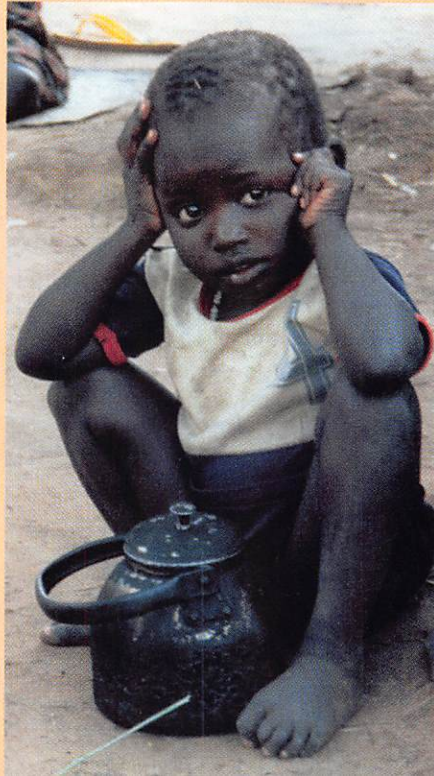
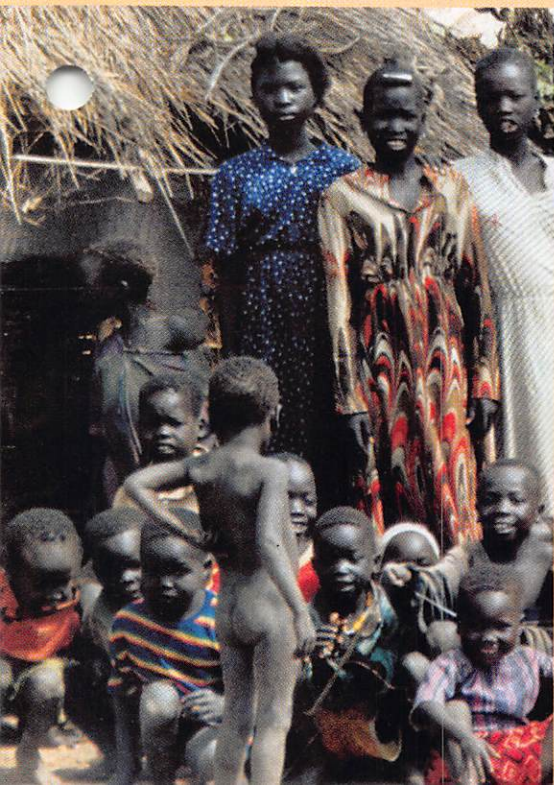
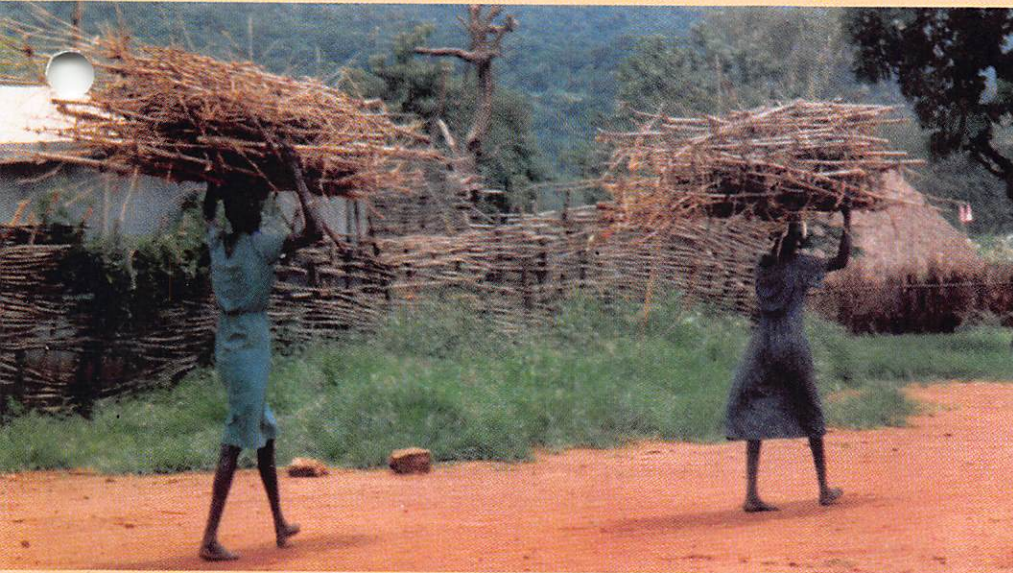


# GLOBAL

## EXPRESS

### Transitions





## in transit

Hunger, AIDS, Racism, War... *Marie Claire* magazine (UK January edition) has just highlighted 'the things we can't believe are still happening'. The article, entitled 'And we call this progress?', opens with this statement, 'Forget new technology and globalisation, we in the West should be ashamed'. I'd agree with that. Several pages later and you're into the glitzy world of 'Friends' whose stars have 'more money than they can spend'. Most of us live light years from both these realities. Whilst it's fashionable to espouse the causes of the former it's all too easy to try to emulate the latter. Yet somehow the glaring gap between these two realities has to be bridged if we are to bring some cohesion to this world of ours. The key lies in individuals deciding to be different. How many of us know that we're sitting on the fence? That there are things in our lives which need changing, eg. habits to be broken, relationships to be restored, issues to stand up for, commitments to be made? How many of us are stone deaf to the voice of conscience? And how good we know we would feel if we made a few changes. As someone once said, 'In a nation (world) in transition what needs to change is people'.

**Laura Trevelyan, UK**

Next issue: Materialism, etc.

Parent/child relationships

Deadline: February 21, 2000

Question: Who knows what's on our back cover?



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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 worldwide network of people working for personal responsibility and conflict resolution. Absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, together with a search for inspiration from God (or the inner voice), are central to this approach to 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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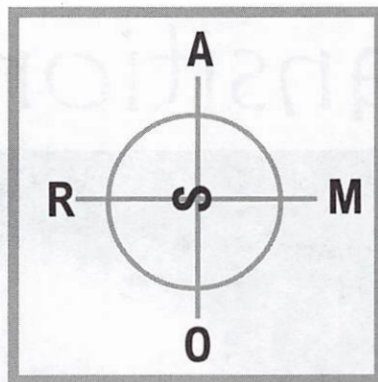


## All roads lead to AMOR

Crossing the millennium  
reminds me  
of other crossings  
I need to embark upon  
one within myself  
and one outside myself

It is an odyssey  
of the Heart  
to transform  
ignorance into knowledge  
dreams into reality  
bondage into freedom  
conflict into peace  
hate into forgiveness  
poverty into fullness  
loneliness into wholeness

The new millennium is  
a challenge  
a chance  
to travel  
from nowhere to NowHere  
from everywhere to EverywHere  
from the present to the Present  
and discover that finally  
all roads lead to  
AMOR



The new millennium is both a chance and a challenge. Perhaps if we all 'shared', 'owned' this journey, we could make a difference. Since great journeys start with a single step—this single moment, this single thought, this single act, this single day, this single life, could be a step into a world that is more at peace.

As I struggle with my limitations and fears, as I despair that I will ever be able to overcome them, my eyes catch sight of a little note I scribbled for myself on the kitchen cupboard: 'Great miracles happen when you surrender your yesterdays and tomorrows, and remember that the present is the Present'.

The cross, the circle, the square, the spiral, the four points of the compass, are symbols that both East and West share. The word Amor, meaning love in Latin—which for the Christian is another name for God—is also 'something' we all experience. And the word is *just* a pointer to a reality that is beyond words, to a reality that we all wish to share in our lives, whatever sex or race we belong to, whatever faith we profess, and even for people who claim to have none.

*Rosa Bellino, Italy/UK*

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# GE

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# Transitions...



Dandelion seed-pods, Cotswold Hills, England, Photo: Peter Sisam



**As we enter the third millennium we see a world scourged by selfishness, greed, hatred and corruption. Not much different from the last two millennia then! But it's human nature, what else can you expect?**

As a boy I remember listening to my grandfather, a socialist, and being inspired by his vision of a world free from exploitation. He asked me who I thought was the biggest enemy of the working class. I thought of various possibilities—big business, certain politicians, the IMF. 'No', he replied 'the biggest enemy of the working man is himself—his own greed and selfishness'. That is when it dawned on me that the world could only change if people would.

The idea that we have moral choice has always been important to me. Looking at some of the popular theories about human nature it's striking how different they are, and the little part that moral choice plays.

Sociologists have tended to emphasise that we are a product of our upbringing and that the key to better people is careful social engineering. Karl Marx took this to an extreme, thinking that people could be cured of selfishness if they were brought up in a society where there was no private property and everything was shared. According to this view individual moral choice is an illusion.

Religions, on the other hand, *have* tended to emphasise moral choice. But it's not always that simple: for example there is a stream within Christian thought which suggests that human nature is inherently wicked and that only God himself can bestow the gift of goodness through an act of conversion. Taken to extremes, this also suggests that moral choice is an illusion since all is pre-destined by God.

Philosophers of the Enlightenment and their successors, the Positivists, have emphasised the mind's potential for rational thought—by making rational choices we can solve all problems. For them, the important thing is to educate people to think clearly, and since religion hasn't always encouraged this, positivists have often opposed religion and morality.

However, since Freud first started writing about the subconscious we have been aware of the extent to which people do not behave rationally. Modern psychologists are a mixed bunch so we can't make generalisations, but from psychology we have the idea that our rational, conscious nature is a thin veneer sitting on top of powerful primordial needs and drives that must be satisfied. Psychologists are (rightly) concerned with 'healthy vs sick' questions rather than what is moral. But there is a tendency to confuse the two—to think that 'bad' is just a form of 'mad'—no more the result of choice than catching a cold.

Ever since Darwin first wrote about natural selection and 'the survival of the fittest', there has been a view that the selfish, individualistic sides of human nature are necessary to advance humanity. As Ivan Boesky notoriously said in the 80s 'greed is good for you'. More recently, biologists such as Richard Dawkins have refined evolutionary theory to suggest that it is not individual animals that compete but individual genes. He pointed out that co-operation is often a better evolutionary strategy than competition and coined the phrase 'the selfish gene'. But for people who heard the phrase but didn't read the book the impression is often given

that it is our genes that make us selfish and (yet again) moral choice plays no part.

So far, the theories have been ones which suggest that our nature is something we have little control over. However, philosophers such as Sartre and Nietzsche, struggling against stifling social conformity, wanted to emphasise human choice. They proposed that humans are free to create their own destiny and nature—to the point of suggesting that we have no essential nature. Borrowing from John Locke, they say that human nature is a blank sheet of paper on which we write our own script. But since they thought of morality as part of the restricting baggage they were trying to move away from, theirs was a distinctly amoral vision.

There is truth in all these ideas, but I find myself most attracted to those who, while recognising the part that genetics and upbringing play, agree that moral choice is important. Looking at my own life it is clear that my genes and conditioning have produced a whole mass of conflicting motives and drives. I may not be able to choose whether I feel love, hate, desire, repulsion etc, but I can choose what I do with those feelings. And it seems to me that just as when you exercise a muscle it grows—so it is with the inner life. If I exercise certain feelings by dwelling or acting on them, they become stronger, and if I choose not to dwell on them they become weaker. Friends who are into health food tell me 'you are what you eat'. I would add 'you are what you think', which is worrying when you look at how much trash people read and watch on TV.

Somebody once said to me, 'I'm too old to change', and there is some truth in this. So much of our personality is about habits and as people get older they often become set in their ways. It would take as big a miracle for me to change mental habits overnight as it would for my body to become athletic—these things take time and daily discipline. To me, morality is about which choices make us more human as individuals and as a society. Yet miracles happen and people do have radical conversions.

One thing about taking the route of least resistance is that it leads to a dead end—a private hell of our own making. An addict may have a choice, but it doesn't seem that way to him. By far the most successful programme for treating addicts this century has been the 12-steps programme of Alcoholics Anonymous, also developed for use in other addictions. Its first three steps are: 1) We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable; 2) Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity; 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

So many have had this experience of God breaking the bars of the prisons we create for ourselves that it cannot be ignored. To those cynics who tell me that human nature cannot change, I would answer that we always have a choice.



## Transitions...

As the morphine wore off, I frantically pressed the nurse's buzzer. 'I need...more...please...', I managed with tears welling up as the pain again threatened to rip me in half. The doctor approached. 'I don't want to give you anymore, but...'. He hesitated. 'The pain...', I choked. The Emergency Room was busy that night. He had no time to negotiate.

The man next door was found frozen on a park bench, a bottle stuck to his hand. The woman next to me repeatedly fell out of bed, crying out about how no one cared. Their voices faded within minutes as the IV worked its magic. Their moans melted into soothing whispers as I felt nothing except more alone than ever.

As I floated into a fabricated calm, the haze gave way to one clear thought: I don't want to be here ever again. I drifted off further, aware of the absence of love and meaning in my life. Though designed to numb all pain, the morphine was no match for my consciousness, which was gnawing from within and screaming to get out. This was not where I was supposed to be.

When I left hospital the next day, I knew that if I continued to live as I was my entire life would be shaped by the threat of unbearable pain and loneliness. I had lived with Crohn's disease for almost nine years—a chronic illness characterised, in my case, by inflammation of the small intestine resulting in abdominal pain and exhaustion. I had had scary episodes before, but this hospitalisation was the first clear sign that I had to make some changes. I did not know what that would entail nor did I understand that Crohn's (more than physical symptoms) has everything to do with chronic negative emotional patterns. Patterns of numbing both emotional and physical pain—such as anorexic behaviour, substance abuse and simply denying all feelings—were making and keeping me sick.

A friend introduced me to the concept of mind/body medicine and encouraged me to see a naturopath. It took me four months to muster up the courage to go, but after the first session I felt new hope. The naturopath told me that I was not responsible *for* my illness but that I had to become responsible *to* my illness. In other words, I had to learn to listen to my body and respond to its needs. She explained that illness and pain are teachers, with lessons to offer on how to take better care of ourselves. She also said that healing is largely about finding the courage to look deep within and to learn to love all parts of ourselves, even those parts which make us afraid, ashamed or enraged.

Months of work followed. Aviator and poet Ann Morrow Lindburgh, said, 'It's not for the moment you are stuck that you need courage, but for

the long uphill climb back to sanity and faith'. Those words echoed through me day after day as I strug-

gled to change. I had remained stuck in the pattern of victim for many years, but the real battle began with the admission that I did not want to continue so disconnected from myself.

I discovered a new story line, a new character to play—one who could create her own health. However, new roles require undoing previous ways of being, shattering one's sense of self. It's as if you are on stage when suddenly you are stripped of your costume and expected to carry on, in character. For someone like me, regarded as strong, confident and completely in control, letting go of who I thought I was, was terrifying. Learning to surrender and find faith in the process was extremely challenging but proved the most freeing.

It is two years since my visit to the Emergency Room and I have found the courage to continue the uphill climb. I am learning how to cook and about the principles of healing through food; I have given up smoking, alcohol and caffeine—torturous to an inflamed intestine!; I have quit my fast-paced job as a hospital social worker; and I am seeking a more balanced life. Most importantly, I continue to face my emotional demons: fears, vulnerabilities, and all the parts of myself that I could never accept. I am learning to love all of me, even the diseased part I had previously labelled 'weak' and 'undesirable'. Our deepest sources of vulnerability call upon us to develop compassion where previously we may have turned away from ourselves.

Ironically, the morphine woke me up to the fact that I had been drugging myself in all sorts of ways, from over-work to suppressing emotion, to avoid looking at what was inside. The pain spoke to me for months after, begging me to stop, listen and address its needs, my needs.

Slowly, I am un-learning my conditioning to be a 'pleaser', to put everyone else's needs before my own. I am un-learning negative beliefs about my lack of self-worth and I am also learning to respond not only to my pain but to all of me. Consequently, my pain has been transformed from an unfair burden to the voice that guides me towards healing and growth. Finally, I am learning to listen to the voice within, to give it space and to find the courage to change in a way that honours its message.

*Alyssa Kuzmarov, Canada*

I sat and looked around. I was in what used to be a white only area, where the presence of a black person was punishable by law, a criminal act. There was I, with fellow South Africans at one of the most beautiful beaches in Africa, oblivious to each other's colour. But deep in my heart I

**There was I, with fellow South Africans at one of the most beautiful beaches in Africa, oblivious to each other's colour.**

knew that we were not totally integrated, six years after the end of apartheid.





Camber Beach, Rye, Sussex, England, Photo: Peter Sisam



## Transitions...

Just 10 years ago, I would have been in a meeting somewhere in Mafeking, my home town, discussing how to destroy the enemy and going out to implement the resolutions even if it meant killing people—something that no black person in South Africa can be proud of, no matter how legitimate our cause may have been.

But today we are fighting a different kind of enemy: crime, a direct result of poverty. This is fuelled by the kind of energy and history that we have. As youth, we were involved in the struggle and we suspended our education. So we have few skills. Being part of the global village has brought a lot of competition and we cannot compete. Added to this is the high unemployment rate; we are left to roam the streets, committing crime using the 'street smarts' we acquired during the struggle. Whether it's the northern suburbs of Johannesburg, or a street corner in a township, crime has taken over.

The dark days of apartheid may be finished but this new creature is tormenting us. The international community likes to label us the nation of miracles. But I say we are the nation of hard-workers with *Ubuntu/Botho* (an African philosophy of living together humanely) in everything we do. It was not a miracle that we went through the transition process with relative peace. And we are definitely going to beat crime.

Former President Nelson Mandela advocated a spirit of reconciliation, which is spreading through the nation. However, this spirit still needs to be fostered amongst white South Africans. A hand of peace, friendship and forgiveness has been extended by the majority of black South Africans. Yet our fellow whites are not reaching out, as if Blacks are to blame for the terrible past we have in apartheid.

The rate of emigration to countries such as New Zealand and Australia clearly shows the anger and fear of white people. Most emigrants are professionals who have skills not only to develop this country technologically, but skills in human development. *Ubuntu/Botho*, which is cultivated as part of black culture, needs to be developed with whites. Then we can create a uniquely South African culture—a culture to defeat the scourge of crime and, ultimately, to unite the nation.

Integration can be seen amongst the young people, in primary and secondary schools. They are teaching older generations, practically, that we can live side by side—firstly as human beings, and secondly as South Africans. This gives real hope that our country can change for the better.

South Africa remains a beacon of hope for the next millennium. Together with the rest of the continent, we must strive for an African renaissance—to make Africa what it should be. Apartheid defeat is the most significant process in human relations. As President Thabo Mbeki said during his inauguration speech in June 1999, 'As the sun continues to rise, to banish the darkness of long years of colonialism and the apartheid, what the light over our land must show is a nation delinquent at work to create a better life for all'.



I always had many friends—they liked being with a happy, optimistic, problem-free person. However, it was all an act, not the real Angela. Deep down I wanted them to see me for who I really was. And yet, I was not ready to do the same.

I had my own problems; my father liked to drink. It was torture going home knowing there would be quarrels, tears and shouting. I resented my father for doing that to us. I used to dream of having a father like those of my friends, someone I could go out with and not be ashamed of. I had a picture in my mind of how I wanted him to be. Only then would I love him. I created an idol, in the comfortable world of my imagination, and expected him to be perfect. Never had I looked at the real man behind the drunken behaviour. He was just an ordinary man, making mistakes like anyone else. Moreover, he was the person to whom I belonged.

With no concept of his inner being, I had seen him only as the 'machine' who had produced me. I had known nothing about the person I'd lived with since birth, not even his favourite colour or song. And all that time he was my father. No, he hadn't spent much time with me but he was the one who had helped me most through problems and trials. He had shown me how to value and appreciate people for who they are.

For the situation to improve I had to change my attitude towards him. I chose to love him for who he is with all his faults. I still do not approve of some of the things he does, but nothing will take away my love for him.

*Angela Starovoitova, Ukraine*



I spent two years in the Soviet Army (now the Russian Army). Happily, I was neither an occupant of Afghanistan nor a 'peace-maker' in one of the countless 'hot-spots' of the Soviet Union because my mother had an acquaintance in the conscription department and delivered a bottle of the best Armenian cognac to the right place at the right time. I knew nothing of such tricks. When I waited with other conscripts to be taken away to my regiment, I was astonished to see my classmate, a good student at the Polytechnic University, taken to the Navy for three years (a bad deal). At that time many of us naively thought that army service would be of benefit, although I suspected that the only skill I would learn would be that of surviving.

The Air Defense regiment where I served was civilised and comprised mostly of enlightened officers, and future and ex-university students, who had to devote several years to the Army at that time. Shortly afterwards Gorbachev cancelled conscription for students, but I wasn't as lucky as those born after 1970 and had plenty of time to reflect on my life. The two years were comparatively idle and full of foolishness. I accepted the famous dictum that when God created discipline on earth the Air Forces were flying, and when he wanted discipline in the sky there was stormy weather.

There were many traditions in the Soviet Army apart from the official 'invincibility and glory' which made us sick every time we heard it. Older soldiers exploited newcomers to the utmost. But we were relatively happy because the construction troops in the neighbouring barracks had an order and spirit which reminded us of prison. As I served in the kitchen police or in the barracks every other day, I would dream

impatiently of reaching the 'golden age' when I would be a senior soldier. At last the day came. The crucial question 'to beat or not to beat' was on the horizon. Three of my colleagues from another flying squadron answered this by beating up a fresher, full of Perestroika ideas, so that he needed hospitalisation. As a result, they saw the rest of the upheaval of Soviet reforms through grated windows. This made me think more intensively than the Prince of Denmark, and that was not all.

Even though our officers were quiet and educated, I was sworn at many times when I lost my automatic rifle. I was on duty at the aircraft parking place while the planes were out flying. This was a prestigious duty because you could either read 'War and Peace' or smoke three hundred cigarettes a week. If a junior didn't come to take over during lunch-break, you could hide your rifle somewhere in the bomb-shelter and go to the canteen. I did that several times.

Once when I came back, as full as Sir Falstaff after a sumptuous feast, I couldn't find my rifle in its hiding place. I knew full-well the consequences of that sort of loss, especially if the gun were stolen, and I prepared myself for a minimum of a year in prison. If I was lucky I would come home at the same time as my classmate in the Navy. My commanders (there were so many commanders in the Army that if I spat in the garrison street I would hit a commander) and colleagues looked everywhere for the rifle while the airfield gradually filled with returning planes and unflattering comments about my loss.

I was crushed and did not know what to do. Neither comrades nor the Communist Party could help. I had grown up in an ordinary atheistic family and (in the words of H.E.Fosdick) 'had no invisible means of support'. My parents had baptised me 'just in case' according to the normal double-standard, double-thinking Soviet practice, but until then I had only been to churches converted into museums.

I was an ordinary boy, who thought that the world was divided into 'right' socialist and 'non-enlightened' capitalist parts. Suddenly, this diligent member of the Young Communist Union started praying and asking God to help him find that damned rifle. Looking back it was awkward but at the time it was sincere.

The rifle was found an hour later, when I climbed onto a plane's tail. I almost fell off when I saw it lying on the roof of a shed. I still have no idea who had played such a trick on me. Maybe it was a standard joke of the construction troops who were jealous of our 'freedom' in Air-Defense. Maybe some of my colleagues did it just for fun. It did not change my life immediately but pointed to changes to come. I understood that there was a spiritual world which is close to us, that we are able to contact when in trouble.

A month later, my Hamlet-like dilemma of whether 'to beat or not to beat' was resolved. I was posted to a remote radio station. It was less military than an Irish pub. The four of us there didn't divide the world into older and younger soldiers, but lived as friends. It was then that I started to recognise ways out of the trap of conformity. And, I hope, my life stopped being so far from spiritual questions.





# ANOTHER FORO

**This summer I spent five weeks doing what millions do every day—I lived in a refugee camp.**

Unlike the 16,000 Sudanese seeking refuge in Sherkole camp, I went as a volunteer. The UNHCR Camp Sadako Youth Awareness Programme offers young people a chance to learn about refugees by living with them. Unlike my stereotypical images of hot, desolate wind-swept plains with people living in canvas tents, I was in the green hills of Western Ethiopia in the rainy season. Often it was very cold. The camp itself seemed more like a village, with the refugees living in *Tukuls*—round mud huts with thatched roofs. Sherkole camp is disorientatingly beautiful.

I had conjured up pictures of bodies lying in the dust, mouths open and hands outstretched for food—another of the many stereotypes I was forced to reconsider. Each refugee family in Sherkole receives a monthly ration, so they are able to cook for themselves. But the ration (consisting of grain, pulses, oil, and salt—no fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs or dairy products) has no nutritional value and is adequate only for short-term survival. The children have bellies swollen through malnutrition and skinny legs. And these are the lucky ones; for a few months of every year they can grow some crops or vegetables in the small area surrounding their hut. Those in Eastern Ethiopia have only dust in which to plant.

The overriding feeling in the camp is one of immense loss—not just of homeland and loved ones, but of their very selves. Everything has been stripped away. Most have only the clothes they came in. Some desperately sell part of their ration, saving up for months to buy an item of clothing for their naked child. It costs only £3 to fully clothe a child in Ethiopia, but when the most you can earn is 25p a day working in the fields, and that money buys barely enough vegetables for one meal, it takes a long time to clothe a family of eight. No clothes are distributed, but the refugees are given a stove, a pot, a pan, and a plastic container to carry water. A few have a Bible, or photos of a loved one, that they brought with them. But most walked for days to reach the camp, and came with nothing. In camps such as this, many have already been refugees for years, with no immediate prospect of returning home. In reality, what is needed is a town with adequate educational, community and health facilities for 16,000 people.

Megumi (the other volunteer, from Japan) and I lived on the UNHCR compound right in the middle of the camp. Our room was very basic—a kind of con-

crete prison cell with a metal door and bars at the window. We had a bed each, two chairs and a small table. There were no shelves, cupboards or drawers, so our stuff was either piled on a chair or fighting for space on the table.



The camp itself seemed more like a village, with the refugees living

We had a bathroom attached to our room which at times smelt so bad we had to try and hold our breath, making washing a quick and determined process. The toilet fluctuated between leaking badly and flooding the bathroom, or refusing to flush. We washed with well water out of a bucket. Our room was a hive of insects: wasps, cockroaches, flies, mosquitoes, and ants. They initially caused us great distress, but we soon found ways to cope. The food was simple but pretty good considering the limitation of ingredients and the difficulties of cooking on an open



# FOTTEN PEOPLE

fire. Unfortunately my stomach boycotted the proceedings and I ended up with amoebic dysentery, and had bad diarrhoea for seven weeks. At times I was ill in bed with fever, cramps etc but mostly able to continue work—just



Tukuls—round mud huts with thatched roofs, Photo: Fiona Leggat

tired and weak, with embarrassingly frequent dashes to the nearest long drop. Soon most of the camp were up to date on my movements (so to speak), and it was the cause of much amusement.

Often it was hardest working out where you could be of most use. I held a series of workshops on equal rights for women and conducted research into the use of resources by refugees. In particular I enjoyed my enthusiastic class of 35 trainee primary school teachers (only one woman). I taught for an hour every day on various topics, including

games and songs (it was surreal to be singing London's Burning and Three Blind Mice!). They wanted to teach in ways more interesting than simply lessons from the front of the class. It's not easy. There are almost no resources at the school—not one ball or map, and only a splattering of textbooks.

The people of Sherkole camp are desperate—not only for food and clothes, but for contact with the outside world. They feel forgotten. Most do not know where their families are, and wait each day, wondering if their relatives will arrive. The experiences of a friend of mine, Daniel, are typical. He is 18, and what is called an unaccompanied minor. His father was killed. Fighting took over his town and he became separated from his mother. He was forced to flee with some relatives. That was over ten years ago, and he has since lost his relatives. He is alone, has spent more than half his life as a refugee, and may never know whether any of his family are alive.

Many of the refugees had never seen a non-African before and almost none spoke English. Initially, some of the children were scared of me and Megumi and would run away, thinking we were devils or diseased. For the first days people just stared, but after a week everyone knew us and would wave and shake hands. Some of the old ladies cried because they were so happy to meet us. The children became very friendly, running after us, wanting to sing for us and touch our skin. We would play ball with them, or traditional games (which I could never get the hang of) or pull faces. We visited some of the pre-schools where all 200 children came out to welcome us. How do you create bonds with people when you cannot talk with them? It is in the midst of such suffering that the boundaries which usually exist between strangers are swept away—a look, a tiny hand in yours can say so much more than words.

The constant attention was overwhelming at times. Friendship-wise it was exhausting and almost lonely. We spent each day sharing the refugees' problems, but with no one to turn to ourselves. Often I felt helpless. All I could give were token gestures—a smile, a hug or a listening ear. Yet these mean everything because they acknowledge a person as a person, not as a refugee. I sat and listened to their stories and wished there was something I could say to make the pain go away. I thought of how frivolous my life is at home, of all the possessions I own and the opportunities I have. No one could believe that, through having parents of different nationalities, I have two countries and two passports. They don't even have one. Even the staff there owned less than I brought for a month and I thought I had packed light.



Often I found myself shutting off reality, chatting to people as if I had just met them in the street. 'Hi, how are you?'—'I'm fine thanks.' But of course they're not fine, they're never fine, they never have a good day, or sleep through a whole night. One friend, Michael, took me to his house to meet his baby. It was six months old and tiny enough to hold in one hand. Michael is 26 and probably has AIDS, but it is too expensive to test refugees. His wife is 20, has typhoid and is probably HIV positive. She has no breast milk and the baby has malaria. Every few days I went to visit them, each time wondering if the baby was still alive. There is treatment that could help, but no one could afford it. Michael asked what more could be done. I gave some money to buy special food. I hear now that the baby has recovered. But you can't help everyone, and that's difficult.

My head often spun in confusion. I was surrounded by laughter, crying, singing, screaming, fear, desperation. The worst was the silence. The refugees are powerless, they have to sit and wait until someone decides their future. My biggest fear before I went was whether I would cope—and at times the suffering, disease, flies, and attention were simply too much. But you do cope, because you have to. The refugees need you to be strong, and having your own personal crisis does not help anyone. At home it is easy to picture them simply as hungry mouths to feed, totally dependent on aid workers, unable to do anything for themselves. But they are not. They get on with it. They build their own huts, and

and dignity. They do not beg, or steal even one cob of corn from their neighbour's garden, though they have no food to give to their children.

I had expected to feel distress, shock, anger, frustration, helplessness, disillusionment, and a desire to change things. I did not expect to laugh so much, to make so many friends, and to be so sad to leave.

In many ways I have returned heartbroken. To leave was more distressing than to arrive. The refugees' prospects are bleak. They have

## An experience like this puts your whole life into perspective.

little chance of being able to return to the Sudan in the near future. If they do, they return to destroyed houses and land ravaged by war. Their prospects on the camp are not much better. The Sudan is an old conflict, and not often in the news. It is the forgotten war, going on for so long that the world has shut its eyes, and in doing so its heart. It is not a fashionable place to distribute aid; new, higher profile conflicts have taken the limelight. The Sherkole refugees have heard that more aid money was raised for Kosovo in a few weeks than they have received in years. They asked me why the aid goes to Kosovo and not to them. What can you say?

Before I left friends would ask, 'Why?'. Why choose to go somewhere you know will be disillusioning and distressing? I could not put it into words, but I knew I had to do it. I feel privileged to have been given the opportunity to share in the lives and suffering of these people. An experience like this puts your whole life into perspective. And, as clichéd as it sounds, it makes you realise that one person can make a difference. On my return, friends have asked what I actually achieved, what difference I made to the refugees' lives. They have no more food than before. There are no fewer deaths, or less disease. Are my friends right? Did I achieve anything?

The many letters I have received, the tears shed when I left, and the new-born babies called Fiona tell me that I did give them something. I gave them hope, friendship and acknowledgement. They may be statistics to most of the world, but to me they are people—they are my friends. I also have a terrible sense of responsibility. I am no longer ignorant. I know they are there, I know how great their needs are, and I also know that things can change. There is so much need in the world, so many horrific stories of floods, famines, earthquakes and war that it is simply overwhelming, and you wonder how much you can do to really change things. For me the key is having been able to focus that desire to help. Deciding to commit yourself to helping just one small group of individuals can seem small or introspective but that is where you can really make and see a difference. I know I can transform the lives of this small refugee community, so how can I possibly not try?

**Fiona Leggat, New Zealand/UK**

If you would like to know how you can help (eg. £3 to clothe a child) please contact Fiona at: Sherkole Refugee Fund, c/o 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD, UK  
E-mail: [fionaleggat@hotmail.com](mailto:fionaleggat@hotmail.com)



Volunteers (left to right): Shimelis Behailu, engineering student, Ethiopia; Fiona Leggat; Johannes Allemu, driver, Ethiopia; Megumi Kato, nursing student, Japan.

work to improve the camp clinic and school. They find some inner strength to make the most of the hand they have been dealt. A number of them are educated, and used to live in beautiful homes, with a car, money and a good job. A degree means little in a refugee camp, and now they dig their own latrine. Yet they try to live with pride



# (COMMON WEALTH?)

**On South Africa's east coast, Durban is a beautiful, palm-treed city... I think.**

Apart from sweating it out to watch a courageous parade of painted, barefooted school children dance its way through the burning streets, we saw mostly the interior of the convention centre. We were a diverse team who came together for an intense couple of weeks to create and attend a stand for Moral Re-Armament at an exhibition of NGOs, linked to CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting). I knew little about the Commonwealth, but have been inspired by its principles (over page) and the number of associated bodies around the world. It is far from the small association of British colonies it once was, with some member states now republics.

Limited space, piles of material, diminishing funds and jetlagged minds do not make for an efficient creative process, but by the time our exhibition stand was ready we were so proud we were eager to show it to anyone who came along. And come along they did: heads of state and other delegates, royalty, business officials, students, other NGO reps,

the Durban public (snake-handler included, who successfully freaked out one GE editor!). I left with the belief that NGOs will play a vital role in the successful, peaceful and sustainable governance of a global community, if only they are granted enough power.

It was the juxtaposition of so-called developed and developing worlds which struck me in South Africa—particularly the lavish Las Vegas-style Sun City casino/resort located in a rural area in North-West province, adjacent to (yet in a different world from) the corrugated iron roofs of a flood-prone shanty town. Many of the divisions come back to inequality. And surely it is this inequality that is responsible for the soaring crime rate and the alienating security measures—in Johannesburg, houses are secured like prisons and a walk through the daytime streets is simply not recommended.

Soweto has one of the highest crime rates in the country, and yet it felt different—people everywhere walking the streets, dancing in their front yards, cramming doorways.

Many of those who moved out of the township when apartheid ended in 1994 have since missed its sense of community so much that they have returned.

The end of apartheid has, and is having, a profound effect on the lives of South Africans—not least many whites, some of whom have felt an enormous release from a guilt which



Rural Crafts and HIV/Aids Awareness KZN (KwaZulu-Natal) is part of the People's Commonwealth. It focuses on changing attitudes and notions towards people living with AIDS as well as imparting information that will contribute to prevention and behavioural change. Rural craft women are encouraged to express their new awareness and prevention messages through their crafts. Photo: Laura Trevelyan

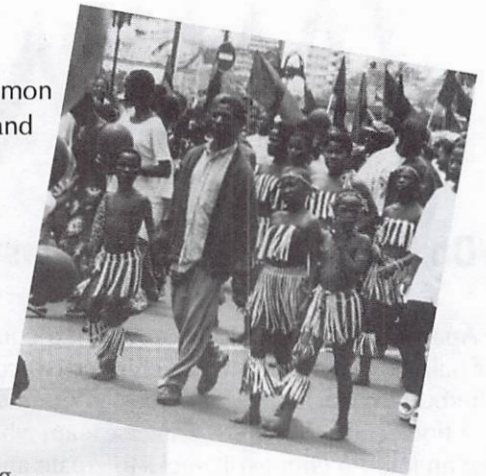
has plagued them for years. Others (especially unemployed young men) suffer from the unintended outcomes of Affirmative Action. (A man stands on the road at a Johannesburg intersection, holding a sign painted in desperation: 'I will do any work. My babies need food'.) In Jo'burg I watched the Wallabies defeat the Springboks amongst a diverse and friendly crowd (despite their profound disappointment and my jubilation!) in a pub that only a few years ago was restricted to whites. But I also spoke to black urban dwellers who avoid visits to their families in rural areas because of the lack of washing facilities and other practicalities there. The situation is more complex than I could have imagined and history inevitably drains into the present. At least we can offer encouragement, learn from this nation's incredible successes, and try to understand.

*(continued over page)* **13**



## The 'Modern' Commonwealth

- 54 independent states (1.7 billion people) which come together in the common interests of their people and the promotion of international understanding and world peace
- CHOGMs occur every two years—different to other high level summits in that leaders are encouraged to meet informally, without an invasive media presence
- half the world's 'poor' people live in the Commonwealth
- 50th anniversary celebrated in 1999
- fundamental political values: democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and gender equality, the rule of law, and sustainable and social development
- the Commonwealth Youth Programme addresses issues of concern to young people (one-third of whom live in the Commonwealth)
- with its HQ based in the UK, it struggles with an image problem



(Above) Schoolchildren dance through the streets of Durban in an international parade during CHOGM, Photo: Fiona Leggat  
(Left) Housing by the highway, KwaZulu-Natal, Photo: Laura Trevelyan



## NGOs

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been strengthening their role in the Commonwealth. The 'People's Commonwealth' is a network of more than 60 NGOs from around the world. 150 NGO leaders participated in the third forum held prior to the 1999 CHOGM to formulate recommendations to Heads of Government. Some of these NGOs include Amnesty International, HIV/AIDS Awareness, MRA, Oxfam and Population Concern.

## Jubilee 2000/Debt Relief

Jubilee 2000 is an international movement calling for

- cancellation of unpayable debt
- of the world's poorest countries
- by the end of 2000
- under a fair and transparent process.

It is made up of coalitions around the world, which share moral commitment to debt cancellation. The world's 50 poorest countries (of which 37 are in Africa) owe a total of \$354 billion, at face value, to individual governments and



'I undertook to work for a Commonwealth which fostered its own values... and brought a "healing touch" to national and international relations' (Nigerian Chief Emeka Anyaoku, second from right, approaching the end of ten years as Commonwealth Secretary-General). Also pictured are incoming Secretary-General Don McKinnon, New Zealand (second from left) and Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa (centre), Photo: Nicci Long

## WHAT - U - THINK

Next issue we look at: **How do you combine the spiritual with daily life?** (Question submitted by Liz Carlisle, UK)  
Deadline: February 21, 2000

This issue: **The new millennium—what have you got to say?**

**Amos Mgeleza Seyama, South Africa**

Be positive, think positive. Be a new person, stop the lying and the hating.

The new millennium brings with it new ideas, a brand new life to live, a new world order, a new vision and most

of all it brings peace and harmony. Are we ready for this change? I am.

I was born in South Africa, into a system where I had boundaries, where I could only do things to a certain limit. I was always a victim of that system.

I grew up hating the whites for what they were doing to blacks, just like every young boy and girl, black man and woman, did. But I would like to take this opportunity to leave all that behind and start afresh—to lift this hate, the problems and perceptions I had, and the wrongs I've done, over my shoulder. To start the millennium as a new person, at peace with myself and everyone.





# SOUTH AFRICA AT A GLANCE

- 11 official languages (including English, Afrikaans and Zulu)
- at least 20 ethnic groups (total population 40.5 million)
- occupies only 4% of the landmass of Africa but has more than half the cars, phones, auto banks and industrial facilities of the whole continent

to the World Bank and the IMF. On average, the amount African countries pay in debt repayments to the West is 13 times as much as they receive in aid. As a result, domestic needs are underfunded and change cannot occur.

The real cost of debt cancellation is estimated to be \$71 billion—only one third of 1% of the annual income of the richest countries. In June 1999, \$100 billion of debt relief was announced, but it was mostly debt that could never have been paid anyway and will do little to relieve the burden of the poor countries. More must be done, especially by G-8 leaders. The Commonwealth could help by sending a clear message to the world community.

The G-8 summit in July 2000 is the final opportunity for debt cancellation to be linked to the new millennium. 'I appeal to all those involved, especially the most powerful nations, not to let this opportunity of the Jubilee Year pass, without taking a decisive step towards resolving the debt crisis. It is widely recognised that this can be done.' (Pope John-Paul II, Sept 1999)

- 64% of all black families still live below the poverty line and less than one in three black people have piped water to their home
- returned to the Commonwealth in 1994, after a 33-year absence, when the apartheid regime was excluded
- likely to see more changes in the new Millennium than most countries in the world



- 1500 new cases of HIV/AIDS are recognised each day
- South Africa's second democratic elections were held in June 1999. 'Those elections marked the conclusion of a phase of transition. The wider task of reconstruction remains to be accomplished; and in the context of South Africa, to reconstruct is to repair a century and more of deprivations.'

- Chief Emeka Anyaoku



(Top left) The Moral Re-Armament (MRA) stand at CHOGM, Durban, November 1999, Photo: Edward Howard  
(Above right) President Thabo Mbeki listens to Sam Pono (MRA) at the NGO exhibition, CHOGM, Photo: Nicci Long  
(Left) Cherie Blair meets with Sllankie Chipeya, of the South African Human Rights NGO Network, Photo: Laura Trevelyan

**Nicci Long, Australia**

## **Nelly-Joyce Katito, Zimbabwe**

For the first time in my life (21 whole years!) I'll be celebrating Christmas and New Year's Eve away from home, my family and all that's traditional for us. In that sense, I'm celebrating them alone, which in a way is a fitting round up to a year that has awakened me to one or two things about being alone. I am now in a situation where the phone and mail are my only link with the people I've always been able to visit when I needed to. That's nothing new to a lot of the people I work with, but for me it has been and continues to be a lesson in what can be found in solitude.

I don't have a stereo in my room in London and I left mine in

Zimbabwe. Initially that worried me. I was finding it quite difficult to be alone with all my thoughts flying around, demanding that I do my laundry or tidy up; or reminding me of that bill to pay and that article to write...

Having my family and friends around—and if not them, my trusty CD player—had always provided me with a way of escaping these thoughts, in the hope they would somehow take care of themselves. I miss home terribly, especially my family and my boyfriend. I'm finding it quite a challenge to be so far from familiarity but at the same time, I've decided to make a conscious effort to face my thoughts and be honest with myself. It often means having to do stuff



# JUST STUNNING



John Carlisle—consultant in co-operative relationships—is a bit of a dude. The kind of dude who meditates, wears black Levi's and has a business with a turnover of two million pounds. British Rail, Exxon and Shell are amongst the companies who have benefitted from his approach.

Development of people informs all his thinking, and the challenge to create learning situations at all levels is his greatest pleasure. He regards anyone who is willing to learn with respect. Global Express was keen to interview the man who urges young people to 'be awake in a society which is putting us to sleep'.

## Where did you grow up?

In a small mining town called N'kana in Zambia, Africa, where my life was idyllic.

## What did you study? Where?

At Rhodes University in South Africa, where I graduated in Economics and Sociology, and then a post-graduate degree in Psychology.

## What nationality are you?

British, by a five-year naturalisation process, and I am inordinately proud of it.

## What is a 'consultant in co-operative relationships'?

Someone who encourages and assists organisations in the development of a co-operative culture. This brings about better relationships with their suppliers, customers and staff, and, as a result, much greater productivity and quality—including quality of working life.

## How do you maintain your integrity in the business

## world?

By constant meditation and reflection, and the peculiar mixture of socialism (especially social justice) and a real love of business.

## How do you cope with a high-powered job and a family?

Badly; but improving, and that is as much due to their coping better with me as it is to my increasing consciousness of the need for balance in my life.

## Are most people you work with willing to learn?

No, except for the younger generation, who are just great. However, once the oldies begin to learn, particularly about the power of good relationships, it is a marvellous awakening.

## What have you learnt most recently?

To trust my own judgement in my milieu, and *stick* with it.

## Can you account for your success with young people?

Thank you for the compliment. I have asked some young people. They find my topics—co-operation, temperance,

## WHAT - U - THINK

I'm not too crazy about but it has restored a few relationships and even added a bit more space to my room. So I go into the big two triple 'O' with a new found skill. It still needs perfecting but I think I've got a lot to look forward to.

### Ben Willett, USA

Historically, I find it curious. Jesus, an irremediably misrepresented man, is the irrelevant reason we're celebrating 2000; and of those of us who are Christian, how many of us really want to celebrate 2000 more years of degradation?

Not that I believe in morality. Economically, it's just another celebration of consumerism and

capitalism. Chronologically, the marketing wizards have made sure to erase any semblance of meaning by getting us to celebrate a year early. Not that I'm surprised. And environmentally, there's no point even pretending to care. Waste away. It's all meaningless from my nihilistic perspective. I'm too far gone. Not that it matters to you, does it?

### Dr Craig Hassed, Australia

The challenges and opportunities facing us are really the same as they've always been. It doesn't matter what period of history you are looking at and it doesn't matter which part



business—intrinsically interesting. I work interactively with them and believe that I can learn from them. My message is ‘respect others, especially their differences’.

### **What is your biggest fear for young people?**

They do not realise how stunning they are, and they therefore (in Britain) dress drably—blacks and browns on those lithe frames. They sometimes mutilate themselves in the most pointless ways and do not allow their enormous passion and positive energy to flow out into a world which is longing for it. They also do not surround themselves with enough beauty, either in sight, sound or activity. In fact, it is the opposite: they are faced with violent images and harsh language from the media, the Damien Hirst kind of ugliness from the arts, and amorality and selfishness in relationships. Our youth is too good for this. (They should look at how their Eastern European counterparts try to create beauty in their hard lives.) They must never believe that all this ugliness is right. If they listen to their hearts they will know that they need, like the ancient Greeks: Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Everyone does, and then we can all have the presence of mind to confront things that need confronting *when* they need confronting.

### **Is there a lot of Africa in your techniques?**

If there is anything African in my approach it is the love of story-telling.

### **In 1979 you consulted with the then-banned ANC on negotiating successfully with white South Africans. How did that feel?**

It felt very humbling. There was a man there called Ishmael Mkhabela, who knew more than I will ever know about the art of influencing without power. All I could do was to bring a behavioural model of the white behaviours, so that the various tactics could be more easily understood and more quickly dealt with. But, my associates in South Africa did go on to do some very good work with training the black youth to negotiate rather than fight (without any help from me).

### **How is it to have your book, *Beyond Negotiation*, translated into mandarin?**

of the world you live in.

We need to learn to be able to sift and see what is unreasonable and what is not, to recognise that little spark of intuition, that little flash of insight. This is what has led great people throughout history. Socrates called it ‘the divine voice’. It’s an inner knowing. We need to be quiet enough to hear it. It has a different sound about it. The rest is noise and clutter in the mind. This sort of knowing is quieter, steadier, simpler. It’s objective, not personal. There is no ‘me’. It’s just a quiet recognition, a quiet inner knowing, and once you start to recognise it, get a little taste for it, it’s quite a different sound and it can govern one’s life.

Tortuous. It has been going on for five years. The Italian translation took only about six months.

### **Are you hopeful about our environmental future?**

No, it will need a revolution, starting right now. We do not live in an Information Age as much as a Chemical Age, as all of us in the First World are ingesting poisonous, man-made substances every day. According to Diane Steingraber (author of *Living Downstream*) the USA, for example, puts one million tons of carcinogens into the air, land and water every year!!! Corporations and governments have to stop rationalising and *act* right now.

### **What do you see as your greatest achievement?**

Personal, and most important: Being a husband and father in a family that has stayed together in love for nearly 30 years—very little of which I can claim credit for. Business: Heading up a business that has grown from a turnover of £360,000 to £2 million in four years, carrying out really useful work.

### **What makes you tick?**

Having a purpose! And my gratitude for the great gift of human life on this truly wonderful earth; particularly the privilege of living in England.

### **Who would you most like to have round to dinner?**

Peter Howard, if he were still alive, and Maya Angelou. What a conversation I would be witness to! (Peter Howard was the leader of Moral Re-Armament; Maya Angelou is an African-American writer and poet.)

### **What things would you most like to be asked about?**

- a) My faith. It is an ‘unauthorised’ gift. I have always had a deep, wondering love of Christ, which gets stronger every day, and, like King David, makes me alternatively dance and weep for joy.
- b) My biggest mistake. To have not tried to keep my marriage as strong as I should have—the memory of which still causes me much sorrow and utter regret, despite the fact that I am more in love than I have ever been.

*Interview: The Editors*

### **The Editors, UK/Australia**

We would like to thank you for all your contributions over the last five years—yes, it’s really been that long. Our millennium wish is to include more people and more ideas. In particular, we’re looking for pertinent themes and real issues—what topics would make you read a magazine from cover to cover? A tight budget keeps us resourceful and enables people to exhibit their art and photography. We are constantly on the lookout for photos (colour for the cover) and would like to create a catalogue of images to draw on. Amateurs and professionals—please be in touch with us if you think you can be of help. We need you!



# celtic monsoon



India is an increasingly popular destination for Westerners—a place where people capture a sense of spirituality often missing in the West while enjoying a taste of the exotic. I met many such folk, adding their mark to the well-trodden hippie trails.

When I decided to go to India, after four years studying theology, I had notions of putting my faith

into practice by reaching out to the poor and sharing the love I had taken for granted in a secure family and the relatively safe and welcoming society of Northern Ireland. Convinced I had already learnt all I wanted about the West, I was eager to experience a totally different culture and discover life from a new perspective.

Stepping off the plane at midnight in Mumbai (Bombay) during the humid monsoon was like jumping into an oven. The following minibus journey through the night with one bottle of water between eight, and our driver overtaking huge lorries around blind precipices, did nothing to calm my nerves and I soon wondered what on earth I was doing! Pune, our destination, offered new challenges. I looked on—amazed by the apparent chaos—as rickshaw drivers wove their way, at breakneck speed, around motorbikes, cows, pigs and pedestrians, amidst the noise, dirt and pollution. I was shocked by the visible face of poverty—beggars sleeping on the street and people in the slums in tiny makeshift homes along muddy paths, unable to escape the damp and flies of the monsoon rains. Thus began six months of stress, nervous exhaustion, loneliness and frustration, liberally sprinkled with awe and wonder.

Whenever I felt overwhelmed and impotent in the face of social problems, a little girl might take me by the hand with total trust. Her wide smile and dancing eyes so full of the joy of living, she would lead me towards her home, where I knew I could expect warm hospitality and a willingness to share what little they had with their strange guest. This openness and warmth I found repeatedly amongst the children I worked with, whether it was the rural high school near Ichilkaraji where I taught RE (religious education), art, singing and Scottish dancing or the orphanage in Pune where the children responded to the simplest acts of love and attention. Material poverty was certainly not enough to dampen their spirits and even the poorest girls took pride in their colourful dresses, presenting themselves to the world with confidence and dignity.

It soon became evident that my enthusiastic plan to single-handedly change the world was not as indispensable as I thought. I was moved by the wonderful work

already in operation at grassroots level by organisations such as the Deep Griha Society, founded in 1975 by Rev and Mrs Dr Onawale. Their family welfare centre in the heart of the slums provides education to over 2000 children and young people, as well as healthcare, nutrition programmes and clean water both in the city and in isolated villages in the Pune district. I had the privilege of staying with this family who accepted me as their own, and learned a lot from their people-centred approach and belief in encouragement to motivate the work force. Not only did they find fulfilment in improving the physical conditions of their fellow Punenites, they also did their best to coax the volunteers into becoming more loving and compassionate. From their total trust in God's provision came gentle humour, serenity and the ability to see the profound in simple things.

Rev Onawale introduced me to the theological seminary where he was Principal and I soon made myself busy working in the office and giving the odd lecture on national identity and spirituality. I'm not sure if they got much from my explanation of Irish monastic life in the seventh century, but we did have some fascinating conversations about spirituality as a normal part of life in both Ireland and India, and the role of women. What struck me most was their strong sense of identity and purpose. This comes from the close family network and social structures, and the belief that God is in control of their destinies and that we are all where we are meant to be.

When it was time to leave, I was ready to have a break from always trying to be culturally sensitive. Being 'protected' as a single young woman, and constant attention from staring locals, had meant a certain lack of freedom. However I had got quite used to my life in India, so much so that the tiny homes where neighbours roamed freely in and out seemed normal. I was told by one Indian vicar that I had come from another planet. Coming home to Ireland in the middle of winter, I felt like an alien in my own country. Everything seemed so clean, clinical and regimented. I saw how people so easily become lonely and insecure striving for independence and material success, forgetting that it is love which gives us strength and esteem, and allows our spirits to grow. People said I must be enjoying my home comforts and really appreciating what I had. Although it was nice to enjoy treats like a bath or a battered sausage supper, such comments made me feel isolated and misunderstood. What I really felt was a profound sense of loss for the spontaneity and vibrancy of a people who had moved me to tears by their generosity and kindness.

**Frances Hume, Northern Ireland (and poem opposite)**

Frances is currently working with Christian Aid in Scotland.



The Pune streets are paved with folk  
 Living and dying for all the world to see  
 Giving the world energy  
 Lighting it up with their youthful smiles  
 Happiness in the mire  
 Heaven in our perceived hell  
 Enriching life with the colour of saris and flowers  
 The scent of sandal wood and other things  
 A mass of humanity pulsating through the streets  
 All bustling together through the days and nights  
 'Please come for dinner in our home!'  
 A stranger is never one for long  
 Always welcomed and warmed by their generosity  
 You are never alone.

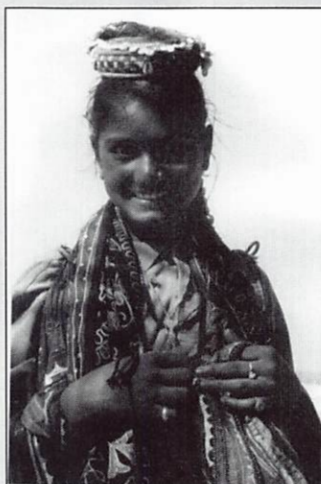


Photos: Zoe Nielsen, Australia



'You'll be a changed girl', they said  
 My values seemed quite fine to me  
 But seeing there was a life more real  
 More vital where the worries were  
 Not 'what shall I wear?'  
 But 'will I eat tonight?'  
 Does anybody care if I die here in the street,  
 Old and bony, dignity stripped bare?  
 And yet a freedom to the people there  
 A call to simply live the life  
 Rules and paperwork are unknown to those  
 In their simple huts beside the streets  
 'I cannot hope for more than this  
 This is my destiny, so shall I live in peace.'

In simplicity there lies a depth  
 I cannot find here easily  
 Achievement seems our only goal  
 There must be more to make one whole  
 How have we lost our dignity?  
 We may have choice, we may be free  
 But folk are lost and purposeless  
 The quest for pleasure our only perceived  
 happiness  
 No deep spirituality pervades our lives  
 Unselfconscious and exuberant in expression  
 With festivals to bring the tired bodies back to life  
 Framing life with significance and purpose.



The Bangor<sup>1</sup> streets seem quieter now  
 The odd person hurries past  
 His expression is closed, stressed and grey  
 Unsure if life is worth living  
 On this cold and blustery winter's day  
 Where the nearest hint of life  
 Is seen on the TV  
 Our quest for space and privacy  
 Closing us off from each other's lives  
 We no longer need each other to survive.

<sup>1</sup>Bangor is a provincial seaside town in Northern Ireland



# Scattered Thoughts

And there is something about creating beauty in the circumstances of shoddiness and privation that is truly exciting – Satyajit Ray

Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair – Native American proverb

If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans for the future

Before you've finished eating breakfast this morning, you've depended on half the world – Martin Luther King

Where there is a clock, there is no soul – Saying of the Hasidim

The best bridge between despair and hope is often a good night's sleep

A peace is of the nature of a conquest; for then both parties nobly are subdued, and neither party loser – Shakespeare

A nerd is someone without enough Africa in him or her – Brian Eno

The only true security is the development of skills – Aristotle

My life is my message  
– Gandhi

You can't tickle yourself

The path to all great things leads through stillness – Nietzsche

