

DECEMBER 1989

Vol 4 No 2

FREEMAN

"Why not let God run the world?"



**"It is one thing to be tempted,
it's another thing to fall."**

(Shakespeare)

See pages 8-9!

BRICKS IN THE WALL

In the last edition of *Freeway* we showed a photograph of the Berlin wall with the caption "how long will it last?".

The answer was "not very long".

Last week the Berlin wall was transformed almost overnight from a barrier to a piece of historic graffiti. Last night we heard the astonishing news that the entire Czech ruling politburo had resigned, bowing to pressure from the people.

There is an extraordinary tide of change sweeping through Europe. The old certainties of the cold war are over. What do we put in its place?

One thing to remember is that communism has not fallen solely because of the attractiveness of Western society. The continued existence of communist groups in the West should prevent us from getting too smug. It is the failure of communism to provide for people's basic needs, and the extensive corruption within the system that has led to its downfall.

But that is not all. In some ways Poland is the hero of the moment. The emergence of Solidarity in 1980 is seen by many as the catalyst for reforms in the Soviet Union and all that followed in Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria and now Czechoslovakia.

Solidarity was much more than a political movement. It was also a moral movement. For Solidarity truth was more important than power, love more important than revenge. Violence was never considered as a means for bringing change.

Their philosophy could be summed up in these words by Solzhenitsyn: "Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either - but right through every human heart - and through all human hearts... And since that time I have come to understand the falsehood of all the revolutions in history: they destroy only those carriers of evil contemporary within them (and also fail, out of haste, to discriminate the carriers of good as well). And they then take to themselves as their heritage the actual evil itself, magnified still more."

A friend once asked a Polish intellectual what we in the West could do to help bring change in Eastern and Central Europe. He replied: "fight for the right values in the West".

This still applies.

If people in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union look to us and see only free markets and selfishness it will not help them to become truly free. It is a challenge for us to present the moral and spiritual foundations of our society. In God's eyes a corrupt and selfish capitalism is no better than a corrupt and selfish communism.

Ole Bjorn Kraft, former Foreign Minister of Denmark and Chairman of NATO, once said: "Real freedom cannot exist without faith. If you cut the root of a plant, the flower will wither and die; the root of democracy is faith in God."

At this historic time we cannot afford to take our freedom for granted.

THE EDITORS

AT THE BUS STOP

by Annette Overdijkink

I TRIED TO RUN AWAY FROM GOD so many times. I was scared of making a commitment, I was scared of myself, of being a failure, of so many things. I thought I could find a better way to live than the one God offered me.

I know now that I made a fool of myself. I was looking for life and hope but all I found was death and depression. I couldn't cope with all the things I saw, being just a young student in this crazy world. I put my life in God's hands. But then I made another mistake. I expected Him to solve all my problems without me doing anything. What was wrong was that it was a one-way relationship. I didn't do anything for Him. I had never asked God if I also had a part to play in His plans for me. I discovered that believing in God isn't enough. I have to be totally committed to Him and live in the way He wants me to live. I realised that I have a part in His plan - and so has everyone.

A recent experience helped me understand how God works through people.

As I walked to church one sunny Sunday morning I was feeling great. Everyone I met on the street received a loud "Hi!" and a big smile. I greeted with the same good cheer a man sitting on a bench at the bus stop. He looked up with a shocked expression, as though I had hurt him.

I thought it was crazy!

As I walked on I felt a clear voice saying to me: "Go back and ask that man why he is so sad, and if he would like to come to church with you". I felt this was crazy! I wanted to see my friends at church, and of course I didn't want to look like an idiot. But somehow I couldn't go on, every step seemed to hurt me. I knew I had to go back, as God had asked me to do, but my knees were shaking. I said to God, "OK, if you want me to talk to that man, the least you can do is to give me courage and the right words".

As soon as I forgot about my fear and pride, I could only think of that sad looking man, and suddenly I felt my strength grow. I went back and asked him why he was sitting there and whether he was waiting for a bus. He said he wasn't

but could always take one if it came by. I invited him to come to church but he wanted to be alone. I just wanted to go, but I saw a tear roll down his face. I was shocked that I seemed to have made him more sad. I sat down beside him and asked him what was on his mind, but he didn't want to talk about it. Then he started to cry. I put my arm around him and said I was sorry for asking him questions that made him feel uncomfortable.

Suddenly he began to talk. Although I told him my name, he wouldn't tell me his. He felt he was a bad, sad and unloved person. He had been in real trouble, his wife had just left him, his friends had let him down and his daughter was waiting for him. "They are my pride and joy, but I am not worth being theirs." He was on the point of ending his life.

Scared to leave

We talked more and I knew I was going to be late for church if I didn't go. But I was scared of leaving the man alone. I told him that I would like to listen to him more, but that I hoped he would go and see his little daughter because I thought he was worth being her Daddy.

Then he took my hand, looked me in the eye and said, "I am Greg, nice to meet you". He said he couldn't believe that, after his family and friends had dumped him, a total stranger seemed to care about his life and feelings. He told me he had learned a lesson. He wanted to go and see his daughter.

I knew it came straight from his heart and that God was within him. I could now leave him alone without having to worry for his life. So I walked to church, now crying from happiness because I knew God had used me to save someone's life.

This experience is a big wonder in my life. It wasn't me sitting and crying on that bench with a stranger, it was God. He gave me His love so that I could give it to this man. There really is no greater joy than knowing your life is under God's control.

Annette comes from the Netherlands but is currently living for six months with Chris and Anne Hartnell in Western Canada.

THINKING EUROPEAN

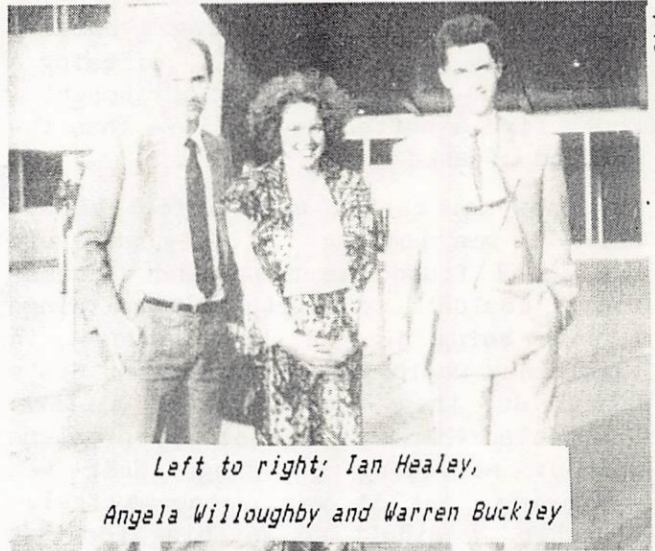
by Warren Buckley

'ROME WAS NOT BUILT IN A DAY'. So goes an old English saying and presently I can think of no better example of this than the building of an integrated European Community. Recent weeks have seen a refuelling of the debate between Mrs Thatcher and M. Mitterand over the direction and pace of the process and such disagreement still underlies European Union. However a few weeks ago I was privileged to be part of a group visiting the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, and my days there were a great boost to my hopes still that Europe can unite.

25 of us were guests of the Belgian Christian Democrat, M. Herman, and we represented many countries including East Germany and Lebanon. For four days we took in the atmosphere of this most extraordinary place; the Parliament is made up of representatives from the EC member states and meets once a month to debate new European law and policy. What perhaps struck me most was the openness of this place. Once past initial security we were allowed to look virtually anywhere and more importantly we all met a number of MEP's. In particular we spent half an hour with Lord Plumb, the previous President of the Commission, who answered questions with complete frankness and was both stimulating and highly encouraging in our plans for a conference on Europe in Caux 1990.

Our time in Strasbourg coincided with the initial murmurs of change in East Germany, and the presence of friends from Leipzig encouraged many MEP's to talk about the Community's important role in supporting all that is happening in that part of Europe. We were encouraged to take an active part in the changes going on by meeting those from central Europe and so I was very grateful for our time together as a group. As Tennyson wrote, "I am a part of all that I have met."

When I left for Strasbourg I was already inspired by a vision of Europe but seeing that vision actually being worked for has made it all the more real. I believe a united Europe has a great role to serve the world. I was encouraged by the number of young people at the Haguenau weekend.



Helene Pick

Left to right; Ian Healey,

Angela Willoughby and Warren Buckley

We must all work to break through the barriers of purely economic union, for, as Archbishop Runcie said, "a Europe united only by its desire to become yet more prosperous would have no attraction for me." True European unity lies beyond economics or politics. It lies in the unity of hearts, minds and spirits throughout Europe. Such unity can only be achieved by meeting together. So I encourage all to be at next year's conference in Caux, 'Shaping a new Europe'. Be you European or not, your involvement is needed.

HAGUENAU

by Ian Healey and
Angela Willoughby

THE YOUNG BRITISH DELEGATION arrived safely in Haguenau despite a hazardous journey of wind, rain and chevrons. The weekend was an opportunity for sixty people from France, West and East Germany, Switzerland, Holland and Poland, together with three Lebanese, to come together on a basis of looking ahead at what we can do for Europe. It was an important time, building team spirit and finding a common fellowship, before a week in the European Parliament.

We took three themes, East-West relations, The Single Market, and The European Community seen from the outside. On the first of these our friends from Leipzig, East Germany gave a great deal, and shared their optimism for the future, talking in particular of the peaceful demonstrations which were taking place. Claude Bourdin had just

NONNENWERTH '89

by Helene Pick

AS IN RECENT YEARS, this autumn a group of young people, mainly Germans, met on the island of Nonnenwerth in the River Rhine. The purpose of these annual meetings is to get to know each other better and to build a team of young people involved in MRA in Germany. But also to stay in contact with our friends from abroad which is why we always have guests from neighbouring countries and is also the reason for writing this report - for you to feel included.

This year's meeting was from October 6th to 8th. We were 23 people, and friends from Poland, Austria, Britain and Norway had joined us.

To get to the island you use a little ferry boat which leaves the shore as required.

The only building on Nonnenwerth is the convent of Franciscan nuns, which is also a school. We sleep in classrooms on the floor and meet in another classroom. There is a very stimulating atmosphere on this peaceful island and I always enjoy looking out of the window to see the ships pass 'right in front of my nose'. A lot of open and honest talks happen, and this year we talked about: "Our fears, and how to handle them."

returned from Poland and described how the Poles who were in Caux have found a new sense of personal responsibility for their country.

How can we, living in democratic countries, support their initiatives?

A particular highlight was the visit of M. Zeller, MEP for Strasbourg. We spent two hours with him, during which he listened and talked and answered our questions. At the end Warren skilfully invited him to the "Europe in Need" session of Caux next summer.

The weekend was a great success, giving us conviction for our week ahead, a time of good fun with our mates and also the knowledge that there was a great team behind us. It was also good to see the different generations working together. We younger people learned a lot by working with and being treated as equals by our more experienced friends. It was sometimes a struggle to keep up with them! We hope it is the first of many such occasions.

One thing that struck me in our talks is that there are different fears in everybody, but that there's also one that nearly everyone has in common, and that is the fear of people. Thinking of that, I really wonder what it is that makes us afraid of our fellow men if they are obviously not trying to hurt us on purpose? Why are we so much dependent on the opinion of others? Why does everybody have to have the fear of not being accepted?

But also another question comes up: Do I give others a reason to be afraid of me by my way of behaving? I'll close by leaving these questions with you. I'm sure they're worthwhile thinking over.



Michael Lester

*Trees and water meet under the pale, pale sky,
Thin branches and turning leaves
In colour.
Green to yellow then brown.
Through the branches another tree waves
Across the river.
An island. Oasis of peace in a rushing world.
Then brighter.
The sun shines through
Bringing smiles and laughter.
Out of the window
Across the treetops
The mountain glances down,
And sees
Joy and cheer
Quiet and prayer
Of a growing fellowship-team.
We come from all over
Germany and beyond;
Together, and then back to work
Renewed.*

Ian Healey

HE TAKES HIS TIME

by Peter Baynard-Smith

I HAVE LONG FELT, during my engineering training, that God was calling me to use the next years of my life to work with poor, or so-called 'under-developed', people. Recently an opportunity arose to test this conviction and to learn how to live into the lives of the 'two-thirds' of the world.

In January '89 I applied to TEAR FUND (TF), the Christian relief and development agency, to work for one year overseas as an apprentice on a development project. At that time I had no idea how much my faith and commitment would be stretched and strengthened before I was even to set foot on foreign soil!

The experience began with the most searching 'application' form I've ever come across. For once, the prospective employers were less concerned with my qualifications (or lack of!) than with my motivation, attitude to life, faith in God, and my personal beliefs. It was clear that it was pointless applying

without a conviction that this was God's will.

My faith-building experience continued in May. My TF selection interview fell in the middle of my final degree exams and indeed was separated from one of these exams by only 1½ hours and 150 miles! With another exam the following day, that particular week taught me a great deal about putting total trust in God. He gave me strength, concentration and above all peace of mind that He had planned the whole thing and intended to remain in control!

After graduation in July, having been accepted by TF, the third phase began - the waiting game! TF were to search for the appropriate country and assignment for me. Through this, God was again trying to teach stubborn old me to trust entirely in Him. When I lose trust, stress, poor health and a heavy spirit all take their toll on me. In the end I was to have to wait over 4 months. These were difficult months as I often felt

GIVING BACK MY LIFE



HUI DUONG (on the left) escaped from Vietnam in the early 1980's with his family. In June he finished a degree in physics at Oxford University, and is currently doing a Masters at Cambridge.

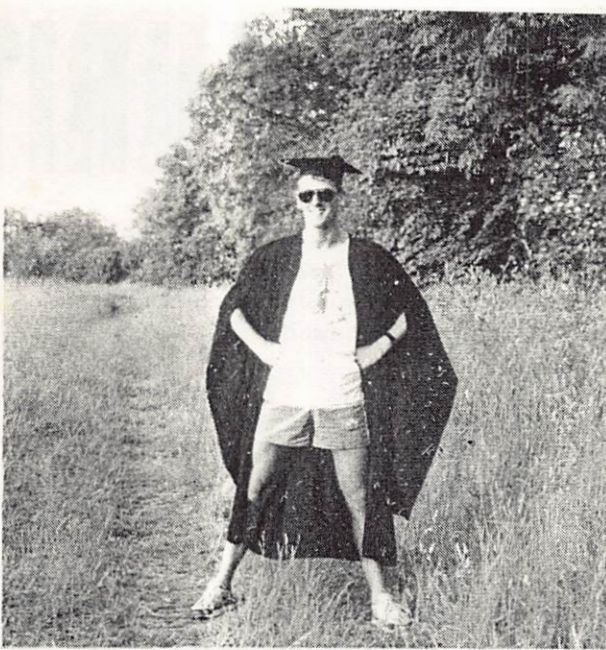
I AM ALWAYS CONSCIOUS that my being in Cambridge is part of God's plan, and that he wants to use it to teach me and make me more capable of serving him in the future. I feel I am also part of God's plan to contribute to the people around me now. In fact the two things seem inseparable.

This knowledge has made such a difference to the way I live my everyday life. Before, I used to keep to the things I am familiar with, and for much of the time I did not look out and give to people other than those I get on with. This year is the first time I have sacrificed time and effort in trying to create relationships with people because I want to contribute to their lives. I'm still not very consistent in my effort but it's a far cry from what I used to do. It's really exhilarating and I'm learning a lot.

However I recently had a talk with a student I know quite well. Afterwards I realised that I am really idealistic, far more so than most people around me.

NEW REVOLUTION IN JAPAN

Chie Takahashi is an interpreter from Tokyo, Japan. Eight years ago she took part in the course 'Studies in Effective Living' at Armagh, the MRA centre in Melbourne, Australia. Last year she made another visit to Australia.



like making other plans (just in case!) but God always managed to assure me, one way or another, to be patient. He was in no hurry! During this period three possibilities came up, two of which He made clear were not His will.

I now feel sure that the God wants me in Tanzania, but the trusting has to go on. Immigration procedures need following through, a visa attained and preparations made. In the meantime God is using every opportunity to teach me total dependance on Him - no doubt so He'll at least have an outside chance of using me in His service when I do get to Tanzania!

I'll keep you informed!

I am not idealistic to the point of neglecting everyday life, but I want my life to improve the life of people in the Third World, and especially in Vietnam - and it's something I want to live for. In a way that seems to set me apart from the people around me and makes me feel quite lonely. I also feel quite daunted at what is needed to do what I want to do, and I am afraid that I may not achieve a lot in the end. But there is a Vietnamese proverb: 'The journey is not hard because of the high peaks and deep rivers. The journey is hard because our hearts are afraid of the high peaks and deep rivers'.

I know that God has given me my life (I was wounded by shrapnel during the attack on Saigon in 1975, and if the shrapnel had been half a centimetre lower it would have gone through my brain). He has taken me to England and given me an education - as well as food and clothes. I know he wants me to take it back to the people in the Third World.

EIGHT YEARS AGO I was exposed to the feelings of our neighbouring countries towards us Japanese. It took me a while to accept that my people were the cause of the suffering in Asia and elsewhere during the Second World War.

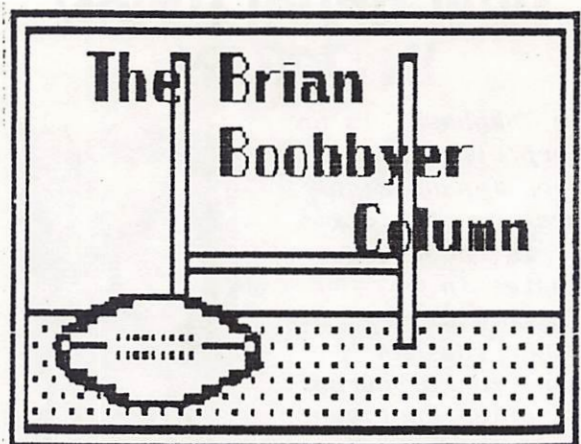
Before leaving Japan an elderly Japanese lady had said to me: "You, the younger generation, enjoy the fruits of your forefathers' hard work and sacrifices. So why can't you be responsible for their mistakes as well?" This helped me to become reconciled with my Chinese room mate, with whom I began to dream of a better relationship for us all.

Last year I was a little reluctant to return to Australia because I had heard that Japanese companies were buying up land in Queensland, and that Australians had mixed feelings about this. "My people are eternal troublemakers!" I thought. "If I feel responsible for my nation and the behaviour of my people, I will have to spend the rest of my life apologising, even though I am just an ordinary person. It's not fair!"

However, as Mr Kaku, the President of Canon, pointed out, the history of Japan shows that when we Japanese see the need for change, it takes place very swiftly. He believes that, for the sake of the whole of mankind, the time has come for the next revolution. This revolution will need each one of us, and has to take place while world attention is still upon us.

I have volunteered myself to help Japan welcome this revolution and become a more caring country, through keeping my eyes and heart open to my country and the world, no matter how painful or humiliating it might be.

We are far from perfect and we may go on creating problems. However, with the help of others from around the world, I believe we can succeed in this further revolution so that Japan becomes what she is really meant to be.



My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure. (Tennyson)

Light and lust are deadly enemies. (Shakespeare)

...who against God rebelled not, nor to Him were faithful, but to self alone were true. (Dante)

Purity is a virtue of the mind: it has courage as its companion. (Augustine)

...even more pure as tempted more: more able to endure as more exposed to suffering and distress: thence, more alive to tenderness. (Wordsworth)

Guard your eyes specially. Show a great love for that virtue which sheds a lustre on all of life, the guiding star of the priesthood, purity. (Pope John)

Purity concentrates God in us. (Teilhard de Chardin)

The first step to a true education is a pure heart. Without purity, the mind cannot attain requisite firmness. The impure person loses stamina, becomes emasculated and cowardly. (Gandhi)

You cannot break the rule of purity without cheating or exploiting your fellow men. (St Paul)

Just as you have your own face, your own smile, your own handwriting, your own walk, you have your own temptation. It is subtle, pitiless. The greatest mistake is to underestimate its strength. (Drummond)

Remember Augustine's history of temptation: a thought, a picture, a fascination and a fall. (Drummond)

Have done with impurity and every other evil that touches the lives of others. (St James)

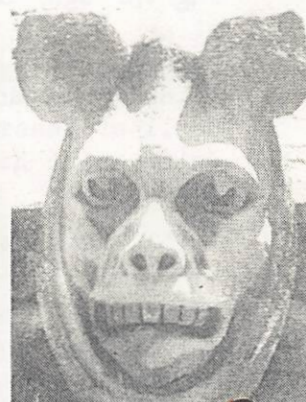
A pure mind soon becomes a deep mind. (Buddha)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Then will I teach sinners Thy ways and they will be converted unto Thee. (Psalm 51)

DOES PURITY

These quotes list some of the fruits of purity: energy, compassion, courage, a sense of wonder, selflessness, stamina, depth, power to help others, God himself.

Purity must be absolute because helping another person on the moral and spiritual road of life is the most delicate art in the world. Most people on the surface do not want to be helped on that road, but deep down they may do. But they would not say so. Drummond wrote: "To draw souls one by one and take from them the secrets of their lives, to talk them clear out of themselves, to read them off like a page of print, to pervade them with your spiritual essence and make them transparent, this is the spiritual diagnosis which is so difficult to acquire and so hard to practise." Drummond was 23 when he wrote that.



The Look, the Thought, the
Gargoyles of New College, Oxford

The apostle Peter wrote: "Now that you have, by obeying the truth, made your souls clean enough for a genuine love of your fellows, see that ye do love each other fervently and from the heart."

Clean enough to love.

The big question is: Is it possible to live that kind of purity all the time?

The answer is: No...unless you have a motive that makes you want to do it badly enough. And it's covered in that verse of Peter. You want to do something for a friend or for the world, for the

NEED TO BE ABSOLUTE?

nation or for the Lord Himself. For the sake of people you love.

But...there is a price to pay. That price is the Cross: the highest expression of love that I know, where God's will crosses my will - with its lust for success, pleasure and comfort - and I choose God's will. Moment by moment. Day by day. Always. Then I'm available for others.

Ugo Bassi from Italy wrote in the early 19th century:

*Measure thy life by loss instead of gain;
Not by the wine drunk but by the wine poured forth
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
And whoso suffers the most hath most to give,*

One way to start on this road is to clean out the dirt of the years, by being dead honest about everything shameful and doubtful with a trusted friend.



Fascination and the Fall

photographed by Chris Donaghue

Christ told us that the truth would make us free. Sin is attractive but its gory details are not. Absolute honesty can mean that the sin that I love can become the sin that I hate. From such hatred of sin can come the power to break with it.

Shakespeare wrote: "It is one thing to be tempted, it's another thing to fall."

I find it a real help, when I'm tempted, to think of certain people that I'm trying to help or befriend, and it restrains me: as well as to look at or

visualise the crucifix above my bed.

Frank Buchman took Augustine's sequence of temptation and expressed it as: "the look, the thought, the fascination and the fall". Look at the gargoyles in the picture. We can avoid the last two, if we refuse to allow the first two to stay and stick.

Henry Wright, Professor at Yale University in the early decades of this century, defined purity as: "Transparency in the crystal, clear water from the mountain spring, the white of snow, the clear open heaven through which the stars appear, victory over every sin."

"The human mind," he wrote, "is like a camera film. After exposure to an impure thought you can delay and develop the plate or flood the plate immediately with the life of Christ."

Trying too hard

A lesson I learnt from sport was that it was all too easy to try too hard and become tense, especially when you were going through a bad patch. Passing a rugby ball or hitting a cricket ball require good timing. More relaxation is needed rather than more effort. Furthermore, if you hold on to your bat too tightly you cannot keep it straight.

It is the same with the spiritual life, especially with the battle for purity. Charles Wesley wrote in a hymn:

*Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin,
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within,*

It is not a question of trying harder and harder but rather letting go the control of my life, so as to allow that process to take place.

Isaiah wrote: "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They will walk and not lose heart."

If God calls us to be eagles, do not let us settle for being crows or sparrows. Purity enables us to fly high, see clearly and see far.

Unconfined, unlimited. To give people a love they cannot resist.

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. To be able to decide for yourself. A marvellous feeling, simply wonderful.

I'm an emigrant from the the GDR (German Democratic Republic) and I came to West Germany in April 1989 with my husband. We had to fight hard for our emigration for five years. Our desire to leave the GDR legally meant that we were treated like public enemies. The party functionary who was responsible for our case once said: "One day you will realise that I acted right by refusing your emigration. Maybe not for

political party can only envy that. The SED failed politically, economically and morally. Now patience has run out, and it is time for new ideas. If the SED doesn't allow free elections there's a great danger that the people will take it from them.

The SED consists mostly of 'fellow-travellers': people who once in their life were blackmailed into taking up membership for financial and professional gain. Hopefully, these people will now find the courage to turn their backs on the party. The SED functionaries have to ask themselves whether they should go on following their communist ideas or whether they should serve the



CROSSING THE WALL

by Annett Kleischmantat

another 10 or 20 , but we've got time. Then you will realise that the GDR is the right state for you. Look, I'm right with my point of view and you are wrong. You can believe me. Maybe it sounds a bit arrogant, but that's the way it is."

These are the concrete results of an unbelievable concentration of power in one party. To whom can you complain when everything and everybody, the press, the courts, the so-called block parties and social organizations are controlled by the SED [the Party]? Can you imagine how miserable and helpless one feels?

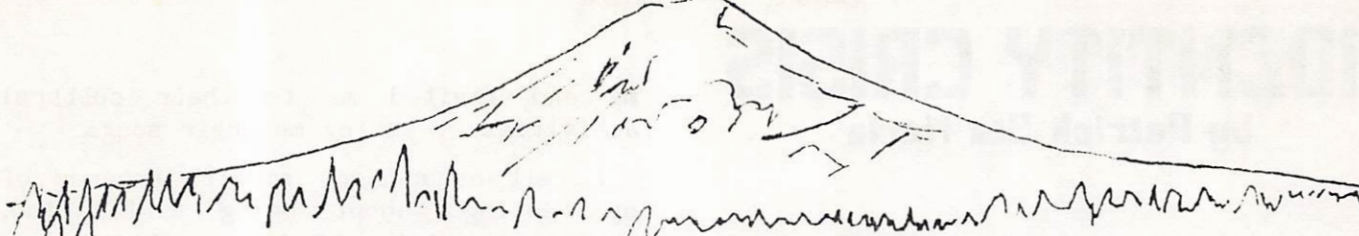
Proud of my countrymen

I am very proud of my countrymen in the GDR. They've achieved something incredible: parts of the wall have been opened for them. But 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. Any Western

people. God likes to support every honest effort. I was an enthusiastic Marxist myself and I had come to the painful conclusion that communism is not the salvation of man, but, because of its rigid structure, a disaster. God, in his grace, gave me a firm belief in his son Jesus Christ, so that I'm able to say that whoever searches for truth wholeheartedly will find it.

Be grateful that you've had the privilege of being brought up in a democratic society. You've been saved from many troubles. We're glad to live in West Germany, although we feel homesick sometimes. Many of us from the GDR, and also from Romania, Poland and the Soviet Union have gone through unheard-of strains to get here. That's why it hurts so very much of we meet people who don't have one good word 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. And 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.



On the slopes of Mt Fuji

by Edward Peters

MORAL RE-ARMAMENT IS FOR EVERYONE. It came to birth in a Western, Protestant culture - nothing wrong with that. Its initiator Frank Buchman, through his unique personality and vision, ensured that MRA moved beyond its cradle. He was constantly reaching out to people of all backgrounds, traditions and faiths. He made no secret of the Christian heart of his own commitment but did not demand that others conform to the limited human definitions easily placed on religious experience. Few Christian leaders can have won the friendship of so many people of different traditions. In his move towards inter-faith dialogue he was decades ahead of his time.

Since Buchman's death the world has changed in fundamental ways, becoming more complex, and with greater options. The work of MRA has also changed. Since 1965 MRA has had no single leader but has striven to work out an ideal of collective leadership based on equal responsibility. In parallel there has been a search for new ways of ensuring cohesion within a widespread programme of action.

2 or 200 working together

Moral Re-Armament has always had two strengths that sometimes appear to work against one another. On the one hand, at its heart is individual decision and initiative, in recognition that the deepest place in each of our hearts is reserved for our personal relationship with, and calling from, God. On the other hand, much of its effectiveness over the past 50 years has come when people have worked together for a common objective. Again and again events have proved that 2, 20 or 200 working together often bear more fruit than 2, 20 or 200 working by themselves.

How then in an age where world issues are increasingly demanding global responses can MRA make its distinctive contribution? A recent international meeting in Japan, on the slopes of Mount Fuji, addressed this question. It was

the second in a series of global Consultations the next of which will be in Brazil in April 1990. 25 of us from 15 nations met for a week to search together for fresh insights and clarity about priorities. This was no elite 'leadership group', merely a collection of people fairly representative of MRA's work around the world. The very nature of the Consultation process is not directing but discerning. Could we, in recognition that we are meant to do better in acting together as a world force, find some steers for priorities?

We ranged over the important issues facing Japan, Asia and the Pacific. We developed ideas for offering more opportunities for training in MRA. And we reviewed our ways of operating, in the light of the need to allow freedom for people of different cultures to develop ways of doing things which draw on the best of their traditions. Some of us have sometimes confused cultural practices with universal truth, voluntarily-chosen disciplines with doctrines.

MRA is not a religion, but a door to faith and religious experience. It is also the outgrowth and application of that faith and experience. It is we who sometimes place limits on the work of God through the narrowness of our understanding. We are meant to offer something that is inclusive without being superficial. As we deepen our personal lives and faith, we can also discover how better to share them with others in a way that speaks to the heart no matter the tradition in which it is rooted.

Yes, MRA is for everyone. It is a chance for anyone to find something deeply satisfying, and to relate it to the world around. That does not require the label 'MRA' to be valid. It requires only a commitment to go all the way with God, and to stretch out to the whole world. All can have a part in the extraordinary adventures God seems to have in store as we enter the world of the 1990's and beyond.

IDENTITY CRISIS

by Patrick Sta Maria

MALAYSIA IS a multi-cultural society with Malays (Muslims), Chinese, and Indians. I have Portuguese and Filipino ancestry.

My identity crisis began when people started mistaking me for either a Malay, Chinese or an Indian. At first I took it all in jest, but eventually it turned into resentment. I started blaming my mother for my predicament, storing up feelings as I did not have the courage to talk them over with my mother.

Then in 1986, I attended a Course for the Visually Handicapped. Among the participants were Filipinos who had taken part in their people-led prayer revolution, culminating with the Marcos regime being replaced by Mrs Aquino.

They were proud to be Filipinos, full of life and enthusiasm. I avoided them at first, but did mention that my mother was Filipino. They were caring towards

me and invited me to their cultural activities, teaching me their songs.

I felt ashamed of myself, ashamed of my feelings about being a Filipino, about being Asian. God, I realised, was using these visiting Filipinos to help me overcome my prejudices. The moment I started accepting myself and appreciating my heritage, I experienced inner freedom.

But self-realisation is one thing, restitution another. There was still the need to put things right with my mother. After much struggle against pride and ego, I managed to write and explain what I had felt about her, about my being Filipino, and ask for forgiveness. Amidst tears of joy, I also reiterated in my letter that I loved her very much and will continue to do so.

I realised that acceptance of oneself should pave the way for acceptance of others, whatever race, creed or colour.

Patrick Sta Maria has come to Britain for a year to participate in the campaign with the plays 'Beyond Comprehension' and 'Let's talk turkey'.

GOING HOME

by Sue Pearce



DESPITE THE LACK OF EXOTIC TRAVEL, my summer was memorable. Summer of '89 - when my parents and I learnt how to get on. Not earth-shaking news, perhaps, but if God isn't big enough to transform specific situations in our lives then there's little point to the faith behind boppy songs and handouts.

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 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 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.

The Pearce family comes from New Zealand. The above article first appeared in the CU broadsheet, 'Green Flares and Guitars', at York University, where Sue studies.

People and Structures

by Michele Soldano

I'M TRYING TO USE MRA as my life philosophy. Even if I am not religious, I am firmly persuaded that the MRA principles are right. I don't believe in God. My view is that we are all part of the Absolute, which you can call God if you prefer. I believe that the Absolute is something inside people, and it is this Absolute which I listen to in my silent moments. This 'inner voice' is the deepest part of my person - the spiritual part of me which is too often crushed by the material part.

I think that if we want to change the world, we have to change structures as well as people. We in the West have a development model based on the idea of scientific progress, on the idea of a free market and private control of industry. But I think we have to produce a new development model, as ours cannot be the right model for less developed countries.

A few facts will explain what I mean. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), 80% of the world's pollution is produced by 10% of the world's population. The majority of this 10% lives in the rich countries. So you can see that it is absurd to think that we can raise the standard of living of all the world's people to the level enjoyed in the West, if we follow our development model. In fact if another 15% of the



world's population reached our standard of living, the world's pollution would double.

This is not simply a consequence of an amoral lifestyle in the West. Capitalism is based on consumerism, consumerism produces pollution. Consumerism is partly a consequence of an amoral lifestyle, but mainly it is a consequence of our development model. We have to consume more and more so that we can produce more and more and guarantee employment, profit, etc.

A new society needs new people who base their lives on moral values, but it also needs new structures based on a different logic of operation. This new logic demands different motives from the profit motive.

I don't think it is possible to change the world with MRA alone. But nor is it possible to change the world without MRA. We must work for a moral re-armament in the world, and also for a change in structures.

WHOLE WORLD

by Joe Hakim

I HEARD A YOUNG MAN this summer in Caux saying: 'How can people expect to find freedom for their countries, while they are still slaves themselves to their own desires?' When I began to obey and cross my own selfish will in Mountain House through a daily fighting, new visions and thoughts came to me; I had the inner freedom to listen more to God and surrender to His will.

During 17 days in Caux, I had the opportunity to share a room with six young men from five different countries and five different religions. Just when I was getting used to one of them, it was time for him to leave and I had to start again. I realised I had to be open enough to share my life with new people of different characters.

Meeting people from many countries who are suffering - especially from Burma

and Poland - helped me not to concentrate on myself and drown in my own problems. I realised that some of them are living in worse conditions than mine. I was meant to be concerned with the whole world and not only a small part of it.

Before coming back home, some decisions had to be taken. It seemed easy to decide something while in such an atmosphere as Caux, but difficult to obey when I would be once again in the midst of my society, its judgements and laws.

Going for absolute honesty was one such risky step. I decided to refuse to take part in signing a contract at work which could avoid us having to pay taxes legally and honestly. Now that I'm in Beirut, I'm still fighting for this idea, even though if I did sign it, it would bring me more money than usual.

Now it's time to put God's will first in my life, without conditions.

THE PASHA'S BOMB SHELL

by Rex Dilly

PIERRE CHAVANNE was a French settler who farmed in Morocco. His aunt had given his name to Frank Buchman at Caux when she heard that he and a group planned to visit Morocco. The Chavannes were intrigued by what they heard about MRA though not convinced. They visited Caux the following summer, and there they decided to experiment with applying Moral Re-Armament. They reviewed their own relationship but also became concerned about the future of Morocco. Chavanne says, "I discovered that I was no longer afraid of the Moroccans".

Soon after their return from Caux, a plague of locusts threatened to ravage the farms around Marakesh. The Moroccan agricultural services took effective action and the threat was averted.

Chavanne thanked Ahmed Guessous, the head of the provincial agricultural department. "You are the first Frenchman who has ever thanked me for anything", Guessous replied. Chavanne went on, "I want to apologise for the selfish way I have lived in your country and for my attitude to your people". He talked of his visit to Caux and added, "I have decided now to serve your country on the basis of the standards of Moral Re-Armament".

Guessous was interested but suspicious; he feared some subtle French plot to trap him into revealing his real attitude to the French. For unknown to Chavanne at the time, he was a secret leader of the nationalists who were determined to rid the country of the French yoke.

The two men became firm friends and the following summer went together to Caux. At the first session they heard Paul Campbell, who had been in Morocco with Frank Buchman, speak enthusiastically of the hospitality they received from El Glaoui, the Pasha of Marakesh.

At the end of the meeting, Guessous, pale with anger, tackled Campbell: "I regard Caux as a holy place; but by speaking here of our worst enemy, El Glaoui, you have spoken of the devil incarnate." El Glaoui had sided with the French in exiling Sultan Mohammed Ben Youssef of Morocco to Madagascar and replacing him with a Sultan of their own choice.

At lunch Guessous poured out his hatred of El Glaoui. Then at the end of the meal Campbell said, "My experience is that I am as close to God as to the person I am most divided from". There was silence. "I am a good Muslim", said Guessous, "but if I am as close to God as I am to El Glaoui, I have a long way to go."

Back in Morocco, Guessous got in touch with Abdessadeq, El Glaoui's son, whom he already knew. They discussed the critical situation in the country and Guessous suggested that they should meet El Glaoui to try and find some common ground.

A meeting was arranged to which they went together. Guessous opened the dialogue by telling El Glaoui that he regretted all the bitterness he had harboured against him for many years. This honesty and humility touched the old man deeply, and he embraced Guessous.

The Pasha then asked them all to stay to lunch. Guessous, supported by his colleagues and Abdessadeq, presented their plan for national reconciliation based on a reconciliation between El Glaoui and the exiled Sultan Sidi Mohammed Ben Youssef.

That very afternoon El Glaoui was due to present himself before a Council of the Throne, set up by the French. He said, "I identify myself with the will of the Moroccan people for the restoration of the rightful Sulta. Mohammed Ben Youssef and for his immediate return from Madagascar". This became known as 'the Pasha's bombshell', which united the country and paved the way for independence.

Later, accompanied by his son he went to pay homage to the Sultan. He knelt before him and begged his forgiveness. The Sultan declared, "The future is what counts. We are all sons of Morocco and it is on your actions in the future that you will be judged."

In 1956 the Sultan, then King Mohammed V of independent Morocco, sent a message to Buchman: "I thank you for all you have done for Morocco, the Moroccans and myself in the course of these last testing years. Moral Re-Armament must become for us Muslims just as much an incentive as it is for you Christians and for all nations."

A La Carte

Silence is the element in which great things fashion themselves together, that at length they may emerge, full-formed and majestic, into the daylight of life, which they are henceforth to rule.

Maeterlinck



Two things must go together - a deep and passionate hatred of sin, a deep and passionate craving for God.

Begbie

God floods in
when a man is
honest.
Begbie

To get at the core of God at his greatest, one must first get into the core of himself at his least, for no one can know God who has not first known himself.

Eckhart

Prayer cleanses and refreshes the heart, clarifies our inner life, and consequently allows the soul to breathe more easily.

Klaus Bockmuhl

A half truth is
a whole lie.
Yiddish proverb



Whatever is only almost true is quite false, and among the most dangerous of errors, because being so near truth, it is more likely to lead astray.

Beecher

A calling is something God gives. Commitment to that calling, and the level of it, is something we choose.

Dodds

While in a Japanese garden of indescribable beauty, I came to a stream. To get to the other side you had to hop from one stone to the next. The thought came to me of the new stepping stone I needed to move onto in my life. I shared the thought with a friend. Though it remains to be implemented, I feel the decision has improved my view of the further shore.

Andrew Webster



As a tribute to Marie-Claude Borel from Switzerland, who died in October, we print extracts from an interview which she gave with Mattius Freitag, which was published in the very first issue of Freeway.

What does full commitment mean to you?

I heard someone say that where God crosses my will, and I choose God's will, that is commitment. My experience is that once one has done that, one never turns back. Sometimes one has to say to God: "I don't know how to give you my will, but here it is." He never lets you down.

What do you do when you don't feel like going on - or you feel tired?

First, I am honest about it with God, myself and sometimes friends - I do not try to pretend that these things 'ought not to happen',... But I also know by experience that when you take the next step something answers your frustration and your tiredness. And also God has lots of surprises in store for us! His affection is shown in a multitude of details: A friend meeting you, offering help just at the moment, or a joke. Humour and joy are part of God's provision for us!

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DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR THE NEXT ISSUE: January 15th 1990

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FREEWAY is published five times a year - in October, December, February, April and June/July. A new 'volume' begins with the October issue, and is numbered 1 to 5.

Annual subscription price (which is the same for all countries) is £6, US\$10, Swiss Francs 20 - or equivalent in other currencies. Overseas subscribers are asked not to send cheques in any currency other than sterling.

Payment may be made by International Giro to: Girobank account (Postgiro/CCP) number 29206 0807

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