our values as the norm.

I am a European. The significance of being a European depends on the aspects one focuses on. For me, the greatest significance is our great potential, the capacity to serve the rest of the world. We have a terrific infrastructure, heaps of knowledge, a good economy generally, well documented history, different cultures close together and time to spare. However, when we get caught up in our internal differences or even our differences with the rest of the world we do not fulfil this potential.

I am a European. I did not ask for it, I did not deserve it, I cannot help it. Wouldn't it be good if we could stop worrying about whether or not we like it and start to make use of it?

Anna Christine Christensen, Denmark

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Sarla Kapadia, India

In Indian tradition, men are often looked up to for support. As a young girl, what my father said counted the most - and my mother agreed. Then, it was my late husband - there was a pattern already set at a young age. My three sons, who are now all married, could have continued that pattern. As per Indian tradition, that's the way it ought to be! But experience has taught me otherwise - to take 'charge' of my life!

A woman's role is different because she is a woman. She can express herself in a gentle but positive way which can bring harmony in the home. To be a good 'homemaker' is an

art for any woman, and I feel that is what life is about. To have a cup of tea and a smile ready when he comes in from work is far more rewarding than ordering him to mow the lawn!

Nicci Long, Australia

I believe the question should be, 'In what ways are men and women the same? In the toy shop where I work, mothers are increasingly buying tea-sets for their sons, and tool boxes for their daughters. This may seem a superficial example, but attitudes are determined early and last for life, even generations.

To speak of men as courageous, logical, verbal, and women

IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE THE RESPONSE TO OPENNESS AND KINDNESS IS OFTEN INDIFFERENCE, RUDENESS OR EVEN HOSTILITY. HOW CAN ONE MAKE PROGRESS WHEN EVEN BASIC HUMAN RESPONSES HAVE BEEN PERVERTED? (DR JULIA POLIANKA, UKRAINE)

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE ARE AT A CROSSROADS. FACED WITH THE EMOTIONAL, ETHICAL AND SOCIAL POVERTY LEFT BY YEARS OF TOTALITARIAN RULE AND THE 'BIG BROTHER WATCHING YOU' SYNDROME - HOW DO YOU REBUILD A SOCIETY? POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS CERTAINLY NEED CHANGING. BUT SHOULD THE WEST BE BLINDLY ADVOCATING ITS OWN SYSTEM? HERE ARE A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IT IS INDIVIDUALS WHO PROVIDE THE INSPIRATIONAL ALTERNATIVE.....

In 1993 a small team began to develop the interactive program 'Foundations For Freedom' aimed at young adults aged between 18 and 35. Designed for use anywhere, so far it has focused on Eastern Europe, and the issues raised by the transition from communism to capitalism. Historically, a direct connection can often be seen between a change in individuals and renewal in society. For this reason, the program encourages people to develop the unselfish motivation which can play a major role in creating societies marked by honesty, a sense of community, economic health and respect for human dignity.

The 'Foundations For Freedom' program has various components. At the core are two interactive residential courses: a 12 day Visiting Course which will go wherever it is invited; and for those who wish to deepen and expand their insights, an International Course held annually for 3 weeks. Around these activities, many other initiatives have been generated. These have included seminars on a variety of subjects, regional meetings of young people in Eastern Europe, and visits to Western capitals by young politicians from Romania and the Ukraine.

Erik Andren, Co-ordinator of FFF Visiting Courses, UK

FAX-THINK-LINK

as patient, intuitive, silent, is true to an extent, but merely because these are the qualities a Western, gender-categorised society has pressured us to develop. Unhappy relationships, of dependence on others who exhibit qualities we feel we lack, are the result. We all embody all qualities. If we only became aware of them, we could do anything we liked. Maybe the next step is for fathers to buy those tea-sets and tool boxes!

Paolo Dealberti, Italy Fax: +39-381-88704

Beyond statistics, there is a distinctive individuality - or 'peculiarity'. It is not enough to compare women and men be-

cause a deeper discussion is needed, eg. the difference between white and black, Asian and Russian. Pope John XXIIIrd said not to look for that which divides but that which unites. So it is better to talk of 'peculiarities' than 'differences' - not about statistics but about personal characteristics. These are constructive because they are 'markers' of union.

The universality of the human being is embodied in the fact that in each of us there is a part of others and vice versa. These peculiarities represent people, not statistics. So we return to speaking about overcoming the barriers of 'difference'. Excuse me for my virtual English!

I came to Britain last year to work voluntarily as a co-worker with *Foundations For Freedom*. Coming from Africa, I saw this as a chance to learn more about the 'first world' and also to bring a fresh 'African alternative' to the work of FFF. Because it is mainly focused on Eastern Europe, it has helped me understand what is happening in this part of the world - something we Africans are ignorant about.

The most important gift working with FFF has given me is that of meeting people and learning from what each individual has to offer. This has helped me radically transform my biases about Europeans and forget my suspicions of Europe. I come from a culture that was colonised by Britain, so we were taught to be cautious when dealing with Europeans. I had to change and be like a fresh student, ready to learn and receive - accepting, observing and participating.

I learnt that everywhere young people are experiencing similar struggles in life. The amazing thing is that the solutions to these problems are the same for each person, whatever continent they come from. Helping individuals find a purpose in their lives is a very important thing that can be exported to any culture - to anybody anywhere.

Isaac Otieno, Kenya

Eastern Europe is a turbulent and dynamic part of the world. The major problem in all ex-communist countries facing transition is the lack of ready-made and proven scenarios showing what the outcome should be. There are many paths leading to all sorts of so-called 'democracies' and 'free market economies' but very few lead to a genuinely free and fair society.

We need a type of democracy based on moral and spiritual values rather than moral relativism. The Western model, which uses concepts such as 'democracy', 'liberal competition', 'social state' and especially 'free market economy', is appealing to people in Eastern Europe because superficially it offers a wealthier and happier future. However, along with this comes moral relativism, crime, human exploitation and more. This model does not offer minimum moral and ethical standards upon which a free and fair society can be built, and have a sustainable future, and so will inevitably

bring decline in many aspects of life. *Foundations For Freedom* offers a way for Central and Eastern Europe to be a role model for the world. It is unique because it challenges every individual to find the moral values deeply rooted within us and use them to become more responsible for one's own future and that of our country.

Under a communist regime, people are taught to think in an 'acceptable' way. This prevents people from thinking and making moral judgments of their own. We must awaken in people that which the communist regime has quashed, and in this way create a basis on which a better society can be built. Every individual has a role to play and is challenged to become an active player instead of a passive observer.

Tomislav Maieric, Croatia

Step by step, I have felt my horizons widening. Thinking about myself as 'small' has almost disappeared. I have found people who can, and do, assist each other. Communication is so important for all of us. I have started to realise how important it is for me to learn to speak and to listen - not only to a friend, but also to somebody else whom I can't see, but can feel. A remarkable thing I have learnt is that if I have something 'unseen' inside me which hurts my soul, I know now I can try to face it and clean it up. It helps me as a human being to be at peace with myself.

Rasa Skarelyte, Lithuania

change alternative

FAX-THINK-LINK

Stephen McLoghlin, Australia

As sex is our original difference, determining our experience of life thereafter, men and women continue always with the task of understanding their differences.

Our differences remain a source of both attraction and rejection between us. When we engage in 'judging' each individual as to how she or he could be 'improved', our relationships suffer profoundly. We easily engage in the time honoured practice of women working on men to have them become 'more sensitive' or men seeking for women to be 'more rational'.

The feminist movement contributes to our collective

understanding, and the men's movement which has emerged in response, adds still more. Gender based difference prevails in every society, often being a source of frustration, anger and conflict, particularly when we are stressed. Rather than accept our differences, we seem to find it necessary to work at making the other the same as we are.

Regardless of gender, we are all endowed with the same qualities. The infinite combination and depth in the mix of these qualities make each person unique. Appreciation and celebration is what we long for, not the conformity of being the same.

suffering + love

Recently, someone close to me was diagnosed with cancer. I was shocked - she seemed so robust, so unlikely a victim. Fearing she would find it hard to come to terms with, I longed for her to see it in a spiritual light, but felt precocious: who was I to say such things? So I just wrote to her sharing my shock and sympathy.

When I saw her two months later, the tables were turned. It was I who sat at her feet, hearing her tell of the profound things she had learned. Instead of raging against the doctors' failure to notice her illness in time for cure, she had come to believe it was a necessary part of her growth. She was radiating joy. The illness had helped her come to terms with some of her most hurtful and humiliating memories - removing the guilt she had felt all her life. I was struck by the healing power suffering can have.

I have met many who, having accepted their suffering, turned their wounds into sources of healing. Suffering comes in many forms and is often no fault of our own - the struggle for survival in slums around the world, the terror of war or occupation, those born with disabilities. And we who live in comfort and security can suffer through dysfunctional relationships and low self-worth.

Suffering can be unjust, painful, frustrating, humiliating and depressing. But when we lose hope and start to feel bitter, things only get worse. Then suffering becomes self-inflicted. In the words of Carl Jung, the great psychologist, "neurosis is always a substitute for legitimate suffering". This substitute can end up more painful than the original problem. Why do we do this to ourselves?

Drawing on his experience as a psychotherapist, M. Scott Peck states, "Life is difficult... Once we truly know that life is difficult - once we truly understand and accept it - the fact that life is difficult no longer matters."

Yet many of us rail indignantly against difficulties and pain as if we had the right to an easy life. In modern Western society, the philosophies of individualism, progress and human rights have imbued in us the attitude that the self is sacred, to be obeyed instantaneously, while death is an 'unspeakable insult' to our independence and sense of control. We have created a comfortable society - at least for some - where the old, the disabled and the ill are hidden from sight. The beauty, fitness and entertainment industries, along with our belief in technology, all

work to create an illusion of eternal life. And in the rush we manage to fool ourselves - some of the time.

Yet, for all my struggles with death and suffering, when I stop, I intuitively know what Scott Peck has discovered: that death "provides life with all its meaning". Not only does it put into perspective our urges for power, wealth, comfort and fame - none of these can be taken beyond the grave - it also links us to the larger framework of creation, decay and growth. It reminds us that we owe our lives to no accomplishment of our own - we have life 'on loan'.

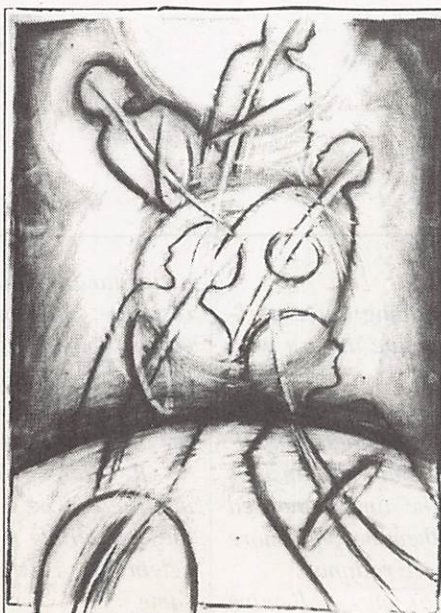
The more I force myself to confront my own death, the more I realise the wisdom of the Buddhist who said of the West: for a civilisation that claims to have sprung from a spiritual revelation (Christianity), you think remarkably little about death. Likewise with suffering. Psychiatrist Paul Tournier has observed that; "The purpose of life is not the absence of suffering, but that the suffering should bear fruit". For this to happen we must see a meaning in life. Tournier found those who cannot, suffer doubly - on top of the suffering itself, they suffer from its pointlessness. Pointless suffering contradicts any belief in a caring, loving Larger Being, or indeed in meaningful human life. At stake is the "struggle of faith which can find meaning even in suffering, in failure and amputation."

We have to find our own perspective. As a Christian, I find priest and writer Henri Nouwen helpful when he says that the heart of Jesus' suffering was to show "not that God came to take our suffering away, but that God wanted to become part of it". In the words of the ancient Hebrew Job, whose life was destroyed as a test of his loyalty to God: "I knew You only by hearsay; but now I have seen You with my own eyes." While this perspective cannot be objectified, I can only say that this is precisely my own (limited) experience.

During the last five years I have gone through some deep emotional valleys - with very close relationships turning sour. Slowly I learnt to accept my brokenness and saw how it stripped me of pretences. Instead of lashing out against others because of the hidden pain inside me, I became sensitive to others' pain. And if I was ready to reveal my brokenness, I could even heal. As a result, life has become much more painful - and meaningful.

Jeroen Gunning, Netherlands/UK

Sources: Scott Peck, M.; *The Road Less Travelled* (1978) Nouwen, H.; *Seeds of Hope* (1989) Tournier, P.; *A Listening Ear*



'Flight of Souls' by Helen Stacey



Photo: Jeroen Gunning

HERE I STAND

Here I stand
Before the quiet earth
With the rain upon my face.
The wind a silent breath.
What do I see
Arise before me?

Stand and watch
Watch the pain pass you by.
No compassion.
Stand and pray
Wash your hands, wash
your souls
For tomorrow is over.

We are the healers
Of the sorrow around us.
We are the lovers
Of the lost and found.
But we only know
What we dare to know.
Some day we should have
A good look around.

Here I stand
Before the quiet earth
With the rain upon my face.
The wind a silent breath.
What do I see
Arise before me?

**Andrew Smith,
Scotland
1967-1995**

SCATTERED THOUGHTS

A COLLECTION OF QUOTES, THOUGHTS OR SNIPPETS OF WISDOM FOR YOU TO SHARE WITH THE WORLD.

If you have something, please send it to us and let's see if 'words and ideas can change the world'.

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'WOMEN'S LIBERATION IS JUST A LOT OF FOOLISHNESS.
IT'S THE MEN WHO ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST.
THEY CAN'T BEAR CHILDREN. AND NO ONE'S LIKELY TO
DO ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.'
GOLDA MEIR

'ONCE WE TRULY KNOW THAT LIFE IS
DIFFICULT... THE FACT THAT LIFE IS
DIFFICULT NO LONGER MATTERS.'
M. SCOTT PECK

'ADMIRATION IS SIMPLY POLITE RECOGNITION OF ANOTHER'S RESEMBLANCE
TO OURSELVES.'
AMBROSE BIERCE

'JESUS CHRIST - A MINORITY OF ONE. THE BUDDHA - A MINORITY OF ONE.
I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE THAT IF EVERYBODY AGREES ON SOMETHING
YOU CAN BE SURE IT IS WRONG.'
ANTHONY DE MELLO

'THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF SUFFERING, BUT THAT THE
SUFFERING SHOULD BEAR FRUIT.'
PAUL TOURNIER

'IT TAKES A MAN TO SUFFER IGNORANCE AND SMILE'. **STING**

'THAT IS THE GREAT DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SEXES.
MEN SEE OBJECTS. WOMEN SEE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OBJECTS.
WHETHER THE OBJECTS NEED EACH OTHER, LOVE EACH OTHER,
MATCH EACH OTHER. IT IS AN EXTRA DIMENSION OF FEELING WE
MEN ARE WITHOUT AND ONE THAT MAKES WAR ABHORRENT TO
ALL REAL WOMEN - AND ABSURD...WAR IS A PSYCHOSIS CAUSED BY
AN INABILITY TO SEE RELATIONSHIPS. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH
OUR FELLOW MAN, WITH OUR ECONOMIC AND HISTORICAL
SITUATION AND ABOVE ALL OUR RELATIONSHIP TO
NOTHINGNESS, TO DEATH.'
JOHN FOWLES, 'THE MAGUS'

'IF YOU PLAY IT SAFE IN LIFE
YOU'VE DECIDED THAT YOU
DON'T WANT TO GROW ANY MORE'
SHIRLEY HUFSTEDLER

'VISIONS, UNLIKE UTOPIAS,
ARE UNCOMFORTABLE.
FOR THE MATERIALISATION OF UTOPIAS
NO ONE IS RESPONSIBLE,
FOR THE FULFILMENT OF VISIONS
IT IS WE OURSELVES'.
ROMAN HERZOG

'I'M NOT PERFECT.
BUT I DO AN EXCELLENT JOB'.
PHONEPHET CHANTHARASY

'I DON'T LIKE THE TERMS 'HOUSEWIFE' AND 'HOMEMAKER'. I PREFER 'DOMESTIC GODDESS'...
IT'S MORE DESCRIPTIVE.'
ROSEANNE BARR

'MIDDLE-AGE IS WHEN THE BROAD MIND AND NARROW WAIST CHANGE PLACES'.