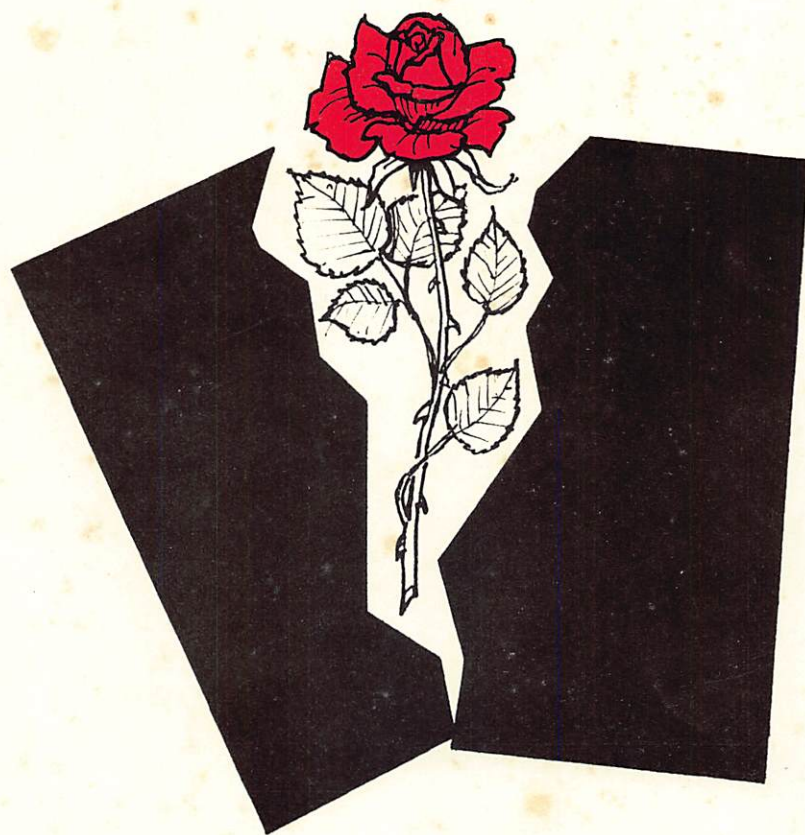


the life of love



freeway special edition

the life of love

In our hearts we are all aware that no amount of talent, achievement or popularity can substitute for love. It is the thing that matters most.

The three of us who have conceived and edited this magazine are not expert practitioners of love in any sense. Some of our friends might even be amused that we should produce a publication on it. Yet we are united by a deep belief which is summed up in a quotation from

St Augustine: 'The good things which you love are all from God, but they are good and sweet only as long as they are used to do his will. They will rightly turn bitter if God is spurned and the things that come from him are loved wrongly.'

Discovering love as a gift of God is what we seek in our own lives. We believe that it holds the key to the loneliness, bitterness and despair which so many experience.

Philip Boobbyer Alan Channer Patrick Turner

Cartoons: Einar Engebretsen

Cover: Einar Engebretsen & W Cameron Johnson

Map: W Cameron Johnson

Centre page photos: David Channer

Layout: Edward Peters & Warren Buckley

contents

IMAGES OF LOVE.....4

Mark Boobbyer looks at how flashy images of love are often presented to us as the real thing.

QUEST FOR INTIMACY.....5

Choice Okoro discovers that intimacy cannot be had on the cheap.

A NEW LIBERTY.....6

William Conner tells of how he found that the 'sex market' was not for him.

IF IT WORKS FOR YOU, IS IT OK?.....7

Philip Boobbyer looks at our society's moral relativism.

A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIMENT.....8

A contributor relates how his years in homosexual practice were 'far from gay'.

MORE THAN DREAMS.....9

Vendela Tyndale-Biscoe tells how she came to accept herself and find a faith in God.

HEART OF FLESH.....10-11

Edward Peters finds that marriage involves self-discovery.

MARRIAGE CAN LAST.....11

Elisabeth Peters answers her daughter's fear that her parents might stop loving each other.

LOVE'S PROMISES.....12-13

A poem by Chris Evans, and some quotations and photographs, explore the central theme that love is God's promise to us.

LIFE'S A BITCH?.....14-15

Jim Sutton tells how he came from contemplating murder to discovering a new purpose in his life.

ANGELIC REPUTATIONS.....16

Susan Faber, a nurse, finds that caring is helping people realise their full potential.

LOVE AND LET GO.....16

Elizabeth Lester, a mother, writes of allowing her children the freedom to make choices.

NEVER LONELY.....17

Alan Knight describes what happened to him after his wife died.

OBSTACLES TO LOVE.....18

Patrick Turner says that love does not involve drawing people to ourselves.

THE FOUR LOVES.....19

A summary of C S Lewis's description of four different sides of love - affection, friendship, eros and charity.

VISIT TO AUSCHWITZ.....20-21

Aniela Stepan goes to Auschwitz and reflects on the meaning of forgiveness.

MERCY IN WAR.....21

Joseph Lagu, former Vice-President of Sudan, takes an unexpected decision.

BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING.....22

Markus Bockmuehl declares that the foundation for all love is that God loves us.

LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS.....23

Alan Channer looks at the start of new life.

images of love

by Mark Boobbyer

'See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness.' This bizarre statement by Christ asserts that what appears as shining light may be pitch darkness. Images of polished unreality can seem to shine brighter than the reality itself, of which they are a copy. And people grab hold of the image, unaware that the brightness is a veneer which will soon wear off.

The biblical name for the Devil is Lucifer, which in Latin means 'the bearer of light'. A strange but clever term because evil is often dressed up in bright wrapping paper, seeming to be a harbinger of light. If the packaging is removed, the contents are shown to be dull and wearisome.

Young people are bombarded from all sides by shiny images of things that purport to be light but which are in fact darkness. This is perhaps most true of 'love'.

Everyone naturally wants to love and be loved, but many are unaware - or unwilling to accept - that real love is often hard and costly. So they grasp hold of one of the readily available images of love, usually bright and glossy, only to find that they have grasped hold of darkness.



Mark Boobbyer is a teacher

The longing of young people for love is exploited by those who specialise in creating false images: including many musicians and filmmakers. Advertisers too know what will sell their products. If you want to sell

coffee, show a man having a late-night cup with his lover, only to be interrupted by an unsuspecting woman who is clearly also his lover. Or if the product is ice-cream, why not have a couple naked in bed? Love, the purest and most transcendent of all emotions, is trampled in the mud.

Pop music nowadays seems almost solely about one thing: broken relationships. Of course there's nothing better than a good love song, but there's an obsession with the pain of love, the pain of infidelity and the promises to be true - next time. Love be-

comes nothing more than sex, a technique to attract people to oneself for momentary satisfaction. If you grow up from the age of five listening to such music, then it will be difficult to convince you that love can keep on growing for a lifetime, or that faithfulness or sexual purity are possible, let alone desirable.

If we cheapen love, if we opt for a shiny substitute, then we can be proficient in every other aspect of human endeavour, but we will gain nothing.





quest for intimacy

Choice Okoro, a former gossip columnist in one of Nigeria's biggest magazines, recently wrote an article entitled 'Sex is not Intimacy' in Nigeria's *Weekly Metropolitan*. 'The current "handshake" attitude of Nigerian women is alarming,' she wrote. 'I am referring to all those females who genuinely feel that going to bed with men is a way of getting them to really love them or of getting them committed. In their quest for intimacy they fall prey to each man who says "I love you", thinking sex would fill the need to be real with someone else. What we all need is intimacy. And this cannot be derived from sex.'

I had a nose for the malicious stories that people love to read - usually sensational items about the rich and famous. I had a knack for exposing people's secrets - I got my stories by 'crawling' exclusive night clubs.

I advocated liberal sexual attitudes and gathered a following of confused young women. My life was not satisfying but I felt it would get better once I reached the top.

Out of curiosity I attended a meeting in Lagos organised by women with a deep religious faith. Intending to spend about an hour there, I ended up staying the whole day. If the ideas discussed had not been so spontaneous, I would have

sworn that I was being got at personally.

For the first time, I began to wonder if I would ever be free. 'Responsibility' took on a new meaning. The issues were so great that I regretted attending the meeting.

Feelings of guilt started disturbing my vision - I saw how my victims felt and did not like what I saw. I decided I could no longer practise my usual journalism and started filling my weekends with more constructive activities than night-clubbing. It was not easy. My editors could not reconcile the new me with the person they used to know. Eventually I realised that I had to resign if I intended to start afresh.

As time went on, I decid-

ed to make a conscious attempt to live straight. I knew that I would never go back to who I was.

Now I have a job as deputy editor of a small newspaper. It used to have a page three nude but I came to realise how derogatory and rude it was to womanhood. Through a persistent struggle, everyone now realises that we don't need it and it has been dropped.

I also have more satisfying friendships. I have started liking the new me after almost a year of self-loathing. I realise that self-worth comes from inside and not necessarily from other people's assessment of you. This, for me, was the first taste of freedom.

I found sex a useful route to popularity. At university one had scope to explore relationships with girls - and the academic demands of pre-war Cambridge were for us no serious limitation on the time available for this.

At university I also became attracted by the sense of purpose in three people I encountered. But I suffered a major shock on discovering that my friends believed that absolute moral standards were important. They talked about 'absolute purity'. No one told me what this might mean, but the idea alone rudely awakened a comfortably dormant conscience. For a time I became violently antagonistic to their ideas. But the whole-heartedness and freedom of those people evoked, despite myself, a



a new liberty

by William Conner

deep response.

The challenge focused for me one evening when several friends in the college rugby club suggested that we

go across to *The Eagle* to chat up the 'fishing fleet' of girls who hung around there. For some reason I said untruthfully that I had to work. On reaching my rooms, which overlooked *The Eagle* whence welcoming sounds floated up, I was plunged into an almost tangible inner conflict.

For two hours I

reasoned and wrestled with the challenge of absolute moral standards and with the arguments for and against accepting them. Eventually by some miracle my mind clarified. I remember clearly the words with which I decided that 'from then on the sex market was not for me'. I stood up strangely integrated; and at that moment was aware of an outraged, devil-like presence in the room - something I never experienced before or since.

Thereafter I found a new liberty with women and unbelievable freedom from the old intrusion of sex. But more important I discovered the willingness to cross a deep area of the will, and the creative and outreaching sublimation that results. And I began to find that when the 'crossing' of the will is done in the light of the Cross, the possibilities go far beyond human limitations.

William Conner is a Middle East specialist

"All my life I have worshipped beauty, and this is no doubt why I have often idealised attractive women.... But in all my passing affairs the main thing was always lacking - love. And therefore, though having no desire to harm them and even sincerely endeavouring to bring happiness to my female companions, I usually caused them only grief and suffering in the end." **Dimitri Panin**

if it works for you, is it OK?

by Philip Boobbyer



If it works for you, it's OK' is one of the world's prevailing moral ideas. This philosophy is part of a cultural and moral relativism which deifies freedom of choice, but refuses to make any serious stand over the quality of choices available. It belongs in a climate where public and private morality are strictly separated: it doesn't matter how you live as long as you don't harm anybody else. Private lifestyles become a matter of taste.

There is something deeply wrong with this whole approach. Yes, it is vital that people make their own choices. But it is wrong to think it doesn't matter what we choose. That can be a kind of indifference. Moral relativism has surely led to a deep crisis in our society. The moral dilemmas of euthanasia, AIDS and abortion are in a sense dilemmas of love. Mother Teresa says she has never encountered such loneliness as in the West. In Britain more than a third of marriages break up. Films, plays and papers often present the failure of love.

We must face that while we have to some extent mastered nature, we have not mastered the subject which is closest to our hearts: love. Technological mastery and wealth creation have not brought the triumph of love, peace and joy.

Another common idea is that our human nature is purely a product of our social and

economic environment: human nature is 'plastic', there is no constant. The difficulty with this is that it abolishes the idea of normality. What is normal comes to depend on one's situation.

Maybe the answer to the problem of love is a return to a religious view of man, where human nature is created by God and operates by certain laws. While man's social context is always changing, human nature remains basically the same.

Our world's despairing search for love demands that we accept certain truths: in particular the idea that love needs a moral framework. Love has its own disciplines.

A list of the qualities which would make up this moral framework might include the

following: honesty; the readiness to be vulnerable; purity of motive and action; fidelity; humility; a desire for the growth and development of the other person; a willingness to admit one's weaknesses and mistakes.

It is not a question of limiting love

through moral obligations, but of appreciating that we are not angels, and that we need a soil where love can genuinely flourish.



*Philip Boobbyer teaches
Russian history*

an experiment which altered my life

Fear
is the
obverse
of love.
I have
learned
to live
without
fear.

Homosexuality carried a stigma in my generation. If like me you were involved in it, you were dominated by fear - of being an outcast or losing your job. The mores of society change, and today's world has taught us to eliminate some of that fear. In some countries, you can read your own newspaper, frequent your own bar or night-club, even attend your own church where the one officiating is 'one of us'. But fear has not been eliminated. Today it is the fear of AIDS or loneliness.

Fear is the obverse of love: 'There is no fear in love,' said John the Apostle in his first letter. 'Perfect love casts out fear.'

A certain friend, 'K', and I were researchers in a big engineering firm. Apart from that we couldn't have been more different: he was a Methodist local preacher, I a propagating atheist. He lent me an intriguing book. It declared that anyone could participate in creating a better society. It was clear to me that the world had gone mad and was likely soon to blow itself up. I wondered if the 'anyone' could include potential outcasts like me.

I asked K how I could be involved in this. He replied: 'I take time in quiet each morning to listen to the voice of God.' 'Fine for you,' I reacted, 'but impossible for me, since God doesn't exist.' K declared: 'I guarantee that if you listen, God will speak to you. If you take your science seriously, put my statement to the test.'

Annoyed that anyone should question my 'scientific integrity', I agreed to the experiment for a month. K suggested that I test the thoughts of my daily 'quiet time'

against four moral standards taken from the gospels: absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love - values which I could readily accept as keys to a healthy society. It was an experiment which altered my whole life.

K had also let slip a few words which went into me like an arrow: 'I have learned to live without fear.' I said to myself: 'That is the life I want.' And that is what I found, not only to be rid of fear and of the drive which had taken me over, but to find a part in helping others; to discover insights and compassion for those, in situations like mine, who might also find a deeper direction.

My experience has led me to reject the view, 'What does it matter: some take their sex one way, some another.' For one thing my years in homosexual practice were far from 'gay'. I found myself possessed by forces so strong that they could destroy every loyalty: to family, profession, friends. My passion to attack and try to destroy faith wherever I saw it was totally irrational.

I also reject the 'anti' mentality. I have heard the nicest people say: 'These things disgust me; I don't want to touch them.' Thank God that wasn't K's view. I remember the private hell I lived in, and the joy of being released both from the drive and the fears.

What I needed - and got - was something different: someone who knew that, in God, there is a force big enough to liberate. Someone who believed that I could find a part in building a better world.

The author wishes to remain anonymous

I used to live in a dream, where I had my dream boyfriend who always loved me. He was good-looking, well-dressed and successful. We would always be together. I thought that if I became successful and good-looking myself, I could then get this dream-boyfriend. So I tried to achieve success and I tested all the attractive men who came my way. Each time I wondered, 'Is this the right one?' I paid dearly, with all of me, for each test. I got hurt as the boyfriends disappointed me or betrayed me. In the end I was totally broken-hearted. I felt used up, and without confidence in myself.

Later I did find an amazing love and care from people with a deep faith, at a conference organised by Moral Re-Armament in Switzerland. For them I mattered, whatever the identity given by my career. This was a new discovery - that my fought-for title 'actress', my success-stamp, meant nothing - but that I was still someone anyway.



by Vendela
Tyndale-Biscoe

more than dreams



Facing the reality about myself and the price I had paid to reach the love that I had dreamed of, made me decide to stop trying to be loved. I also felt a promise from God, whom I was beginning to rediscover, that if I handed over my life to him, I would receive his love

like flowing, living water. Since then love, his love, has sustained me through sorrow and happiness and disappointment. I can always come to him with everything - and he is there.

Vendela Tyndale-Biscoe is a Swedish actress

'At long last I loved You, Beauty so ancient and so new; I loved You at long last. You were within, and I was looking for You without. My unlovely self rushed after the lovely things You had made. You were with me, and I was not with You. You called and shouted and burst through my deafness. You shone in splendour and cleared away my blindness. At Your fragrance I drew my breath.'

St Augustine

Making love. What a strange notion. Love isn't made in bed - indeed it can't be made at all. It's only a gift that can be received and given.

Receiving can sometimes be harder than giving, especially when one feels unworthy of the gift.

For many years I had been troubled by my difficulty in getting close to other people. Something inside me kept others at arm's length. One day, in a time of quiet reflection, I suddenly and unexpectedly saw a clear picture of myself at the age of 13: a timid adolescent thrown into an academic stream with older boys, who were emotionally much stronger than I was. It had been a time of great insecurity: teasing and bullying, even physical abuse, came my way. My feelings of inferiority had been confirmed: I was odd and unlovable.

To this painful memory was added the revelation that - wholly unconsciously - I had closed myself up, built a protective wall around me. Small and vulnerable as I felt, I had resolved never again to allow anyone close enough to cause me further pain. This involuntary decision, of which I had been unaware until this moment, had affected all my relationships - but in particular that with my mother and father. As an only child, I knew that they loved me. But I had kept even them at a distance. I felt the tears of sorrow streaming down my face.

Suddenly I felt a voice inside saying: 'I love you. You don't have to be worthy. I love you just as you are.' I began to glimpse the simple majesty of God's love, something given freely to each one of us regardless of whether we deserve it or not.

Because I had refused to receive love, I had been unable to give it. Acceptance that I was loved began the lifelong journey from a 'heart of stone' to a 'heart of flesh'.

searching for a 'heart of flesh'

by Edward Peters

It was only a few months after this experience that I proposed to Elisabeth. To my surprise she accepted, and there followed those heady days of cloud-nine love experienced by all who fall therein. Yet beneath those ample feelings - strong,

rich, exciting - there lay a deeper foundation: the belief that it was God and not only our feelings which had brought us together.

Early on in our engagement we went to our first Holy Communion service together. During one of the hymns I noticed that Elisabeth was crying; I instinctively knew it was because she was deeply moved by God's presence in the words of the hymn.

Suddenly an uncomfortable question popped into my mind: 'Am I happy for her to love God more than me?' We went up to the altar to take communion, but when it came to our turn there was only space for one more person. Without



hesitation Elisabeth continued without me. I was furious. How could she do that when the whole point of coming to church was so that we could take communion *together*?

I stormed out of church and paced around the neighbourhood, struggling angrily with this question, 'Am I ready to take second place in her life?' It was tough, but I believed deep down that the best chance for our marriage was if God was at the very heart of it. After a long while I returned to the church, now deserted, knelt down at the altar and promised God that I would always put him first.

It was a simple decision in a way, yet one I have looked back on as crucial. We have discovered that, mysterious as it seems, when God comes between us we are in fact closer to each other than when he does not.

Edward Peters, an editor of 'For A Change' magazine, and his Swedish wife Elisabeth, live in Oxford



marriage can last

by Elisabeth Peters

'Mamma, I'm so afraid that you and Daddy are going to stop loving each other, and split up and leave me.'

It is bed time and our six-year-old ought to be asleep; but this is when the real things come out, and I know it is time to listen. My daughter's friend has just left school because her father has walked out, and

mother has taken the children home to the other side of the world. How can I reassure Karin that this won't happen to her? What has our love got that will guarantee our children a secure home?

It is one of the greatest human experiences to have one's love answered. What meant most to me when Ed-

ward proposed was that he told me he loved me. But what gave me the reassurance that our union would be for life was that he and I both believed that our love was a gift from God. I think of our engagement day as the day when we promised each other to stick together for life. But it was on our wedding day in church, when we publicly made the same commitment before God, that our love became sanctified by a holy promise.

That is the answer I gave Karin. Just as we expect our children to obey us, who love them, so they too need to know that we are obedient to the God who loves us.

Since the beginning of the world,
eye has not seen nor ear heard the
things that God has prepared for
those that love him.

love's p



If she does,
The road ahead will broaden, firm
Each step ahead,
Like a well placed cat's-eye in C
Comes into view as needed.
With her the verges spring to life
No ditch so splattered, hedge so
But that takes on some new joy
By her presence.
Together we'll thank the God who
The God who brought us together
And together will tread His road.

If she doesn't,
I'll try to do the same
Despite her absence.

Chris

For some 200 y
overcome socia
ally by secular
saving power, t

I still think the greatest suffering is being lonely, feeling unloved, just having no one. I have come more and more to realise that it is being unwanted that is the worst disease that any human being can ever experience. Nowadays we have found medicine for leprosy and lepers can be cured. There's medicine for TB and consumptives can be cured. For all kinds of diseases there are medicines, and cures, but for being unwanted, except where there are willing hands to serve and there's a loving heart to love, I don't think this terrible disease can ever be cured.

Mother Teresa

**The Lord has sent me to bind up the
broken-hearted, to free those who are
bound and comfort those who mourn
and give a garment of splendour
for the spirit of heaviness.**

romises

If you had listened to my commandments your peace would have been like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

and free.

d's plan,

stale
and interest

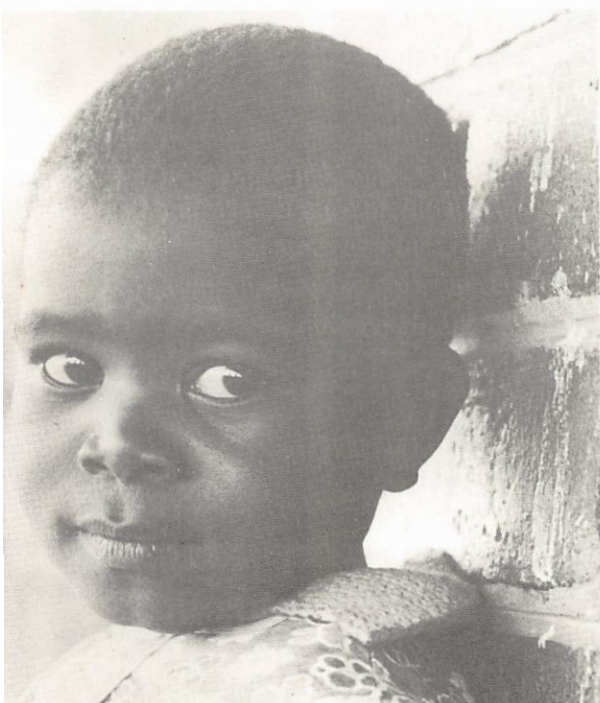
madous,

Evans



ars mankind has been vainly struggling to
wrongs and to organise life justly and ration-
means alone, forgetting the only healing and
e power of love.

Semyon Frank



The spectrum of love has nine ingredients: patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, sincerity.... Get these ingredients into your life, then everything that you do is eternal. It is worth doing, it is worth giving time to. No man can become a saint in his sleep; and to fulfil the condition required demands a certain amount of prayer and meditation and time.... Address yourself to that one thing; at any cost have this transcendent character exchanged for yours.

Henry Drummond

four corner quotations from Isaiah

**The Lord waits to be gracious unto you.
Your ears will hear a word behind you
saying, 'This is the way: walk ye in it.'**

'Most people live lives of quiet desperation.' These words from a film hit me hard. I had made a mess of things in almost every area of my life. My wife had turned to drink; my children left home at the first opportunity. And I felt stretched to the limit every minute of every day. Desperation and I were old companions. I couldn't begin to understand what life was all about. I saw a sticker on the back of a car in Gibraltar one day. It said: 'Life's a bitch, and then you die.' That about summed it up.

Looking back now I see that the chaos in my life was caused by my selfishness. I had searched for years to find peace and satisfaction. But I had always put myself first: how does this suit *me*? Where do *I* benefit? Only when I had an answer to these questions would I think

of anyone else. Everyone around me suffered.

My wife knew all about my selfishness. She spent her whole life trying to ensure that nothing happened to displease me: that the children stayed quiet or out of the way if I was tired or angry or depressed. And since I always seemed to be in one of those states, you can imagine how unhappy she was most of the time.

Seen today, it is obvious that I had to change if things were to get better. But in those days I couldn't even identify the problem, let alone solve it. Everything that went wrong in my life I blamed on someone else. I had to be taken to the

brink of disaster before recognising the need to change direction. It took many years and far more hurt and heartache than I care to relate. But when the change took place, it happened with remarkable speed.

After I retired from the RAF every-

life's a bitch and then you die

by Jim

thing seemed to go well. I found a secure job where my skills were appreciated, and we owned a comfortable home. But I was bored speechless. Soon our marriage was heading for another all-time low. And the thought that there was nothing more to life than 'this' was crushing.

My job used to take me abroad. On one trip I got involved with another woman and an affair developed. It didn't last long nor did it produce the elusive 'happiness' that always seemed just beyond my reach. But of course it made my wife even more unhappy. At that point I don't believe either of us thought that life was worth living.

But somehow we managed to patch things up and set out for Spain to start a new life. Things couldn't possibly get any worse, could they? Indeed they could!

We met up with an old friend in Gibraltar, a businessman with whom I went into partnership. Too quickly and very foolishly I invested a lot of money in this venture - more



bitch you live

Sutton

money than I could afford to lose. A classic mistake. Very soon things started to go wrong. I began to question some of my friend's business decisions and his pride couldn't stand it. We agreed a date on which I should recover my investment. The date came, and of course, just as I had feared, I didn't get my money back.

The lies and broken promises continued and I felt bloody about it. I felt deceived, cheated. I saw the world through a red haze of rage. Worst of all I felt powerless and foolish. I began to plot dire revenge.

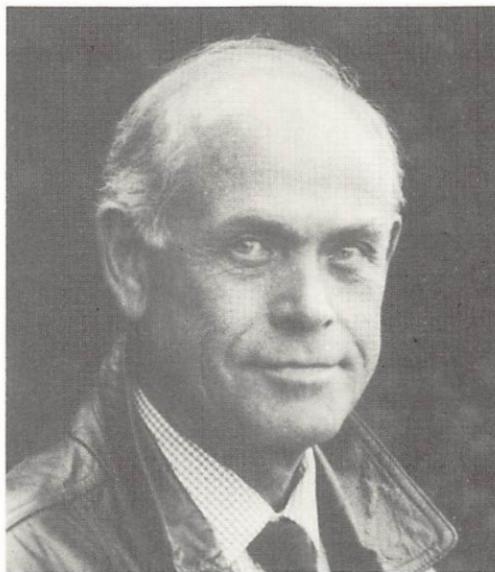
One of the tricks you learn in the trade which I have followed most of my life is how to kill people. I began seriously to think about it. I had murder on my mind.

Happily we were staying at the time with some friends who were Christians. I happened on a book which had a story about a Lutheran minister's hatred for some people who had wronged him. His bitterness made him so ill that he was no longer able to work. One day in a little chapel

he heard a woman preach about the sacrifice of atonement which Jesus made on the Cross. The minister had himself preached about it on numerous occasions. But this time he was hearing the story when he himself

needed it most. It changed his life. He decided to write to those who had wronged him and apologise for his hatred. With the apology all his negative emotions melted away.

This story seemed to mirror my own situation. I began to wonder, 'Could this possibly work for me?' I pondered it for



a while and then said to my wife, 'I think we should go to these people and apologise for the way we've been feeling towards them.' She thought I was crazy.

I gave her the book, and she read the story. We talked about

it and for the first time for many years I prayed. Together my wife and I decided, with God's help, to make the experiment. It was perhaps the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. But it worked, just as it had for that Lutheran minister all those years ago. My anger evaporated. And having asked for forgiveness, I found I was able to forgive.

That was the beginning, the turning point. I had changed, and for the first time was able to admit that my business partner had not been entirely to blame. I became willing to see his side of the coin. I felt so different that I thought, 'There must be more to this Christianity than meets the eye!'

I decided to do some more reading, and as a result I found a firm faith. I discovered that the change in my life was because I had unwittingly followed a principle given to us by Christ himself: 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even "sinners" love those who love them. Forgive and you will be forgiven.'

These words of Jesus are for me some of the most precious ever written. As long as I was totally self-centred, my life was continually in crisis. It is only since I learned the painful lesson recounted here - since I've been trying to live a Christ-centred life - that things have been coming together.



angelic reputations

by Susan Faber

Some will always be more lovable than others - and nurses, in spite of their angelic reputation, do not always find it easy to love their patients. Yet nursing helps you to get over that. For you are allocated to look after a group, or you are running a ward; and it is your professional duty to care for each one - natural affinity or not.

Nursing teaches you to see each person as a whole: someone with physical, social, psychological and spiritual needs. Nursing is

a very human form of love - not an emotional or intellectual concept, but a day-to-day hands-on care for individuals at their most vulnerable. You see people at their worst and best.

Caring is helping a person to achieve their full potential. This may or may not mean my involvement, because it puts the interests of the other first. In nursing we work towards a



love and let go

Elizabeth Lester is a mother of two from West London. We would not have missed our sons' upbringing for anything. We have learned so much from them. So it is with a jolt that I realise that soon our older son

will leave for university - away from the family to develop his own interests and path in life.

This is a pain that is as old as creation - every parent goes through it. Love is not without pain, because real love has to be ready to let go. The moment of letting go is painful because it is the beginning of a new and unknown era - both for the child and the parent.

Yet perhaps in this step there can also be found the joy

of new discovery, new life. Nothing is broken - in fact our family life can become strengthened and extended.



person's independence from our care - an invaluable lesson to learn.

Care must come from a certain strength and peace within yourself, or you will not find yourself seeing others clearly. And that strength comes with time - and discipline.

You cannot love and flatter your ego at the same time. When I act without love, it is usually because I have been self-absorbed - or am too tired or stressed, as sadly we often can be on the wards.

Still, I find it easier to care on a ward than in an office, say, or in everyday life, because one's heart naturally goes out to those who are suffering, dying or grieving. Every day I am conscious of not acting with enough love. Life is growth towards fullness and wholeness. I am growing - in humility as I see how little I really love, and in determination to learn to love.

I begin to understand the experience of my own parents who had five children - letting us go, watching us stumble, falter and having to work things out. Perhaps also I can understand a bit more of God's love for His son, when He gave Him to the world for our sake, and of His great love for each of us that leaves us free to choose.

never lonely

Colonel Alan Knight met his wife Maude at a tennis club which overlooks Kenya's famous lake of flamingos. After 48 years of married life in Africa, Maude died. Alan recalls how he felt:

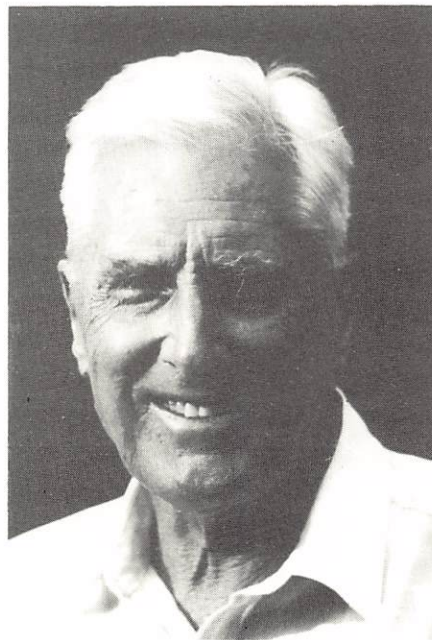
I was lonely. I wondered whether there was anything worthwhile still to do in life. I thought I should sell my house. What could I do alone, one old man in a big house?

Then I read, in a book I had been given, 'If your heart breaks through sorrow, it breaks open. And if it breaks open, then there is room in it for God and for other people; for compassion and love.'

The thought came to me, 'If you will fill your heart with people, you will never be lonely. I will keep you busy until the day you die.' Since then I have been included in other people's extended families, and a constant stream of people have been coming to stay.

When you seriously start to care for people, loneliness goes out the window. Memories of Maude have now become a source of strength to help other people.

If your
heart
breaks
open
there is
room.



obstacles to love

by Patrick Turner

Ask a married couple about the obstacles to love and their answers might include: 'The smell of that takeaway he brings home on Wednesday night'; 'the toenail clippings she leaves on the bedroom carpet'; 'watching the *whole* of the 75-lap Grand Prix on television'.

But there are obstacles of a more fundamental nature. In fact there are probably as many obstacles as there are people. The following comments flow from my own experience, though I do not claim always to have observed my own remedies!



Patrick Turner is a British civil servant working in Brussels

Some obstacles can flow from the desire to control another person. Sometimes what we call a desire to 'help' or 'take responsibility' for someone else is really a desire to play God in their life: to direct, to instruct, to control, to compel imitation of ourselves (which persuades us we're not so bad after all), and ultimately, perhaps, to grab what we want from that person.

Trying to sort out somebody else's problems can seem kind, but when the objective is to draw them to us rather than allow God to draw them to Him, then we are offering a poor kind of help.

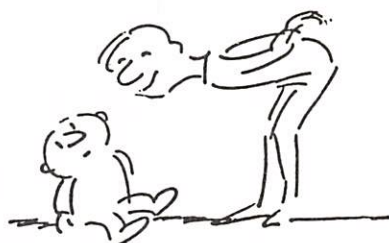
The Dalai Lama spoke recently of the need for 'compassion without attachment'. That expresses it well - because the harder we grasp at somebody else, the more likely we are to corrupt the 'loved one'. The same applies to all good things: the more there is that element of demand or lust, the more the good things will turn to ashes before our eyes.

The obverse of a lust to control and direct other people is the craving for them to direct or control us. We look for somebody to take our cue from; we move on from imitating one idol or hero to another; or accept ideals fully-formed from parents, friends, media or popular culture figures. We crave approval. We are desperate to please but all too rarely seek God's approval or pleasure, which alone gives lasting satisfaction. Thinking it out for ourselves is more difficult - we may have to stand alone and blunder in a bewildering mental or spiritual darkness, with God as our only guide.

Probably the most effective antidote to our ability to love others is the concern with self, and all those preoccupations and habits which lead to self-absorption. Ultimately it is almost always shortcomings in our relationship with God that underlie our incapacity to love. We refuse to wait on him; to let him offer us, in his time, the good things he intends for us. We are impatient, and have to grab, to mould, to force. We think we can shape at least as good a future for ourselves as he ever could. But the time taken to unravel the consequences of not waiting (if we ever manage it at all) can be so much greater than the time he asks us just to wait in readiness.

When God calls, we must be ready. That means always listening for the call, and staying prepared to respond. We need to be constantly ready to change, to learn new things. The desire to remain the same, to keep others (and our relationships with them) the same is destructive and is opposed to God's boundless creativity and newness. But newness hurts: others will misunderstand us, not want us to move on, crave for us to share in a cynical, jaded and pessimistic view of things to accompany them in their 'oldness'. But waiting on God, obedience when He calls, and a constant willingness to be made new are keys to our lives and their purpose - love.

Affection Affection is the humblest and most widely diffused of loves. It is Affection which creates a truly wide taste in humanity, which will find something to appreciate in the cross-section of humanity which one has to meet every day. It teaches



us first to notice, then to endure, then to smile and enjoy, and finally to appreciate, the people who happen 'to be there'.



Friendship In friendship (which C.S. Lewis regards as relatively rare), 'Do you love me?' means 'Do you see

Charity Natural loves are always directed to objects which the lover finds in some way intrinsically lovable - objects to which Affection or Eros or a shared point of view attracts him, or, failing that, to the grateful and deserving. But Divine love [Charity]

in the person enables him to love what is not naturally lovable: lepers, criminals, enemies, morons, the sulky, the superior and the sneering. Finally, God enables people to have love towards himself.... All the activities (sins only accepted) of the natural loves can in a favoured hour become works of Charity, but natural loves can hope for eternity only in so far as they have allowed themselves to be taken into the eternity of Charity.



The Four Loves

In this issue we have used the word 'love' to refer to everything from divine love to sexual love. In his book *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis analyses three 'natural' loves and one 'divine' love, which he terms Affection, Friendship, Eros and Charity. Here are some of his conclusions.

the same truth?' or at least 'Do you care about the same truth?' Though we can have erotic love and friendship for the same person, in some ways nothing is less like a friendship than a love affair. Lovers are always talking to one another about their love; friends hardly ever about their Friendship.

Eros

Eros is that state which we call 'being in love'. Very often what comes first is

simply a delighted preoccupation with the Beloved - a general, unspecified preoccupation with the person in their totality. It plants the interests of another at the centre of our being. Eros enters like an invader, taking over and reorganising, one by one, the institutions of a conquered country. It may have taken over many others before it reaches the sex in a person; and it will reorganise that too.



Arkhangelsk to Auschwitz



My ancestors lost everything in the uprisings against Russia in 1863, and were deported to Siberia. When in 1918 Poland became free again, my family settled in the eastern part of the country, and I was born there in 1924. Initially the family lived in shelters left from the First World War. We were quite a large family: three brothers and two sisters.

At the start of World War Two, Poland was attacked again and our half of the country was taken by the Soviet Union. My family was arrested by the Soviet secret police in February 1940. They put us into a train and each family had the right to half of one shelf in a carriage. There were no toilet facilities, so my father cut a hole in the floor.

We were transported to northern Russia and settled in barracks in the Arkhangelsk region. Our daily work was logging. Without cutting a certain amount of timber, you would not get the 200 grams daily ration of bread. I was almost never able to manage it. Fortunately my father and elder brother were clever and so as a team we managed to reach the norm. Our diet was bread, tea and fish soup. Lack of vitamins produced signs of blindness in my father; I had ulcers on my legs.

Before the war, my father had employed Ukrainian workers on his farm. Imagine our surprise: it had



been Ukrainians who had brought the secret police to arrest us in 1940. And yet, other Ukrainians were very upset and sent

us food parcels; and but for the help of these

poor people we would not have survived. Every nation has its good and bad.

In late 1941 we were taken to Asiatic Russia. We picked cotton. The family was separated, although we all survived. I fell ill and left for Persia via the Caspian Sea.

by Aniela Stepan

I was sent to a Polish school in Palestine. I met and married my husband Olgierd in Beirut, where I also read history at the American University. We moved to England in 1950 and had four children.

Our marriage went through a difficult period. It was very painful. My faith always brought me through. And our marriage survived.

In 1965 our son Kazik developed cancer and bronchial pneumonia. He couldn't walk or see, but he wanted to live. At such moments, when you have absolutely nothing within yourself but faith, you can cry: 'My God, you are the Father, help me, I am helpless.' I have been through these moments. Miraculously, during a pilgrimage to Lourdes, our son fully recovered.

Two years ago I went back to Poland for the first time in 50 years. During the visit, I went for a day to Auschwitz. It was a kind of pilgrimage and it affected me profoundly.

In the camp we started by looking at the rows of photographs. 80 per cent were young people. I wasn't myself exactly. Evil was getting into me. Suddenly, I was so grateful to God for our deportation to Russia.

In the crematorium, where bodies had been

placed in line and pushed into the oven to burn, I thought I was going to be sick. Outside the death cells, I saw the wall where people were shot, and the place of the public gallows. It was enough for me. Although I had never hated in my life, I felt real hatred, and cried: 'My God, how could you let people like this suffer? Where have you been?' I was lost. Complete darkness.

Then I became frightened. 'My God, help me. You can't leave me alone here with these feelings.' I started to shout: 'Christ, help me.' At the moment of my utter despair - maybe I imagine it, I don't know - I saw Christ's outstretched hands on the Cross and heard his words: 'Look, I died on the Cross for love, and what about your love, where is your love? I died from love, I died for

them, and what about you? I saved you and where is your love?'

I answered: 'Yes I want to be yours.' And suddenly I could feel that my hatred was dying down, and it was as if clean, clear waters were falling on my head.

Whenever I look back, I think: 'When you cry with your heart, God always listens. He will come.' In my utter desolation, he came to help me. All my life, that has been my experience.

It is necessary to forgive, otherwise you won't be a new-born person. I can forgive only because God helps me. God speaks to each one of us in a different way. God - he is the Creator of each of us, and he knows the way. You have to ask, to cry, to shout. And he always answers.

mercy in war

Civil conflict erupted in Sudan shortly before its independence in 1956. One Sudanese who took to arms was Joseph Lagu. In 1967 he became leader of the rebel movement fighting the government.

In December 1971 an airliner carrying civilians loyal to the government crash-landed in territory held by Lagu's guerrillas. A message was sent to his headquarters asking if the 29 surviving passengers should be killed or held hostage. Lagu recalls his decision:

I thought about it in the night. What should I do? I thought, 'Will I ever be forgiven if I take the lives of these people who are now at my mercy'? After all, I could have been in their position - just an innocent traveller on that plane.

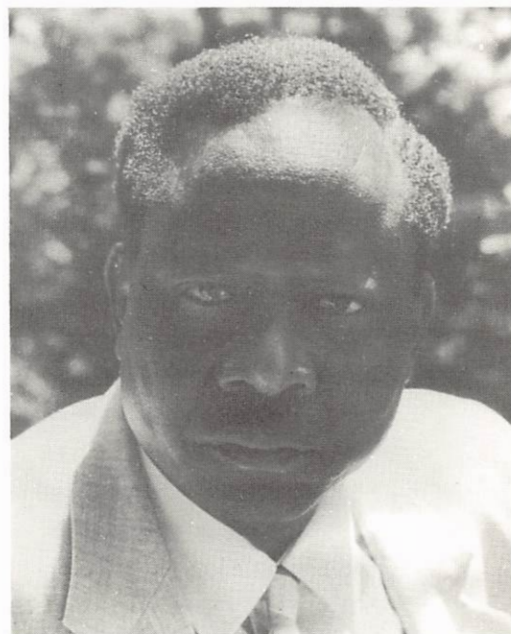
I remembered the compassion Christ had on the multitude, and automatically I felt some sympathy for those people. So I put aside whatever anger I had because they were from the enemy side. Then another thought came: 'Release them'.

Sometimes in the coolness of the night a

thought comes to you that may be the guidance of God. So in the morning I just said, 'Gentlemen, I have taken the decision. We shall release these people.' A few soldiers tried to murmur, but I said, 'If you want me to continue as your leader then you better accept this.' They consented and we let them go.

The government never expected us to do that, and the victims of the plane-crash became our ambassadors with our enemies. The government could never be believed if they again described us as savages. The government was embarrassed, and possibly because of that they asked for peace talks.

In 1972 negotiations led to a peace accord which gave Sudan its only peaceful decade since independence. Joseph Lagu was a co-signatory of the accord. He became Inspector-General of the Sudanese Armed Forces and later Vice-President of the whole country.



begin at the beginning

We cannot know love until we have been loved. A mother's affection, the devotion of a lover, the care of a friend: all this can only be experienced. But where can we learn love when in reality too many find that parents have hurt them, lovers have spurned them, friends have not been there at a time of need?

'Love is not love,' wrote Shakespeare, 'which alters when it alteration finds.' Yet that kind of shallow experience is all that many of us know and see around us. To begin with, the vision of a secure, idyllic home; a fantasy of lifelong romantic bliss; an ideal of undying soul friendship. In the end, broken trust, empty promises, or simply drifting apart in the maelstrom of life. 'I don't love you any more.'

It seems that love is an alien, uneasy concept to us. Even the biologists tell us that selfishness is what naturally drives human beings: self-giving love is genetically unnatural, something supposedly artificial. 'What's love got to do with it,' sang Tina Turner a few years ago: 'What's love but a second-

hand emotion.'

The good news of Jesus Christ neither begins nor ends here. Its understanding of love originates not with a human emotion but with the very character of the Creator. 'God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.' (1 John 4.9f)

by Markus Bockmuehl

This is the only realistic starting-point. Begin at the beginning. We cannot learn to love unselfishly till we know that God loves us. If indeed real love does not reside in us as a native talent, then in our desire for it we must turn to God, again and again, to be embraced and filled with his love.

God's love for us is not the love of some celestial mother or lover, but it is the very definition of love, from which all human love derives its meaning and importance. Can a lover desert his beloved? Yes, this can and does

happen, for human love is imperfect; but God has demonstrated his irreversible love for us in Jesus Christ. 'Can a woman forget her nursing child,' God asks the prophet Isaiah, 'or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.' (Isaiah 49.15)

Christian love, then, begins with him who first loved us. God has not only created us but loved us. Here lies the world's most radical and yet simple idea: no one is inferior because God loves what he has made. And, as one inner-city teenager put it, 'God don't make junk.' The Cross of Jesus is the graphic demonstration of God's self-giving love, forgiveness and acceptance of us as he has made us - even if there are things he does not like in us and which he wants to purify and beautify for use in his work of healing people.

Secure in that relationship, we can learn and grow in our love for people. We will be able to grant our trust to others, because God is trustworthy and has trusted us. We will patiently hope for them, because God's promise to us is a sure hope, ever worth waiting for. And we will love even the unlovely, because of how God in Christ has reached out to us.



Markus Bockmuehl, from Canada, lectures in theology at Cambridge University

Perhaps love is just a pleasant thing to believe in: a nice, warm feeling. So we pretend this feeling binds us to other people; even that it is the force behind the universe! We fill our lives with individuals and things we like, hoping we'll never encounter the abyss at the other side of existence; hoping that fear or grief or emptiness will never loom out of the darkness.

'I love ice-cream,' 'I want to love you,' become the veneer of our lives, and we hope the veneer will be enough. Sometimes it is. But don't look closely.

And sometimes the veneer is smashed - by the death of the beloved, by betrayal, when a life-long dream is broken. 'I've looked at love from all sides now,' sang Joni Mitchell, 'and it's love's illusions that I recall - I really don't know love at all.'

'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.' Blessed, perhaps, are they whose treasure is stolen by thieves or consumed by rust, for they are reminded that the things we love are not ours by right, but gifts from God.

In this light, suffering can be seen as a blessing: it shows where we are too closely-bound to the created world, rather than inclining to what lies beyond it. We can become grateful for this aspect of suffering in the same way that an enemy can be loved. And amazingly, in that quality of love, both enmity and suffering dissolve.

When love meets suffering we come to understand love for the first time - not merely as a liking for ice-cream or a person, but as an invincible power - the power of God.

How do we make such love the engine of our lives, rather than an emotion which sweeps us away and then dissipates? There are two golden ways: silence and service.

Both help to disengage our fallen nature from that deeper aspect which is the image of God within us. 'Will not a speck close to the vision blot out the beauty of the world?' asked George Eliot in *Middlemarch*. 'There is no speck so troublesome as self.'

When we are silent we can begin to see through the stupidity of our selfishness; to clear out the dross; and then the inner world starts to shine. All of life's incidents become privileges eliciting gratitude. 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God'; they shall know love.

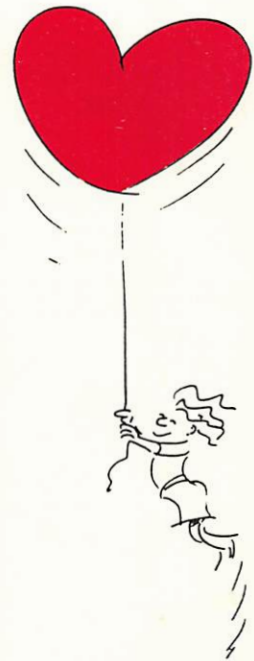
How then do we love others? Morality offers us guidance: we refrain from killing, lying, stealing and the misuse of sex. But love goes further. Through inspiring acts of compassionate service it liberates others and ourselves from self-centredness, drawing us towards God.

Ultimately, as Augustine observed, you 'love and do what you will'. Therein lies the challenge and the excitement. Love invites us, in the words of the monk Thomas Merton, 'to forget ourselves, cast our awful solemnity to the wind and join in the general dance.' Love invites us to life in all its fullness.

Alan Channer is a biologist and journalist

life in all its fullness

by Alan Channer



Suppose a man should make a ring for his fiancée, and she should love the ring more than the man who made it.... What would he think if she should say, 'The ring is enough; I do not want to see his face again?'

God's gifts are beautiful, but greater is the beauty of him who formed them. You are not to set your affection on his gifts as your supreme happiness. Their maker wants to give you an even greater gift - himself.

St Augustine



Vol 6, No 5 July 1992

Price: £1.50

Extra copies can be ordered from: Freeway, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF, UK
or from Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, UK.

Bulk orders of 10 or more copies should be addressed to Grosvenor Books.

Special rates: 5 copies - £1 each; 10 copies - 90 pence each;
50 copies - 80 pence each; 100+ copies - 70 pence each.