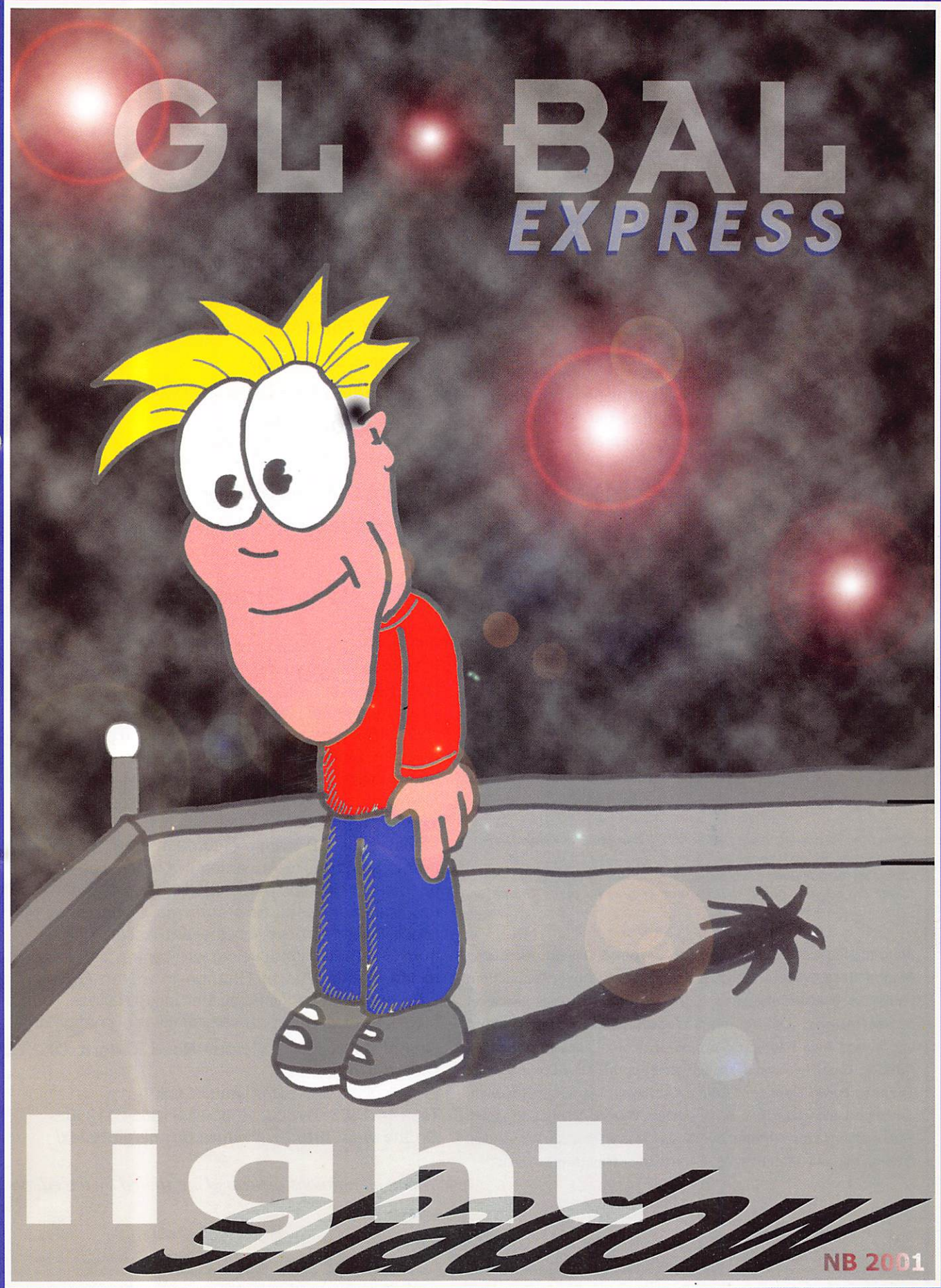
GLOBAL EXPRESS



light shadow

NB 2001

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Embracing our dark sides

EDITORIAL

As this issue goes to press, scenes of devastation from New York and Washington still haunt us. Now, every night on the news, we see images of hopeless poverty in Afghanistan and Pakistan. For those of us not personally affected, it has become part of our daily routine: switch on the news in the evening, be horrified at what we see, then switch it off in order to 'get on' with our lives. Is this a TV war lived, by many of us, in thirty-minute bursts? And then put aside?

But no matter how detached we have learnt to become, we cannot help but be reminded—at a time when atrocities are so visible on a global level—that we all embody both good and bad, light and dark. The struggle is not between individuals or between communities, but within each of us. And 'we come to maturity by integrating not only the light, but also the dark side of our story' (Henri Nouwen).

GE is in transition. A gathering of people from all over the world in India, January 2002, will include a discussion on the future role of the magazine and its production. Should it continue in a similar format, or is something different required? As always, any ideas from our readers and contributors would be valued. Please email us—you are our reason for being, and our lifeline.

There could not be a more poignant time to examine the symbols of light and darkness, and to realise that we *can* overcome that division within ourselves (read on, inside). We would ask you to join us and—as the Dalai Lama said in a recent letter to the global community—'join all those people around the world who are praying right now, adding your Light to the Light that dispels all fear'.

Correction: In our last issue (Vol 6 No 2), the article 'In Nagaland, Living Every Second' spoke of, 'Burma (now Myanmar)...'. We apologise for our error—'Myanmar' is what the military junta are calling the country, but to the Burmese people, Burma is 'Burma'.

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Why Global Express?

Global Express (GE) was started in Melbourne, Australia, in 1994 to link up young people who care about the future. Dissatisfied with what we were being offered by commercial youth magazines, we felt an alternative was needed.

Our aim is to inspire people to believe in themselves, and to believe they can make a difference. 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 Initiatives of Change (formerly Moral Re-Armament), 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. Initiatives of Change is a Non Government Organisation recognised by the United Nations.
More information: http://www.initiatives of change.org/

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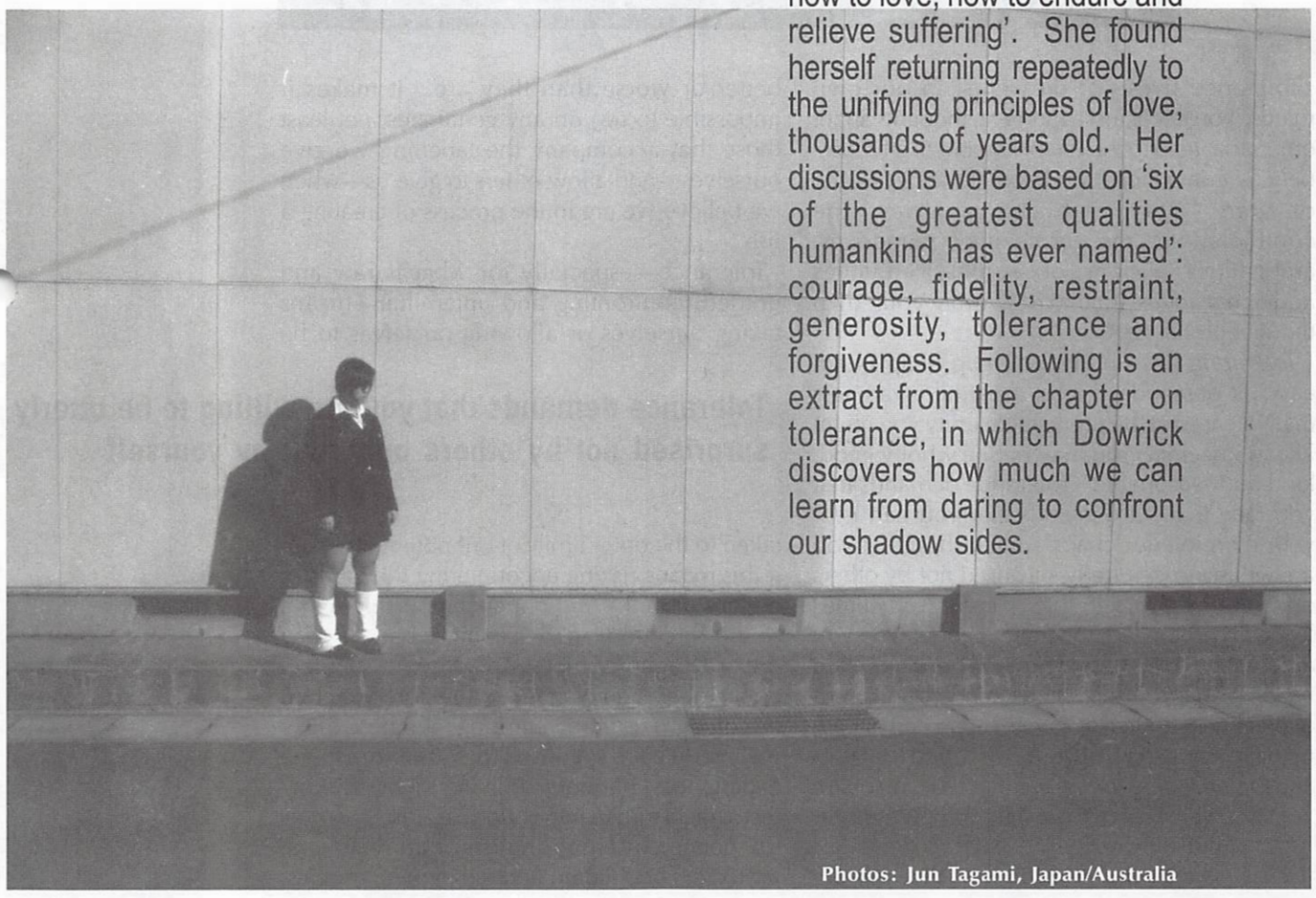
Not all opinions expressed are shared by the editors.

Global Express goes to:
Africa: Kenya, Nigeria 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, Czech Republic, France, Gemany, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Scandinavia, Serbia, Switzerland, UK and Ukraine; Middle East: Lebanon and Palestine.

TOLERATING THE SHADOW SIDE

Stephanie Dowrick is a writer and regular contributor to radio and magazines in Australia. *Forgiveness and Other Acts of Love* came out of a series of radio discussions on what she called 'the humane virtues'. At a time of 'grim uncertainty' in her life, (having survived cancer and about to face a harrowing court case) she wanted to explore the 'most urgent questions about how to live, how to love, how to endure and relieve suffering'. She found herself returning repeatedly to the unifying principles of love, thousands of years old. Her discussions were based on 'six of the greatest qualities humankind has ever named': courage, fidelity, restraint, generosity, tolerance and forgiveness. Following is an extract from the chapter on tolerance, in which Dowrick discovers how much we can learn from daring to confront our shadow sides.



Photos: Jun Tagami, Japan/Australia

Tolerance is not a neat and tidy virtue. In its bonsai forms it certainly allows people to be nice, compliant, patronising, pleasant, hypocritical, blind, unreal and half-alive. But where it lives and breathes, sweats and weeps, grows and soars, it is anything but nice. It is confronting, flexible, blatant, humorous, sometimes harsh, always encompassing, truthful, demanding—and real.

Tolerance lives—or dies—first in our own minds. Forget, for just a moment, thoughts about others that lead to the establishment of attitudes, beliefs, convictions, and sometimes to peace or war. Stay with the rivalries, the contradictions, the perplexities, paradoxes, ambiguities, elisions, obsessions, certainties and ignorances that exist within your own thought processes.

Tolerating this untidy, writhing heap is not easy. It demands at least a partial awareness that you are not the predictable unity you might like to imagine. You may not be wholly good, kind and reasonable. Tolerance demands that you face that. It demands that you can bear your own interior chaos and clashes; that you are willing to be utterly surprised not by others only, but by yourself; that you can sometimes live with prolonged uncertainty about who you are, what your life means, where you are heading; that you can come to understand times of bleakness as well as joy; that you can accept in the spaciousness of your own mind thoughts and their accompanying feelings that you might well prefer to assign somewhere far outside yourself.

What this adds up to is that you are able—as your life progresses, and you learn from it—to take yourself on in your entirety, and not just in the bits that fit with others' ideas of you, or your regularly polished illusions about yourself.

'Taking yourself on' makes it hard for you to disown your actions that cause others pain or harm. It makes it hard for you to see yourself as separate from other people, and markedly better or worse than they are. It makes it impossible to rest on any certainties, not least those that accompany the labelling we give ourselves—and allow others to give us—when we believe we are in the process of creating a life.

Tolerance—especially for what is raw and untried, confronting and unfamiliar—means taking ourselves or allowing ourselves to be taken to the outer limits of our potentials, even if this means risking encountering the perils of ecstasy or hell. And not taking ourselves in a single direction only. Facing what we may prefer to ignore, repress or disown may feel dangerous, even crazy. Contemporary culture discourages us from venturing into these tricky realms. We are supposed to *consume* extreme experiences, but not risk living them. Risking them might turn us into nations of artists, warriors for peace, internationalists, nature lovers, protectors of children and old people, mystics,

Tolerance demands that you are willing to be utterly surprised not by others only, but by yourself

storytellers, perpetual students hungry to know more, employees who want our work to add up to something.

Nothing in our education or public culture encourages or prepares us to live like that. Too many of our experiences have become synthetic: other people's lives and fantasies mediated to us through movies or television. Yet authentic experiences remain always close at hand. They are not available for rich people only, or for special people only.

Too many of our experiences have become synthetic: other people's lives and fantasies mediated to us through movies or television

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Tolerance, especially when it slides into apathy, has a fearsome shadow side. But that does not make it any the less valuable or powerful. It is a law of nature that the brighter a light is, the darker its shadow. That is true for this virtue as we see it practised (and defiled) socially, and as we experience it within ourselves.

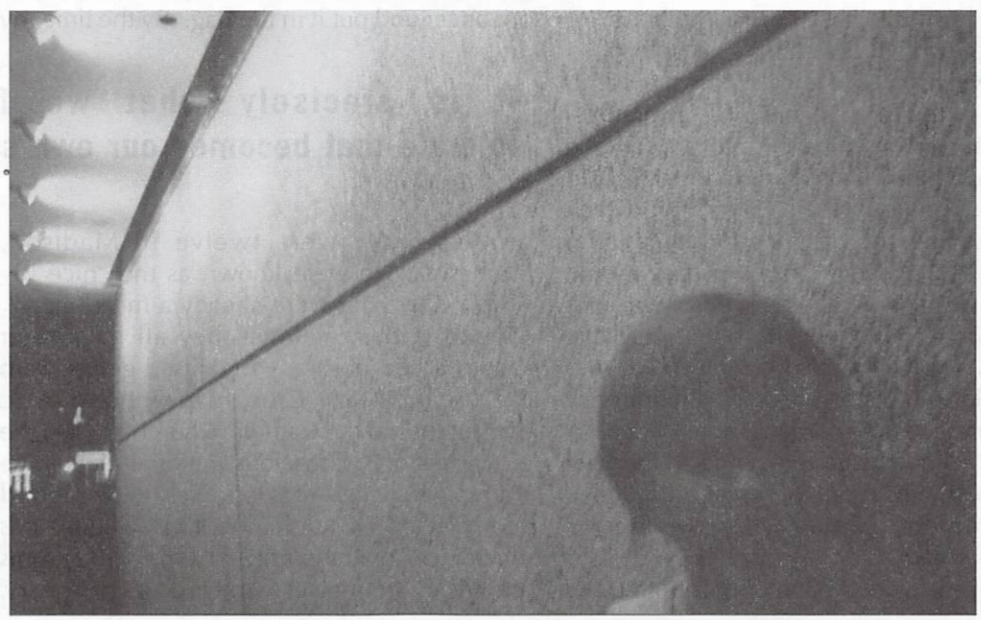
It may be, however, that it is only when we are up against the limits of what we believe we cannot bear, or could never bear, that the sleeping tolerance within us can come awake and, as it does so, waken love and wisdom. This is certainly my own experience. Only through tolerating what had to be faced, as well as the range of feelings that erupted around that, could I come slowly and erratically to a point of recognition of my own inner strength.

Looking back at the unendurable that I have, inch by inch, endured, I can see how tolerance has emerged, inch by inch: tolerance for the situation I was in; for the uncertainty of its outcome; for my own insufficiencies in dealing with it as well as I might have wished. I could have discovered nothing about that experience in prospect, and even looking back I feel extremely tempted to say, 'I could never do that again'. Yet I am a stronger person because I did see those situations through; because, despite my feelings of dismay and helplessness, I did tolerate them, endure them, and survived.

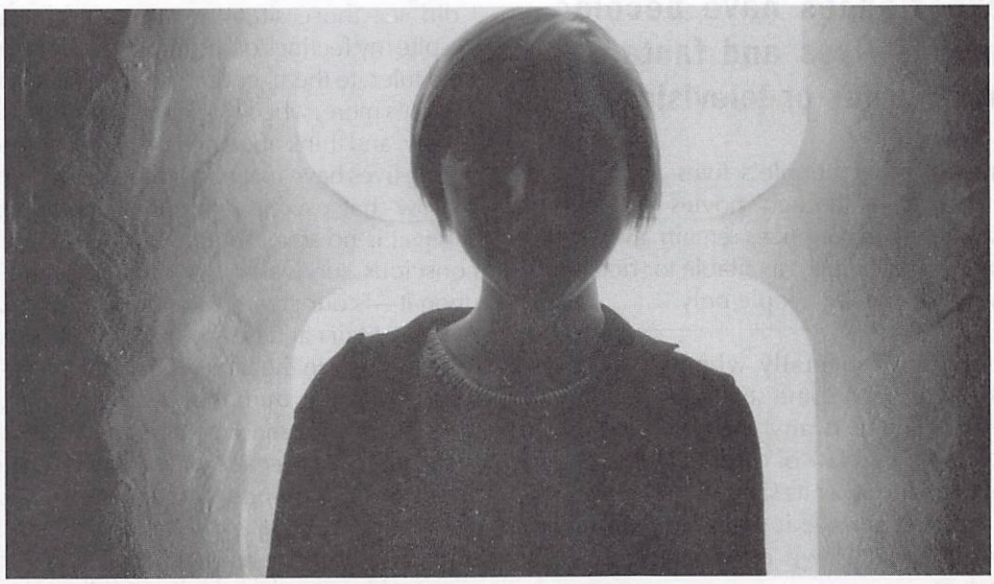
What's more, when I look around at the people I know, and think about the many, many people whose lives have met mine through their books, I know that psychic, emotional and spiritual survival is no small thing. It may even be that conscious survival—surviving *and* reflection upon it—is our greatest source of wisdom.

Nancy Mairs and her husband, George, were foster parents in the late 1970s to an adolescent who had been dumped, betrayed, ignored, pushed around, and who eventually landed in their home. A decade later, writing not only about the experience of fostering this young man, but about her experience of life, Nancy said: 'People have asked me often whether I regret taking Ron in, whether I'd do so again if I had to do it over. Hard questions to face, the answers risky to the ways I like to think of myself.

'Because I did regret taking him in, many times. I lack the largeness of spirit that enables someone like George to transcend daily inconveniences, lapses in behaviour, even alien values, and to cherish a person without condition. I often judged Ron harshly, by standards inappropriate to his peculiar situation; I was often grudging of approval and affection; I made him work too hard for the privilege of



being my son. He suffered, I'm afraid, for my regrets. And no, I think, I wouldn't do it again, knowing what I now know. But then, I wouldn't have Anne and Matthew again either. Might not even marry George again. Such ventures seem now, in the wisdom of hindsight, to demand a woman of more than my mettle.



That's how we get wise, by taking on in ignorance the tasks we would never later dare to do [my italics].'

And the answer to that stark question: did Nancy regret taking Ron in?

'No. Yes.'

Just as tolerance itself has a shadow side—allowing us to turn away from people or events in fear, indifference or apathy—so, too, in the realm of our most personal experiences, in the inner home of the self, it is precisely what we fear or cannot tolerate that becomes our own shadow.

That shadow is the basement of our home, or maybe the ignored, unfamiliar and potentially eruptive wing. What we can't tolerate out in the open, in the light of conscious awareness, becomes our unconscious: the realm of our own experience is hidden from us. Everything within the unconscious is not 'bad'. Far from it. Much of it is dazzling; too dazzling for us easily to own. To acknowledge our own dazzle, and live it, we would need to give up some of our self-pity, some of our hope that others may take care of us, or dazzle for us. Giving up our self-pity and illusions of powerlessness is as difficult for most of us to do—perhaps more difficult—as it is to acknowledge that some of the ugly beliefs we have about other people speak volumes about what we fear in ourselves.

Few writers have gone hunting the elusive shadow more skilfully than Robert Bly. Here he describes the personal shadow, which can never usefully be understood separately from either the collective or social shadows that it is fed by—and that collectively it also creates. 'When we were one or two years old we had what we might visualise as 360-degree personality. Energy radiated out from all parts of our body and all parts of our psyche. A child running is a living globe of energy. We had a ball of energy, all right; but one day we noticed that our parents did not like certain parts of that ball. They said things like: "Can't you be still?" Or "It isn't nice to try and kill your brother." Behind us we have an invisible bag, and the part of us our parents don't like, we, to keep our parents' love, put in the bag. By the time we get to school our bag is quite large. Then our teachers have their say: "Good children don't get angry over such little things." So we take our anger and put it in the bag. By the time my brother and I were twelve in Madison, Minnesota, we were known as the "nice Bly Boys". Our bags were already a mile long.'

It is precisely what we fear or cannot tolerate that becomes our own shadow...

Towns, cities, nations: they all have their shadows. So does any organised group, from the local Rotary Club to psychoanalytic associations to the Catholic Church. When the group has only conscious, rational aims—like winning at soccer—it is less likely to be affected and infected by its shadow than when it has ideological or transcendent aims. Such aims are not in themselves wrong; on the contrary.

But the higher the aims of any group, the more watchful the individual members need to be of where the shadow is falling.

Look closely at how 'exclusivity' is maintained by an individual, group, collective or nation; at who is excluded and on what basis; at how criticism is fought off or denied. Look at what is most feared, reviled, envied or disparaged and you will have a rapid insight into what is 'in the bag'—what is the intolerable shadow.

Bly suggests that most of what has to go into the bag is put there before we turn twenty. That gives us the rest of our lives to pull things out. Tolerance is a virtue that ages well. And we age much better when we practise it. A broad, rich, flexible, curious, tolerant *old* mind, open as much to what is still to be discovered as to what has been discovered and contemplated, offers the most splendid defiance possible to a world that fears ageing and the elderly.

Tolerance means watching out for those 'sudden changes of character' that tell you your persona is cracking and your shadow is emerging

Tolerance can certainly be taught to the young and, more usefully still, modelled for them. But for tolerance to flourish in our hearts as well as our minds, we may need to experience a whole series of fairly violent jolts and realisations that we can't order the world in the way we want to. Or that we can order the world until we are breathless, but our orders must compete with those of all with whom we share this planet.

The analyst and writer Marie-Louise von Franz, a colleague of Jung, had a refreshingly accessible way of describing how we can learn to catch sight of our shadow in daily life: 'Whenever we are tired or under pressure, another personality often breaks through. For instance, people who are very well-meaning and helpful suddenly become ruthlessly egocentric. They push everybody else aside and become very nasty. Also, when people have the flu or are ill, you suddenly see their shadow side coming through... There's a sudden change of character. That's the breaking through of the shadow. It can take on a thousand forms. Let's say you have a very good friend and you lend him a book. Now, it's just that book that your friend loses. It was the last thing he wanted to do, but his shadow wanted to play a trick on you...

'We all have our favourite enemies, our best enemies. They are generally our shadows. If people do some harm to you, then it's natural that you hate them. But if somebody doesn't do special harm to you and you just feel so madly irritated every time that person enters the room that you could just spit at him, then you can be sure that's the shadow.' The best way, then, is to sit down and write a little paper on the characteristics of that person. Then look at it and say, "That's me." I did that once when I was eighteen, and I blushed so that I was sweating blue in the face when I had finished. It's a real shock to see one's shadow.'

When understood and used skilfully, with love and some humour, tolerance allows us to embrace our own shadow. This is never an abstract matter. It means watching out for those 'sudden changes of character' that tell you your persona is cracking and your shadow is emerging. It means listening with your mouth closed when others accuse you of something. It means hesitating long and hard before you assign fault. It means owning up to your own divisive thinking. It means refusing to believe or cultivate myths of your own powerlessness. It means checking out your simplistic assumptions against the complex realities. It means acknowledging the differences of opinions, needs, wishes, desires that exist within your own mind—and recognising how these mirror the conflicts that you may despise that exist outside yourself. Such hesitations, reflections, acknowledgements and incorporations also bring the flexibility, mobility, expansiveness and depth that characterise an interesting mind. In relationships, too, the outcome of bringing light to the shadow can be markedly uplifting. Marie-Louise von Franz again: 'When people learn to know their shadow and to live their shadow a bit more, they become more accessible, more natural, more roundly human. People without shadows, who are perfect, inflict (project) an inferiority on their surroundings, which irritates others. They act in a manner superior to the "all-too-human". That's why one is so relieved when something nasty happens to them. "Aha!" we say. "Thank God, he's only human."'

This extract from Forgiveness and Other Acts of Love, *by Stephanie Dowrick, published in Great Britain by The Women's Press Ltd, 1997, 34 Great Sutton Street, London EC1V 0LQ, is used by permission of The Women's Press Ltd, Price: £9.00*

Jun Tagami is a Japanese-born photographer living in Australia. He has worked on several magazines and films, and is creative director of Etisoppo *magazine—a collection point for different perspectives and a visual exploration of a multicultural society.* Etisoppo *can be found at http://www.etisoppo.com*

Why the Heart Must Break

If you're looking for a good book to curl up with in bed tonight, *The Heart Must Break*, by James Mawdsley, is not it. You won't sleep. Instead, you will begin to wonder why you didn't do more to help that homeless guy on the street, or why you didn't choose the fair-trade bananas in the supermarket. This is a book about JUSTICE. This is a book I needed to read.

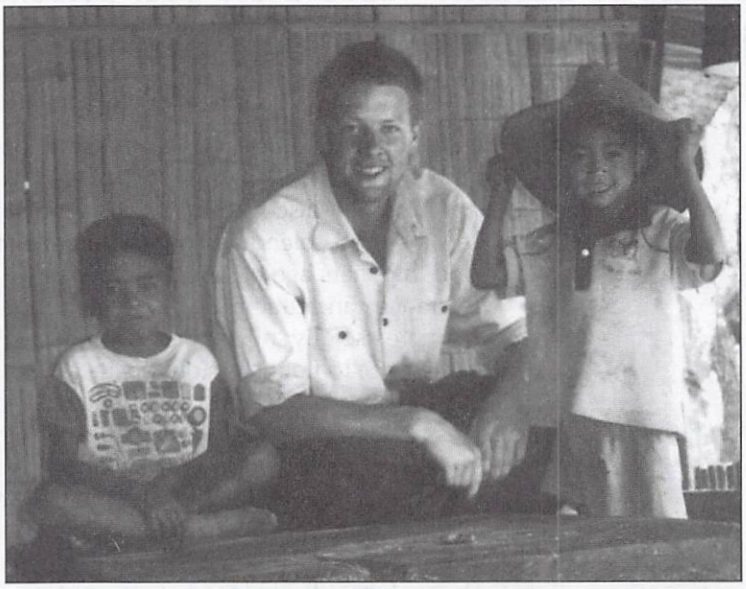
The title comes from a quote by Sebastian-Roch Nicholas Chamfort: 'I'm leaving this world where either the heart must break or turn as hard as iron.' Mawdsley describes the previous few years of his life, engaged in a 'fight for democracy and truth in Burma'. Much of the book is set in prison; he spent two periods locked up—a total of 400 days, or 14 months, of a 17-year sentence. Most of this time was in solitary confinement. His crime was distributing leaflets opposing the ruling junta and playing pro-democracy songs. But how did he come to chain himself to a school fence in Rangoon and shout slogans at the soldiers?

Like many of us, Mawdsley spent a large proportion of his first year at an English university drunk. That's why he was disillusioned when he received good grades: 'I understood next to nothing of [quantum and relativistic physics] and here was the university awarding A-grades. What was it for?' Halfway through his second year, he decided there were more important things to be doing, though he was not yet sure what they were.

He attempted suicide in '93, but wondered before the end whether his desire for death came out of 'a more personal weakness' than the world's suffering: 'fear of failure, disillusionment or the feeling of being intensely alone'. Having survived, he vowed never to contemplate suicide again (though at one stage in prison the idea was cruelly tempting)—life was too precious, and he could use his to alleviate even a little of this world's suffering.

Aged 13, Mawdsley had befriended a Burmese boy new to his school. So began a connection with this oppressed people and their region that became that most important thing that a university degree was not. 'Could it possibly make sense for me to pursue a degree, a career, a mortgage, a happy family life while all around the world people were starving to death and living in unspeakable fear?'

What I read in the following pages challenges me—first, to think hard about what I really believe in and what kind of a world I want to bring my children into; and second, to stand up for that world, even if it means sacrificing my personal comfort, if not safety. Mawdsley is not an 'irretrievable idiot', as some of the aid agency officials who visit him in prison, apparently believe. He is an exceptionally rational thinker, who weighs up all possibilities and implications before embarking on any course of action. In particular, he asks himself (and the Burmese themselves, whenever possible) whether what he is doing is in the best interests of the local people. And he considers the impact on his own family—although their love for him does not stop him from doing whatever he believes to be right and just, whether it be facing Burmese soldiers on a trek through the jungle, or a twenty-day hunger strike (one for each year of student leader Min Ko Naing's prison sentence). He does not believe in suffering for its own sake, but 'God wants us to seek the truth. If we encounter suffering in our sincere effort to do that, it will be such suffering as makes us stronger and makes us rejoice. We will be given what strength we need to see it through.'



Mawdsley taught English at Minthamee Camp in the Burmese jungle, 1997

Mawdsley is no saint, thank goodness. If I'd read about the personal sacrifices he makes for the sake of a people and a region not his own, without reading also about him as a real, twenty-something British male, I might wonder about his

sanity. But as he admires the beauty of two local female doctors at Minthamee Camp in the Burmese jungle or draws blissfully on a cigar on Christmas Day in prison (admittedly less for his own sake than for the sake of the prison officials, to let them know that they cannot crush him) both his deep humanity and his absolute human-ness are clear.

Despite the cruel conditions, Mawdsley says that 'ninety per cent' of his struggle in prison is against himself. With so much time to think (he speaks of prison as a kind of monastery—simple conditions and contemplation time) he has to face the darkness inside himself. His answer as to why there is evil in the world is 'because there is sin in every single one of us and if we would fight evil then let us fight that wrong within our own being'.

Mawdsley's main aims while in prison are to give the other prisoners hope, even if that means repeatedly shouting out 'ridiculous slogans' in the hope that they understand him; and to treat everyone as equals. So, he fails to respect the hierarchy of the prison officials (though he always remains respectful of their humanity), while symbolically raising the status of the lowliest prisoners by, for example, inviting the prisoner with the job of emptying his latrine bucket to leave his shoes on instead of removing them before entering the cell. Mawdsley is appalled by the conditions under which many of the prisoners are held, and cannot let these injustices pass him by, despite his own appalling circumstances. 'We gain nothing at all by buttoning our lips in the face of injustice. We put the brakes on progress every time we fall for self-censorship.'

Although Mawdsley is held in solitary confinement most of the time, he manages to communicate with a number of people on a daily basis. Some of those guarding his cell are other prisoners ('trusties') and show their support for him by conversing discreetly when possible, and bringing him extra food. (At one stage, during his first period of imprisonment, he is so desperate for food that he eats mangoes rotting in the mud in the prison yard during his daily 45 minutes of exercise.) He becomes close friends with a couple of the trusties—even though, several times, they are compelled by the officials to beat him with wooden clubs, until his eyes are black and his nose broken. When one particular friend is taken from the prison to do labour elsewhere, Mawdsley 'retreated to the corner of [his] cell and cried. It was only the second time in the whole of the first year.' And, incredibly, his predominant feeling as he leaves prison upon release is one of sadness, not only for those particular friends, but for all the prisoners.

Sitting in my local bookshop, listening to Mawdsley speak, I notice something unusual. But what? Then I know. Here he stands, before a public audience that includes his contemporaries, talking about his faith, about how this was what kept him alive. How many of us would be so open, so uninhibited? And yet how much it meant to that audience. He does not dramatise his story, nor try to convert us, but the strength he gains from his God is evident in all that he says. 'It did not matter that I was in prison', he realises in a moment of revelation. 'To forget myself, and to seek with all my heart and soul to serve [God's] will, that was what it meant to be free.' From prison, Mawdsley sends references to the Psalms back to his family, to assure them he is OK.

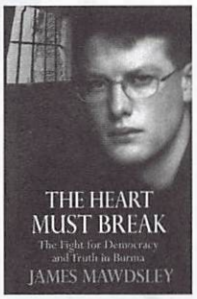
The other unusual thing about his talk is that he is evidently not interested in promoting his book—or, only in so much as the proceeds keep him on the road, talking about Burma. He is focused on letting the world know what is happening there.

You will laugh at this book—as Mawdsley wavers between the choice of eating monkey shit stew or offending his hosts; or as he sets up a round-table conference with the mosquitoes inhabiting his prison cell, to negotiate a cease-fire. And you will be uplifted, inspired by the human connection between people and their capacity for goodness which undeniably exists across false political borders. You will be compelled to consider your own life and the means for upholding justice that exists within it. And you may be urged to examine the darker side of yourself—the side that would surely emerge long before you were subjected to imprisonment and torture.

'We gain nothing at all by buttoning our lips in the face of injustice'

Mawdsley does not advocate that we get ourselves imprisoned in order to publicise the plight of another. But he reminds us that we are responsible for ourselves; that it is wrong to fall back on the supposed weaknesses of our upbringing or our character. 'Every single one of us has free will. We can choose to do right and we can choose to do wrong. For sure only God can weigh up the mitigating circumstances. But to deny our choice is to deny our humanity, our very meaning.' This is a challenge enough for me.

Nicci Long, Australia



The Heart Must Break, *by James Mawdsley, is just published by Century, The Random House Group Ltd, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA Price: £17.99 He recommends www.burmaproject.org for current news on the situation in Burma.*

The Cross and The Bodhi Tree

Alan Channer's new documentary, *The Cross and The Bodhi Tree*, explores Christian encounters with Buddhism. Here are two perspectives on the film, one Christian and one Buddhist:

As someone who attends an evangelical church (which has done wonders for me) whilst working for an increasingly multi-faith organisation (which I am devoted to), life in recent years has felt somewhat schizophrenic.

I have agonized over whether or not to look for another church. Each time I decided to stay, knowing I would disagree with the way in which other faiths are dismissed as 'wrong' or 'flawed'. This is one reason why watching *The Cross and The Bodhi Tree* is like balm for the soul.

The film charts the journeys of two outstanding characters whose Christian faith has been enhanced by Buddhist thought and culture. One is the Mother Superior of an enclosed order of Anglican nuns not far from my church in Oxford. The other is a French Catholic priest living in Cambodia. They have never met.

For nearly forty years Father Francois Ponchaud has ministered to the people of Cambodia. He was in the midst of training forty young Catholics when Pol Pot seized power in 1975. Only two survived. He went on to write *Cambodia Year Zero* so that the world might know the sinister truth behind 'The Killing Fields'. Today, he continues his writing to keep the West

informed of the reality of life in Cambodia.

Mother Rosemary took her vows in her early twenties. The contemplative order to which she belongs, The Sisters of the Love of God, has a 'double intention'—praise and worship, and repentance for where the Church may have turned people away from God.

She renewed an interest in Buddhism from her younger days when 'prayer seemed to go dead'. To this end, she headed for a two-month sabbatical at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in Hertfordshire, England. Aspects of meditation posed big problems at first but when she was told that her difficulties would teach her the most, she persevered. It was worth it. By mastering the art of letting go, she experienced a detachment from worries, anxieties and herself (!) which led to 'greater serenity' and 'more ability to cope'. Now meditation enhances both her prayer life *and* her community life.

For Father Ponchaud, meditation has become the cornerstone of his spiritual life. It purifies him before God and prepares him for what the day might bring, in a way that saying prayers and reading Scriptures alone, does not. Another lesson for a man who thought his role was to bring people closer to God is that those he meets in the slums of Cambodia teach him (by their joy and generosity) what it really means to 'witness to the poor and servant Christ'.

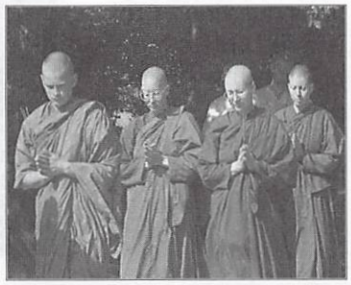
Such experiences have led him to re-evaluate what exactly it means to be Christian. If it means 'putting the other person first' and 'giving your life in order to gain it', then, he concludes, 'a Buddhist can do this just as well as a Christian'. It is his conviction (and this could stir up a theological hornet's nest) that, 'if Jesus were a Cambodian, he would go into the pagoda' and 'bring another light, another way of practising Buddhism'. A Cambodian Jesus would not destroy Khmer culture.

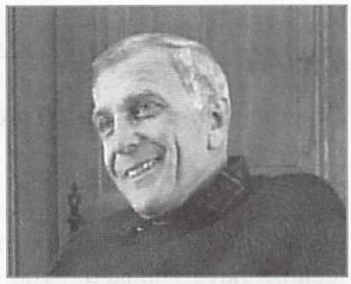
This is a brave film. The questions asked are searching: *Is Buddhist meditation more passive than Christian prayer? Can Buddhists attain eternal life?* The answers given by Ponchaud and Rosemary have authority because of the sheer humility, peace, and joy with which they are delivered.

The title, *The Cross and The Bodhi Tree*, alludes to the link between Jesus' life and that of the Buddha. The non-self of Jesus on the cross as he reveals God the Father, is compared to the non-self of the Buddha as he meditates under a tree and achieves enlightenment (bodhi).

The analogy is offered as a basis on which Christians and Buddhists might begin a dialogue. Included with the film is a study guide with questions to aid group discussion: *Are religions rivals or allies? Does the Church need to repent for having borne false witness against other religions?*

The film invites us (and especially we Christians in the West) to examine what our lives are about. It encourages us to take our search for truth more seriously and not to shy away from difficult, perhaps uncomfortable,





Images from the film: David Channer

questions. For, as Mother Rosemary says, together we can look forward to a time when—rather than bypass the divisions and differences which exist between the various traditions—we will be able to transcend them.

Laura Trevelyan, UK

Viewing the film for the first time, I began to feel quite uncomfortable. Coming from a Buddhist tradition, I felt that this was an attempt to 'fit' Buddhism into Christianity, and I became defensive. That was the first time; I have seen it twice since then, and am convinced about its message.

It has enforced, for me, the truth that there are deep spiritual treasures to be discovered, and that the process is unique for each person. It also helped me realise that I was clinging on to an ownership of my faith (which, incidentally, is contrary to Buddhist teachings). The more I see the film, the more I experience a sense of happiness and awe at the rich paths spirituality can lead us along.

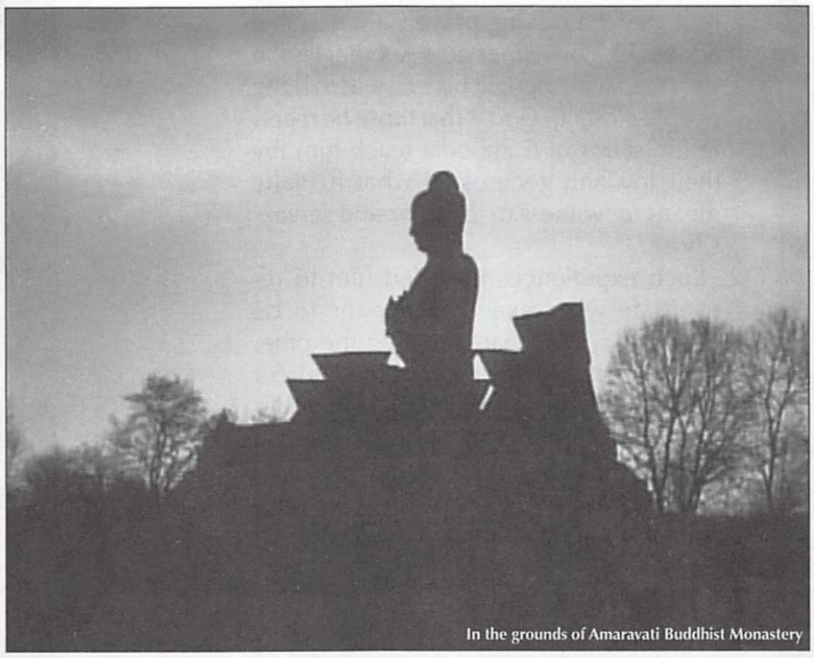
It's refreshing to hear Mother Rosemary and Father Ponchaud speak of the similarities of the two approaches, and yet the struggle to find common ground. It's equally heartening to hear them say, 'I don't know' or 'I am still learning' when asked potentially contentious questions. This is a lesson for me in both humility and patience.

The message the film carries is of fundamental importance for the world today—that each path is a path to liberation/salvation and it's not for us to judge someone of a different faith. It helps me understand what makes someone of another faith tick and gives me an opportunity to be sensitive—a probable way out of the great misunderstandings and suspicions we can have of each other. I have been asked whether my view of Christianity changed after seeing the film. Yes, my understanding of it has grown—a lot. I feel a closer bond now, and am challenged to find out more.

I commend the filmmakers; they have approached Buddhism from both an Asian and a Western perspective, and the way its essence is drawn out is skilful. One thing I would have found helpful—even though the film is about Christian views on Buddhism—is the opinion of a Buddhist monk/nun, on the learning processes they had to go through.

By the way, you might be wondering how I coped with my uncomfortable feelings back at the first viewing. Others watching the film pointed out that *they*, as Christians, might feel defensive too, at the sight of Christians embracing Buddhism. It dawned on me how silly I had been to let my little fears wrap me up and blind me to the view of the other.

Roshan Dodanwela, Sri Lanka



In the grounds of Amaravati Buddhist Monastery

The Cross and the Bodhi Tree *is available from FLT films—*
for the love of tomorrow
24 Greencoat Place
London SW1P 1RD
Email: fltfilms@post.com
Tel: 0207 798 6020
Price:
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WHAT - U - THINK

Do you ever/never watch the news on TV? Why?

Allison Woodruff, USA

As a teenager growing up in the 80s I felt emotionally drained by TV news and the media. But in recent years my feelings have changed. The spirit of the 80s was one of materialism and greed. News coverage reflected and sensationalised that. Watching it made me feel depressed, anxious and afraid. However, the spirit of this new millennium is noticeably different here. There is a return to wholesome values and peaceful, grass roots efforts in every area of society. There is a spirit of kindness and goodwill among 'Americans', who represent almost every race and culture. That is reflected in my local TV and radio news. I even see it in NBC and CNN reporting. The day of the September 11 attacks, I was grateful to have an experienced and sophisticated news media to turn to.

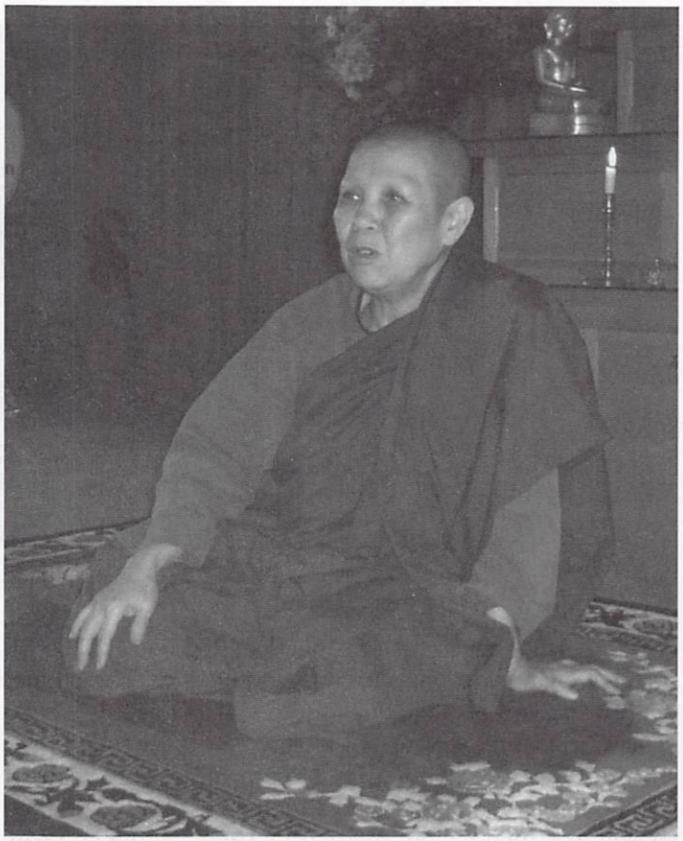
While I value the US media, I realise some reports have a particular slant, so I balance my view by reading other news sources such as The Tehran Times of Iran and the BBC online.

Hugh Williams, UK

There are two different 'modes' in which I watch TV news. One reflects the general need to be informed of what is happening in the world. In this mode, I watch once in the evening. But at times of heightened tension at home (such

Always the Host...

Our function in life is observation, according to Sister Bodhipala. To observe how our minds react to the changing circumstances around us, and to respond accordingly, not reactively.



The diminutive Cambodian-born nun has had 'great fun' over the past three months, during the annual Rainy Season Retreat, observing how her mind reacted as she did things which are not usually part of her daily routine (reading the newspaper, for example).

Sitting with her at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in the English countryside, a month after the terrorist attacks on the US (for many years her home), her warning seemed pertinent. 'The receivers [of the attack] do not need to blame themselves—or anyone—but to try to work out what needs to be done *now*.' And she sees herself as part of this doing. As a nun, she helps create and run a refuge where anyone can come to gain peace and wisdom, to learn better how to live—first with themselves and then with others, as part of a community.

'Now' is another word that Bodhipala, as she calls herself, uses often. 'Right *now*, what the US needs is wisdom, not revenge.' There is no point in looking back, she says; we need to take care of the present, so that the future will be as good as it can be.

Bodhipala is absolutely with us for the time we are there. She has not prepared for our interview in the traditional sense (by making some notes on paper, perhaps), just as she no longer prepares before giving a speech. But, unlike most of us, she is totally present, and so her wisdom is unadulterated. If she made notes for a speech, she says, she would not be totally with her audience, but caught up in the notes instead.

Her training (three years as a novice, in white robes, followed by two years in brown, as above) has meant that she is able to trust her first thought about anything—her wisdom arrives instantaneously, not via hours of thought. If

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as a general election or a train crash) or of crisis in the world (such as wars in the Gulf or Bosnia, or terrorist outrages such as at the WTC) then viewing becomes almost obsessive. As such situations develop—I think the media professionals call it 'breaking news'—I might watch several news programmes in one evening, and then go to teletext or the radio for more. What I think takes over is not so much the desire for information, but the love of a gripping story—'what happened next?'. And real life is often stranger and more unexpected than fiction!

Maike Bochow, Germany

For me it is important to know what is going on in Germany and the world. I am not an active person in political life, but feel it is my duty to be informed. While watching TV my mind is more focused on the pictures than on the facts. So I get most of my information from the newspaper. But I do not want to miss the TV news because it can bring home the reality of what is happening. The collapse of the Twin Towers, for example, is something I could not believe before seeing it on TV. On the other hand, TV runs the risk of showing the same things again and again. And I see so much cruelty I often have to switch it off.

Alleson Mason, Jamaica

Arguably, the best way to keep up with current affairs

she goes over and over ideas in her mind, picking out the best option, they lose their purity, she says. This is another reason why she does not prepare for the speeches she is asked to give. Amaravati is inhabited by many young professionals (doctors, architects...) who have become enslaved by the type of intensely rational reasoning that Western society contantly promotes, and who are yearning for a more direct, more natural way of living.

A Sri Lankan/Australian couple being blessed for marriage by Sister Bodhipala, Amaravati Buddhist Monastery

Bodhipala believes that we need DIRECT EXPERIENCE before we gain wisdom. It is easy to talk about something, but how do you *do* it? One of those magical people whose age it is impossible to gauge by looking (she is a grandmother) she has had plenty of direct experience. Born to a Cambodian-French father and a Vietnamese mother, Renee (as she was then called) married in 1960. Fourteen years later, after a stint in the US, and after the birth of three children, her husband, Sothi, was appointed Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia. Less than a year later, he was a prisoner of the Khmer Rouge and Renee had fled back to the US. She has not heard from him since, and must assume that he is dead.

Renee brought up their three children on her own, alongside obtaining a master's degree in statistics and computer science, earning an income as an economic forecaster, helping other Southeast Asian refugees to settle in the US, and working for freedom and democracy in Vietnam. Finally, she became fed up. She yearned to help people, but didn't have the money that society required or the will to corrupt the government to achieve what she wanted. She compares her mind at the end of this time to a computer with too many bytes in its memory—it becomes slow and inefficient. Space is required before it can operate properly again. We need to engage in 'space management'!

In particular, her hatred of the Khmer Rouge was using up precious space in her mind. She 'determined' (another favourite word) to forgive them for what they had done to her family and to her country, and to ask their forgiveness for her thoughts. This decision did not come easily. During sleepless nights, Renee wrote, 'Khmer Rouge, I forgive you', on bits of paper, then screwed them up and threw them away. But, finally, it became clear to her that she was ready. When she spoke to Khmer Rouge members and forgave them—t years after her husband had disappeared—she felt 'so calm, so light, like an angel came and picked me up'. Her heart

WHAT - U - THINK

in the ever-expanding 'global village' is to watch TV news. It's as current as it gets. You're not only informed—you're entertained, live. Newspapers can't capture the excitement and terror of the war in the Middle East as vividly as a TV camera can. TV personalities sometimes add an individual flavour to the story they're covering—people may watch CBS news, for example, to see Peter Jennings.

The question surrounding news in whatever medium, however, is how much is fact and how much is opinion (spin). To what extent are we being informed and to what extent indoctrinated? Sometimes I refrain from watching because the dire circumstances of our world are too depressing—I just don't want to know. At that point, I choose peace of mind and sanity over being informed.

James Wood, UK

I do watch the news, but have to confess that it is rather boring—yes, even now. From day to day little appears to change—the same people doing the same things, and many of the responses are predictable. Of course these things affect us all so it is important to be aware that—for example—there is a war being fought in our name right now. However, I don't feel particularly affected by or attached to what is happening in the Middle East or even in London (where I live) much of the time. I have been an avid news fan in the past but have come to feel that, just like anything else, you can have too much. News, as much as soap operas or

was free from its heavy burden, and her mind able to think again. Now, whenever there is a conflict within herself, Bodhipala knows that she must face it right away, to let the prisoner (the hatred inside herself) out, and to escape the suffering it provokes.

In the monastery, Bodhipala values every moment of her time. She feels her life here is too precious to spend reading books about politics, for example, even though she was once an energetic political activist. Meditation enables us to transcend the emotions that clog our minds on a daily basis, she says. Through the practice (sometimes she will sit for hours at a time) she creates space that has enabled her to love her children more than ever. They are not constantly in her mind as they perhaps once were, but when she decides to bring them in, or to go to see them, she is totally with them. Through meditation and getting to know herself, she has come to know other people better, to really know that they are human too. She has greater compassion—not only for her own children, but for all of humanity. It is rare that people have the opportunity to live the kind of life she is living, at Amaravati, and she feels it is the best thing she can offer society *now*.

Often, she is asked what would happen if her husband were not in fact dead—if he came looking for her and found her in a monastery (where she is required to remain celibate). Bodhipala cannot answer this question, she says, because it is not the way things are *now*. But, if it happened, she would *then* know what to do.

During her recent retreat, she spent time contemplating a corpse, to help rid her of the fear of death. After 11 days of viewing and contemplating the degenerating body, her initial horror disappeared: 'This will be me'. Beneath our outer coverings, we are all skeletons, and when we realise this, we suffer less. 'Learn how to die', she says, for though life is uncertain, death is certain for us all. She takes refuge in this—and in the thought that through her life she is harming no one—rather than in the worldly refuges that so many of us are tempted to seek. Bodhipala has become disillusioned by politicians and others who lose the ability to satisfy themselves and so try to fill the gap in other ways—power, money...

Clearly, she is a determined person; clearly also, she gains greater determination through her faith. It doesn't matter what religion, she says, but to have faith is the most important thing. One of the most effective ways of reaching people is by caring for them, through our prayer and thoughts. 'Our caring travels through the air, to reach others.' However, prayers must come from your heart, to be effective; they are useless if they are coming from your head. She feels it is her ability to pray for others, from her heart, that makes her life in the monastery most effective in changing society.

For herself, she uses her own determinations as 'police'—without them, she would suffer greatly. They may be big (a determination not to criticise others) or small (not to drink coffee!) but they keep her healthy in mind and body. She sees herself as a constant host: 'The best home is the home within. Always go back to your home.' Guests come and go, but if we can remain hosts, we can enjoy the security of being ever present within ourselves.

Her message to us, above all? In this throwaway society, where we want results instantaneously, be patient. And practise the skill of observation.

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computer games, can be a distraction from our everyday lives. Too much of it can leave us detached and unavailable for the things we are directly involved with. I cannot, at the moment, change the war on terrorism or enable the Northern Ireland assembly to reconvene. But through my work, friendships and daily dealings I can have a positive impact on those around me. A quiet, well-placed word today can prevent all sorts of unecessary suffering in the future—who knows what never happened because of the right word or action at the right time?

So news *is* important. We need to be aware of what is happening—not necessarily so that we can solve all the world's problems, but so we know what it is that we hope to prevent, or even encourage.

Steven Greisdorf, USA

I never watch news on TV. It isn't that I'm not interested—in fact, I like to keep up with what is going on. This isimportant not just for me, personally, but because I am getting to know people in many parts of the world and want to know how I can care for them. News on TV tends to focus on the negative, not the positive. It tends more toward entertainment than information sharing. It tends to present information on a very basic level. It also tends to be fairly one-sided. I like my news to be more objective, contain more facts, provide scope for me to form my own opinion. Various Internet-based news sources provide this type of news presentation, as do some selected news magazines.

"If the strains of having children are not resolved early on... the emotional and spiritual side of the marriage calcifies, until all that is left is a brittle shell"

Sarah Mayor Cox, 35, on her struggle with Post-Natal Depression

After each of your three sons were born you suffered from severe Post-Natal Depression (PND). You say you would not have had it any other way. Why?

I feel as if I have been to hell and back over the last six years, but I am so much stronger for it. I can really relate to that metaphor of work-hardened steel. My experiences have forged me into a more resilient, compassionate and real person. Before I got married and had the boys I was off in 'la-la land' a lot of the time. I am a dreamer and slighty bi-polar by nature. Being a mother of young children I initially lost sight of many of those dreams. I think you would have to be an extraordinarily 'together' person not to let the endless baskets of washing, sleep deprivation and lack of time to yourself cloud your vision of your dreams. I think that is one of the reasons I got PND. But now I have found my way again I realise I was hanging on to my dreams for dear life. I knew deep down that if I unclenched my fist I would die with my dreams. (That sounds melodramatic, but I am a drama queen by nature too!) Having come through my third bout of it I am eternally grateful for the lessons I have been shown, and I do not mean that in a martyrish way.

Had you experienced depression before?

Yes, the odd day in my high school years, and usually when I was pre-menstrual. But I had never experienced long-term depression before—the sort which arrives like the snow for winter and stays long after the spring melts.

How has the depression affected your marriage?

Hugely. You often hear of couples with very young children breaking up, and you wonder why it has happened. Pete and I have come to the conclusion that some of these may actually be undiagnosed cases of PND. Starting a family is a massive strain to put any marriage under, especially when many couples work two jobs and are often removed from family support networks. And if one (or both) is suffering from depression it can mean the end of the relationship.

And relationships can end in many ways. Sometimes people do physically leave each other and try to square things up financially. But more often, if the strains of having children are not resolved early on, then a different kind of leaving takes place—one partner stays longer at work, or puts more energy into exercise, recreation, hobbies or volunteer causes, and the other either does the same or slides into a pattern of resignation, low self-esteem and apathy. Gradually the emotional and spiritual side of the marriage calcifies, until all that is left is a brittle shell.

Pete and I are pretty fiery, assertive types. Though we had worked through lots of issues before we married, and in the first few years, having the boys really showed up the areas we *hadn't* worked through. For instance, as single people we were both quite energetic—the sort who had their fingers in far too many pies. We realised that, as we had both lived at home until our late twenties, we had been able to do so much because we had had the back-up of our parents—meals cooked, clothes washed, nice place to live and, in my case, a father who helped me whenever I had to deal with a financial question. I could stay at work late, put my hand up for every committee in sight and be very involved with my local church and more, because I was still treating my parents as my personal assistants. You can do that as a child, but I don't think it's very healthy for working adults. So when Pete and I got married we had lots of growing up to do.

All of a sudden we seemed to get nothing done, on the house or in the garden, and we were exhausted all the time. When we had Oliver we had both just finished our Master's degrees, moved house and renovated. For a while we had no bathroom, laundry or kitchen. Try eating and living in one room and using a bucket for a toilet when you are heavily pregnant. It was a recipe

for disaster. I do have this tendency to make each situation I take on as complicated as can be. I think we'd honestly thought life would go on as normal.

The baby didn't sleep much and was very clingy. It slowly dawned on me that, as Pete was working full-time, I was going to have to take on the personal assistant role. I freaked and then baulked. I was so angry at Pete and Oliver and the world. I thought we had gone into parenthood with the explicit understanding that, as far as possible, we would parent in equal proportions. Suddenly I felt as if the contract had been changed—I was doing all the parenting and house-duties while Pete went on with his satisfying career.

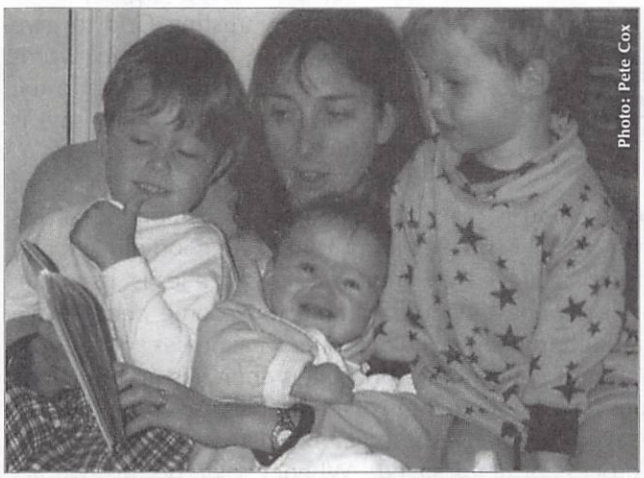


Photo: Pete Cox

What and/or who has helped you most through the darkest times?

Pete, some very special health professionals and my family (my sister in particular). Pete, by sticking by me when I have been, to quote him, 'an axe-murderer' to live with. There have been times when I have been so ill, angry and violent that Pete has feared for his life. I would not have liked to have been married to me at times. I'm sure the only thing that got Pete through was saying his marriage vows under his breath: 'in sickness and in health—this is sickness and it will pass, she will be healthy again'. But horrible as it was for Pete, I used to say to him, 'at least when you go somewhere you have a break from me—everywhere I go, I take myself with me'.

I honestly don't think I would be alive today if it were not for my brilliant GP. She put me in touch with a fabulous psychologist who has helped me understand my own nature and God in a new way, and with a marriage counsellor who has helped us take our marriage to a deeper level. I also joined a PND therapy group which helped turn things around.

Another major help, after our second child, was that Pete cut back his working hours. We now work two-and-a-half days a week each, and when we're not at work we look after the boys.

Where does your hope come from?

From knowing that every day is a fresh day; from getting back in touch with myself and my God; from the writing which I have started doing; and from learning how to be silly. I have spent too much of my life being really serious, and worrying what other people think. And now that I am nearly well, my hope comes from my family too. I love my husband—I am excited by the prospect of being his partner for the rest of my life. Oliver, Hamish and Samuel are great little people too, and as they get older I enjoy them more.

Do you learn from your children?

All the time. The latest thing I've realised is that the things I most dislike in my children's natures are the things I wrestle hardest with in myself.

Have you felt understood?

At times, yes. Always by my health professionals. By others no, not always. I think PND is a scary condition for society to deal with. We are frightened by the idea that mothers may be ill and unable to cope. It is in society's interest for mothers not only to be good at their job, but to enjoy it. Being a mother is bloody hard slog, and more should be done to support them.

Having experienced your shadow side do you feel more, or less, comfortable with yourself?

Far more comfortable. Emotionally I have been to the edge—I have looked into the abyss. It's a nightmarish place to be. But I have come back. I know myself better now, and funnily enough I like myself better too.

I believe one of the reasons people in the West are experiencing more depression is that we have lost touch with our darker side. We have tried to gloss over everything, made it appear all sweetness and light. Talk to anyone in a war torn country and they will tell you it's not, but that even in the midst of the most gruesome conditions, the human spirit is amazingly resilient. The 'Disney' spin we put on things cuts us off from half of ourselves. You only have to read some of the old myths, legends, folk and fairy tales to know that humanity has a profound need to understand the darker side. I am so grateful to have been put back in touch with this side of me.

After two bouts of PND, why did you have a third child?

Without sounding like a complete fruitloop (!), I felt very strongly that a little soul said to me, 'I will completely understand if you can't do it, but if you have room in your family for me I would love to be part of it. But don't worry if you don't have the energy—I will watch over you throughout life'. Well, what could we do? We couldn't leave that little soul wandering around. We had to make room. And our family is so much richer for it. Samuel is our little smiler—he smiles with his whole being, reminding us just what a lucky family we are.

Interview: The Editors

Sarah is a primary teacher, currently lecturing in Literacy and Children's Literature. Pete is also lecturing, while completing his PhD. They live in Bendigo, Australia, with Oliver (5), Hamish (3) and Samuel (1).

how do you fight *evil?*

For the last few months, this has been the question dominating the world's headlines. A range of different answers has been offered, from massive military strikes on several countries, to questioning what drives people to such murderous deeds. At the time of writing, the intensive rounds of diplomacy have given way to focused military action. So far, we have avoided falling into the traps set by the extremists who want to provoke a full-scale confrontation between Islam and the West, but the stakes are high.

Two thousand years ago, similar grave political crises forced the people of Israel to ask the same question. They were God's chosen people, called to be a light to the nations, to show the world how to live. Yet they were dominated by a foreign super-power which worshipped the idols of power, sex and war. For those who chose to ally themselves with the Romans there were rich rewards. Yet, for the majority there was the indignity of grinding poverty combined with the shame of seeing their religion, the symbols of their identity, gradually being compromised and defiled.

Some chose to become freedom fighters (or terrorists, depending on how you look at it). Despite their small numbers and puny military capability, they were convinced that God would join them in the battle and throw the Romans out.

Others took the line that God had allowed them to become enslaved because they had displeased him. Their answer was to strictly apply God's Law, especially the purity laws—those rules which set them apart from other peoples. Some (such as the Essenes, who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls) went so far as to physically separate themselves by living in desert communities. They saw themselves as the vanguard of God's chosen people restored and re-made. In an age which viewed sickness and deformity as a sign of God's punishment for sin, the lame or the lepers were not welcome in these special communities. Only the pure, the perfect, were allowed. Soon, they believed, because of their faithfulness, God would act to destroy their enemies and restore Israel.

Jesus took a wholly different path. To those who took up arms he said: 'those who live by the sword will die by the sword'. It was both an accurate prophesy (Jerusalem was annihilated by the Romans forty years later) and a theological observation (that those who choose violence are worshipping at the altar of Mars and become as wrong as the people they are fighting).

Jesus saw his work as re-constituting the People of God or 'building the Kingdom' and, like the Essenes, he believed that God would act through this. Yet, the way he went about this work stands in complete contrast to the Essenes or Pharisees. In the Sermon on the Mount, he pointed out that the so-called purity of external obedience to the Law fell miles short of the inner purity that God asks. In the face of these total demands to perfection, ALL fall short and stand condemned. The 'People of God' would not be re-made by excluding the sick and the sinners, but by *healing* them. All would be welcomed into the Kingdom, and the key to the door was *forgiveness* (of which healing was a visible symbol).

Jesus was no pacifist in the modern sense. He knew full well that walking the path of love and forgiveness would lead him to do battle with the powers of evil in the world. He took the full force of violence, cynicism, corruption and self-interested bigotry on himself, trusting God to give the victory and breathing words of love and forgiveness to the last. The rest (as they say) is history!

Too often churches and religious groups think of themselves as communities of the saved

The paradox at the heart of Jesus' mission is that the Kingdom is both coming and is *already here*. By raising Jesus from death, God did act, and Christians believe they are invited to share Jesus' risen life. Yet, clearly the Kingdom has not fully come because we are all still struggling with our inner weaknesses and failings. It is a hard concept, and too often churches and religious groups have come to think of themselves as communities of the saved (or changed), forgetting that we are also still in the process of *being* saved. Whenever we do this, we act like the Essenes by excluding people from their birthright as members of the Kingdom. In Jesus' time it was the blind and the lame. In our day it is the single parents, the gay, the poor.

So where does that leave us in the 21st Century? The temptation now—as before—is to see evil as something external, separate from ourselves, and either to take up arms against it, or to self-righteously regard our own communities as being without fault.

I believe that, particularly at the present time, we would do well to recognise the old truism that the dividing line between good and evil runs not between nations or religions, but through every human heart. Wherever we recognise that, and become a community engaged in that inner struggle, we become part of the Kingdom of God, and can expect to be working with the power of the Holy Spirit. In an interdependent world we are called to solidarity with fellow strugglers from every race, creed and continent. Our struggle must inevitably take on board the need for global justice and care for the environment, and the warm embrace of cultures and traditions different to our own.

Mike Lowe, UK

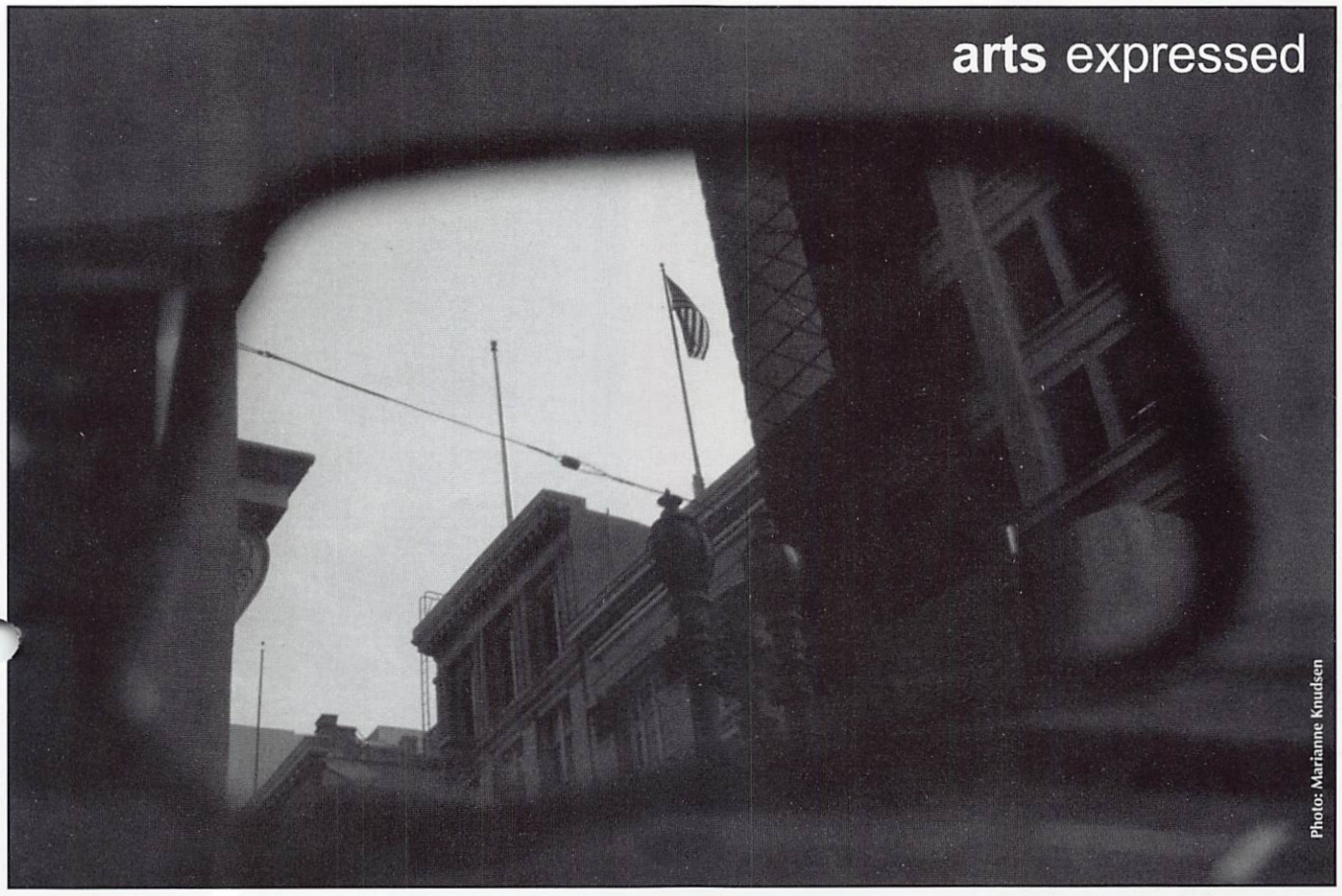


Photo: Marianne Knudsen

Remember
Not just the lives we lost
But the love we share

Remember
Not just the sorrow we feel
But the joy we grow

Remember
Not just the images of terror
But the image of God

Remember
Not just the desperation that entraps us
But the hope that frees us

Remember
Not just the failures of mankind
But the potential of humanity

Remember
Not just the hate we succumb to
But the forgiveness we surrender to

Remember
Not just the shadows that divide us
But the Light that unites us

Remember
Not just the words that tear us apart
But the Silence that embraces us

Remember
Not just the wounds of the soul
But the healing of the Spirit

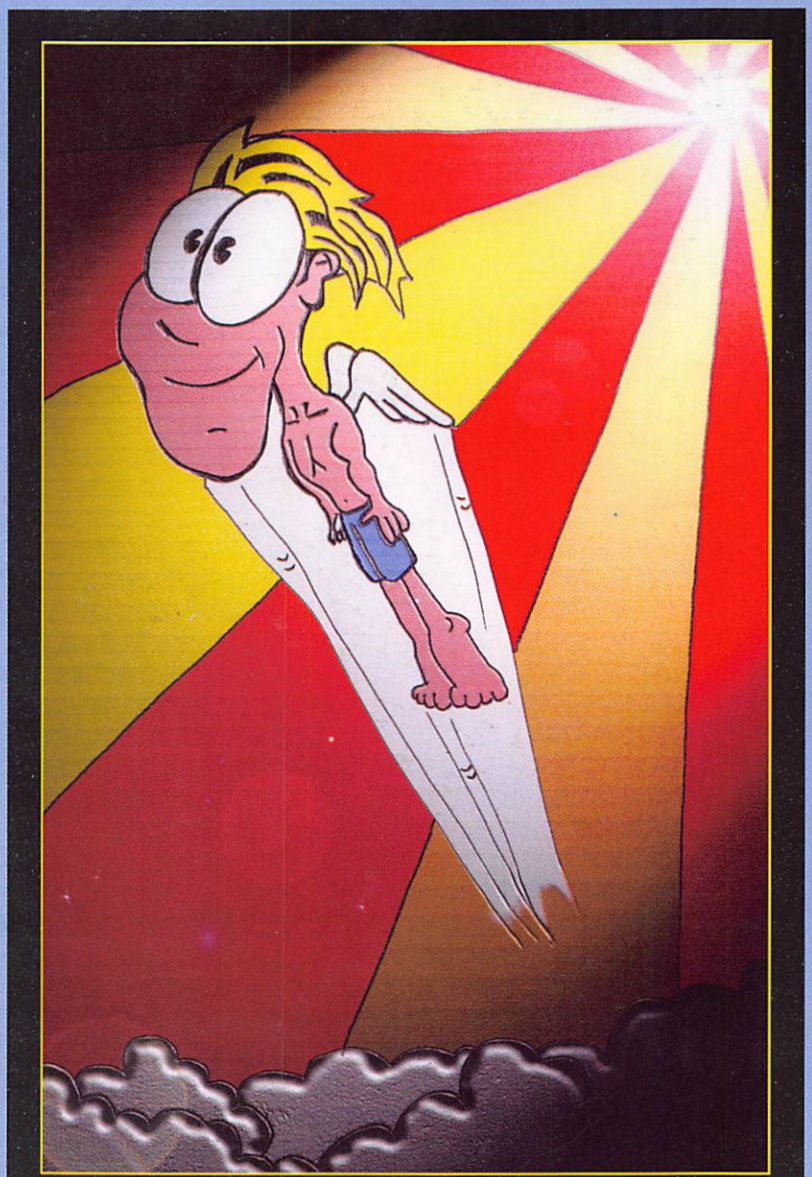
At 8:48 Remember...
Across the oceans
Across all faiths
Across all colours

Remember
Not just this time
But Eternity

Remember...

Rosa Bellino, Italy
(Email, September 11)

Scattered thoughts



Learning to soar

The Earth is a cradle of the mind, but we cannot live forever in a cradle - Konstantin E Tsiolkovsky

Only dead fish swim constantly with the tide

The real obstacle lies much more in people's hearts than in their circumstances - Paul Tournier

The absence of intention is the basic element in the beauty of the cosmos

True leadership is loving service

The purpose of life is a life of purpose - David MacInnes

Faith means believing in advance what will only make sense in reverse - Philip Yancey

Whenever I have to choose between two evils, I always like to try the one I haven't tried before - Mae West

Relationships are only as alive as the people engaging in them

Prayer heals, not just the answer to prayer - Henri Nouwen

People change and forget to tell each other - William Hellman

What our world needs is not a peace that condones, but a purity that transforms - Charles Ringma

Massage your body - it needs it! - Sister Bodhipala

If you love the sacred and despise the ordinary, you are still bobbing in the ocean of delusion - Lin-chi