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## World-wide question that needs an answer

WHEN THE POPE VISITED BRAZIL last July, his heart was stirred by the conditions he saw in the *favela* (shanty town) of Vidigal. Spontaneously he took off his Cardinal's ring, a prized possession, and asked that it be sold to help relieve the poverty and deprivation.

The *favelados* have not sold the ring. They are keeping it in the tiny chapel in the *favela*. It is their symbol that, though they have neither wealth nor education, property nor power, they matter.

'Do I matter?' It is a question asked in rich homes as well as poor. Recently I met a young European girl from a family of privilege. Confronted with her mother's refusal ever to give time to her, she has concluded that she was never wanted. She longs for the assurance that came to the underprivileged of Vidigal.

What goes on in the heart of a worker, an engineer, a school-leaver who is told there is no longer a place for him? I spoke to a union branch secretary at a British steelworks where half the workforce is being made redundant in the wake of the recession. 'They have got rid of the best ones,' he said, talking of engineers who have laboured to improve plant productivity in recent months.

Over 40 years ago, Frank Buchman, who launched MRA, called for a national mobilisation to deal with unemployment 'on the same scale, and carried out with the same personal care, that nations in war-time have given to everyone who needed to be taken to a place of safety. The unemployed must have the safety and security which comes from knowing that they are needed, and that there is a job for them to do. Thus each nation can use all its resources and find its truest security.'

In Brazil the Pope spoke to 150,000 people in a Sao Paulo football stadium. 'Think of the suffering and anxiety that unemployment causes,' he exclaimed. 'The first and fundamental concern of each one of us must be to give work to all. It is just not realistic to hope that the answer will come, more or less automatically, as a result of some social or economic development.'

Laurie Vogel

# NEW WORLD NEWS

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## SPECIAL ISSUE

**In a world where so many feel unwanted, everyone is needed**

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## WHEN A FAVELA IS NOT A FAVELA

**In Latin America the word 'marginalizado' describes the people who feel pushed out to the fringe of society—such as the millions of 'favelados'. What can they do about it, our correspondent asks LUIZ and EDIR PEREIRA from Rio de Janeiro. Luiz is a building worker who lived for 20 years in the 'favelas', and became president of an association representing 35,000 'favelados'.**

**Luiz:** In the *favelas* we feel that no one sees us as worth anything. We feel that if the people in the luxury flats—those we call 'the people of the asphalt'—were to wake up one morning and find that we had all disappeared, they would breathe a sigh of relief. When the police are dealing with us they call us 'those damned *favelados*'.

**Edir:** I was in despair at having to bring up my children in a *favela*. It wasn't the poverty;

it was the bad ways they would pick up. Almost all the habits of life are different there. Now our *favela* has been replaced by an estate of low-cost apartments. But there are still cruel attitudes. The families there who have not come from *favelas* blame us for any damage to the estate.

**Luiz:** If you feel yourself a *marginalizado*, you just let yourself go, and soon you fall into the ways of the *favela*. 'What does it matter?' you say. 'Who cares?'

But even in the *favela* you don't have to be *marginalizado*. The Association we launched not only brought many material improvements, but people no longer felt defenceless. We invited people to come and visit our *favela*. I remember someone saying to me, 'Senhor Luiz, our community isn't a *favela* any more. Look at all the people who are visiting us.' At one point I used to broadcast over the loudspeaker at the Association hall, 'Let's stop using terms which create division like "those white people from the asphalt". We are all one people.'

It is not even the Association that is important. It is whether or not those who lead it will work to bring a new spirit. No one is truly *marginalizado* unless he has lost his link with God. A human being in contact with God, no matter how poor he is, will never become wretched and worthless. After all, there's nothing immoral in being poor.

And it is not only the *favelados* who feel *marginalizados*—there are the *posseiros* (subsistence land-workers) for example. They take a piece of land in the country and



plant food for their family; but they know they may be dispossessed at any moment if someone stronger comes along.

The Pope's visit to Brazil helped very much. The spirit he radiated reached everyone, including the underprivileged. I understand why, because it was through people of MRA visiting me in my *favela* that I began to understand that I mattered to God. It took a long time, but slowly my attitude changed. We will always remember one of them—Peter Howard. He came to our *favela*, and went to the heart of the toughest of us with a few sentences. 'Poverty is hell,' he told us. 'But sometimes in the midst of poverty is born a spirit of community which is part of heaven.' One day, he said, we would get new houses, and he challenged us to take the spirit of solidarity there. 'It is something the whole world needs,' he said.







A 'favela' in Brazil like that in which Luiz and Edir Pereira lived, described in the slide-tape show 'Build on Solid Ground'.

## Leaving the safety of the asphalt

Harold Sneath

Cape Town

IT ALL BEGAN five years ago at an MRA conference in Zimbabwe, or Rhodesia as it was then. One morning, as I searched for God's guidance, I had the unexpected thought that I should become interested in housing. Unexpected, because there I was, a retired chartered accountant, with a natural inclination towards relaxing, golfing and gardening, but no knowledge of housing.

On my return to Cape Town I got myself invited to several seminars on housing. One Chairman, whom I happened to know, asked me what on earth I was doing there, thereby rather confirming my own question. The seminars were held in big hotels and provided a lot of talk, which did not seem to lead far, and a lot of good food which, in my case, led to rather somnolent afternoons.

Gradually the conviction grew that it was with housing for squatters that I should concern myself. There were about 200,000 in camps around Cape Town. But how to begin? I was told that it would be useless to walk into the camps without knowing the leaders. All I had to go on was the certainty that the Holy Spirit would lead.

### Self-help

One day I attended a gathering at the University of Cape Town on a quite different subject. There I found myself telling a young woman about my frustration. 'That's easy,' she said. 'You want to meet the leaders. You fix an evening and I'll bring them to your home.'

Next Sunday evening, 20 leaders from four camps rolled up at our home. Our neighbours took a poor view, but the visitors' courtesy and friendliness set any fears at rest. As we were about to start, six white university students gatecrashed the party. Not wanting to begin with an unpleasant incident, I let them be.

We showed our visitors the tape-slide presentation, *Build on Solid Ground*, which describes the way squatters in Rio de Janeiro have been tackling their problems. Since that thought in Zimbabwe, my wife and I had been in Brazil and had seen at first hand the answers they were working out. Our visitors were fascinated, but one of the gatecrashers objected to the Christian conviction and moral change which was the source of the *favelados'* initiative: 'Christianity has had 2000 years and failed; now

Chairman Mao is showing us the way!'

Our new friend and her co-worker had been working alongside the squatters for some time, trying to help them to do what they could for themselves as a community. They told the students, who visited the camps telling the squatters to have nothing to do with our 'nonsense', that if they didn't like the message, they had better clear out.

After that I found there was no problem of what to do; rather how to fit it all in. Projects had to be tackled in faith, with none of the financial guarantees I was used to. Our friends organised squatters' committees and taught them how to run them; how to govern their own affairs; how to develop self-help; how to present their case to the authorities. The squatters began to build community centres and schools.

### Core units

This work took care and commitment. In the early days our friend used a pedal cycle to get around. On one occasion she was accosted by a gang of youths who demanded her cycle. She protested she needed it for her work, but the gang insisted. Finally she compromised: they could have it, but they must bring it back at 5 o'clock. Incredibly, at 5 o'clock, it was returned. It was an unforgettable experience to go into the camps with her and see the joy and trust of the people. Even at night she could move safely. It seemed that her complete lack of fear was her protection.

The public slowly began to recognise the needs and contribute. R250,000 (£125,000) was subscribed to put up experimental 'core' or 'starter' units. Designed free of charge by the President of the Institute of Architects, these consist of a minimum of one room plus bathroom and toilet. Three or more rooms can then be added bit by bit. Just this month the new Minister of Community Development has spoken favourably of this idea and also of 'site and service' schemes for which we have pleaded. And instead of evictions, the Government has housed many of the Coloured squatters and has set land aside for homes for certain of the African squatters.

I believe that the determination, sacrifice and inspiration of these friends has played an important part in these beginnings towards change.

## No longer

MY FATHER was legally married, but had a second family with children outside marriage and I belong to that one. This meant I never lived with him, was never told who he was and did not carry his name. Although I grew up in a home where there was enough materially, there were many wounds, humiliations and sometimes a sense of shame.

Because of this, when I was eight I decided to close my heart to the hurts and to open it to no one. I became two personalities; an outward one which was bright, successful and superficial, and another in the silence of my heart—hurt, unwanted, hard, sometimes with violent feelings.

By the time I was studying medicine at the University of Paris I felt that society had no place for me; that I was a victim. Then I met two young women who told me about listening to the voice of God within. I experimented in quiet and for the first time I came face to face with the reality in my heart: that I was full of hate and that I blamed my parents, society and circumstances. I felt I must say sorry to my mother; when I did, a great load was taken from me.

That was a first step, but later in silence God spoke very clearly to me: 'If you are bitter and hurt, it is because you blame somebody else. If you accept total blame, you will

## What to do in

Is it possible to run a business during individuals first? Greville and Stuart Li 17 shops in Yorkshire and surrounding c upper size range. Margaret Smith spol



THE DAY I ARRIVED in Sheffield, home of Greville and Stuart's head office, the management had spent the morning conferring on the future, which involved vital decisions about one branch where turnover had fallen to a level below that of the 1960s. Should the shop be closed? Were there still ways that sales could be boosted? Should a new shop be opened in a more promising locality?

Joint Managing Director Eric Priestley smiled at me across his wide desk and commented, 'We came to this morning's meeting with strongly differing opinions.



## er a victim

become totally free.' I protested, 'I was not consulted, when I was brought into the world!' But God said to me, 'When you were eight, you decided to close your heart. I am more concerned about the effect of that on people around you, all these years, than about the circumstances of your birth.'

That was a moment of truth. If I accepted this, I was no longer a victim of society, but totally responsible for what my bitterness had created around me. I did accept; the bitterness went and has never come back. I became a free woman.

Later I went to work in South America with the programme of Moral Re-Armament. There I understood that the roots of violent revolution are the bitterness and hatreds in the hearts of people who feel they have been treated unjustly. We must answer not only the unjust structures in society, but also the feelings in the human heart. I deeply believe that this answer can come to the world from Latin America and that is why my husband and I are giving our lives there.

Looking back, it has been an amazing series of experiences. For so many years, as a young woman, I asked myself if I had ever been wanted in this world. Now I know that God needs me—as He needs each and every one—to build His family on earth. EV

## a tight squeeze

a recession and still put the needs of limited is a family concern which runs counties, selling women's clothing in the ke to the management and employees:



Greaves, Huddersfield

'Each had his say. Then we had a time of reflection, seeking what God wanted us to do. Everybody had a clear sense that we should wait five or six weeks and trust that we would be shown the next step. It was a positive instruction, and we look forward with freedom and anticipation to see what happens.'

His brother Ralph, the other Joint Managing Director, is responsible for the accounts. 'Trading is worse now than I have known it for 35 years,' he told me. 'The two main

**WHAT TO DO contd on p4**

## Will they still need me, now I'm 54?

by John Dodds  
Gloucestershire

AFTER FOUR YEARS as Export Director of a British trading company, I was made redundant with three months' salary in December 1978. At first I was confident of securing another post in management. But I soon found that at 54 you are unwanted in industry and as the national economy deteriorated it became increasingly difficult even to get interviews. I started to become sour, bitter and disillusioned.

My wife, Dawn, and I have made a practice of taking time in silence to seek God's direction every day. It was like a life-line to a sinking man during those days and helped me to combat the recurring waves of shame and despair. I often recalled how Frank Buchman, during the last major world recession in the 1930s, had said that every unemployed man could be fully employed in the remaking of the world.

As a solution this seemed grossly impracticable for a man with seven children, even if some of them were now on their own. But I realised I was confronted with a choice. Some years before, I had given my life to God for His work of remaking the world. The question was whether I was going to keep to that decision regardless of whether I had paid full-time employment or not.

I had recently received an invitation to spend some time in the south of England, helping to promote the film *Britain Works—OK!* in which workers and management talk about the changes in attitude which they believe offer a hope for British industry. I decided to go, and it proved to be worthwhile, interesting and satisfying work, though unpaid.

One day my wife had an inspiration: 'Make the most of what you have got in the house, get the spare bedrooms redecorated and take in paying guests.' This meant quite an investment, out of our dwindling savings. But we went ahead in faith that this was what God wanted us to do. All the family then at

home buckled to and we went at it day and night. I worked longer hours and more days of the week than I had in my job. From the day all the rooms were finished, paying guests arrived, in spite of the fact that we had done no advertising and had no previous experience. Everyone in the family was needed—growing vegetables, preparing the meals, cooking, cleaning or washing up.

Then the holiday season ended and it was back to the dole and no prospects. Gloom returned. One day as I sat quietly I had the thought, which I felt came from God, 'I will find you the right job at the right time. Trust Me. Meanwhile you will be a vehicle for my work of remaking homes and families right where you are.' Within two hours of saying 'yes' to this, a neighbour's friend phoned in desperation asking us to come at once as their marriage was on the point of breaking up.

### Money

Over the next weeks and months we spent many hours with this couple. They began to listen to God and put things right with one another. The marriage has been saved. This led to meeting more couples and it has been fascinating to watch God work, as we let Him. People seem hungry to hear how our own marriage has been healed.

Often I have doubted God's promise of full-time paid work. But my wife's faith, certainty and serenity never wavered.

The family rallied marvellously, with the occasional loan of a car when it was most needed. Gifts of money came from family and friends, always when a large bill had to be paid and the kitty was nearly empty. Two years ago we decided to give a regular amount of money to the work of MRA, and we have kept it up, even though we have often wondered whether we could manage.

These 21 months have demonstrated to us that God does have a plan for everyone everywhere, which He shows as we give ourselves and our lives to Him day by day. There is satisfying work for everyone.

## Under-used asset

Dick van Tetterode  
doctor, Holland

THE HEALTH PROBLEMS of many of the older people who come to my consulting rooms are caused, I feel, by a lack of purpose. And I can understand it. The other day, realising that I am almost 60, I felt tempted to think, resignedly, 'There are so many problems in the world, what contribution can I make in the years left to me?'

But older people can play an important part in our society. So often I meet people who say, 'Nobody wants to listen to me'. Old people have the time to listen. I believe that they are society's under-used asset.

## Employable

George Walker  
Editor, 'The Industrial Pioneer'

WHAT CAN I, an over-65, do about the appalling level of unemployment in Britain?

My wife and I decided to take responsibility for a 24-year-old without any particular skills. The job centre had described him as virtually unemployable.

It has meant getting to know him, sizing up what skills he could achieve, then planning a programme which would train and develop them, with the aim that he would steadily become more employable.

I never imagined it would work so well. Now he is very much alive, enjoying the course, looking for the next thing to do.



## WHAT TO DO contd from p3

factors which swell our costs are wages and the renewal of leases. We don't begrudge higher wages to our staff. But when the shops' leases come up for renewal they can rise 600 per cent or more.'

The Priestleys have been through hard times before. Eric Priestley served his apprenticeship in business shortly after the 1926 General Strike. At the age of 20 he had the task of closing down his father's Chesterfield shop, which had run aground in the early days of the depression.

More recently, in 1976-77, they faced an acute deficit. Many employers were laying people off. As men whose Christian commitment guides their actions, the Priestleys sought God's leading and had two thoughts: make nobody redundant, and consult the staff.



Ralph Priestley

They asked the staff of all the shops and the warehouse for suggestions as to how expenses could be cut—including reducing staffing levels. Some offered to take extra leave without pay; others to pay for tea and coffee usually covered by the firm. These and other suggestions, together with some exceptional buying contracts, brought the trading difficulties under control.

'When the present crisis began to press, just before Christmas 1979,' Eric Priestley said, 'we consulted the staff again. My brother and I were profoundly moved when our whole younger management team proposed a cut in their earnings, and a manageress from one of the branches rang to say that they had had a wage increase a few weeks before and felt that we should not pay them their normal pre-Christmas bonus this year. She said that they knew we would make it up when things were better.'

What kind of people would volunteer such sacrifices? I talked to Doris Grafton, until recently manageress of the Leeds shop: 'When a new person comes to work in my shop, I sit them down for a cup of coffee and I say, "First I will tell you what we are. We are a family business and a service selling clothes to larger ladies. I do not see the Priestleys ever being millionaires, they are

not whiz kids. But they are really solid. We want the customer to go out of the shop with good value and good service.'"

With a sparkle of satisfaction in her eyes Mrs Grafton described an incident from the previous day. A young girl had come in on her birthday. 'She was wearing a navy skirt, a blouse and an old cardigan and looked shabby. I found a dress that made her look smashing. Her eyes lit up when she saw herself in it and she kept the dress on to go out to a birthday lunch with her Dad.'

She went on: 'This is a close-knit business without the typical management/employee relationship. Once a year there is a conference for all the manageresses and those at head office, and once every two years there is a conference for the entire staff.' (One hundred and fifty are employed in all: half attend the conference one day, the rest the next, so that the shops remain open.)

'We are asked beforehand if there is anything we want to discuss. All sorts of things come up—what is needed for the next season, advertising... and often you find that something raised by someone else has been on your mind too.'

## No dog-eat-dog

Pauline Crofts works in the record office. She began at Greville and Stuart when she was 15, left to have her children, returning part-time when they began school. I asked her why so many like herself come back to the firm.

'Well, it's not for the money; nor for the surroundings,' she said. 'I suppose the reason I came back is that Mr Eric knew that, for me, the family comes first. I can always take time off, to be made up later, if the family needs me.'

'At first when I came back to work I told my children I was doing it for their sakes, to earn more. But I soon realised it wasn't really true. I wanted to feel I was doing something, helping in some way...'

'This business started small. In times of need I can remember Mr Eric rolling up his sleeves and helping me with the packing. The staff conference makes people feel they belong.'

I asked a shop assistant whether the recession made her fear for her job. 'I am worried,' she replied. 'I live alone. But I feel more secure in this position than in the last. There I had four weeks' notice of the shop's closure. I was frantic. But I found this job and I feel someone up there was watching over me.'

In April this year a girl in the records office had to have a serious operation, and throughout the ensuing months of surgery and emotional adjustments her job was kept open for her. Pauline Crofts described to me how part-time women had worked another day a week to make this possible. 'Doesn't that mean a lot these days? We

carry one person's job just because we want her to know that we want her back.'

Ralph Priestley emphasised that the firm had not laid down a rigid policy of no redundancy, but that a lay-off would only be a last resort. In fact, he could only think of one genuine instance of redundancy—there had been insufficient work for one of the girls, they had hunted for an alternative job, and in the end she had decided to proceed with a long-held plan to found her own riding school.

Though Ralph Priestley does not deny that he worries these days, what strikes the outsider is the buoyant spirit in head office. Alan Ward, the Personnel Director, resigned from a fashionable London group because of the 'ruthless, dog-eat-dog atmosphere'. 'I heard of Stuart's and said to myself, "I don't want to work for an outsize women's clothing business—I've been working on Regent Street!" After an interview I knew I had come across a management team with a great spirit. In the last 18 years I have seen a wholly new concept that is both challenging and exciting.'

The Priestley's father was a Methodist of great integrity. And Eric and Ralph each at different times had an experience of Christ coming into his life which changed his motivation and attitude. This has been true too of Eric's two sons, who have both left promising jobs elsewhere during the last five years and joined the firm, as has the Priestley's nephew.



Eric Priestley

The older Priestleys believe that their business is a service to meet the needs on its doorstep and in the wider world. Eric Priestley says, 'We had to start out saying to ourselves: "We want to see a better society, but are we ready to start with ourselves and our business?"'

They decided that they would be honest in prices, in advertising, in taxes. They decided they would honour all contracts with suppliers, which is often not the case in the clothing business, where demand does not always match orders made long in advance. 'We decided that people would come first. We believe that how you do the job is the most important thing.'