

GLOBAL

EXPRESS



creativity.



AN INTERACTIVE QUARTERLY FOR THOSE WHO CARE ABOUT THE FUTURE

global moves

Moving out of your comfort zone was the theme of the last issue and that's what Co-Editor Janet Gunning will have done by the time you read this. She and her Dutch husband Jeroen are off to Palestine for the next nine months and she'll be teaching English whilst he works on his thesis. Imagine that... a *Global Express* office in Palestine!

The feedback on the last issue has been very encouraging. Take Jack Cooper in New Zealand, "Let me congratulate you on the copy of *Global Express* I have just finished reading. It held my attention at the age of 87, because if you dig deep enough, truth and reality become ageless; that is what 'moving out of your comfort zone' has meant to me... I will do my best to secure additional subscriptions!" And from the younger generation: "*Exploding the myth* was a very nice article", wrote Marc Van Dijk in Holland, "Sex really shouldn't be such a big issue. People very often overrate it. But the most valuable lesson was about being yourself. That is so important!" Peter Mills in Australia felt the same and concluded, "This article goes a long way in dispelling myths which unfortunately so many people are sucked into believing." In response to the interest shown, we have a new article on the subject: *Is this relationship healthy?* which is full of common sense.

And as for *Creativity*... it's taken all our creative powers to bring this issue in to being and we'll be delighted if you find it half as inspiring as we have.



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GLOBAL EXPRESS

seeks to:

- be an independent media service
- establish and support a global network
- be culturally inclusive
- respond to a rapidly changing world
- connect personal and global issues
- encourage personal integrity and responsible attitudes
- encourage people to act on creative inspiration

believing that:

- you matter
- you can make a difference
- goodness has an image problem and spirituality is marginalised
- sincere communication at every level is essential
- peace is possible if we face the 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 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://www.mra.org.uk>

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Global Express goes to:

Africa: Kenya and South Africa; Americas: Brazil, Canada and USA; 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; Middle East: Lebanon and Palestine.

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Not all opinions in GE are shared by the editors!



Atsushi, Lisa and Laura

Photo: Elisabeth Peters

HOT SPOT

I am a visual artist; I have been a student of and gained skills in the areas of fashion design and the creation of wearable art, computer embroidery, graphic art, photography, flower arranging, music reviewing and poetry writing, and I've even delved into woodwork and metalwork. I have also been an interior design student and love restoring old furniture.

I became involved with *Global Express* in 1995, during a visit to Melbourne where the magazine was being produced at the time. My first contribution to the magazine was the tulip photo on the front cover of the *Holistic Environment* issue (Vol. 2, No. 1). Since then I have done several pieces of artwork and a music review and now I am working for the magazine on a permanent basis.

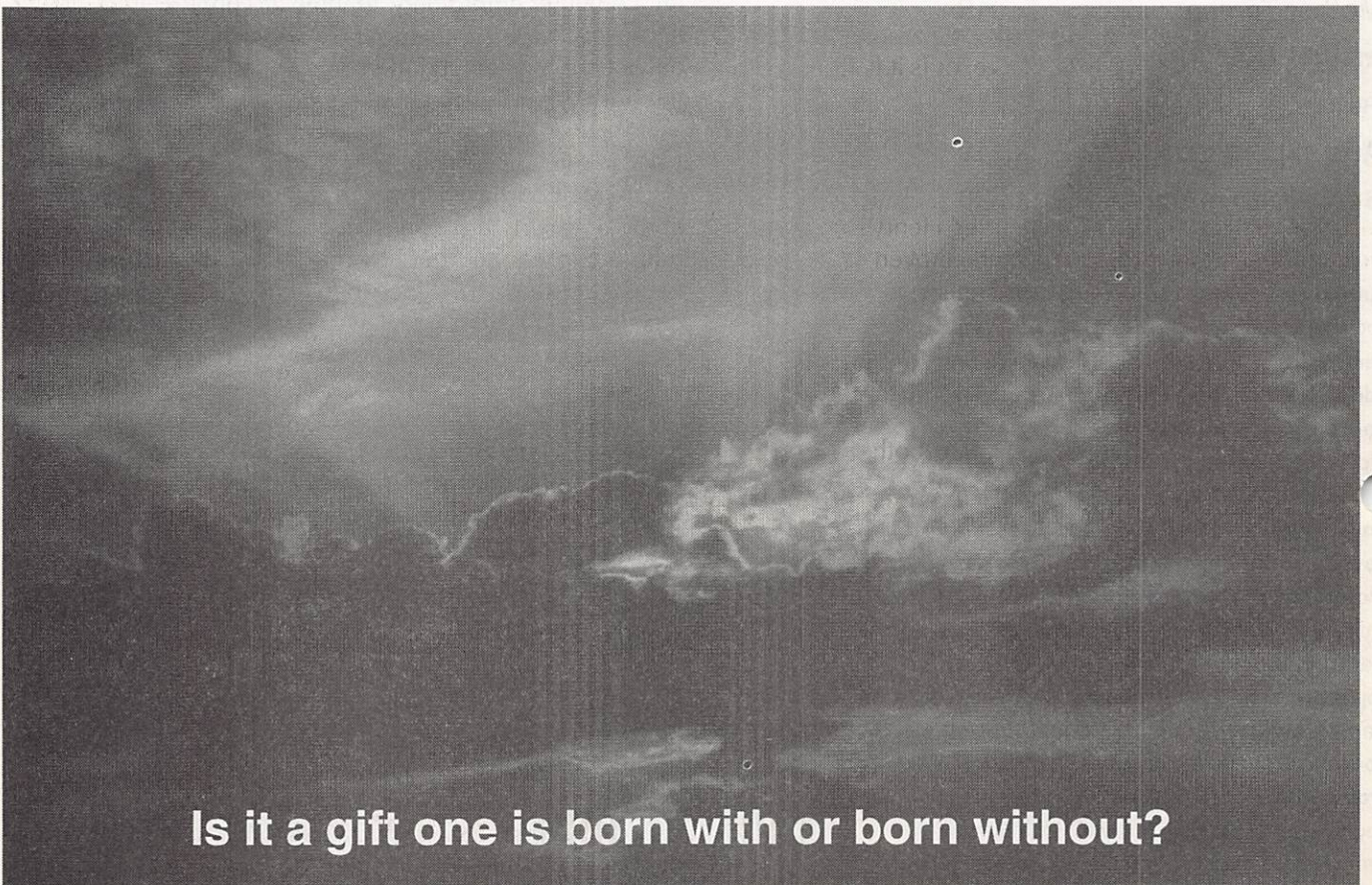
My job on *Global Express* is to do the layout and design along with Laura Trevelyan. It is a big learning curve (coming to grips with computer graphics programs, such as PageMaker, Photoshop and CorelDraw, for the first time), but it is rewarding as well as challenging.

This is the first *Global Express* to be edited and designed in Oxford. In this issue of creativity, we have tried to create a cool, fresh feel to the layout through the use of openness and a light text, using the idea of 'less is more'. Although the design is not visually complex it is conceptually subtle and more experimental in structure.

Global Express is a good magazine to work for because it is passionate about youth and gives them a chance to express their views and opinions, no matter who they are or what their background. To be able to offer an alternative to mainstream magazines and to offer real life experiences is a fantastic opportunity for a young person like myself.

Lisa Kesby, Australia/UK

creativity



Is it a gift one is born with or born without?

Photo: Christine Karrer

Have we got that creative spark within? Can we articulate how we got it, and get it? Is ours a universal experience, or does it vary with each person, each culture, each generation, each age?

If it is something everyone is born with, why does it seem to flourish more in some than others - even in some not at all - whilst in others it is like a gushing oil well?

Does creativity have a part in politics?

Where does hard work figure in the creative process? Are creativity and hard work the same? Is one any good without the other?

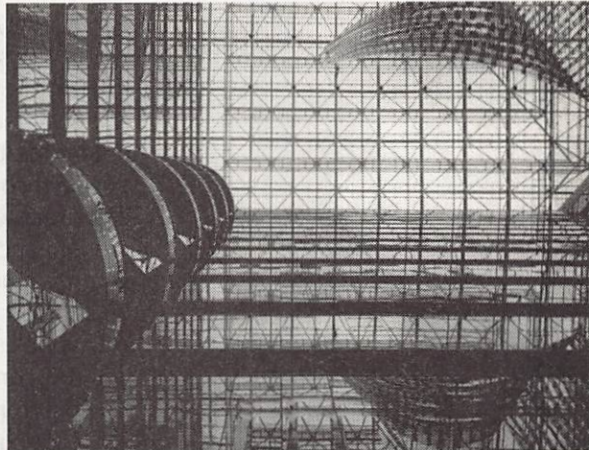


Photo: Laura Trevelyan

Do creative people try to be creative, or is it just the way they are?

Are these examples of creative people? Henry Ford, Mother Teresa, Picasso, Shakespeare, Napoleon, Beethoven, Alice Walker, Tiger Woods, the Dalai Lama, Martina Hingis?

Is invention the same as creation? Do both discover something already there? Is the answer yes and no?

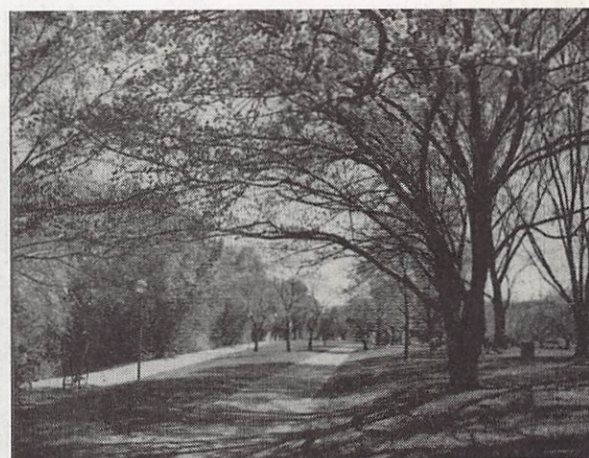


Photo: Lisa Kesby

Does creativity involve pain? Always?

Are there essential ingredients and preconditions?

Is the most creative thing to release creativity in others? How is this done?

Dickie Dodds, UK

creativity...

A soul cries out

Last autumn Allison Kenny had just finished a post-graduate course in women's media studies at the University of Swansea in South Wales. Her original degree, begun at Mercyhurst College, Pennsylvania, USA, continued at University College, Cork in Ireland and completed at Swansea University, was in politics which she studied because she wanted to learn how to make a difference to society. Now she felt led to make a difference by working on films about peace, reconciliation and renewal. But there seemed to be very few producers making such films. She spoke to the youth pastor at her church in Wales and he showed her a copy of the Christian Handbook where she looked up film and TV companies. Her eyes lighted on an entry by MRA Productions who make documentary films and videos dealing with social and moral issues from a Christian perspective. She picked up the phone and dialled their number.

Meanwhile, at the offices of MRA Productions in London, Alan Channer had just returned from filming in Kenya for the video 'Is he my brother?' about a former Mau Mau guerrilla fighter and a white commandant of a detention camp for Mau Mau prisoners. The phone rang. It was Allison Kenny, asking if MRA Productions could use any help with their films - she could edit video tape and was ready to work as a volunteer. Alan needed someone

to start straightaway. It was Friday afternoon. "Can you come up for an interview on Monday?" he asked. Allison was intrigued. She came - and stayed. Since then she has not only edited the Kenya film, released in August, but has worked on several others too. Allison told me her story:

I originally came to the UK from the States on a student exchange programme. I didn't like life in the USA because of the level of violence - in the city where I lived, and on TV. My father is a detective and that may have influenced the amount of violence I was exposed to. But that did not alter the fact that the violence was happening. I had seen too much while growing up and had vicariously experienced things. I don't think any young person should have to experience. I just wanted to get away from it. My education gave me the means to get away. I came over here to find some community which I didn't have in my city. And I found it - in Ireland and in Wales. The Welsh people took me in and were incredibly generous. I felt safe in Wales. I could walk down the street more or less when I wanted to and not be afraid. There was no fear of guns. I could relax. I was very happy and did well at the University. So I pressed to be allowed to stay and finish my degree in Swansea, which I did.

When it was over, I was reluctant to go back to the USA because I did not want to face the violence there. Once back in the States I fell apart. I became afflicted for the first time with depression and anxiety. Now I feel for anyone who suffers from that, because you break down; things shut off and you can't think straight; you can't do the things you used to do. Finally I just collapsed on the floor on Thanksgiving Day. The ambulance came. I was almost paralysed. I couldn't eat or speak. There was no hand coordination. It was a very empty time - for a long time I could hardly get out of bed, was constantly in tears, and couldn't even go to the bank or do any other simple tasks, without hyperventilating. I just wanted to die.

But I decided I wanted to die in Ireland! I felt it was a very spiritual



place and that was where I wanted to die. So I took all my money out of the bank for a one-way ticket to Ireland and enough money to stay in a convent. I figured that if I was going to die, a convent would be the best place to do it! Feeling very weak and sick I got on a plane to Ireland. The nuns greeted me. Within two days I was back to normal again - it was almost too amazing to be true. I said to God, "I'm alive! I'm me again and now I can do something." My voice came back - it was wonderful. So I returned to my friends in Wales and took a course in media studies.

I did video production because upon reflection I realised that all the problems I had faced in America were compounded by what I saw on TV when I got back from school. I was blasted by all the horrible images - very dramatically presented - on TV. It was overwhelming. A doctor said to me after my breakdown, "You collapsed because of fear. You are so afraid that it is paralysing you", and added that if I went back to Ireland or Wales, to an atmosphere where I was no longer afraid, I would be healed. And she was right.

In America the breakdown of the family has been accelerated by the media. American consumer ideology tells you that you are only to think of yourself; that you must be competitive; only the best survive; guns are sellable; we are just products. Plastic surgery is a billion dollar business and TV adds to this body-consciousness.

One thing I have really benefited from since coming to work with MRA Productions is the quiet time - meditation - stilling the mind. For someone who has suffered from anxiety this has really helped - to be quiet, to calm down. When you are in cities like New York, you just want to say, "Calm down!"

The other thing I have learned is that change starts right here, with myself. All the complaints I had about life in America - that TV was wrong, my parents were wrong, school was wrong, guns were wrong - all that is still valid. But when I came here I realised that I had a problem with

arrogance; that I myself was a very aggressive person and was quick to judge. When I tried to change all that - and I am still working on it - then positive things began to happen. I became a more loving person - and people respond to love.

from her own experience. That is why she wants to make films that will help society rather than harm it. She has the vision and the passion - and is fast gaining the experience and expertise that will enable her to do it.

Hugh Williams, UK



Sculptor: David Cregeen, Photos: Laura Trevelyan

It is very therapeutic to be working here and to be able to say, when there is something horrible or exploitative on TV, "Well I am doing this. I am putting these positive messages of peace and reconciliation on the screen." And for the future, I want to keep on providing this alternative.

Allison is in no doubt about the size of the task. She likes to quote from a recent edition of 'Glamour' magazine in the USA in which Dr Mary Anne Layden, a professor of psychotherapy at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia says: "Television has tremendous impact on the way we see ourselves, our bodies and our sexuality. I've seen a lot of depression, sexual insensitivity and body self-consciousness that I think can be traced to TV's unhealthy messages." And the article continues, "What's more, dozens of studies point to the societal damage caused by the endless on-screen stream of blood and guts. Among the concerns: people (especially children) will mimic violence, become desensitised and may grow overly fearful for their safety."

Allison recognises the truth of that



Urfaust

Photo: courtesy of Studio Ararat

WHY ART?

Have you ever heard the theory of creative chaos?

As the name suggests, it's about creativity evolving out of chaos - and I'm hoping it will happen with this article. The questions I have been pondering are: Why art? Why create?

As a drama student living in a house full of vets and engineers, my first years at university were interesting. Names like "arty farty" and "dahling" I could deal with, but surrounded by people doing such practical/vocational degrees I was left wondering what my role was - would I make a legitimate contribution to society or not?

Before entering my final year I had the good fortune to see a short film called *One Word Of Truth*. The script is based on the Nobel Prize Lecture of the Soviet dissident, Alexander Solzhenitsyn. In it, he exposes the vital importance of art and literature in the battle against evil (the lie). "Writers and artists are capable of something more", he says. "They can defeat the lie. Art has always won its fight against lies, and it will always win. Everyone can see this. No one can deny it."

This had a profound effect on me. Now I could see the importance of my role as an arts student - and the responsibility that went with it.

Back in first year, a friend described his favourite play; the curtains open to reveal a fridge centrestage - on top of the fridge is an electric light bulb which is on - thirty minutes later the curtains close. Ideal for meditation perhaps but is that theatre? Later, the same guy created a theatrepiece for our class. We all had one line to repeat, as loud as possible, and wait for it... he got to kick the fridge. My line was, "I

am a Satanist and I believe in communism!" The others had variations such as, "I am a Christian and I believe in fascism!" I don't know about them but I certainly didn't believe in what I was doing. I doubt I even knew what communism was. But I did it because I wanted to act. And I wanted to act because I wanted to be famous. Vacuous or what?

Here is perhaps not the place to discuss what constitutes theatre or not but the aforesaid examples stand up pretty poorly to news coverage of Angolan children creating theatre sketches to warn against landmines. A sobering image. Equally so, is the fact that whilst I was running around a drama studio mindlessly shrieking "I believe in communism!" millions around the world were emerging from years of inhumane totalitarian oppression. It is with a guilty unease therefore that I reflect upon my meeting in August with *Studio Ararat* - a young people's theatre group which was launched in Prague, Czech Republic three years ago. The initiator, Ludmila Pichova - an actress with 40 years experience in Prague's Municipal Theatre - wanted to bring something creative and anti-materialistic into the lives of young people. She also felt the need to prove that drugs are not a prerequisite to 'opening up' and finding one's identity. Her daughter, Michaela Miskova - also an actress - has shared the directing and since the group's inception their repertoire has included pantomime, cabaret, and poetry recitals.

Their latest and most successful production is *Urfaust* - Friedrich Durrenmatt's adaptation of Goethe's classic play. They chose this one, explains Michaela, "because it is one



Slurp

Photo: Rob Lancaster

WHY CREATE?

of the most interesting and truthful plays about the difficulty of finding a purposeful earthly existence; it highlights the everlasting struggle between good and evil, the moral and the immoral, the human and the divine". I don't speak a word of Czech but I found myself hypnotised by the two hour production at the Caux Theatre in Switzerland.

The same week I saw a different (but equally compelling) production called *Slurp*. Advertised as 30 minutes of 'Physical Theatre', it was devised and performed by three Swedish girls. The first of the seemingly unrelated scenes contained a non-verbal conversation between two people, no chairs and a table. And if I tell you that the next contained a speech about potatoes whilst two people made a human circle and rolled across the back of the stage, you'll be... confused? You had to be there. Describing it will kill it. What's important is the effect it had on the audience. And boy, did they laugh. Whatever happened on stage that night, it definitely worked. It was clever, fresh, innovative, thought provoking and funny. Dare I say - it was inspired.

And real inspiration is what, I think, the theatre and the arts are most in need of. As a student I used to dream of all the plays I could write. Now I don't. Instead, I ask myself, "What is the right play for me to write? Indeed, is it right for me to write a play?" Of what relevance is this, you might say. I am struck by the comment of the late writer, Henri Nouwen: "Beneath all the great accomplishments of our time there is a deep current of despair". It is surely no coincidence therefore that "many contemporary movies and plays portray the ambiguities and ambivalences of

human relationships". He cites Bret Easton Ellis's novel, *Less Than Zero*, which describes the life of sex, drugs and violence among the teenage sons and daughters of the super-rich entertainers in Los Angeles. And "the cry", remarks Nouwen, "that arises from behind this decadence is clearly, 'Is there anybody who really loves me; is there anybody who really cares? Is there anybody who wants to stay home for me? Is there anybody who wants to be with me when I am not in control, when I feel like crying? Is there anybody who can hold me and give me a sense of belonging?'".

This reality, coupled with the observation of Hollywood film critic Michael Medved that rather than uplift, inspire and ennoble the human spirit, "we have substituted the idea that the only worthy purpose of art is to shock, horrify and depress", reveals more tragic dichotomies.

People ask, "Was Hitler creative?" No he was destructive. People ask, "Why create?" To save ourselves from dying spiritually and to give life to others. People ask, "Why art?" Solzhenitsyn's answer, previously quoted, is the best one I know of.

There is not the time, and least of all the need, for self-indulgence in artists. And given the insights he gleaned from his time in the labour camps, who amongst us can ignore Solzhenitsyn's universal plea: "Mankind can only be saved if all people are concerned about everything. If we are worth anything at all, let us try to help".

Laura Trevelyan, UK

One Word Of Truth is available from the Anglo-Nordic Productions Trust, 2 Thornton Close, Girton, Cambridge, CB3 0NQ, England

creating a ne

It was a day never to forget: 31st May 1994. Images of the newly elected president, Nelson Mandela, in Pretoria were flashed on television screens around the world. Millions, in six continents, saw jet fighters pass by, trailing the colours of the new South African flag.

We have been celebrating too soon, one observer commented in the days that followed. It is impossible simply to close the books, to forgive and forget. "We have to face the past," Archbishop Desmond Tutu is fond of saying, "Because if you don't face the past, it may return!"

One of the last decisions taken by the multiparty conference, prior to the elections that brought the new South Africa into being, was to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). This was not a unique experiment. Between 1974 and 1994 there have been 15 truth commissions in the world, among them - Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, San Salvador, Uganda, Chad, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Germany.

The TRC officially commenced its work on 1st February 1996, with three committees: the Human Rights Violation Committee, the Amnesty Committee, and the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. The TRC has a fourfold agenda:

1) To establish as complete a picture as possible of the past. The causes, nature and extent of suffering of human rights violations between 1960 and 1994 have to be established, taking into consideration the following: the circumstances, factors and context of the violations, the perspectives of the victims, as well as the perspectives and motives of the perpetrators.

2) To facilitate the granting of amnesty. After full disclosure of the relevant facts, and if the deed for which amnesty is required complies with the qualifications of the act (specifically the political nature of the act), amnesty may be granted.

3) To establish and to make known the whereabouts of victims, restoring their human and civil dignity, by granting them the opportunity to relate their own accounts of the violations they suffered, and by recommending reparation measures in this respect.

4) To compile a report, as comprehensive as possible, on the activities and findings of the TRC, with recommendations of measures to prevent future violations of human rights in the country.

From the communal wisdom of previous truth commissions, one expert concluded, three prerequisites for a successful process exist. One: the nation should own the process. Two: the government of the day must have the political will to take the process to its final conclusion. Three: the process must stop! Numbers Two and Three have been taken care of. The South African government has not only promulgated the enabling act, and appointed the Commission, but budgeted for its expenses, and repeatedly affirmed its support for the work of the TRC. And as far as the end of the Commission goes - on 14th December 1997 the doors of the TRC will be closed; the final report must be finished in time for the President to hand

to the South African nation, on 1st March 1998.

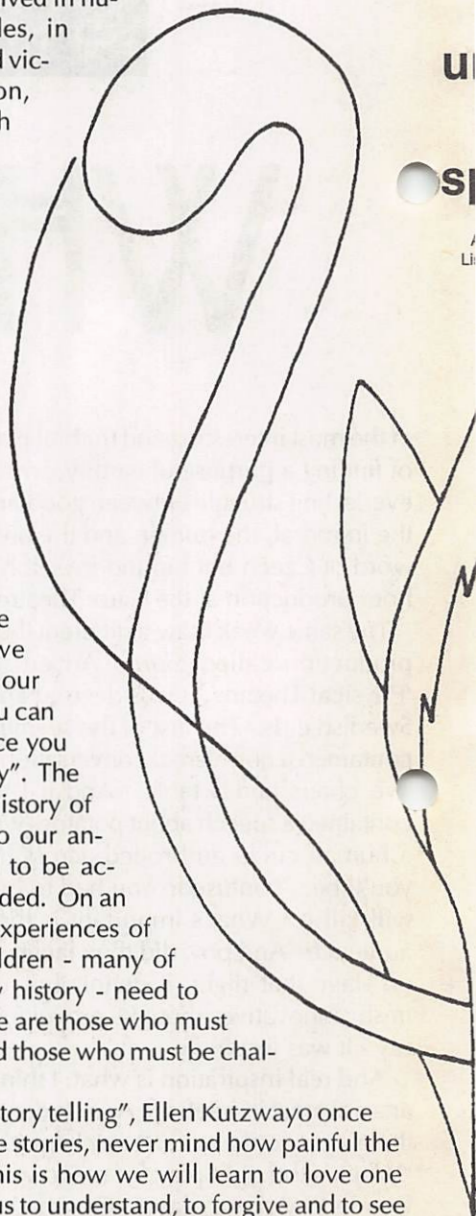
It is, however, about the first prerequisite that we need to reflect: the nation should own the process. Fortunately, in spite of criticisms - sometimes outright opposition - from many quarters, the South African nation is living up to expectations. The contribution from civil society, from the Christian churches as well as other faith communities, from NGOs, from academic institutions, has been enormous. Many of these institutions have been involved in human rights for decades, in trauma counselling and victim-offender mediation, and had a lot to teach the TRC. Three concerns, however, remain - if the nation truly has to take ownership of the truth and reconciliation process.

1) There is a real need to acknowledge and record the past.

"Why don't we just close the books and get on with life?", many ask. The answer is: "Yes, the time has to come when we should be able to put our past behind us. But you can only close a book, once you have opened it properly". The pain of the past, the history of what had happened to our anguished society, need to be acknowledged and recorded. On an individual level, the experiences of men, women and children - many of them half forgotten by history - need to be remembered. There are those who must be invited to speak, and those who must be challenged to listen.

"Africa is a place of story telling", Ellen Kutzwayo once wrote. "We need more stories, never mind how painful the exercise might be. This is how we will learn to love one another. Stories help us to understand, to forgive and to see things through someone else's eyes".

Can we handle the truth, are we ready for the harrowing disclosures made by the victims and the perpetrators? These have long since ceased to be academical questions. With the daily items in the papers, the nightly reports on television, we



W south africa

have learnt how fragile our society is. At the inauguration of the TRC, President Mandela said: "Looking at the guilt and suffering of the past, one cannot but conclude: in a sense all of us are victims of apartheid, all of us are victims of our past". If the process to uncover the truth is insensitively handled, the nation may bleed to death. But treated with sensitivity, the process may pave the way for a national catharsis, for a future of peace and harmony in the country.

The truth, as far as is humanly possible, must come out. The victims need it. It is the first step towards reparation and rehabilitation. One of the commissioners of the Chilean truth commission commented on his experience in Latin America. We owe the truth to the victims and their families, he emphasised, "the truth is at least as important as justice".

Speaking the truth is one thing, acknowledging it quite another. Many South Africans, who in the past sided with the previous regime, mostly English and Afrikaans speaking whites, are thrown into a deep existential crisis by the TRC revelations. Many react like people who have to undergo a deep traumatic experience - terminal illness, the death of a spouse or a child, the break-up of a marriage, moving from one stage to the other: from outright denial, to anger, to a position of bargaining, to a deep depression, to eventual acceptance and peace.

It is at this stage that a person's faith, and the support given to him or her by the churches, become of utmost importance, guiding people along the way, helping them to deal with their anxieties and fears, to the point where they experience that the truth eventually does set us free.

2) There is a real need for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Uncovering the past, learning about the different contexts within which people operated, trying to understand the motives of all the role players, provide for only one leg of the

TRC. The other is that of reconciliation. For in the long run, after the walls of history have been brought down, we need to face one another: perpetrator and victim, white and black, young and old.

Forgiveness and reconciliation can never be obtained in a cheap and superficial way. True, there are the cynics (realists, they would call themselves!) who warn against high expectations, who contend that if you can teach people just to tolerate one another, you have to be content.

Others do have high hopes. The majority of South Africans profess to be Christians, confessing that we are able to forgive, reconcile and accept one another as Christ has accepted us. Drawing from the deepest sources of their beliefs, members of other faith communities, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, in a similar way encourage their fellow believers to reach out and work for reconciliation.

During the last months of the TRC's life, close attention will be given to the process of reconciliation. Workshops will be held countrywide where all the stakeholders will have to help us think through the process. Many questions need answers: What exactly do we mean by reconciliation? Who are the instruments of reconciliation? Who will carry the flame once the TRC's life comes to an end?

We all recognise that it will be a costly and time consuming process. Microwave reconciliation does not last. Sometimes, however, heaven smiled on us, so that even in the hectic programme of the TRC, heartwarming instances of reconciliation did occur. "It never ceases to astonish me", Archbishop Tutu often says, "the magnanimity of many victims who suffered the most heinous of violations, who reach out to embrace their tormentors with joy, willing to forgive and wanting to reconcile".

3) There is a real need to create a new moral order in South Africa.

How do we learn the lessons of the past? How do we build a new South Africa, without repeating the errors of the society we come from? The TRC is tasked by the Act to provide to the best of its ability, answers to these questions. This, it can never attempt on its own. Realising the fond dream of "a rainbow nation", will take all the will power, all the wisdom, all the effort, of every single member of society. South Africa has recently adopted its new Constitution, founded on the highest principles of human dignity and human rights. But what is on paper, needs to be put into practise.

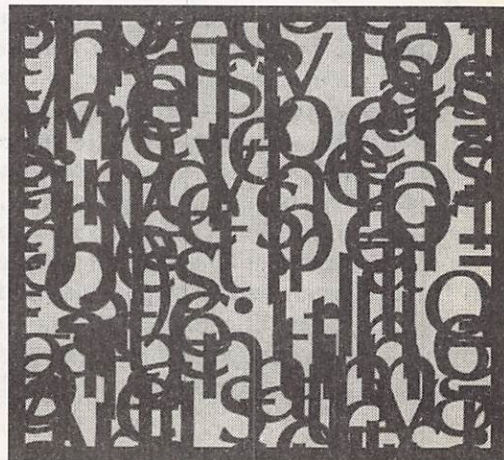
As we step out of the wreckage of the past, South Africa is still in many respects a spiritual wasteland, a reality painfully expressed by the appalling crime rate, the breakdown of family structures, a growing disrespect for the dignity of the human person. We are a nation in need of healing, in every sense of the word.

*Excerpts from a speech by Professor Piet Meiring,
Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa*

THE ART OF LISTENING

The last year has highlighted one thing for me - The Art of Listening. To be able to truly listen to someone with an open heart, without the intent to advise or change, and mostly to listen to what they don't say - immediately gives that person value. To be valued gives empowerment. Being valued is what, I feel, the youth lack. I have found that actions don't necessarily reflect who and what the person is inside. To reach inside someone takes time and real care. Listening properly to others enables us to do this and makes others feel loved. I haven't particularly found this from the positive aspects of the last year but from the struggles. I feel the times when I have difficult experiences or when I make mistakes they create the deepest learning. *The concept of listening relates to my biggest fear for the youth - apathy. The heaviness of hopelessness hangs over us in Britain. There is no way for the youth to express ourselves and be heard. So we use other ways to be valued, turning to other methods - we internalise things. Sometimes we use escapism, create momentary happiness via drugs, a sub-culture in which we feel part of the world. There, in that atmosphere, we are part of a whole. I think if people noticed the youth and listened, to try and understand, it could provide a channel for our grievances, difficulties etc and maybe things could change.* **Worthlessness is so embedded in our society via such things as insecurity and the outlook that nothing lasts i.e. temporary jobs, marriage etc. I see that to some people God provides this - a faithful listener, support and a guide which is constant.** My commitment for the 21st century is to bring a sense of value back to the youth, to show us it is our future. As Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote 'Pessimism is an abdication of responsibility'. My vision is to make the youth feel responsible for the world and realise it is in our hands to make the future brighter. *However, this starts with ourselves and I am the worst victim of negativity. I have learnt from meeting people and listening to them that it is only through hope and struggling that anything can be achieved. Now I have seen it, and it is possible, I have to make it my reality.* **Liz Carlisle, UK**

my vision is to make the *youth*
feel *responsible* for the world



How do you know if you are in a healthy relationship? A healthy relationship feels good. You are able to be yourself without fear of losing the other person. You feel accepted by the other person even if the two of you do not agree about things. You can be honest about what you want and need to be happy. It feels safe and secure. You do not feel like you will be harmed or hurt in any way. *In a healthy relationship each person thrives. Your life is tremendously benefitted by the other person's presence.*

There are two types of love - conditional and unconditional. Conditional love is very common and unhealthy. Conditional love is based on what you do: the other person will love you if you do what they want. Their love for you is granted only under their conditions. Many people have never given or received unconditional love. They learned as children they were lovable if they behaved properly. As adults, that thinking spills over to feeling lovable when you are successful, rich, look great, and drive a hot car. *Healthy people give their love unconditionally. It is consistent and steady. You can count on it. No matter what the circumstances are, you know that the other person will be there. Unconditional love does not mean, however, we walk on people or let them walk on us. Healthy people always have clear consistent boundaries. We know what each other needs to thrive in the relationship. The ingredients for a healthy relationship are:*

**Honesty
Openness
Acceptance
Earned Trust
Sense of Humour
Unconditional Love
Many Common Interests**

If you are in a relationship that does not feel good, if you feel like you have to be different than you are to make the other person love you, you are not with the right person. A healthy relationship fits you, like perfect fitting shoes, as opposed to shoes that hurt your feet. You can find a good fitting relationship. One that causes you to thrive and grow! *You might be thinking that there is no such thing as a harmonious, healthy relationship. Maybe you have never seen one in real life. They are rare these days but they are attainable. Don't settle for less than the best in your love life because you will get exactly what you settle for. How does your love life feel? Trust your feelings.*

Jacqueline Andrews, USA (Reprinted from *Love Sense*)



Photo: Laura Trevelyan

is this *relationship*
healthy?

being released and felt relaxed. In my mind I had an image of myself flying with wings in the blue sky. I felt cleansed inside and understood it to be an experience of inner freedom and spiritual rebirth.

What was I free from? Answer: my negative reaction to being rejected by my peers for just being myself. I had overcome it by believing I was superior and therefore not bothered by what they said to me. But I could not bear the pain so I created a false image of myself. I suppressed and nearly forgot who I really was. There has always been love,

One sunny summer's day, whilst contemplating the Swiss mountains, a thought suddenly came into my mind, "Accept yourself as you are." This set me free. I said to myself, "Yes, I accept myself as I am. I am good and poor at doing particular things. As long as I do my best it's okay to make mistakes because that's me. I have an evil and a good side. I should give up trying to be perfect or wishing I could be somebody else, and just be as I am and do what I can." Funnily enough, it felt as though a big burden had been taken off my shoulders. I had a great sense of



trust, compassion, moral and spiritual values and a sense of wonder in the deepest place of my heart. Now my inner man was torn apart and I found myself longing for my true identity. On the way back to Japan I decided to live a new life. Since then I've appreciated the fact I am given a new day each morning. The experience of inner freedom restored wholeness and gave me a sense of direction. I also realised that to create a new life I had to make moral decisions which would sustain my inner freedom. A few

months later, one of my friends said looking into my eyes, "Now I can trust you". He obviously found something different in me. A new form of friendship was created.

How can one change? My answer would be: accept yourself as you are, find the joy of life and create it everyday, make mistakes but never give up, and get out of and go beyond yourself. In life there are a lot of challenges, some of which seem impossible to cope with. Don't worry - they help us draw on our innermost creativity.

Atsushi Ota, Japan

FAX-THINK-LINK

The Fax-Think-Link is a gathering of ideas and opinions. Next issue we look at:

What would you most like to say to the world's youth?

Contact gloalex@mraoxon.demon.co.uk or fax the editors at +44 - 1865 - 311950, by 1st January, 1998.

This issue: Do you think the study of history is important? Why?

Janet Gunning, New Zealand/UK

History is incredibly powerful. People today can feel angry or moved, ashamed or proud of things which happened hundreds of years ago. But then you would expect me

to defend the study of history - it's what I do. While my friends were studying to be lawyers or accountants, or doctors, or teachers, I was writing essays about people who have been dead for 800 years.

Someone once told me that history is written by the winners - a very cynical but thought provoking observation. We often turn history into a posthumous courtroom drama: examining the evidence, assessing possible motives, and pronouncing our judgement, not only on what happened but on who was right and wrong. For both good and evil we use the past to justify, or at least explain, our present. History can so easily become ammunition in our present day arguments and

In a country where the only thing you can hear is shelling and bombing, a person may lose faith not only in others but also in himself. And he may find it difficult to uproot the bad things that wars usually create, in us like hatred and selfishness, especially when there are many sects e.g. Muslims and Christians etc.

As an educated Lebanese I tried, along with my friends, to devote part of my life to a noble goal e.g. to bring about reconciliation by educating the young. Our first step was to open a public

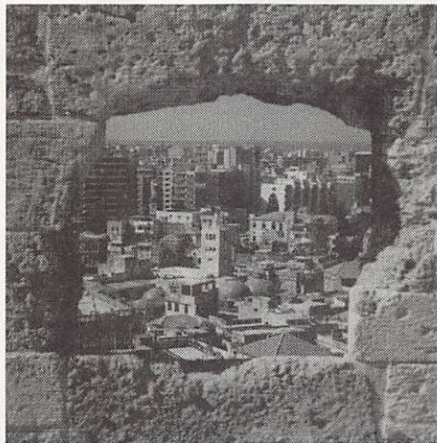


Photo: Peter Riddell

library followed by computer and language centres etc. That was five years ago. But the question which still remains is, "Did I myself succeed in replacing hatred and selfishness with love and forgiveness?"

Let me tell you about an incident which, in many respects, changed my life. I had a very close friend... as dear the soul to oneself. We were both Muslims and studied in the same classes at university. When it came to

the Final exams, I passed but my friend failed. That was the turning point; he avoided me which hurt a lot. When I tried talking to him he wouldn't. Time after time I forgave him until eventually I said to myself, "Why should I forgive someone who keeps hurting me?" I broke off the friendship.

Some time later, I had a frank conversation with another friend who told me to quit working for the aforementioned youth causes. She remarked that if I couldn't forgive my best friend, how could I possibly forgive

people from other sects? She suggested I apply the teaching of Jesus Christ, "If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too." So, I sent a letter to my friend asking his forgiveness for the fact that I had given up on our friendship. To my surprise, he answered by asking me for my forgiveness! Believe me, if you don't have a goal to work towards and a code to live by, life will be meaningless.

Hisham Tofaily, Lebanon

FAX-THINK-LINK

prejudices. We owe it to our future to look at the past with integrity - our motives for studying history are as important as history itself.

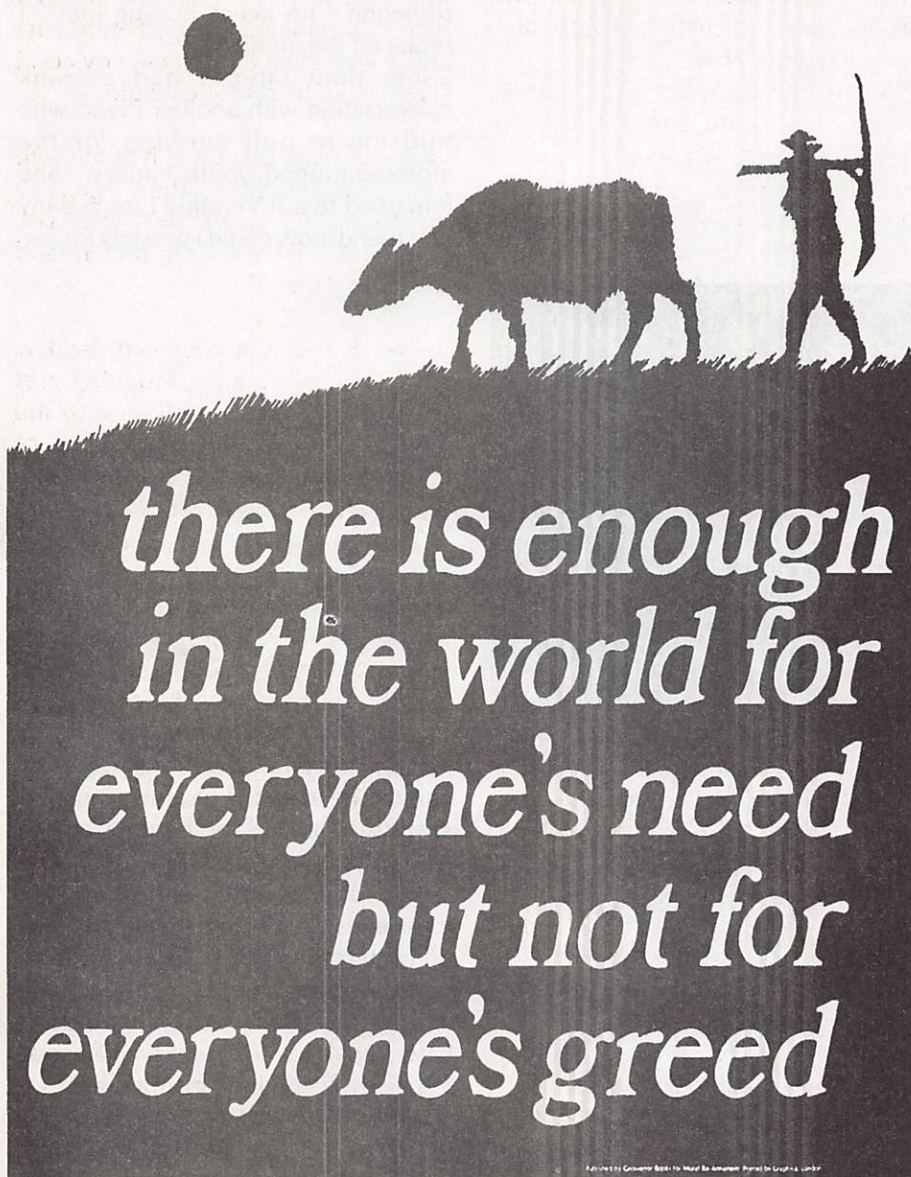
Marc Van Dijk, Holland

When I tell people I am studying history their reactions can be negative. They think I won't find a job because the field of history is so wide - you'll have had a great training in general development, but the labour market demands specifically trained people.

Some people do look beyond the next corner and think that history is very valuable and most useful in the field of conflict

resolution. How can one try to resolve a conflict between two parties, without knowing the background of the problem? To give a very basic example, look at the recent suicide-bombings in Israel. Everyone knows they were not stand-alone events. That conflict goes back to the First Testament of the Bible. And when one doesn't know the history, the cultural heritage and the differences, one will never understand, let alone solve, this conflict.

History gives us the chance to analyse our mistakes and to learn from them. We become very cautious when there is a neo-Nazi demonstration. Why? Because of the Second World War.



there is enough
in the world for
everyone's need
but not for
everyone's greed

Art: Jan Smith

I shall never forget my encounter with Mother Teresa in Calcutta in February 1984. It happened to coincide with a special day in the Roman Catholic calendar when she was inducting 45 new novices into her Order, the Missionaries of Charity. It was officially a day of prayer and reflection at their headquarters, affectionately known as "the Mother House", and visitors were not supposed to enter. But as I had to catch a flight back to Bombay that evening, the Sister in a white saree with a blue-striped hem gave me special dispensation and welcomed me in.

My host, the daughter of a Calcutta family who had known Mother Teresa for many years, had brought me first to Shishu Bhavan, the Home for the Children. We passed through the tiny wooden doorway into the forecourt and quickly up the stairs to the first floor. As we entered the children came running to us, gathered round and held us by the hand - a loving welcome from children who had been given love and radiated it in return.

There were row after row of wooden cots and in one a week-old baby, a tiny scrap warmly wrapped in a blanket. The other children - one, two and three years old - were playing with toys. I asked a young woman in the corner, with a child on her knee, "Where are you from?" "Dublin," she replied. She had arrived two weeks previously. "But I was here in 1980," she said with pride.

She told me there were 180 children

FAX-THINK-LINK

To finish, I'd like to say that the prospects of finding a job aren't that depressing. Most history graduates find a job in various fields. And that is exactly what they have been trained for.

Franziska Berdat, Switzerland

Yes, I think it is very important to study history, because it helps us answer questions such as, "Where do I come from?" or "Where do different cultures and traditions come from?" or "How did all the states and nations evolve?"

The comprehension between other cultures, countries and religions should develop through the study of their backgrounds. However, I think the most important thing

is to remember history because if we are conscious of all the negative and positive things which have happened, we should be able to make the right decisions. This means we won't repeat the mistakes of the past.

James Trevelyan, UK

Man is always searching for an explanation. Why this, why that, why did s/he do it? We all possess a historical consciousness, some dissatisfaction, unrest, curiosity; a sense that all is not well. In Utopia this would not be so and irritant little words like 'Why' (and cousins 'If', 'When', 'Where' and 'How') would be redundant. But the world is not a Utopia and most of us have why, why, why? wailing in our heads.

on that floor. Upstairs there were a further 90 babies whom I was not allowed to see: there was an infectious disease in the ward. All of them were either orphans or "unwanted" children of unmarried mothers or of those families who could not afford another mouth to feed. Some were brain damaged. But none was unwanted here and they radiated a tangible atmosphere of love and care.

A few hundred yards down Acharya Jagdish Chandrabose Road (AJC Road, for short - it is a main thoroughfare into Calcutta) we came to No 54, the headquarters building. The entrance is down a side alley.

We arrived at the same time as a smartly dressed woman in a red and white saree, carrying a huge bunch of flowers. She pulled on a chain on the timber door and a bell rang on the other side. We were let in. "Yes, Mother Teresa is upstairs, but she is conducting a service. Please wait." Shortly a sister came and asked if we would like to go up and watch the service.

We took off our shoes before entering a large, long, unfurnished room on the first floor. Mats covered the bare wooden floor. Several rows of novices in plain white sarees were kneeling, their backs to us as we entered. We too knelt at the back of the room.

Mother Teresa was immediately distinguishable. She was slightly stooped and was the only one wearing a grey cardigan over her saree. She was

conducting the service commissioning the new novices into her Order. It was a simple ceremony. She put her hand on the left shoulder of each novice in turn, said a prayer and handed each of them a prayer book wrapped in brown manila paper, which they kissed as they accepted it from her.

This was, after all, their calling. Others were noticeably moved by the significance of the moment.

Outside, the cacophony of Calcutta's traffic, below the open windows, continued unabated. The sound of car horns frequently pierced the room, punctuating the ceremony - a sharp reminder of the world out there to which these fledgling Sisters of Charity had a specific calling. Inside there remained serenity. At the end of the service they all flocked around Mother Teresa who handed each of them a rosary, a cross to pin onto their sarees, a picture of Mary, the Mother of Jesus and a Mackintosh's toffee! The large tin of sweets was, of course, a gift from a well-wisher.

She talked privately to the woman with the bunch of flowers. Then she came over to talk to the five of us who had been allowed in to the service. She asked where we had come from. America, Germany, Britain and India.

I handed her a pack of postcards - a humble offering, I explained, from my wife and me. My wife, a graphics artist, had designed them and they bore the Gandhian slogan, "There is enough in the world for everyone's need but not

for everyone's greed". Mother Teresa read it out loud so that all could hear. "This will feed people," she said. She meant it literally as well as spiritually. There were 90 cards in the pack, I informed her. "Oh, but we are 273 here," she rejoined smiling. Perhaps she could give them to the new novices, I suggested. She said she would.

I showed her a photograph of my wife and baby daughter, then aged 16 months. "Oh, a baby!" she exclaimed. She put her hand on the picture and said, "God bless!"

Below in the central courtyard, the new novices were singing, laughing and clapping to the music. "Praise to the Lord and love Him for ever." Many of them, no doubt, will. Each novice has a two year initial training, followed by a further six years. Few, if any, were likely to fall out. One I talked to came from Mangalore, another from Nagaland. There were 40 to 50 new novices every six months, I was told. Someone carried out a blackboard on which was chalked, inside a surrounding picture of roses, the encouragement, "Our very hearty congratulations to our dearest sisters".

Now they bear the responsibility of carrying forward Mother Teresa's work. She may have had her detractors among the materialists and non-believers. But, like her friend Princess Diana, she gave to everyone she met what the world most needs: a compassionate love.

Mike Smith
Managing Editor, For A Change, UK

FAX-THINK-LINK

The study of history is important to know who we are, to show that to every action there is a reaction and to learn from our mistakes so that it will be better in the future... And just think, without it we would not possess the gift of hindsight.

So does history, whose prime function is to dwell on the past, help us cope in the present tense, with reality and the future? History has an important message here because no matter how much the world progresses it will always regress - just ask the man who stumbled on nuclear energy. It teaches us that there are no short cuts to a perfect world. Okay, it gets in the way a bit, comes back to us, even haunts us. But it steers us away from illusion and make believe, welcoming us to reality. We avoid it at our peril.

Sarah Wood, New Zealand

The study of history conjures up images of learning endless names and dates, for some. But history is much more than this. It is about real people, places and events. Studying history creates a sense of perspective, and an awareness of how and why our world has come to be like it is. History is not confined to books - we are living it out today, and the decisions and actions we make shape the course of history for future generations. Therefore it is important to learn from the past so that we do not repeat its mistakes. And as my history teacher warns, watch what you write in your diary - it may be studied hundreds of years from now!

reflections on *the ego*

My own heart is often stubbornly cold and ignorant, and my own ego is often the cause and barrier to its enlightenment and indeed to the spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness. The Hindu scriptures are clear about the falsely proud; they inhibit all that is good on earth and as Krishna expounds in the Bhagavad Gita, Ch.16, v.4;

dambho darpo timanas ca
krodhah parusyam eva ca
ajnanam ca bhijatasya
partha sampadam asurim

"Ostentation, arrogance, false ego, anger, as also harshness and ignorance..." (aspects of my own nature that sometimes surface) "...are the endowments of those born with a demonic nature" (a horrifying thought).

When I find myself judging others, unable to forgive, cold and harsh, I find inspiration and humour when I revisit a story my Dad told me when I was an infant:

On the banks of the Sabarmati River in India, there once lived a boatman whose life consisted of three main duties - ferrying people across the river in his tiny paddleboat for a small fee, feeding his family and praying to the Lord in gratitude, whenever he found the time, for the continued safety of himself, his family and his passengers. Once late in the evening, on the night before the monsoon season was due to start, he found himself ferrying a distinguished scholar across the windy Sabarmati.

"Tell me," asked the scholar after



Art: Lisa Kesby

some time, "after you've taken me to the other side, will you have a break and read some Shakespeare?"

"No sahib," replied the boatman meekly, "I cannot read".

"Then you have surely wasted 25% of your life", the scholar responded with disgust.

Some minutes later as the waves became somewhat rougher, and the boat more difficult to navigate, the scholar inquired,

"Do you know how to calculate the speed at which we are travelling?"

"No sahib, I know only simple sums", came the shamed answer.

"You know nothing of mathematics?", thundered the scholar, "You fool, you have misspent 50% of your life".

In due course the wind picked up and the boat began to oscillate angrily on the waves. As it did so, the scholar shouted at his companion,

"Do you know how to predict the weather by using geographical calculus?"

"No sahib", came the rather preoccupied answer, "I only know about this boat and my river."

"Then you've wasted a full 75% of your life", returned the scholar pitifully.

At that moment the boat capsized and the two men were thrown into the furious waters,

"Swim sahib, swim!", screamed the boatman to his companion.

"I can't", came the choked reply.

"Then sahib you have wasted a 100% of your life", said the boatman to himself as he swam safely ashore.

Ego, arrogance or prejudice often prevents me and indeed members of my own community and country from doing the right thing.

Kumar Raval, UK

And when I am gone let this be my song

And when I am gone
You'll find me

In the eyes of a child that cries
In the arms open with charm
In a moment spellbound

And then you'll understand
How important I am
Then you'll call my name
And you'll feel the pain

And when I am gone
You'll find me
In a real smile
In a boundless sky
In a life so fragile

And then you'll understand
How important I am
Then you'll call my name
And you'll share my pain

And when I am gone
Don't ask why
Wipe your eyes

Help a child who cries
Open your arms with charm
Draw a moment spellbound

In my name
Feel someone's pain
And when I am gone
Let this be my song

And when I am gone
Give someone a smile
Knit a boundless sky
Help life survive

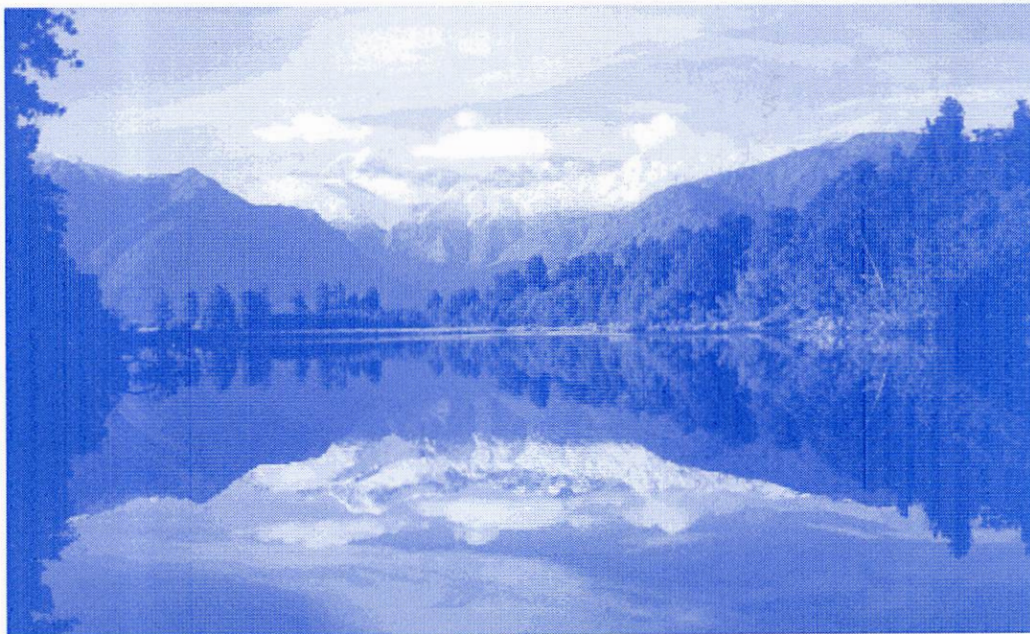
In Love's name
Share someone's pain
And when I am gone
Let this be my song

Help someone to stand
Someone to understand
This is not the end if you
Lend someone your hand

And when I am gone
Let's together try
To keep this Love alive

In Love's name
Help someone's pain
And when I am gone
Let this be my song

Rosa Bellino, Italy/UK
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Lake Matheson, New Zealand, Photo: Gail Trevelyan

arts expressed

SCATTERED THOUGHTS



I married 'Miss Right'. I didn't know her first name was 'Always'.

Nothing but what is past is certain.

What is worse than a blind nation?
A nation with sight but no vision.

Action will remove the doubt that theory cannot solve.– Tehyl Hsieh

Learn to be silent. Let your quiet mind listen and absorb.– Pythagorus

I can take any amount of criticism,
as long as it is unqualified praise.– Noel Coward

Conscience has gone the way of the dinosaur.

Success is a journey
not a destination.

A divine voice sings through all creation.
– Jewish prayer

The only way to stop is to stop.– Rachel Turner

There is one thing stronger than all the armies of the world
and that is an idea whose time has come.– Victor Hugo

Be open. Be real. Be vulnerable.– Marta Dabrowska

Happiness is the person who wants what they have.

Most people wish to serve God – but only in an advisory capacity.

Today's mighty oak is yesterday's little nut that stayed put.

What have you let go of today?– Renee Pan