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# FREEWAY

Vol 2 No 3

"Why not let God run the world?"

**SPECIAL AMERICAN ISSUE!**





## WHAT KIND OF FREEDOM?

The first half of this issue of FREEWAY is devoted to North America, with various articles contributed by friends in or from that country. It seemed only fair to hand over this editorial column as well - to our chief American editor! Over to him...

AN UNUSUAL BOOK TOPPED THE BESTSELLER LISTS in New York in the summer of 1987. The Closing of the American Mind by Professor Allan Bloom of Chicago University is a devastating attack on the education and culture of modern America. The popularity of the book (as a book of philosophy, it is not light reading) indicates the concern many Americans currently feel for the identity of their nation. What is it, to be an American?

Bloom argues that tolerance has become today's morality. It is considered wrong to have strong personal convictions which might clash with the views of others. People are open to everything, but believe in nothing. Absolute truth has been sacrificed for fear of offending others.

This raises an important question. What kind of freedom do we need in today's world? The USA is founded on an idea of freedom. But it is surely wrong if freedom of choice in society leads to a wishy-washy refusal to have clear views. Tolerance, yes, but not agnosticism.

Bloom's commentary is nothing especially new. Other writers have noted an absence of real moral conviction in this century. The great American poet, T.S. Eliot, wrote the following in *'Choruses from the Rock, 1934'*:

Our age is an age of moderate virtue  
And moderate vice  
Where men will not lay down the Cross  
Because they will never assume it.  
Yet nothing is impossible, nothing  
To men of faith and conviction.

Eliot's certainty that 'nothing is impossible' to those who have faith is very interesting. It is like the statement of the famous American evangelist, D.L. Moody (which so influenced Frank Buchman): "The world has yet to see what God can do in, for, by and through a man whose will is wholly given to Him."

So the USA is facing a great question. What kind of freedom? Perhaps the answer lies in distinguishing between political and spiritual freedom. It is the second which has got lost in the moral chaos of today's world. But without it, people become prisoners of every passing fad and fashion. Spiritual freedom, which is freedom from sin, gives the glory to everyday life.

Political freedom brings tolerance. Spiritual freedom brings conviction. In combination, the two are irresistible.

THE AMERICAN EDITOR



# THE USA TODAY - SEARCHING FOR LEADERSHIP

by Steve Dickinson

'THE U.S. IS... a threat to peace... a hope for the world.' 'Americans are... greedy... generous.' 'I love... hate the US.' The list goes on, and it could be one person speaking!

Much of what is said about the US is true. Much of what is felt is based on facts. To comprehend the US today it is necessary to look at the facts and our feelings - and beyond them. For all who genuinely long for a better future for our world this last is imperative. Because the US needs supportive friends, and critical friends, and above all friends who help this youthful country understand its influence and responsibility in the world community.

People here are searching for new sources of leadership and understanding. They're no longer expecting it in some of the traditional places. Though an important presidential election takes place in less than a year, candidates are getting at best, lack-lustre attention. The responsibilities a new President carries will be enormous, and most do not now expect significant change from this executive leadership. Our expectations have jaded as we have seen the corrupting influence of the power and pressures of the presidency, and also of electronic pulpits, and of the greedy accumulations of many heretofore respected economic leaders.

In this atmosphere both opportunities and personal motivations shrink. So not only family farms, but also family life fail on an increasing scale. We wage all-out war on the distribution of drugs, but consumption and addiction continue. Unemployment and crime dog our inner cities.

Yet there is a vitality in this nation; when mobilized it can put people on the moon, and civil rights laws on the books. A debilitated public education system can be strongly criticized in a national government report ('A Nation at Risk'), and curative efforts start to appear through local initiatives within a few months.

In New York a successful minority businessman is invited to speak at his old school, where a high percentage of students just drop out. He looks at those young men and women, thinks of his own life, then tears up his speech and offers to pay for a university education for any who graduate from high school. Inspired by his example and offer, and aided by a support system of other adults, most are now graduating with marks good enough to get university scholarships.

A European friend of the US says this nation can only be understood by attributing both its negative excesses



and its positive vitality to the great freedom we possess. It is the freedom expressed in the Declaration of Independence and delineated in the 200 year old Constitution, documents that attest to the value of persons - created equal, endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights, with governments established to ensure and perpetuate these rights.

This kind of liberty, has attracted and released the human energy and potential to build a strong nation. Born out of struggle with exploitation, this freedom has also allowed the advancement of those who wish to entrench their opportunity by exploiting others. (We all know how the Native Americans, or the Africans brought as slaves were treated; and we are learning more about the legacies of some of the mining, and banana companies too.)

So there has to be a continual struggle toward making this liberty's fruits real for all. How each person lives, and fights, makes a difference. And each new generation has to be as clear about all the forces in human nature, good and bad, as was that first generation. This clarity becomes even more important as we develop a closer relationship with Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union.

Frank Buchman said the only thing to do in a crisis is to change people, starting with yourself, and this may be the best advice for his own country today. This is where too many of us fall short. We benefit from our freedom but don't understand its precious value and inevitable price. We need to change, and we need companions from around the world who help us see how to change.



# SURPRISE!

# SURPRISE!

Kathy Aquilina (from the USA) is in Malta with her Maltese husband, Charles, working to build further links between the Middle East and the West.



I DETEST DETAILS. At times they seem to be life's nailfile wearing down any of my more creative surges. If I had my way, beds would make themselves and letters would be sent by thought waves. And so for the past six years I find myself in a job full of letters, address changes and financial points which threaten to take hours of sorting out after one careless move - a high-wire act for one who hates heights.

On cold mornings my inner person is likely to say reasonably to me as I lay in-grown in the blankets: "I do realize that there are challenges out there, but it does seem a rather cold and hostile place. Why don't we move to the Bahamas and become a beach bum? The sun is wonderful and we could have such fun swimming and snorkeling. Fish are very relaxing."

"Relaxing, yes, that's a good idea," I say as I roll over. "What's for breakfast?" a more practical voice questions. "What is happening today?" I wonder as I struggle to pull my thoughts together. "The longest journey begins with the smallest step," a little thought lectures.

Sweeping aside this stream of horizontal thinking, I make a move to sit up. Pen and notebook in hand I begin to view the day from a more vertical perspective. I pray.

Coming to the inner quiet place is a precarious venture. I may lapse into my horizontal dream-state or sometimes I enter a realm of inner springs, a bubbling of peace and creativity.

As prayer is meant to be a dialogue, and as I am a deeply feeling person, I often like to express my feelings on an issue and listen for feedback. This day I voice some anger I had been saving. "Okay, God, I am ready to stay single. I am enjoying myself and do not fear

by Kathy Aquilina

emptiness because I have seen other single people with full lives because they care about people. The world needs people who are free to care for lost of people...I could even be a nun. I admire what Mother Teresa is doing for the poor and I would even be willing to do that. I want to do that. But if I am meant to be married, let's get on with it as I am soon to be 34!"

When I was in my twenties I had offered God my life so if it suited God I could be used for the universe's more eternal purposes. I have played ping-pong at times with this commitment, but generally I want to be open to God's ideas. However, when it came to my love life I had grave doubts about God's concern. With world hunger, world debt and pollution, not to mention wars to solve, God's got more important things to do than care about my inner aches and pains.

I began to steel myself for the worst. God in the past has often exposed my selfishness... "The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double-edged sword but more finely: it can slip through the place where the soul is divided from the spirit, or joints from the marrow; it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts. No created thing can hide from God; everything is uncovered and open to the eyes of the one to whom we must give account of ourselves." (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Instead I received the most unexpected and luminous reply: "I am going to surprise you."

Now I love surprises as anyone might, because surprises bring joy. The promise of a surprise is a delight, but something else important is happening here... I am getting a sense of clarity straight from the Top! I understand that waiting is not endless, purposeless waiting as I work, but a waiting on the fullness of God's plan for me.

You may understand that I am rather taken aback when, three months later, Charles Aquilina asks me to go for a walk with him and after a bit pauses and says, "This may come as a surprise to you, but I have loved you for many years!"

I've never counted how many hairs are on my head, but God knows. God loves details and cares about each one of us intimately. This is some sort of awesome relationship we could have.

Charles and I married and now I am with him on an island surrounded by the renowned and jewel-like Mediterranean Sea. Here three continents come together throbbing with history, beliefs and culture. There is much that is ancient, different and intricate for this American to drink in. The world may indeed be a cold and hostile place, but there is some fishing to do!



# APOLOGY WITHOUT RESERVATION

by Glen Woodbury

IN MINNESOTA, 1987 was designated by Governor Rudy Perpich as the 'Year of Reconciliation' with the Mdewankanton Dakota tribe. It marked the 125th anniversary of the Sioux uprising of 1862.

Prior to that year, a series of treaties were signed giving lands of the Dakota Sioux over to white settlement. In 1851 a treaty opened 24 million acres to southwestern Minnesota to whites. At this point the US government began to force Dakota into white culture - education, farming, religious practices - but with little or no regard for their own traditions and culture.

The Dakota were given a reservation along the Minnesota River, the area of which was cut in half by another treaty in 1858. Tensions were high, and when a crop failure in 1861 left many Dakota near starvation, they revolted in 1862, attacking white soldiers and settlers. Hundreds on both sides were killed. By the end of the year the US army had subdued the Dakota, imprisoning several hundred, hanging 38, and driving most into other states.

Through this century recovery on the reservations has gone at a snail's pace. Reservations count as Third World nations within an industrialised nation. In a country where the average annual per capita income is \$14,000, the figure for some reservations is \$2,500. Unemployment ranges between 40-87%.

Mr Ernest Wabasha, hereditary Chief of the Mdewankanton Dakota, prefers to say that reconciliation is something that is born in the hearts of individuals, first between the person and God, and then with other individuals. It is not something that can be legislated or decreed.

Born on the Santee Dakota Reservation in Nebraska, Chief Wabasha is the seventh Chief of his family line. A bronze bust of his great, great grandfather was recently dedicated in the rotunda of the State Capitol in St Paul. His wife Vernell is of the Yankton Dakota, another of the Seven Council Fires forming the Dakota nation.

At age eight, Ernest and his family moved to Morton, Minnesota. His parents were the first Catholics of his tribe, and young Ernest was sent off to Catholic school where the practice of his traditional religion was prohibited by law. (In a country where freedom of religion is enshrined in the constitution, this particular law was finally repealed in 1978.) So he grew up learning Catholicism in school. His Dakota religious education he received 'underground', hearing stories orally from his elders, as had been the practice for centuries.

When Pope John Paul II arrived at a Canadian Indian Reserve on the final leg of his September 1987 North American tour, he encouraged all Native Americans to share their culture with the rest of the world. This Chief Wabasha exclaimed was an inspiration to all Indians, lifting the veil of centuries of religious persecution. The Wabasha's tribe asked them to represent their area in Phoenix for the Pope's visit, where over 14,000 Native Americans from every tribe in the country gathered.

Mr Wabasha, who now works as an electrical engineer with the Honeywell Corporation in Minneapolis, spends weekends on the reservation, 100 miles to the south west. He says that materialism is the 'gospel' our society has accepted. He sees his Catholic faith and his tribal beliefs working hand in hand.

If we whites were to face the fact that some of our US cavalry generals aimed to wipe out the entire Indian race, and ask for forgiveness from that basis, could we then begin to build a just relationship with our First Americans? Such relationships might give birth to a new spiritual dynamic.

If it is true that those who have suffered most have the most to give in creating a society of dignity, then Native American nations could become islands of light and hope for the world.





# CONFESSIONS

## OF A

by John Gardner

## CLOSET YUPPY

ALL MY LIFE, I've proudly scorned materialism. This was true even more as I studied and graduated from college this past spring. With somewhat over-zealous righteousness I frowned on some of my peers who were playing the job-hunting game, parleying one hefty offer with one firm into a higher one with another. All the while they were calculating for BMW car payments, properly trendy condominiums and electronic gadgetry. It was a good feeling to know I wasn't like that. I had been to Caux several times, given my life to God, and felt I had a real vision for how I wanted to use the abilities I had for changing the world or, at least, my part of it. All was well, until....

I got done with doing the play 'Skeletons' in Caux this summer. I had had the exquisite joy of becoming engaged to Edith Anne Campbell. Now I was headed home to find a job in my chosen field of media production in order to start building for our future and putting my abilities to work. Though media is the toughest field to get a job in, I was confident that, since I had a God-inspired vision for my work, all doors would open as soon as said the magic word 'guidance'. Not so.

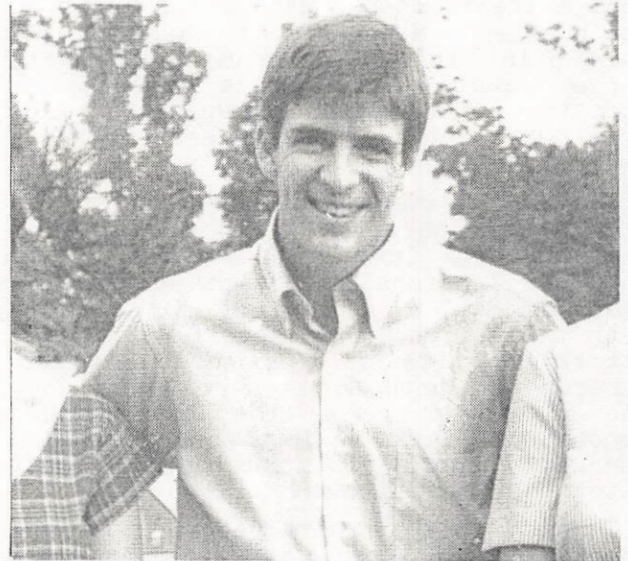
Within days of the first closed opportunity in media, I began adapting my resumé and changing the name of my college media major to sound like a general management student because this was where I found the money, er- jobs, were most easily acquired.

So I spent many weeks busily stretching my qualifications and re-wording them so as to sound qualified for everything from accounting (which I hate) to paralegal work (which would have bored me to tears). Fortunately, one media interview surfaced in all of this. Nothing came of it employment wise, but it returned me to my original sense of direction.

I realized that not only was I being dishonest with my subtle changes in the way I presented my qualifications, but that I was also chasing money for all I was worth. Whether or not God had given me a vision for how to use my abilities, I had to trust Him with how I went about it. The direction and vision was a gift. The actualizing of it, or bringing it into reality, was where I had to invest my faith and my patience.

Contrary to what you're probably expecting, this story, at least this time, isn't going to end with me having gotten a wonderful job because of returning to God's plan and investing faith in His guidance. I am still

unemployed. But I am unemployed with a purpose. Through various means God is providing for my financial needs. But the pressure to be employed at any job at any cost has been replaced by peace to wait for a forward step rather than a financial one.



Rob Lancaster

## THE HONEYMOON IS OVER!

by Karen Elliott

WHEN I ARRIVED at The American University to study Broadcast Journalism and International Relations, I had no idea who my room mate would be. I was grateful when I received Elizabeth Hanke who shared my interests and strong faith in God. It was something I had really hoped for, because living and sharing ones faith can be easier when supported by friends.

Our neighbours on the floor were amazed at how well we hit it off and work together. But as we got more involved in studies and student groups, the dishes and laundry began to pile up. We found that our friendship was going to take more work. The honeymoon was over!

We have learned to make time to be with each other, not just at meals. We now live and work as a team, so that we can be better friends for each other and for our friends at university. We are looking forward to hosting one or two of the young people from Europe who will be visiting America over Easter.

[Editors' note: this group comprises Anja Snellman, Beate Meyer, Warren Buckley, Mots Leballo and Edward Peters. They will be in the USA from March 22 to April 12, and would appreciate prayers for the money needed for the visit.]



# GOD, CAREER AND FRIENDSHIP

by Philip Boobbyer

Henry B Wright was a Professor of Latin Literature and History at Yale University, and later at Yale Divinity school. He was one of those who most influenced Frank Buchman, the founder of MRA.

When he was 32 in 1909, Wright published 'The Will of God and a Man's Lifework'. The book was based on the idea that God has a plan for both a person's character and career. He quotes another writer: 'God has a definite life-plan for every human person... for some exact thing which it will be the true significance and glory of his life to have accomplished.' The book is about how to find that plan. Wright emphasizes one condition for knowing God's will: 'Willingness to God's will is a necessary condition for knowledge of it.'

Wright emphasizes that work is a part of God's plan. 'Every profession today needs its heroes and martyrs - the teacher who will battle for a truth against adverse public opinion and who will give of his own soul experience to his pupils; the lawyer who refuses to distort truths to win his case; the merchant who will not drive a sharp bargain; the statesman who will fight against corruption.' Wright believed that all work is a battleground.

In 1918, Wright co-authored another book, 'The Practice of Friendship'. The book links friendship and faith. Wright quotes another author: 'Jesus of Nazareth was a private person in search of a friend.' He states that the ability to pass on one's faith depends on one's desire to have that ability. He writes: 'The motive for personal evangelism must be one of love. By this is meant a desire, a yearning, a compelling constraining emotion... which causes one



Edward Peters

to direct the resources of spirit, mind, body and material treasure for the benefit, guidance, and material and spiritual well-being of others, and all this without thought of reward for self.'

At the heart of Henry Wright's thinking is the idea that faith is neither acquired nor communicated by accident.

## CANADIAN LETTER

Quebec City,  
December 2 1987

Dear friends,

Different teams of young people are working throughout the world. We would like to share some of the work that is done here, in Québec City.

After the Cap-Rouge conference last July nothing is the same in Québec. With lots of activities and meetings, a very deep relationship has been created between members of this team. Some are at the university here, others are at the beginning of their professional life, and others are unemployed. Also a

group of 20 are maturing spiritually, meeting every two weeks at the Gagnon family home. This group includes people from different countries, cultures and levels of faith. We keep in close touch with our teams in Montreal and Hamilton, forming with Québec a dynamic triangle.

So we have a lot of hope for the future, a lot of work to do for the Kingdom of God. It is imperative that we all come to a deep commitment.

Also, we want to do this in relation with other people of different age groups and with those who pioneer MRA here.

I want to keep in touch with all those I met in Caux, in Central America and in the United States!

Jorge Virchez



# NEW WAYS UP NORTH

by Emmanuel Odiachi



Arthur Strong

*Emmanuel is part of a young African team (from Nigeria and Uganda) which has just completed a two month study visit to the Nordic countries.*

We started in Sweden's west coast city of Gothenburg where we met a team of young people connected with MRA who briefed us on their plans and intentions for Scandinavia. Three weeks later, in the university of Oslo, we met another team of young people. In these meetings, and at a subsequent gathering of youth from all over Scandinavia, we discovered that a certain phrase was very popular. This was: "New ways of doing things". They were convinced that new approaches to doing God's work had to be found. Being used to some of the old ways of doing things, we Africans found it very difficult to understand some of their views.

We were invited to be a part of a youth camp over New Year at Leira in Norway. We looked forward to this event with a high sense of expectation. We were curious to find out how feasible the new way of doing things would prove to be without watering down the old truth.

At the camp there 50 youth, not only from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, but also the Netherlands, Germany, Sri Lanka - and us Africans. There were informal meetings hosted by youth from different countries and cities. Those which meant most to people were the ones without agenda, when people could speak freely and spontaneously from their hearts about what part they are playing in making the world different. Some of the thoughts that went into each day came in people's quiet times in the mornings, or before going to bed at night, or through a sudden flash of inspiration.

On the second night we Nigerians were told that we were going to be wholly responsible for the programme of the third evening. We went to bed too tired to have guidance as a group. The next day we met over lunch to plan, but to

our dissatisfaction our thought followed the same traditional approach we had been used to. We all agreed that this approach would dampen the mood of the gathering. Our task, we thought, was to open people's hearts - not the opposite.

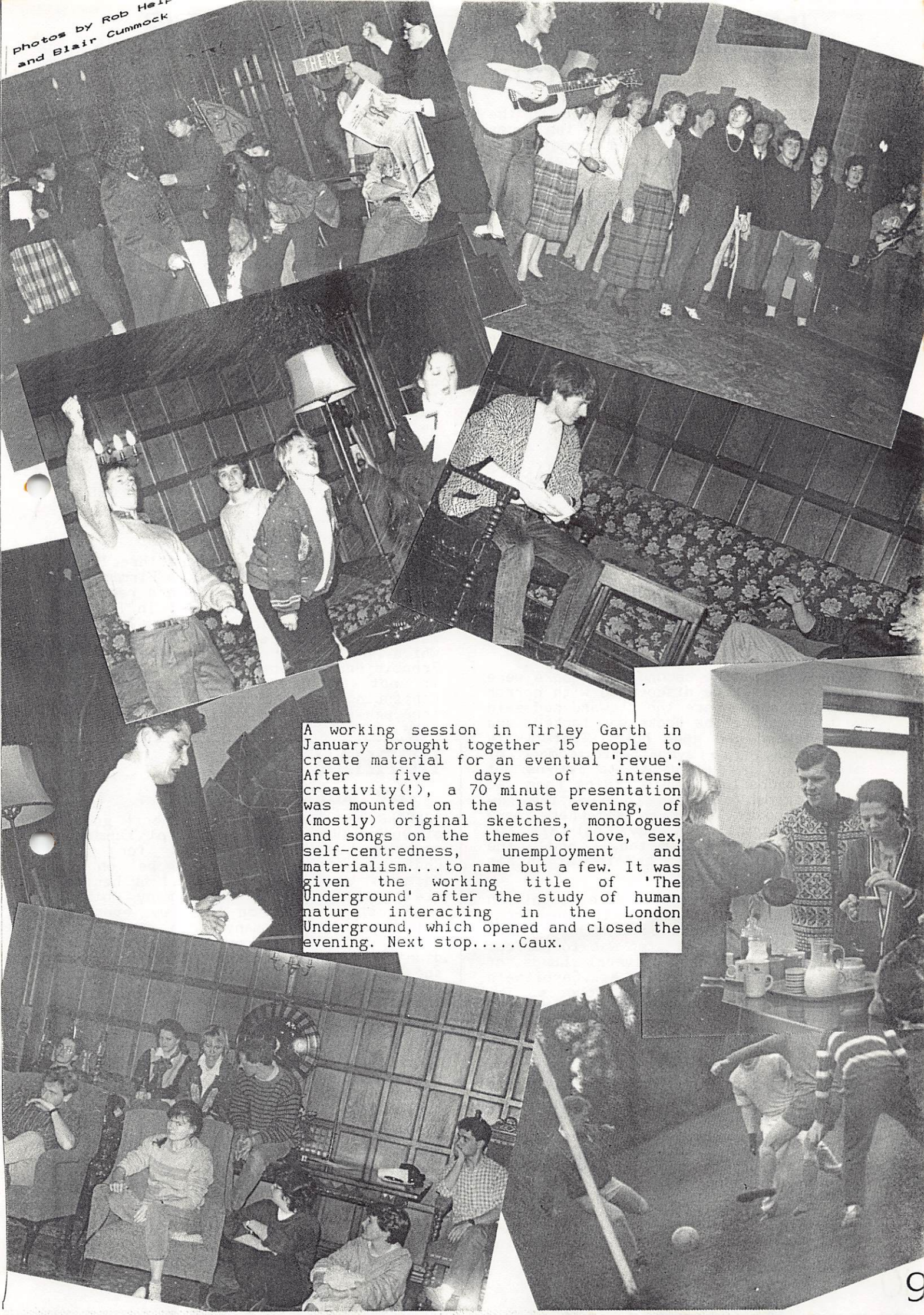
At dinner two of us had flashes of inspiration. Why not teach them a Nigerian game and get them to sing and dance to a Nigerian tune! We did just that. Music was provided by the 'orchestra' of Paul Agbiih using empty bottles as musical instruments. People danced their hearts away! In between we talked about our MRA campaigns in Nigeria, our historical background and our geopolitical situation.

Most of the people told us that the evening meant a lot to them. One said to me, "I am glad to have met all of you. I had come to the conclusion that people in MRA were all grey. Now think differently. It shows on your face that you are happy to be doing what you are doing, and you enjoy life. Some people are dead while living."

The Leira youth camp showed me how, having experienced God in our lives, we can sometimes cling so tenaciously to our strongly-held views and ways of doing things that we become dogmatic. At the camp, lectures, creative workshops, music and sport all helped provide a congenial atmosphere in which sensitive issues such as racism could be discussed by both black and white. The atmosphere was so joyful that we were able to talk freely about the deep things in our hearts even with those who did not believe in God.

On our last day at the camp I wrote in my guidance book: "Surely there is something in their search for new ways of presenting old and lasting truth to a highly materialistic modern society. I have realised that I have no monopoly of the good ways of doing things. There is good and bad in everyone; our job is to increase the goodness."





A working session in Tirley Garth in January brought together 15 people to create material for an eventual 'revue'. After five days of intense creativity(!), a 70 minute presentation was mounted on the last evening, of (mostly) original sketches, monologues and songs on the themes of love, sex, self-centredness, unemployment and materialism....to name but a few. It was given the working title of 'The Underground' after the study of human nature interacting in the London Underground, which opened and closed the evening. Next stop.....Caux.



# MIRACLES & TEA CHESTS

by Pippa Faunce

"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. A schoolfriend, Caroline, and myself had heard a young South African speak about his home in Soweto while we were attending a study week for 'those who want to understand the forces that run the world and have a part in changing them'. We returned to our boarding-school two days later committed to seek God's guidance in undertaking this venture.

After consultation with his 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 was forthcoming, Caroline and I began to look for a means of raising money ourselves. Fortunately, a member of staff had a friend in the town who sold second-hand books for charity, and who was willing to let us organise a sale, and keep the profit. We accepted the offer.

The evening the second-hand books were due to arrive, we discovered with horror that the room where the steward had said we might store the books was locked, and the steward had gone home. Tentatively we approached a sympathetic member of staff, and persuaded him to let us put them temporarily in his dining room. We made various attempts to have the few hundred boxes moved to somewhere more convenient the next day, but all our efforts were thwarted, and the unfortunate gentleman had to eat in his kitchen for four days.

Thanks to Caroline's forethought in putting an advertisement in the local paper, the sale went better than we had ever hoped. The next step was to collect the used textbooks. Several heads of department contributed books. Caroline's parents found us some tea chests. The Librarian lent us a trolley for carting these around the school, and one teacher got his whole English 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 was ready.

I discovered quite by chance that a friend in Birmingham was also collecting books to send to South Africa, and she gave us the name of a firm which would send the books at a reduced price. One day I rang this firm, thinking everything was ready, until they informed me that they needed to know the

weight of the chests that same day. 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 that to move the scales to the remaining chests would be simpler. However, the doctor arrived at this point, and put his foot down. The scales were delicate, he said, and we must find somewhere else to weigh the other chests. Eventually the kitchens produced some large scales, and a good trolley, so I was able to convey to the firm the weights of the chests - one in kilos and two in pounds!

A young teacher kindly offered to drive our tea-chests to London, where they had 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. With this, and all other expenses accounted for, £2 remained in the fund. This was the exact amount I had promised a friend to repay a number of phone calls I had made from her home while the books were being sent off.

Caroline and I sent a mere three tea-chests of books; my friend in Birmingham has 15 waiting to go. We heard recently that our three have arrived in Soweto, and I was reminded of a letter sent to me at a difficult stage by my father, in which he quoted the prayer of Sir 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.'

## DURHAM NEWS

by Mark Boobbyer

RUNNING the 'Christians in Sport' group at Durham University was great fun and exciting. I had arranged for our Christmas term dinner to be on 4 December but as it approached it became clear that there were many other conflicting events on the same evening which would stop many from coming. I wanted to move it to 1 December but didn't bother trying because the speaker, Andrew Wingfield-Digby, director of Christians in Sport in Britain, is usually so busy. Feeling very frustrated I was praying about it one morning when a friend pushed a letter under my door.... It turned out to be from Andrew and read, 'Disaster, I must go into hospital on the 4th for an operation; can't make the 4th, how about the 1st?'

80 came to the dinner including 15 members of the rugby club who enjoyed it enormously. The food, which we cooked ourselves went round to the nearest person. Next summer I'm hoping to get 100 to come along.

I went to see Andrew in Oxford in the middle of December. It turned out that he hadn't had to go into hospital on the 4th after all.



# CURFEWS AND

# CHARACTER

"WE WANT GHORKALAND!" were the chants of more than 10,000 students that racked the peaceful air of Darjeeling. Darjeeling is a tea garden town in the foothills of the Himalayas, very close to the Nepal border. For the past year, the Gurkhas, who are a race of Nepalese descent now settled in India, have been asking, demanding and now agitating for a separate state within the boundaries of India. At the same time in the poorest state of India, Bihar, the tribals of Jharkhand, as they are called, are also agitating for a separate state, and in many instances their agitation has turned violent.

I was also in Meghalaya, a state in North East India. Life in Shillong, the capital, has been completely paralysed because of the Khasi Students Union, led by a university student whom one magazine described as 'mercurial'. Here the KSU has rendered more than 25,000 Nepalese homeless. Because of the violence that has resulted in the way that they have put forward their demands, curfew has been declared from 9pm - 4am. But amongst all this separatism, violence and wielding of power by the students, who are in the forefront of most of these battles, there are rays of hope which give courage to those who think.

Wanlura Diengdoh, a Khasi from Shillong, is currently in his first year of Law studies. He is also the General Secretary of the Meghalaya branch of the National Students Union of India, which is affiliated to the ruling party, the Congress I. On returning home after attending an international conference of MRA in Panchgani, India, he decided to return to his state library books which he had stolen over the past years. Wanlura collected all the books that he could find and on adding them up he counted 65 reference books and encyclopaedias. He took these books in two cardboard boxes to the librarian. The librarian, thinking Wanlura had only stolen 3-4 books, was amazed to find that they were 65. Wanlura apologised



Mike Lowe

# ASSASSINATION

by Rahul Kapadia



and offered not only to pay for the other books which he wasn't able to trace, but also to pay the necessary dues for having kept the books for 6-7 years. The librarian replied by forgiving Wanlura and said, 'you have made the library richer in returning these books'.

Another story is of a young man called Robert Kharshiing, also a Khasi from Shillong, a student leader and formerly headman of his village. In January this year Robert wrote a letter to Professor G G Swell, a veteran Member of Parliament of the ruling party and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, who also hails from Meghalaya. During the 1984 Indian Parliamentary elections, Robert and his friends who belonged to another party, had written an article containing some very embarrassing and damaging statements about Professor Swell and also forged his signature at the end. This was printed and circulated in thousands throughout the state. Swell immediately denounced this letter and won the elections, and ordered a police investigation to find the culprit. It was in this letter which Robert wrote in January that he owned up and apologized to Swell for having used foul means, and gave Swell permission to prosecute Robert and publish the letter. This apology was front page news in Shillong and Swell said that in the spirit in which Robert's apology was written, he was now considering the matter closed. Robert's letter has come at a time when India is reeling under political corruption and character assassination..

I believe that it is these stories that will hold India in good stead and lead her forward. We in India have a lot to learn from the tribes of the North East.



# THE SECOND TOUCH

CHRIST CURED A BLIND MAN. He touched his eyes once and the blind man could see people vaguely "like trees walking". Then came the second touch and all was clear. He could see other people as individuals.

I am suggesting that we all need both touches.

St Teresa of Avila, the patron saint of Spain, who lived in the 16th century, wrote about her "second conversion". She mentions it in her famous autobiography which, after Don Quixote, is the most widely read prose classic of Spain. She was 40 at the time, having become a Carmelite nun at 21.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta describes a similar experience for herself as "a call within a call".

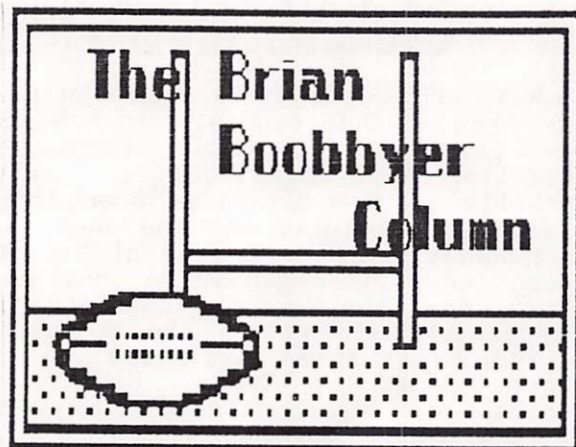
I remember God first getting a foothold in my life at the time of my confirmation in the church when I was 13. My conscience then rescued me from various habits. But I was still the centre of things, aware of myself, I think, as a decent bloke with a few minor blemishes.

Seven years later, through a sporting friend, I was challenged to listen to God and compare myself with Christ and His standards. I found I was not the decent person I thought I was.

This was for me the beginning of the second touch.

I got a Christmas card from an old university friend. At the bottom he wrote "Isaiah chapter 60 vv 1-2". I remember thinking "I've read that before", but after Christmas I did read it and it seemed to me like a charter for the new year.

"Though darkness covers the earth, and dark night the nations, the Lord shall shine upon you: and the nations shall march towards your light, and their rulers towards your sunrise."



It seemed to say to me, the darker the darkness the brighter the light can stand out. As AIDS and violence spread, and despair grows, there is one essential for all of us: to make sure that our candles are fully lit.

Psalm 18 says, "Thou wilt light my candle". A quiet time in the morning enables us to leave our rooms with our candles lit.

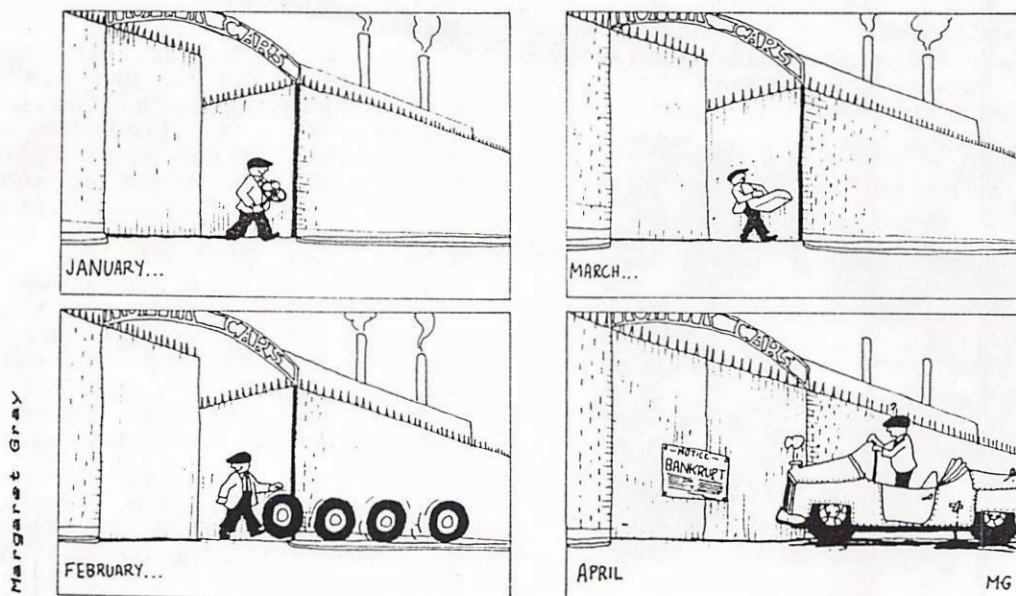
And if the candle flickers or goes out, what then? I suggest: pray quietly, obey the next thought, care for the next person.

There is a simplicity about the spiritual road in life which we can recapture each day.

If I believe in God and do not give His priority it seems perhaps that I am content with the first touch. I may have a certain spiritual dutifulness, determination and intensity, but there is no music.

God can cross out my self-will. That is the Cross. Then I am free from myself.

That is the second touch.





# BOOK REVIEW "BEST OF FRIENDS"

by Mark Boobbyer



'FRIENDSHIP IS one of life's richest gifts' says the back cover of Alan Thornhill's book *'Best of Friends'*. Alan Thornhill's life certainly seems to have been blest with many special friendships. Rather than write a straightforward autobiography he has chosen to trace his life right from the early days through a series of friendships, some spectacular such as that with the conductor Artur Rodzinski, and some simple but perhaps the more moving for being so, like that with the gardener in his Sussex village.

Through these stories we see the influences on Alan Thornhill's life which led him to the church and to writing plays which have toured the

world. The friendships he draws out include those with Frank Buchman and Peter Howard, Muriel Smith, Malcolm Muggeridge and Bishop Peter Ball. Not all are famous but for Alan Thornhill all are special for that very reason with which he begins the final, beautiful chapter on 'The Eternal Friendship': '...every friendship has become a three-cornered affair. Christ is the unseen friend in every human relationship. Often not mentioned, sometimes not recognized, he is none the less there.' With this in mind the author demonstrates not only how every friendship is a gift and a privilege but how Christ has been for him the greatest friend.

## AMERICAN POSTSCRIPT

by Margaret Gray





## 30,000 CROWD HOLLYWOOD BOWL

'First Anniversary Finds Moral Re-Armament World Force' was the front page headline in the 'Washington Post' following a capacity meeting in the Constitution Hall, Washington.

This was one of the three major demonstrations launching Moral Re-Armament in America in 1939. Three weeks earlier 14,000 crowded Madison Square Gardens during MRA week declared by the Mayor of New York.

The following month 30,000 spilled over the arena of the Hollywood bowl in Los Angeles. 15,000 were turned away.

At the Washington occasion Senator Harry Truman (later President) read a message from President Roosevelt. 250 British Members of Parliament also sent a message.

These demonstrations were a bid to rouse America to a sense of danger. Buchman had recently arrived with an international group who had participated in the launching of Moral Re-Armament in Europe the year before. On arrival in New York Buchman was shocked. 'America doesn't know what it means to have the front line right in her own backyard,' he told a group of friends. 'London does. There are trenches in the middle of St James's Park. You talk about peace, but it is a selfish peace, not a battle to rouse the nation. This message must spread across the whole country. That will demand more from us than we yet realise.'

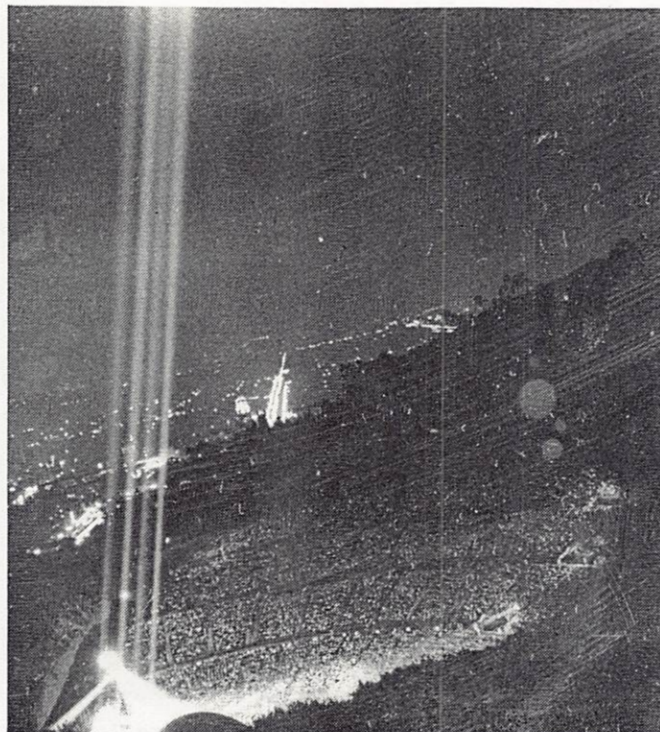
Barely six weeks after the Hollywood Bowl meeting the storm broke in Europe. Nazi Germany had attacked Poland.

Buchman had already initiated a series of world broadcasts. He concluded the last with William Penn's words 'Men must be governed by God or they condemn themselves to be ruled by tyrants.'

As Buchman pondered the challenge to stir America, he was aware that his team needed the added dimension of deeper spiritual roots. In the summer of 1940 he suspended all activity and assembled his fellow workers on the shore of Lake Tahoe in the Sierra Nevada mountains, where there was a group of holiday cottages. They spent three months together.

Buchman included his friends in the deepest springs of his faith and set about welding them into a united force. It was a time of daylight honesty with one another about motives, the uncovering of resentments and reservations and all that divides, and turning to God for His liberating power. Often Buchman would quote the words from Wesley's hymn, 'let the healing streams abound. Make and keep me pure within.'

Gradually a force emerged united and creative. A handbook and a revue by the same name, 'You Can Defend America' were created. They called for 'sound homes - teamwork in industry - a united nation', and for America to become a nation



Art Strong

governed by God. The cast travelled 36,000 miles through 21 states and performed before more than a quarter of a million people. The General of the Armies John J Pershing wrote the foreword for the handbook which went to over a million copies. 'No patriotic citizen can read it without feeling its inspiration' he wrote.

Fifteen months later Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. America was at war.

In Britain a similar programme to strengthen morale was undertaken, sponsored by 360 Mayors and Provosts. The novelist Daphne du Maurier published 'Come Wind, Come Weather' in which she told how ordinary people were reacting to war time conditions. She dedicated the book to 'An American, Dr Frank N D Buchman, whose initial vision made possible the work of the living characters in these stories'. Her book sold 650,000 copies in Britain alone.

An event of considerable significance was the association of Peter Howard with Moral Re-Armament. He was a tough columnist on 'Express' newspapers. He came to investigate the work of Moral Re-Armament at a time when there was a vicious attack on it in certain sections of the press. He found the allegations quite untrue and published a best seller 'Innocent Men' to give the facts, but not before losing his very lucrative job. The 'Express' management gave him the choice: publish and go, or withhold publication and stay. His decision was a sensation. It carried with it a commitment to put God first in the fight for the country.

Hundreds of MRA men and women were in the armed services. In the Nazi occupied countries many fought heroically in the Resistance.



# WHAT GOD MEANS TO ME

by Sydney Cook

He gives courage when I am afraid.

He gives purity when I want Him first in my life.

He gives passion, compassion and vision for people when I would gossip about them.

He makes me straight and free with people when I would be soft. He makes me understanding when I would be hard and self-righteous.

He makes me open with everybody when I would form a clique. He makes me the same with everybody when I would have a few special relationships.

He makes me steady when I am unstable, mature where I would be childish.

He tells me to listen to others and seek their help when I would be a Mr Know-all. He propels me into honesty about my mistakes, and nudges me into silence when I am eager to reveal my part in some success. When I would be silent and self-absorbed, He takes me deep into the life of the other person. When I would talk to draw attention to myself, He does not bless the conversation.

If I turn to Him swiftly a hundred times a day, He gives victory in temptation, strength in tiredness and a fire in my stomach when I lack conviction.

Each day He takes me beyond my doubts, longings, fears, ambitions and limitations out into His amazing plan for a re-made world. He tells me that the army of men and women He has created across the world are my family, my friends and my responsibility for the rest of my life.

He whispers to me that the Cross and the Sermon on the Mount are as relevant, as revolutionary and as deeply satisfying for every human heart as they have been for 2000 years, and that they will continue to be for all eternity, when organ transplants, space trips and nuclear power are as far back in history as the discovery of fire or the voyages of Columbus.



## TIRLEY STUDY WEEK

The next 'week with Moral Re-Armament' starting on Easter Day (3rd - 10th April 1988) WILL BE THE LAST in the current series.

Speakers will include General Joseph Lagu, former guerilla leader and Vice-President of Sudan, and Very Rev. Mgr George Leonard, Director of the Catholic Media Trust.

If you are considering participating yourself, or know of others who are, PLEASE LET CHRIS EVANS in Tirley Garth KNOW URGENTLY, at least by 21 FEBRUARY.

# 1988 - 50 years of MRA

by ANDREW STALLYBRASS

AS A READER OF FREEWAY, you are part of a perceptive minority - you actually know something about MRA at first hand, and you are in the process of finding out more.

'Morals' are coming back into fashion as scandals and social problems hold the headlines. After decades of 'do as you please', current affairs are bringing many to conclude that there may be a link between personal choices and the way society goes. Our individual actions do have social consequences. But 'Re-Armament'?

Moral Re-Arrangement, as one dyslexic tradesman once put it on a bill, or as it is better known, MRA, was launched by American Frank Buchman, in the East End of London, on 29 May 1938. Europe was on the brink of war, and Buchman saw the desperate need for a 'moral and spiritual re-armament'. So we are coming up to the 50th birthday of this hard-to-define 'thing'.

Already 50 years ago, MRA was arousing much puzzlement and some hostility. The contradictory and mutually exclusive evaluations have continued down the years - perhaps a backhanded compliment, and proof that MRA's aims have not changed much! In the words of the invitation for next year's Caux conferences: 'Human nature, at the heart of the difficulties, is also at the heart of the cure. Change, starting within us, can be applied to daily life and to collective responsibilities.' Perhaps it is so simple that it is hard to understand.

A great ideal, but how does it work in practice? Well, over these years, MRA has acquired a certain baggage of experience, of evidence that people can change, and that change in people can change situations. Moral Re-Armament has been an effective, if often unseen, catalyst in world affairs. Since 1938, it has, for example, made a leading contribution to the reconciliation between France and Germany after the war, the resolution of conflict in North Africa in the 1950's, and the creation of an independent Zimbabwe. Last year Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone publicly underlined the important part played by MRA in rebuilding post-war Japan.

In the past year major campaigns and conferences have taken place in Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, Atlanta, USA (opened by Mayor Andrew Young), Scandinavia, Britain, Switzerland, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, India, Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Events are being planned around the world to mark its 50th anniversary.

Of course, much more remains to be done. MRA is part of an eternal struggle between good and evil, and in this world, there is no final definitive victory to be won. But the years ahead could see even more radical 're-arrangement' than in the past. Perhaps, with luck, more people will get to know for themselves what Moral Re-Armament stands for, what it has done, and more interestingly, where it is headed, and the part that they can play in building a better world.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: February 25th

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