



1990

SPECIAL EDITION

Living for a Change



WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

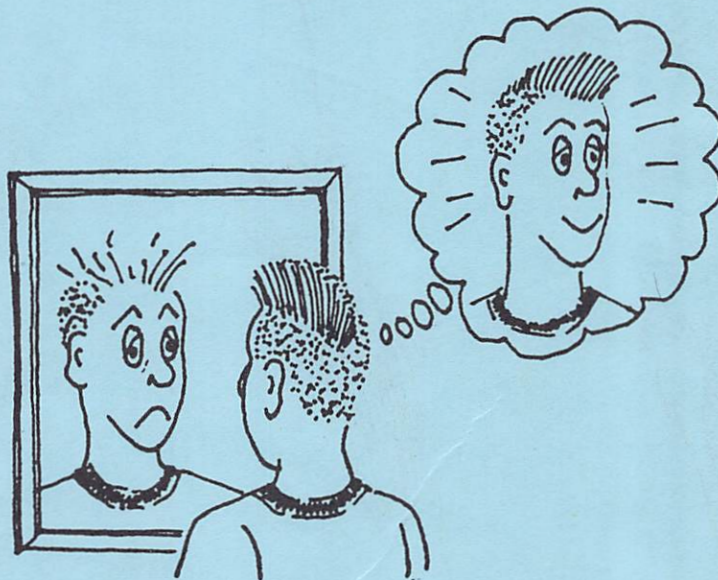
"Most of us jog along from day to day doing this and that, but in terms of a meaningful direction in life we're heading nowhere," says a sixth-form character in the play '*Beyond Comprehension*', by Howard Grace. Some people do have a clear sense of purpose, but many go through their whole lives with little idea where they are heading. Perhaps that doesn't matter. Perhaps people live quite happily without any thoughts about why they are here.

What about you? Do you think you are just part of a routine cycle of production and consumption or do you suspect that there must be more to it than that? We are convinced there is. We also believe that the quality of our personal lives is crucial to finding a purpose.

The contributions to this publication are to provoke thought on these linked factors. The articles are mainly taken from previous issues of *FREEWAY* - a magazine for young people which gets its inspiration from Moral Re-Armament, as do we.

Warren Buckley Howard Grace Ian Healey

Edward Peters Peter Riddell Angela Willoughby



To put the world in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order we must put the family in order; to put the family in order we must cultivate our personal life; and to cultivate our personal life we must first set our hearts right. (Confucius - 500 B.C.)

INFURIATING PARENTS

by Sue Pearce



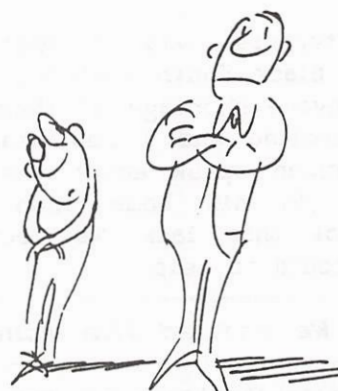
day it all came out. Surprisingly, Mum and Dad understood because they both remembered similar hurtful experiences from their own childhoods.

Later on I was staring out of the window thinking it over. Something inside said, "Apologise to Dad for your critical attitude". I knew it was true but it took

DESPITE THE LACK OF EXOTIC TRAVEL, my summer was memorable. Summer of '89 - when my parents and I learnt how to get on.

After leaving home I didn't much like returning. Dad was embarrassing. Mum was annoying. They were both infuriating. Or so I thought. When life went out of control last term I turned inwards to figure out why I was the person I was. This dug up some incidents buried in my mind since they happened between my parents and me many shoe sizes ago.

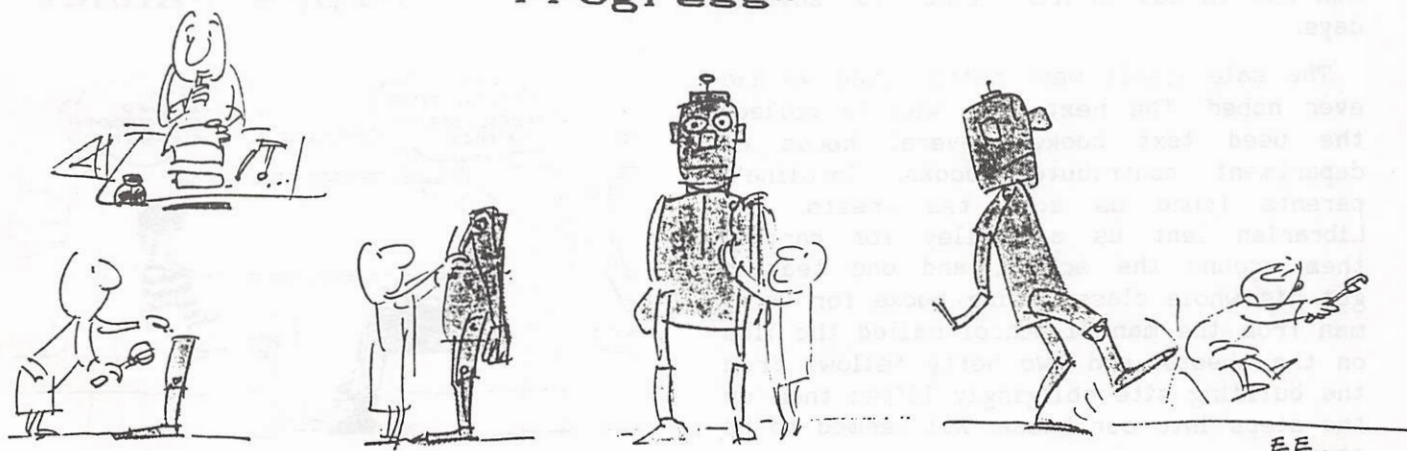
Telling Mum and Dad about these things seemed ludicrous. But in early summer we went on a tense holiday together and one



me ages to step on my pride, turn around and say it to him. There was no accompanying orchestra that day, but since then I've astonished myself by looking forward to seeing Mum and Dad. The automatic reactions of annoyance and criticism have vanished. What's more I actually like them. Honesty and forgiveness, though tough to practise, are a powerful combination.

This article first appeared in the CU broadsheet at York University, where Sue is studying.

"Progress"



EE.

ANY OLD BOOKS: SIXTH FORMER'S STORY

"I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES," I said to the headmaster when he asked where the money for our enterprise would come from. There was a rather blank pause before he replied hastily, "Ah yes, well...er, I'm sure we could find some benefactor or... or something." I wondered vaguely what had prompted me to say such an outrageous thing.

The enterprise was to send used text books to black South Africans, who suffer from a severe shortage of them. My school friend Caroline and I had heard a young South African speak about the damage to education in his home town of Soweto because of this lack. We decided to do what we could to help.

We raised the money

After consultation with the staff, the headmaster gave us permission to send unwanted text books to South Africa - but added that it was up to us to arrange it. As neither miracle nor benefactor seemed to be forthcoming, Caroline and I began to look for a means of raising the money ourselves. Luckily a member of staff had a friend who sold second-hand books for charity. We readily accepted his offer to organise a sale, from which we could keep the profit.

Storing the few hundred boxes of second-hand books proved quite a nightmare. Another generous member of staff offered to keep them 'temporarily' in his dining room. But our efforts to find an alternative place failed, and the poor man had to eat in his kitchen for several days.

The sale itself went better than we had ever hoped. The next step was to collect the used text books. Several heads of department contributed books. Caroline's parents found us some tea chests. The Librarian lent us a trolley for carting them around the school, and one teacher got his whole class moving books for us. A man from the manual school nailed the lids on the chests, and two hefty fellows from the building site obligingly lifted them up the steps into our house. All seemed to be ready.

Panic!

We had discovered the name of a firm which would transport the books to South Africa at a reduced price. But when I rang them they said they needed to know immediately the weight of the chests. Panic! My first thought was the infirmary, so I grabbed an unsuspecting friend and we hauled one chest down there and weighed it. By this time we were so exhausted that we decided it would be simpler to take the scales to the remaining chests. But then the doctor arrived and put his foot down. The scales were too delicate to be used for this purpose! Eventually, thanks to the help of the kitchen scales, I was able to convey to the firm the weights of the chests - one in kilos and two in pounds!

A teacher offered to drive the chests to London, to be handed over to the shipping company. But at the last minute we found that the school minibuses were unavailable, and a van had to be hired. After this and all other expenses were covered, £2 remained in the fund. This was the exact amount I had promised to repay a friend for phone calls made from her home while the books were being sent off.

We heard a while later that our tea chests had arrived safely in Soweto. I was reminded of a prayer used by Francis Drake: "Grant us to know that it is not in the beginning, but the continuing of the same, until it be thoroughly finished, which yieldeth the true glory."

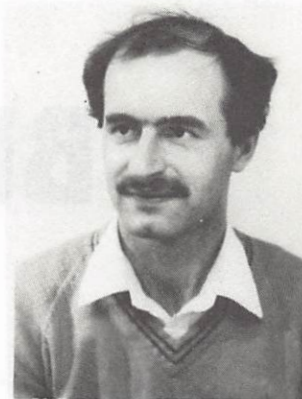
Pippa Faunce



Margaret Gray

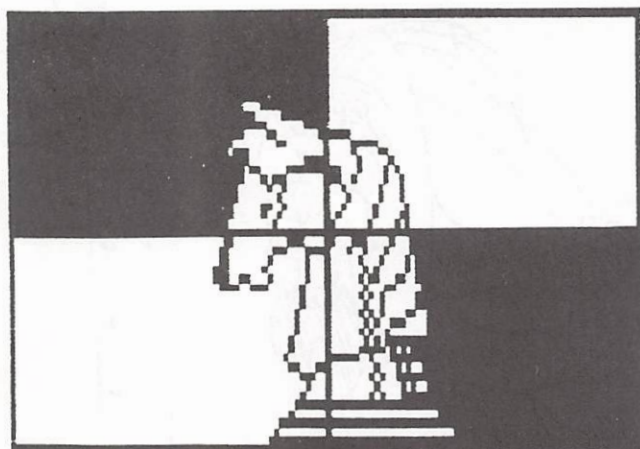
RETIRED AT 22

by Ian Healey



I'VE JUST RETIRED. AT 22. And now a whole new world, a freedom has opened out before me. 'What!' you may say, 'Isn't that a bit young?' Perhaps, but my retirement is from chess not my career; indeed the latter is just about to start.

For most people the thought of chess would be something long and boring - and for intellectuals. For me it was a passion, a thrill, almost a way of life at times - and I am no intellectual.



I started at school, and found it a great ego-boost since I was quite good. My lack of success with the girls left it in need of a boost! From there I joined a club, read a few books and found myself doing well in competitions. Suddenly it was more than an ego-boost. Winning was not so much a reward, but a target. Defeat became unthinkable. The desire for competition spread and I found myself playing more and more. I became Club Champion - but that wasn't enough. As my opportunities with girls got worse, I buried myself further in my world of chess.

An enormous void

Shortly after I found a faith, I asked myself whether I would be prepared to give up chess for God. This was a tricky one. I

recalled one friend who felt God was so important that he would give up his girlfriend and his sports car if God wanted. This was serious. I knew the chess would have to go - my one regret was not winning any trophies (prizes were mostly cash). What should I do instead? An enormous void stretched out in my life. What about my chess-playing friends? I needn't have worried. The last game was a defeat by my biggest rival in the semi-final of the local Summer Knock-Out (KO) Tournament.

It was at this time that my relationship with my father really started to grow, after I'd overcome my rejection of him. I realized that, with this and my growing faith, I wasn't missing the chess! But what of the wasted talent? So, after four or five months, I started again - this time with a new 'free' spirit. I found myself enjoying playing chess for the game's sake. And after my 'rest' I was playing better than ever, and winning some trophies! (For Mum of course...)

I wasn't free

During the summer months this year, I decided that my final year at university was going to be hard work. When I added to this the fact that playing in a team is a commitment - which limits one's freedom of action - I realized that I wasn't free for God to do as He pleased with me. I felt I should stop at the end of that season.

And what a last few months! In July my club won the British Intermediate Championship; but the fact that God knew what He was doing was shown in this year's Summer KO Tournament. In the third round I met (and beat) my old adversary. On 30th September I finished, with all my ambitions satisfied - and I wasn't even KO'd.

*This article first appeared
in December 1987*

BUY, BUY, BUY!

by Elisabeth Peters

IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN.

With the first weak rays of sun in early spring, the inevitable happens to me. It just hits me: I want a total renewal of my whole being. I would like to go to a beauty salon for face and hand treatment and a new hairstyle, to a solarium for some tan instead of my blue-white winter skin; then go through my entire wardrobe, throw out most of it and start again.



The pressure becomes almost unbearable as I walk past the shop windows, with everything in lovely light colours and fresh crisp cotton. The slushy snow is falling on my grey winter jacket and I almost get a fright when I see my own ghost face in a mirror. (Oh why do they have so many?!)

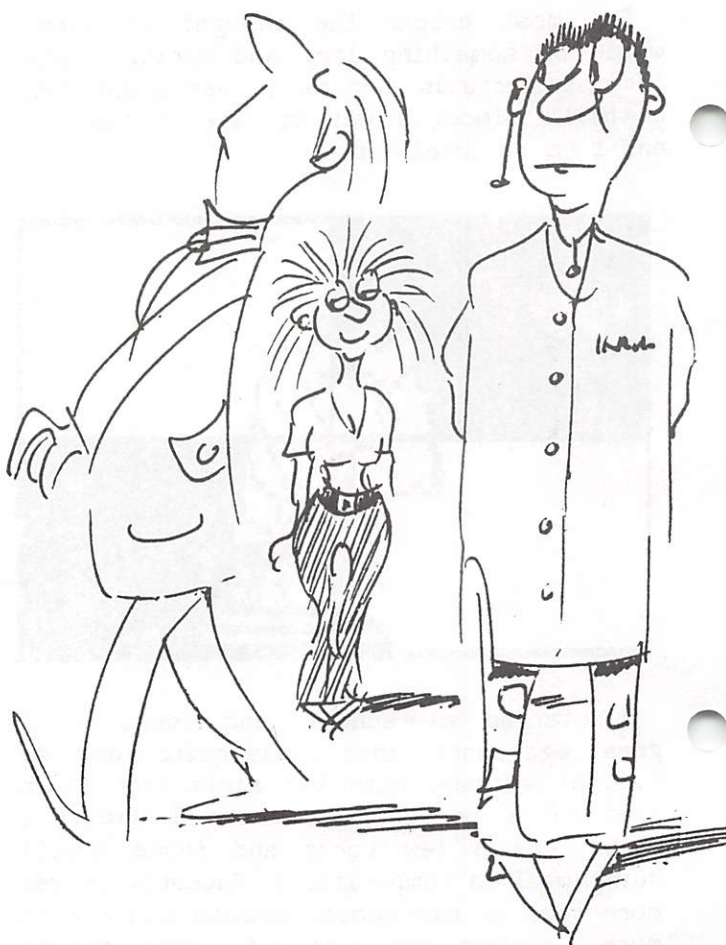
Not from eye make-up

The man in my life - who is strangely unaffected by all this - generously says, "Do buy yourself something new!" And I tentatively enter into the pastel world to have a look. Then the same reaction as last year: No! I don't actually need anything, I can do with what I have. Oh, the pressure, the pressure of fashion, the pressure to buy, buy, buy! I settle for a few necessities in Boots and go home again quite relieved.

No, I don't mean we should never buy anything new - of course I do that at times. I just long to be free from the pressure of fashion that means we *must* buy a new pair of jeans because this year they should be loose-fitting with a belt and buttons instead of a zip!

The most beautiful people I know are those with lights in their eyes - and it does not come from eye make-up or the

right colour clothes. My sensible sister once said to me that when I long for a new physical 'me', it is actually a new spiritual 'me' that I need. New life inside, living, pure, fresh water to cleanse me inside and out.



So as the sun continues to shine through my winter-dirty clothes, I now bit by bit open up every door inside of me for a closer look. There are things that need to be thrown out altogether, thoughts that need to be aired, and longings that need to be answered in Him who knows me best of all and satisfies every part of me.

And maybe I will find a piece of material in the market for a new skirt!

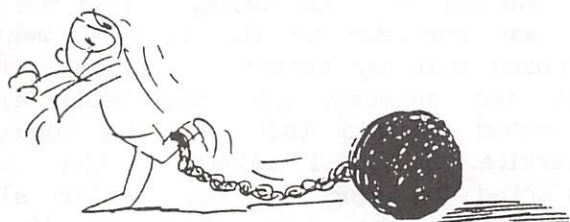
SEX, LIES & LIBERATION

SCARCELY A DAY GOES BY without some new horror story of rape, child abuse or other sex-related violence. We are creating in our cities a climate of fear and mistrust. Many women think twice about going out alone at night, or even staying at home alone.

These phenomena have many causes, economic and social, of course; but a primary cause is the wrong place that sex has come to occupy in our scale of values. We have become super-conscious of whether or not we are sexually fulfilled, and conscious of others from the one-dimensional view of how they relate to us sexually.

Thirty years ago the 'permissive experiment' began. We decided it was more 'honest' to do what we wanted, rather than 'repressing' it. The shackles of the past were released and we broke into a 'brave new future'.

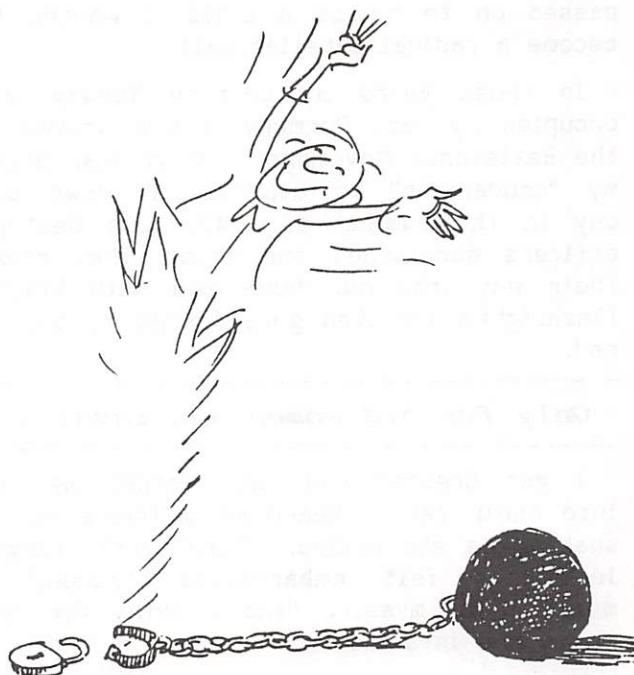
It now appears that - far from being released ourselves - we released a beast which has imprisoned us and is destroying countless lives. Family life, education and industry have all suffered. AIDS is but the most recent tragic result.



It was the challenge to live by the quality of absolute purity which made me see that I had become enslaved by sex. I began to be ashamed of the way I had looked at other people, using them to satisfy my desires.

Freedom came when I found the courage to be honest with a friend about all that I was ashamed of, asking God's forgiveness and His strength to make a new start. This brought a real inner freedom, where before I had found that self-indulgence led only to self-centredness. Of course I still struggle with my own nature. I slip from the high ideal, and justify that slip to myself; then the next slip is that much easier, and before you know it you are completely enmeshed.

Only admitting that I have failed, and that I am not strong enough alone, restores inner freedom, lightness and joy in life - the sparkle, sensitivity and new energy.



Perhaps the greatest cost of permissiveness is that it has helped to render conscience meaningless. In us all there are instincts with constructive or destructive effects - on ourselves, our community and our environment. Conscience is what distinguishes between the two. It is what promotes the growth of the constructive force within us, and the diminution of the destructive.

The spiritual health of a society depends on the way that struggle is going on in each heart. Sex-obsession makes us in-turned, so that we use our energy, imagination and initiative for ourselves rather than for the good of others.

If enough people took purity on board as a personal commitment, we would, I think, find a growth of concern for neighbours and community, as well new creative ideas emerging in all areas of our national life. Not to mention the deep joy that comes from living a life which is 'on the give' not 'on the get'.

Peter Riddell

LIFE AFTER DEATH ROW

AT THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN I acquired a voracious appetite for everything I thought was "radical and revolutionary." The ideas of Karl Marx and world communism challenged me; I turned away from God and the faith my parents had passed on to me as a child. I wanted to become a radical intellectual!

In those years my country Norway was occupied by Nazi Germany. I was active in the Resistance Movement. A good year after my "conversion" to atheism, at dawn one day in the summer of 1943, five Gestapo officers surrounded our house. They broke their way into our home and with bright flashlights and Sten guns forced me out of bed.

Only for old women and invalids

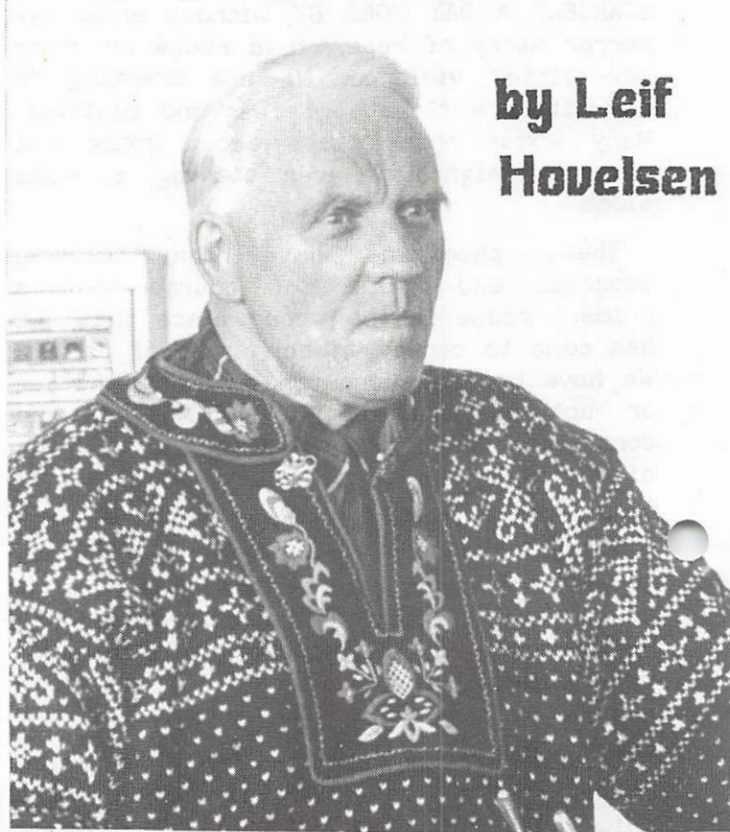
I got dressed and they forced me out into their car. I heard my mother's voice, shaking as she called, "Leif, don't forget Jesus." I felt embarrassed. "Jesus," I mumbled to myself, "that's only for old women and invalids."

I was taken to Gestapo Headquarters for interrogation. Then I was locked in solitary confinement where I was strictly guarded for several months.

I suddenly found myself in a world of evil that I had never believed possible. I experienced humans who behaved as beasts. I had been robbed of everything: freedom, home and family, friends and everything I possessed. In other words, I was utterly alone, destitute, betrayed and forsaken, just surrounded by four brick walls. There were no books in the cell, no pencil, not a bit of paper.

They told me I'd be executed

After about three months had passed one of the Gestapo chiefs came into the cell and told me I would be executed. "But your case has to go through the Police Court first," he added. I was faced with the reality that I was going to lose the last thing I possessed: my life. At that moment of painful realisation everything in me cried out to live. In those days of rock-bottom reality, I learned that no darkness of man-made hell can prevent the hand of God - the God I had denied - from breaking through. I experienced a divine force



by Leif
Hovelsen

transcending my physical existence and intellectual understanding.

One day as I was pacing around the cell, I was reminded of the times I went to church with my parents. I seldom listened to the sermons, but one thing always touched me and that was the communion service. So as I walked in the cell I started to sing, as our pastor always sang, "In the same night as He was betrayed, He took bread and, when He had given thanks, He brake it"

As I sang, suddenly I realized what Jesus had gone through. I experienced Him in a new reality. He had been betrayed, and I had been betrayed. He had been tortured and I had been tortured. He had been crucified, and I was going to be executed. It was as if Christ were physically walking beside me saying: "Don't be afraid, Leif. I have been through all this for you. I am with you. I am the conqueror. Follow me." The fear that had gripped me disappeared, the sadness of my heart turned to joy and I knew that neither Gestapo nor the fear of execution any longer had power over me. I was free inside. And with that inner certainty I knelt down and prayed: "Whatever be Your will God, let that come to pass. But if I

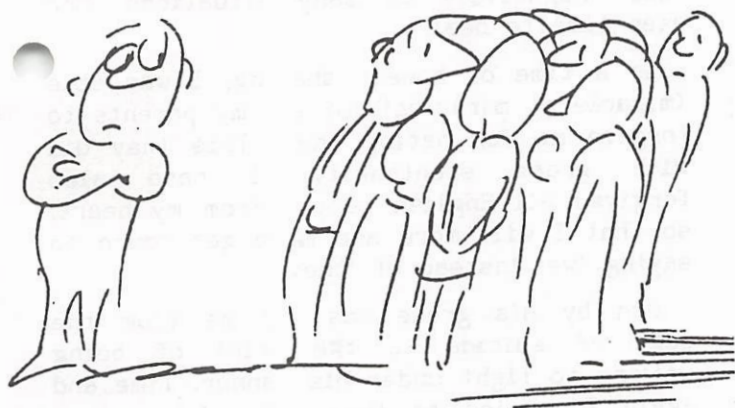
may live and even be free once again, I give You the whole of my life to use as you see best."

Was I saved for a purpose?

For some reason the death sentence was never carried out. So God gave me the privilege of living. I had to ask myself: was I saved for a purpose? I was transferred to a concentration camp and allocated to a room with 12 other prisoners. Most of them were tough intellectuals and convinced communists.

One day I got to know a Christian student in the camp and we became very close friends. His name was Olaf. We strolled around the camp talking of our studies and what we would do when we got home. We shared our hopes and longings, our joys and expectations, our troubles and uncertainties. One morning it all came to an end. Olaf and four of his friends had been taken to the Police Court in Oslo and been condemned to death. In the afternoon they were back in the concentration camp and put in the death cell. The news spread fast.

Before the evening roll-call I walked under the window of the cell where Olaf and his friends were. I wanted so much to show solidarity with them. Many of the other prisoners were standing around waiting for roll-call and among them were some of my radical friends, with whom I especially wanted to be in good standing. I nodded to them.



Then I saw Olaf at the window. His hands were grasping the iron bars and he had pulled himself up so that he could see out. His eyes shone and his glance took us all in. Then he saw me and called in a strong clear voice: "Thanks for your comradeship, Leif. Never give up the fight for Christ."

I glanced at the others standing around me, and kept quiet. I didn't answer Olaf.

When roll-call was over and I went back to the hut, I thought about the way Peter in the Bible denied that he knew Jesus. I went to the bathroom - the only place where I could be alone - and wept. Then I felt as if Christ was touching me and saying: "Don't be distressed. Stand up and follow Me."



That same night the condemned men were taken away. In the morning we heard that before they were executed Olaf had read aloud from the New Testament: "Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, pain or persecution? Can lack of clothes and food, danger to life and limb, the threat of force of arms? No, I have become absolutely convinced that neither death nor life...nor anything else in God's whole world has any power to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Not success or failure

I decided at that time never again to deny the truth of Christ and to follow Him regardless of my many shortcomings. And I have learned that to follow Him is not a question of success or failure, but a question of grace and commitment. Mother Teresa once said that "God has not called me to be successful, God has called me to be faithful."

We live in a time of history with great uncertainties, with upheavals and suffering, with want and injustice. The world is in the melting pot. But one supreme task stands out for which we will be made responsible. To follow Him, and through Him and by Him to save a crumbling civilisation. Or if it should crumble, to sow the seeds which God can bring to fruition in His way and at His time.

Thus the roll-call that sounded about 2000 years ago is as relevant today: "Then Jesus called his disciples and the people around him, and he said to them, 'If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself, take up his cross and follow Me.'"

PARTIES FILLED ME WITH PANIC

I COME FROM AN INSECURE, rootless background. My mother is Brazilian, of Italian extraction, and my father is English. He was a diplomat so I grew up in an international world. We'd spend two or three years in one country and then move on to another - often a traumatic upheaval. I felt the pain of not knowing where I belonged, and of constantly seeming to lose my friends.

I became a self-conscious and shy sort of person. I avoided social engagements like the plague. Parties filled me with panic.



Sent to boarding school in my teens, I experienced terrifying loneliness. What hurt me most was not being called 'weirdo' or 'zombie', but 'foreigner' or 'spaghetti-gobbler'. I felt deeply rejected, and retreated even more into myself. I felt angry and bitter. I had always tried to hang onto the concept of England as my home. These people who were making me feel inferior represented for me all English people. As well as hating them, I started hating my parents. I blamed them for producing me.

I was desperate for love. I was using hate to defend myself against the feeling of being unloved. To try and counter my loneliness I surrounded myself with material possessions.

Later on, when I was in Argentina, I began to read the Bible and other books about faith. Truth after truth made good sense. "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap...and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

I didn't at that time know that Jesus was at work in my life. It was only when I returned to England that I made a personal act of surrender to Him. From that moment on I have experienced that God is holding me by the hand, in spite of my many times of back-sliding and apathy.

Held by the hand

I'm beginning to realise that my - indeed our - true identity is really to be found in God. When we meet him on the other side of death's door, He will not ask if we succeeded in being good Englishmen (or whatever) but whether we truly loved or not.

In the person of Jesus I have forgiven all those who have hurt me. But the residue of hurtful memories still makes me react negatively to many situations. God uses time to heal.

In a time of honest sharing, I was able (miracle of miracles!) to ask my parents to forgive me for hating them. This they did with great spontaneity. I have also forgiven all English people from my heart, so that I will more and more get round to saying 'we' instead of 'they'.

God by His grace has led me from the edge of suicide to the point of being willing to fight under His banner. Time and again I am led to the joyful truth that "what you are is pure gift from God". To grow in the knowledge that every good thing comes from God is to enter more and more "into the glorious liberty of the children of God".

Ronnie Carless

TO GO FOR A STROLL on the Ku'damm (the 'Oxford Street' of West Berlin) - just because you're in the mood. Not to have to ask anybody's permission: neither party nor state. A marvellous feeling!

I'm an emigrant from East Germany. I came to the West in April 1989 with my husband. We had to fight hard for our emigration for five years, whilst being treated like public enemies. The party functionary responsible for our case said: "One day you will realise that I acted right by refusing your emigration. Maybe not for another 10 or 20 years, but we've got time. Then you will realise that this is the right place for you. Look, I'm right and you're wrong."

ally, economically and morally. Now patience has run out, and it is time for new ideas.

The SED consists mostly of 'fellow-travellers': people who once in their life were blackmailed into taking up membership for financial and professional gain. The SED functionaries have to ask themselves whether they should go on following their communist ideas or whether they should serve the people. I was an enthusiastic Marxist myself until I came to the painful conclusion that communism is not the salvation of man. Then God, in His grace, gave me a firm belief in His Son Jesus Christ. I believe that whoever searches for truth wholeheartedly will find it.

CROSSING THE WALL

by Annett Kleischmantat



Ian Healey

These are the results of an unbelievable concentration of power in one party. To whom can you complain when everything and everybody is controlled by the SED [the Party]? Can you imagine how miserable and helpless one feels?

The Wall has been opened

I am very proud of my countrymen. They've achieved something incredible: the Wall has been opened by them. One has to be very clear: the people have 'fought' to get this 'concession' from the SED. The people and the SED are two 'very different pairs of shoes'.

The SED had the chance to put its ideas into practice for 40 years without any political opposition. But it failed politic-

Those in the free world have the privilege of being brought up in a democratic society. Be grateful for that. You've been saved from many troubles. My husband and I feel glad to live in West Germany, although we feel homesick sometimes. It hurts to meet people in the West who don't have one good word to say for their state and don't even consider what a great advantage it is to be able to utter their opinions freely without any fear of the consequences. In Western Europe everyone has the right to be critical. But human selfishness creates problems here as well. We from East Europe have no patent on the truth, but we know from our own bitter experience how things don't work.

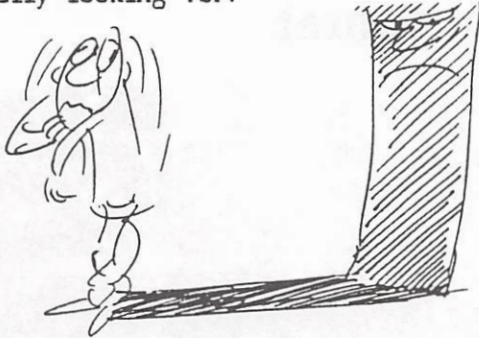
"Materialism held in common by East and West is more dangerous for the future than the issues which divide us." (Solzhenitsyn)

"The more one takes to violence the more one recedes from truth. For in fighting the imagined enemy without, one neglects the enemy within." (Gandhi)

A MUGGER'S STORY

PATRICK O'KANE IS A BRICK-LAYER from a Northern Ireland Catholic family. For several years when he was young, there were seventeen children in his home - five of them his cousins. At 19 Patrick went to Australia in search of "fun and excitement." Wanting to experience the good things of life, he headed for the night clubs. He found the drinking and gambling attractive, but "at a deeper level there was something missing."

His first reaction was to drink and play harder. When three of his friends were sent to jail for two years for mugging a man, it was a shock and a turning point for Patrick. He began to look within himself, and to realise that "money and drink couldn't satisfy that deeper thing I was really looking for."



But he remained burdened by his past. "I knew there was a God and I was beginning to realise there was a reason for my existence but somehow I couldn't throw off the shackles."

Returning to England, he found himself working on a building site alongside a man who had done many things he was ashamed of in life, but who had started to find something new. "If he can start again," thought Patrick, "so can I."

Mugging incident

He started to try and put right some of the wrongs of his own past. He paid money to a bank for a plate glass window which he had smashed in a drunken rage. He returned \$275 income tax to the Australian government which he had avoided paying. After much time and effort he got in touch with the Melbourne police to admit his part in the earlier mugging incident. Finally, and this was hardest of all, he had an honest talk with his father. "Somehow we managed to talk about the deeper things and I shared with him the things I was most ashamed about. He opened

his heart to me and started to share things which happened in his own life. What we call the generation gap was bridged - and it was honesty that did it."

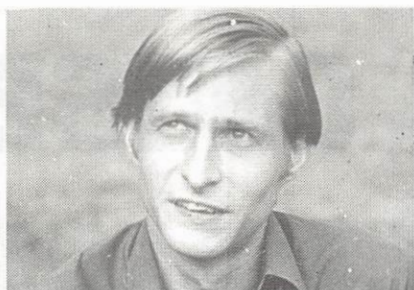
Putting these things right "lifted a great burden off my life." He realised that God had to deal with the rubbish in his life before He could show him his task in life. He began to believe that the true satisfaction he longed for could only be found by discovering something bigger than himself to live for. And he found that he now had something to offer other people. "My sins...opened people to what I was trying to say more than any of my virtues. My simple message has always been, 'you can start again.'"

Bottled-up frustrations

But then "things started to stir in my guts - bottled up frustrations which I could never fathom," things relating to his working class and Northern Ireland Catholic background. They were often negative feelings, and he tried to suppress them. "The only way I could handle these feelings was to offer them up to God... I thought He would take them away from me, but I realised He was helping me not only to be free of the intensity of these feelings, but to show that He understood them, and that there was power in these feelings which he wanted to use, so long as they could be purified."



Through all this, Patrick came to believe that God has a plan for the healing of nations as well as of individuals. He had a sense that God was telling him that he could be part of this healing process.



ACTING AWAY THE MASKS

by Philip Tyndale-Biscoe

AN ACTOR WEARS A MASK. Like everyone else. Except that he does it in front of an audience. And sometimes even gets paid for it. The mask he wears on stage or in front of the camera is usually designed by somebody else, but underneath he wears his own mask - like anyone else.

Which makes us all actors one way or another.

Some actors, of both kinds, collect so many different masks over a lifetime that they get a bit dotty. Others get so attached to a particular mask that they'd die if it was taken away from them. Either way, they lose sight of their original face and end up like one of those dried up empty shells one finds on a beach. Hollow and characterless.

A peep at the real person

The type of theatre this 'actor' (me!) is interested in is the type that gets people to lift up a corner of the mask they are wearing and take a peep at the real person underneath. Even to peel the mask off altogether and begin to find the joy and fulfilment of being the creature that God created them to be.

There's nothing new in this. Clowns and comedians have been doing it for centuries. Laughter is the shout of self-recognition, and all that.

But that is only the beginning of true development. The second type of theatre that this actor is interested in is to give strong indications, or hints, as to how that development might take place and in what direction.

MUGGER'S STORY continued:

You can't escape the past, he says, the challenge is what you do with it. "You are a product of your past but you choose whether you're going to be a victim."

Patrick lives in Coventry with his wife Margaret and one-year-old son, Douglas. They are particularly involved in the trade

At this point one may depart a little from traditional concepts of theatre to introduce ideas of 'honesty' and even 'witness' as tools of communication. "Unartistic!", one hears someone mumble. "Blasphemy!"

A candid look

Not so necessarily. This writer's life changed course through witnessing sixty young Indians present on stage a candid look at their nation together with deep honesty about themselves, their hopes and fears. It was convincing, challenging and artistic, both moving and humorous. It drew the writer to India where he spent four of the most fascinating and 'developing' years of his life.



So long as those masks worn on stage can help others get rid of theirs and be instrumental in that development process for mankind, this actor will hang onto his make-up kit and risk the ridicule of any critic.

Philip Tyndale-Biscoe and his wife, Swedish actress Vendela Löfgren, are touring Britain with 'Let's Talk Turkey' - their play about honesty in relationships.

union movement (Patrick wants to see it refind its moral and spiritual roots) and in helping to build a multi-cultural society. "God has placed this city on our hearts," says Patrick. "The challenge is to balance your vision for a city with its reality. Cities are laboratories. What is created in one city is valid for the world."

REBEL FINDS A CAUSE

ALEC SMITH WENT "OFF THE RAILS". He started to rebel against being just the son of the Prime Minister of pre-independent Zimbabwe.

"I went to university in South Africa to study law, but spent most of my time breaking it," he says. He drank a great deal and took drugs. Finally he turned up for an exam dead drunk and wrote a letter to the professor telling him what a stupid paper it was. He was sacked from the law faculty.

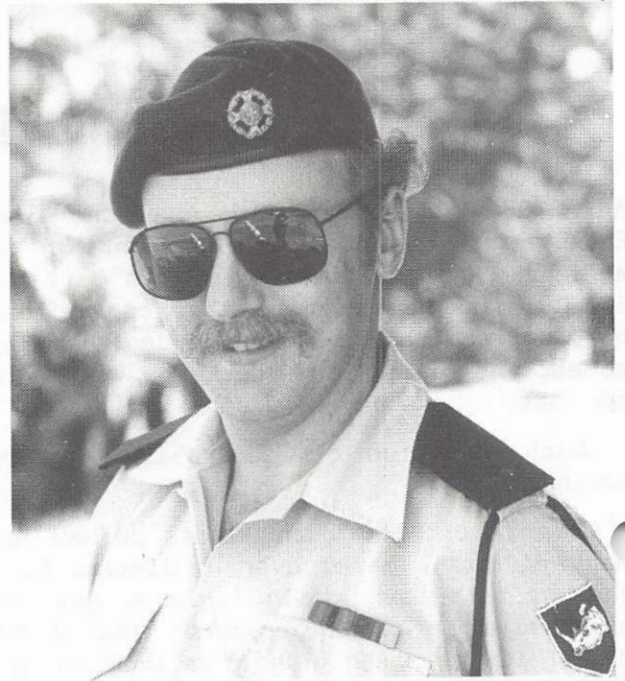
A year in the army doing national service did not cure him, but increased his hatred. He drifted into heavy drug-taking and fantasy. His only reality became the next 'trip'. He had already lost touch with his home and parents. Then, to their acute embarrassment, he was convicted for drug-running and sentenced to a heavy fine. But it did not solve his personal problems or end his drug-taking. When he was at his lowest ebb he underwent a dramatic Christian conversion.

Mastered the drug habit

He had many things to sort out, but his new freedom bubbled over. He found strength to master the drug habit which had held him for six years. He felt like stopping people in the street to tell them what he had discovered. One immediate result was that he was reconciled with his parents.

At that point he had to take a further decision - whether to keep it as a personal experience, or move on to take responsibility for his country. "I discovered that there is a big difference between giving my life to God so that my problems can be sorted out and giving my life to God to work towards establishing His authority in the power structure of my country."

He chose the latter and organised an international conference to foster reconciliation between black and white leaders. One person who came was Arthur Kanodereka, a nationalist and guerilla



leader. Hearing Alec speak as a young white person about repentance for his past selfishness, led Arthur to a radical change of heart which freed him of bitterness.

'Cabinet of conscience'

The two men formed a partnership and, joined by others, created a 'cabinet of conscience' for their country - a group of black and white who met in the faith that God had a plan for the new Zimbabwe. Arthur Kanodereka was tragically assassinated after a courageous peace mission. However the work carried on by Alec and his friends played a significant part in the political changes which happened in his country.

After independence in 1980 there remained the problem of integrating two guerilla armies and the white army into one Zimbabwean army. Alec became an army chaplain in order to be able to help with this process.

His book, *'Now I Call Him Brother'*, gives a vivid account of how a wasted life can be transformed and used to affect the future of a country.

"Our hopes are seldom realised but it is our pursuit of them that changes the course of history." (Aristotle)

DO YOU WANT TO BEGIN?

AN OPERATION NEEDS TO BE PERFORMED on society. If a surgeon is to operate on a patient, he must first wash his hands thoroughly - otherwise his patient might die of infection.

One cause of problems in the world is that many who want change have not taken this step of first cleaning up themselves. They are therefore infecting society. Some, on the other hand, spend all their time trying to clean themselves while society dies around them.

What is the moral equivalent of washing our hands?

ONE PRACTICAL SUGGESTION is to take four sheets of paper and write at the top of each one: Absolute Honesty, Absolute Love, Absolute Purity and Absolute Unselfishness. Then write down the specific places where you have fallen short of these standards.

Relationships with those closest to us need particularly to be examined. What about jealousy, bossy-ness, and competition with brothers and sisters? What about honesty with parents?

Absolute Purity

We may not fully understand what purity means, but we usually have a pretty good idea when we are being impure. What do we think about or look at? Whom do we use or exploit for our own pleasure? Absolute purity concerns the creative power that comes when we are free from these sort of things.

Absolute Unselfishness

What really guides us? The things I want, or what needs to be done? The love of money, things and power, the good opinion of others, private ambitions; these passions have a very strong pull on us.



The sort of things to look for are:

Absolute Honesty

Many of us are critical of dishonesty in others or the government. But have we told any lies, stolen anything, or cheated in exams? How many times do we tell 'white lies' and kid ourselves it is for the benefit of the other person?

Absolute Love

Things like resentment, gossip and criticism behind people's backs build up all sorts of barriers. It is no good excusing ourselves by saying, "everybody does it", or "I can't help it". Do I only love the people who are easy to love, or do I also care for those whom I don't naturally relate to?

There may be some things you aren't clear on or can't put right, but don't let that stop you dealing with the things you are clear on and can put right.

A SECOND SUGGESTION is to seek God's guidance - or listen to the deepest thing in your heart, if you don't believe in God. You can do this at any time but it is particularly helpful to get up earlier in the morning and sit quietly listening to the direction which comes from deep inside. It may be where you need to change, something you need to do, or how to help a friend.

Those who already have a faith or commitment to Christ may feel the need of the greater depth of commitment which will come from facing the challenge outlined above. But these basic steps can be taken by anyone who wants to set out on a more effective direction in life.



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