

Abseiling into the unknown



by Brian Lightowler

photo: Laurent Petr Les Aiguilles des Drus, Chamonix, France

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Preface

You could say, "Life is about 'abseiling into the unknown'". And it is not only climbers who "abseil into the unknown". In different ways we all do or will do. The thing to watch is that our rope reaches the ledge below so that we are not left hanging in space!

So to carry the metaphor further this book is not a memoir or autobiography but is my experience of "abseiling into the unknown" through incidents I encountered and people I met that have had a lasting impact.

Brian Lightowler October 2009

Incidents in life

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In gratitude for the warm
welcome of my Australian family

BL

Incident 1

Into the unknown by abseil



Grand Dru East Face photo: Giani

My climbing partner said, "You see that cloud over there. There is going to be a storm. We need to get off this mountain in thirty minutes."

We were standing on the summit of the Grand Dru in the Mont Blanc chain with sheer

precipices all around. "We are going to have to abseil down before things ice up." "I have never abseiled before," I said. "I'll show you," he replied. "You'll go first and I will hold you on the rope for the first pitch." He quickly showed me what to do and how to avoid falling out of the loop of the rope, which ran between my legs and over my left shoulder. "Hold the rope below with your right hand and you can't fall out." In those days there were no harness or clips: you simply sat on rope with your feet against the precipice wall and walked down the rock face in a series of jumps.

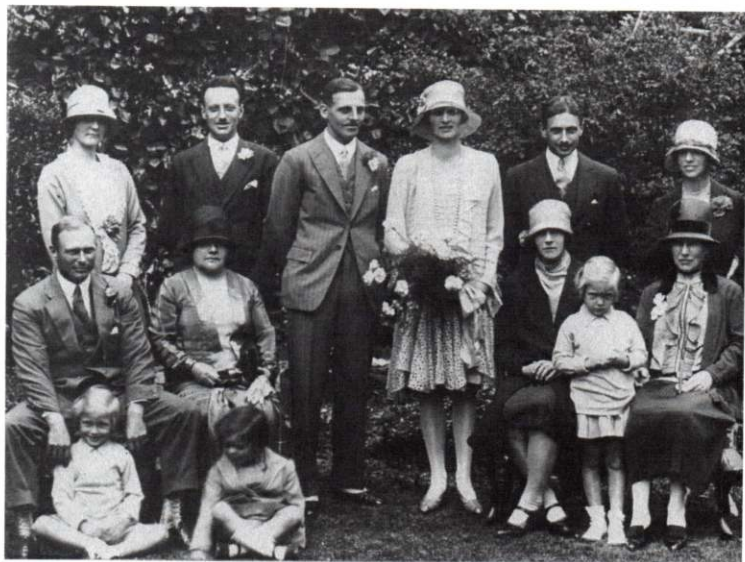
So looping the abseil rope round a statue of the Virgin Mary, fixed on the mountain summit, he tossed the two ends down the precipice ensuring that they landed on a ledge and were not hanging in space! Then said, "You go. I'll hold you on this second rope." I soon got the hang of it. Once we were both on the ledge we then pulled the rope free from the summit statue and looping it round a spur of rock started the second pitch. I did not now need the security rope. Repeating this in quick succession we got to within seventy feet of the bottom of the 1300 feet precipice when it began snowing. We got off the mountain and on to the glacier just in time.

I was 18 or 19 at the time and in 1949 was probably the youngest person to have traversed the Petit and Grand Drus. Would I do it today given the

chance? No, I could not, but I learnt something that has stayed with me. Namely, life is about abseiling into the unknown.

My first venture into the unknown was on 26 August 1930 when I was born in Willesden, London. My parents had met in Burma, returned to England and were married in Eastbourne in 1928. My father was a Yorkshireman and my mother from Sussex. Dad served for two years in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve from August 1917 during the First World War. He was a wireless telegraphist. After the war he worked in Sierra Leone for a short time before going to Burma. Mum lost her father in the War when she was 10 years old. He was killed on 31 July 1917 on the battlefield at Passchendaele in western Belgium, serving in an Irish regiment, 7th battalion of the Leinster Regiment.

Dad was fortunate, on their returning to the UK from Burma, to find employment at the beginning of the Depression, first in Swansea and later in Peterborough as manager of two retail-clothing shops. A leopard skin mat from Burma lay in the front hallway of our home, on the wall hung crossed dars (swords) and in the living room other Burmese articles. My venture into school life began when I was five and started at the Queen's West Primary



Mother and father's wedding, Eastbourne 1928

School in Peterborough. Two years later I moved to the newly constructed and much bigger Fulbridge Council Primary School, about ten minutes walk from our house.

There were fights between rival groups of boys and stone throwing was common. Nobody as far as I know was seriously hurt, but the risk of course was there. There was a particularly rough group of boys called the Crown Street gang and my friends and I were wary of them. They would call out "monkey-face" to me, which I found hurtful. I think that had a negative effect on me as I grew up, feeding my shyness and underneath a competitive spirit.



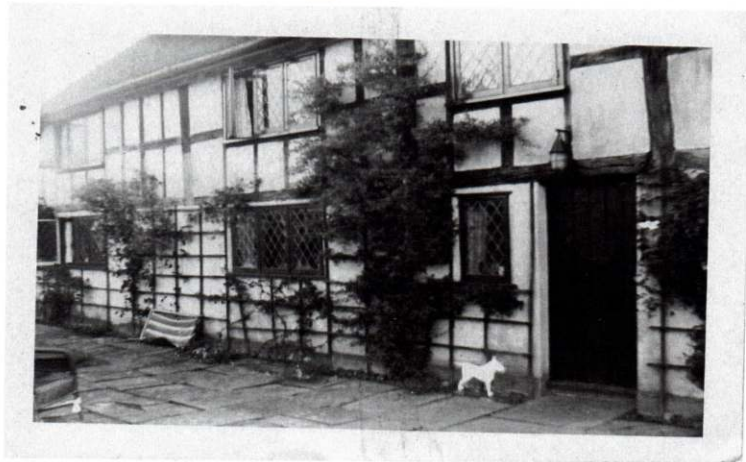
Dad with the Clyno in the Lake District

My particular friends were the Wright brothers, Dennis and Raymond, with whom I was sorry to lose contact when my father transferred me to the local grammar school, King's School, Peterborough. I was nine at the time and found going to a new school initially difficult and at one point my father said, "Give it another week and then if you still don't like it you can go back to Fulbridge Road." After that week I told him that I would stay on and in the light of subsequent events I am glad I did.

Incident 2

Mother in tears

This was September 1939, the beginning of the school year, and I can vividly recall my parents and I sitting close to the radio as Prime Minister Neville



Sussex cottage where Mum grew up

Chamberlain declared war on Germany. As the Germans had not withdrawn their troops from the invasion of Poland, as requested by France and Britain, Britain was now at war with Germany. On hearing this news my mother burst into tears. I am sure the

death of her father in fighting the Germans caused her to fear for the future now that we were at war again. At the time I did not understand my mother's tears. My father had a more stoical attitude, believing we had to stand up to Hitler. He had served of course in the Royal Navy for two years, 1917-19, as a telegraphist. I however had little comprehension what this declaration of war would mean.

The Government introduced strict rationing of food and petrol and enforced a blackout policy throughout the country. Everybody had a national identity card, ration book and gas mask which they carried with them. My father became an air raid warden, a volunteer group trained in putting out incendiary bombs and ensuring that the blackout was effective. At school we were not greatly affected by the war. Some boys wrote the names of Goering, Goebbels or Hitler on sandbags and then slashed them with knives. The collapse of France and the subsequent blitz on London, Coventry and other cities brought the war closer to us but Peterborough was not in the firing line. Later in the war as the Allied air strength grew, Peterborough was surrounded by specially constructed British and US air force bases. From these bases hundreds of bombers daily raided the industrial heart of Germany, destroying the Germans' war-making capacity. In the quiet of the night we could hear the drone of the heavy British bombers heading for the Ruhr, Berlin, Hamburg

or some other German industrial centre.

Throughout the war we listened every night to the 9 pm news with its reports of Allied setbacks or advances. Each week there was also the *Brains' Trust* or the comedy, *ITMA, It's That Man Again*. During the war years I often played chess with my father. We also developed our own war game, which we played on a large map of Western Europe. These games would run for several nights when he was not on air raid duties. Later in the war he joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve as a lieutenant, serving as a training officer in the stone frigate in Peterborough.

The Government encouraged people to construct covered trenches in their backyards for protection against air raids. We built one together with our next-door neighbour. Later the authorities built air raid shelters in the streets, where several families could spend the night if necessary. My father bought a strong steel shelter that was installed in our dining room so that we could all be protected inside the house. The top of this shelter became our large dining room table.

Despite these privations and difficulties the British population was reckoned to be healthier and less suicidal during the war years than in the postwar period.

When the war came to an end with the unconditional surrender of first Germany and then Japan, I was fourteen and I had four more years at school.

Growing up during the war years, combined with my mother's suspicion and fear of Germans, fed in me, albeit unconsciously at the time, a negative spirit towards Germans which continued for many years.

Incident 3

Headmaster from the Gurkhas

King's School was among a number of schools that were founded by Henry VIII in the 1540s, following the dissolution of the monasteries and the founding of the Church of England. King's School was to provide an education for choristers at Peterborough Cathedral and for boys from less well to do backgrounds. The close link with the cathedral continues and when I attended the school we went to services in the cathedral for the beginning and end of each term.

King's was and is a Rugby Union Football school. In my final year at school I was Head Boy and Captain of Rugby. We played similar grammar schools and public schools (i.e. private schools) within about a fifty-mile radius. I played either centre-three-quarter or on the wing.

One of our team, fly-half M G "Mick" Allison, later gained a Blue at Oxford. One of our opponents from Wellingborough Grammar, Johnny Hyde, was in the same year playing for England, and still is the

only schoolboy ever to win a full international Rugby Cap for England. In my last years at King's the headmaster was H R "Harry" Hornsby. He was a major in



Prefects and Headmaster 1948

the Gurkhas during the Second World War and tended to treat the boys as soldiers under his command. The school Cadet Corps was a shambles when he arrived but we soon learnt to step out smartly on the order "quick march!" Boys were to take their hands out of their pockets when talking to him. In military terms he was getting us into shape. He often coached the Rugby teams and was very keen that we won our matches.

Many of the grammar schools of East Anglia participated in an annual athletics competition in the market town of March in the Fens. In my final year

at school I ran in the relay race (4 x 440 yards) and we won.

One year our form (class) went to Fēcamp in France on the Channel coast to improve our French. Apart from improving my French I learnt how to do the samba in a Saturday night dance hall from a tall blonde girl and also got to know a Ginette Guērin with whom I corresponded for a few months. But we never met again.

As head boy one day I was in the headmaster's office to discuss something with him when a lady entered. Hornsby rose to greet her, but I remained seated. After she left Hornsby told me that I should have stood up, addressing me such a way that I have not forgotten the point.

Incident 4

'Why the hell do you do this?'

On holidays in the war years we went as a family by car to the Peak District, the Lake District or Snowdonia. We all had a great love for the mountains and the high places. We were climbing Bowfell in the Lake District, when a thick mist descended on the mountain and I became separated from my family. Fortunately, after a few minutes we met up again, but for me as a nine year old it was a troubling experience to be lost on a mountain.

Later that holiday we were climbing Scafell Pike from Langdale, a good distance for a young boy. At the top my father became concerned that it might be too much for my mother and me to return to Langdale where the family car was. On the summit there were two other men whom we did not know but with whom we got talking. My father told them his predicament and they advised a shorter but steeper descent to Wasdale and offered to pick up his car in Langdale and drive it to Wasdale the next day. My father accepted their kind offer, gave them the keys and the car's registration number (EG 1955, I

think). It worked without a hitch. It was something that one would not likely risk with strangers today.

Overnight in Wasdale we stayed in Burnthwaite, a farm property that opened its doors for paying guests. Wasdale is the wildest and bleakest



Burnthwaite Farm

of the Lake District valleys, awe-inspiring and a great contrast to the softer, wooded slopes of Borrowdale. We returned to Wasdale the following year to stay longer. Years later Lorna my wife found, coming into the valley by car and suddenly on turning a corner seeing The Screees, black and dominating across Westwater , a confronting experience.

On another year we went to Snowdonia and stayed at the well-known climbers' hotel at Pen-y-Pass, the summit of the Llanberis Pass. Commandoes were being trained on the mountains. One day climbing the precipitous Crib Goch (Red Ridge in English) in the height of summer we met a party of soldiers carrying Bren guns and other heavy equipment on a training exercise. "We bloody well have to climb. But why the hell do you?" they exclaimed. Whatever we replied, they didn't seem to be impressed.

The daughter of the owner or manager of the hotel was Glynis, an attractive girl about my age. I was then 14. We spent some time together and struck up a friendship. I was sorry to leave, but we didn't keep in touch.

After the war in 1948 we went to Switzerland and stayed at the climbing centre of Zermatt, at the foot of the famous Matterhorn. This is a peak that stands alone wrapped in snow and ice and often in cold, challenging brilliance. One night the snow and ice was so bright from the light of a full moon that it seemed as if the mountain summit and precipices were hanging in space as the lower slopes were invisible, wrapped in darkness. So striking was this phenomenon that dozens of people were simply standing spellbound.

My father hired a guide for me to climb the Zinalrothorn (height 4221 metres). I was 17 at the time and was thrilled to be doing this. With an acquaintance, Harry Eckersley, we set off with the



On the summit with August Juhlen photo:Eckersley

Swiss Alpine Club guide, August Juhlen, for the Zinalrothorn. We stayed overnight in the climbers' hut and early the next day left for the summit. Reaching a sharp high Alpine summit for the first time was an exhilarating experience. We could see range after range of the high Alps, close by were the famous peaks, the Matterhorn, the Weisshorn and the Dent

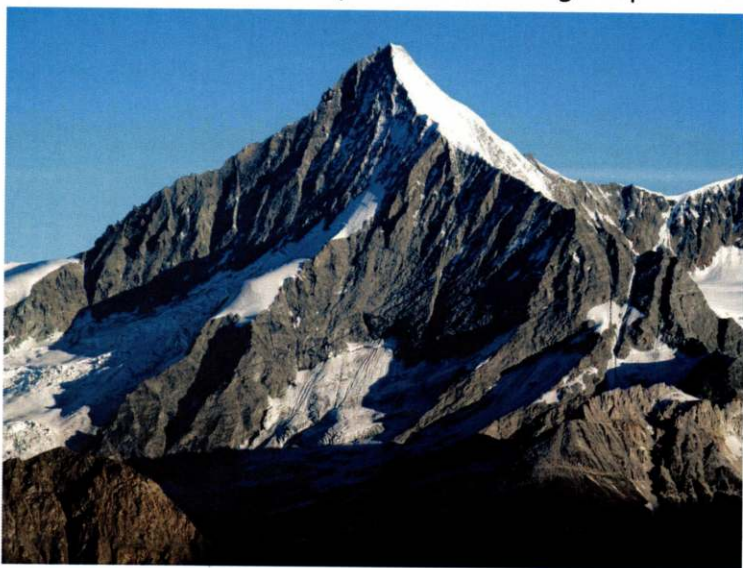
Blanche. On the way down, once we had reached the grass slopes, the guide announced that he would go ahead at a faster rate as he had to start the climb of another peak later that day. As we waved him good-bye I thought "What a bloke!"



My parents with Erich and myself photo:Heinz

Three years later I was back again with my parents in Zermatt. Having climbed Les Aiguilles des Drus, and other peaks without a guide I believed that I was sufficiently competent for most climbs. But with whom to climb, that was the question. While walking along the valley I saw two men in a small tent at the bottom of the Weisshorn. Were they planning to climb the Weisshorn? Yes they were and on exchanging our climbing records we all

agreed that we would climb together. The next day we left for the climbing hut halfway up the peak. It was only five years after the war and my two companions were Germans. I learnt from one of them, Erich, that he had been in the paratroops and his friend, Heinz, still believed in Nazism. That night in the climbing hut I began to wonder whether these two men were ideal companions in the high Alps.



East Face of Weissshorn photo: Terra 3

Would I be thrown off the mountain in an "unfortunate accident"? Fear grew in my heart. I prayed about this and was given the sense that all would be well, as it indeed was.

The ex-paratrooper led. I was the second on the rope and Heinz brought up the rear. On a steep snow slope the leader drove his ice axe in the snow above and began to haul himself up. The shaft of the axe however broke but we were able to hold him on the rope. Sometime later Heinz lost hold of his axe and it went plunging irretrievably over the side of the mountain. So I was the only one with an ice axe. We reached the summit (4512metres) about 1 pm which is late in the day as the snow begins to melt by that time and avalanches are possible. We however made a speedy descent, often sliding over the snow, with myself bringing up the rear with the pick of the ice axe driven into the snow or ice. That way I could control the speed of our descent as we were all roped together. My fear was unwarranted and the next day, with my parents, the five of us celebrated my 21st birthday.

Incident 5

Failing officer school

In early 1949 I won an Exhibition in History to Peterhouse, Cambridge and well remember the day I received the letter. In winning the scholarship I owe a great deal to R C Moon, history master in my final years at school, a teacher passionately devoted to his subject and to the success of the boys he taught. Before going up to Cambridge I did my 18 months national service in the Army in the Royal Artillery.

Many of the officers and NCOs had served in the Second World War or in the post war communist insurgency in Malaya (as it then was). As young recruits we were often regaled with their stories of the war and for the officers Field Marshal Montgomery was their hero. At Mons Officer Cadet School, Aldershot, our platoon was under a Captain Lilley. After one room inspection he informed us that he had not seen such a "filthy room in all his life" and that there would be another inspection at 6 a.m. the next day. The sergeant, on being told of this setback, informed us that Lilley said that to

every intake. Lilley told us that he did not care what men did in civilian life, whether they were even criminals or not: what counted was the ability to kill Germans. On parade the School was under Regimental Sergeant-Major Ronald Brittain, an extraordinary character who read *The Times* daily and cycled to the parade ground each morning. One day he shouted, so the story goes, "Company Sar'nt-Major Russell." Russell replied, "Sah". "Company Sar'nt-Major Russell there's an idle man in your company." Russell marched up and down the ranks saying, "Is it 'im?" until eventually Brittain shouted, "That's 'im. Double 'im off to the guard room." Russell then ordered, "Fall in two men. Double 'im off to the guard room." Whereupon the "idle man", rifle in hand, streaked across the parade ground ahead of the two men who were meant to escort him. Brittain then called out, "Release that man. He can't be idle!"

I was eventually posted to a radar experimental unit in Ty Croes in Anglesey, North Wales, after failing to pass out of officer school, a great disappointment and setback for me at the time. Achievement was my motivation in life and so any failure was a blow to my pride and self-confidence. Ty Croes however was close to Snowdonia and so with a 48-hour weekend pass I could go climbing. One weekend I did some rock climbing on the Idwal Slabs with a Royal Marine commando party who were

on a training exercise. Their camp was at the foot of Tryfan, a sharply pointed peak overlooking the Nant Francon Pass. They were a tough bunch. The sergeant in charge was doing physical exercise swinging from a rope some two or three metres above the ground and somehow lost control and fell on the middle of his back on the rocky ground. The marines standing around roared with laughter. No one seemed to be bothered and the sergeant, apart from using some colourful language, got up as if nothing much had happened. On finishing my time in the Army I went up to University and a new stage in life began.

Incident 6

The book that changed me

University freshmen are assailed by a variety of sports, social, religious and political clubs, seeking their interest, support and membership. I joined the Peterhouse Boat Club, the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club, the Cambridge Union Society and the University Conservative Association. I did not stay with the latter for long as it seemed to be more of a marriage market than a political association. I could have joined the college Rugby Club but decided to have a change and learn the skill of rowing in an eight or four.

One of the men whom I got to know in the Mountaineering Club was Bob Kitchin, a fellow History undergraduate. We were planning a climbing venture in the university vacation or vac, as it is called. One day in his room in Trinity Hall a man came in and said, "Here is this book I promised you." He did not stay long. I noted he was a few years older than we were and thought he must be Bob's supervisor or tutor. Who else but a tutor would loan an undergraduate a book? The book was a paperback,

The World Rebuilt. When I saw Bob about two weeks later to discuss our climbing plans, he urged me to read it. I made cynical comments about the title but he persuaded me to take it away. After dinner that night I started reading it. I could not put it down and finished it about 2 a.m.

The world of 1950, the year I went up to university and the year I read the book, was confronted by challenges very different from those we face today. Perhaps the decade of the 1940s could be said to have witnessed profounder changes than any decade since. Following the defeat of Nazi Germany and imperialist Japan in 1945, Winston Churchill two years later announced that an Iron Curtain had descended across Europe, dividing central and eastern Europe off from western Europe and bringing those nations under Soviet control. In Asia Mao Ze-Dong was establishing Communism across mainland China. In Korea a fierce war was raging for control of the strategic Peninsula between the South Koreans and the UN forces on one side and the North Koreans and Chinese on the other. Pretty well all in my year at university had been in the armed forces as national servicemen. A few had fought against the insurgency in Malaya and some had served in occupied Germany. Some of the older undergraduates and postgraduates were ex-servicemen who had fought in the World War II to

free Europe from Nazi Germany's domination.

Now five years later in 1950 the world was facing a similar threat from the Soviet Union, perhaps not so much from military aggression although that was always a possibility; but more from ideological penetration aimed at intensifying class war, precipitating revolution and ultimately establishing Communist control. In *The World Rebuilt* Peter Howard¹ not only addressed this issue: he drew on compelling evidence from the global work of Moral Re-Armament (MRA)² and from his own experience that both Communists and Capitalists can change and find a new motivation and direction. For him and for MRA, rebuilding the world was not a fanciful dream but a realistic aim. This so intrigued me that after reading the book I went to see Bob Kitchin the next day. I wanted to find out more about what lay behind the message of the book. Together we went to see the man who had loaned Kitchin the book, Tony Bigland. Bigland was an oarsman who had won events at the Henley Regatta and later was close to being selected for the Cambridge University Eight.

I had assumed that Moral Re-Armament was an organisation that you could join, if you wished. But I gathered from Bigland that it was not so much an association you joined and supported, such as a political organisation, but more a quality of life you lived following a commitment you made. This commit-

ment was to God and the quality of life that flowed from that commitment, based on absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. So while I did not "join" MRA I left that meeting with the intention that I would look at my life in the light of those absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.

As someone said at the time about MRA:

It's not an institution,

It's not a point of view,

It starts a revolution

By starting one in you!

A few weeks earlier, before reading *The World Rebuilt*, the coxswain of our college eight, Rob Millett³, had persuaded me to go with him to a series of Sunday evening Evangelical services at the Holy Trinity Church. Coming from a non-churchgoing family, I regarded the church as an ineffective organisation and some of its members as hypocritical. Earlier, however, while on national service the padre of my unit had loaned me a copy of *The Robe* by Lloyd Douglas, an historical novel about the crucifixion of Jesus and its impact on the Roman centurion who had carried it out. This story about the early Christians captured my interest, so that my mind

was to some degree open to what was preached at Holy Trinity on the claims of Christ on one's life. After much thought and argument over about 18 months since reading *The Robe*, I decided that I would give my life to Christ.

One evening I knelt in prayer with Millett in my room in college which I shared with another man, Tony Mostyn, and did that. I was hoping that Mostyn would not come barging in while I was on my knees, which he didn't. But I did tell him later about my decision. I was aware that making this commitment to Christ represented a turning point in life but unaware in what way or how this would be realised. What does a commitment to Christ mean in daily life, personal relationships, and relationships with the opposite sex, career choice or in how one plays a part in influencing or changing society for the better? I joined Millett at bible study groups and occasionally at prayer meetings, but found little that addressed these questions or gave practical meaning to a commitment to Christ.

Through reading *The World Rebuilt* and meeting people associated with MRA, I began to find answers to my questions. One question on the minds of some politicians and perhaps others in those Cold War years was, "Can a Communist change?" A visitor to the University was Karl Albrecht, formerly Deputy Commissar of Forests in the Soviet Union and

member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party 1929-32. He said that he began to question in his mind the validity of communism after talking with a wandering Christian hermit (a *starets*) in Siberia. This was a starting point for his return to faith and his leaving the Soviet Union and later meeting MRA. For him MRA offered hope, not as a theory, but as a practical reality. He said, "I could not sleep if I did not fulfill my duty to tell the world of the greatest idea of the twentieth century."

I kept in touch with Bigland, Kitchin and other undergraduates convinced about MRA. Some months later I helped in a small way in organising a major meeting in the Union Society to bring the ideas of MRA before the University as a whole. The hall of the Union Society is modelled on the House of Commons and is one of the main halls for debates and public occasions in the University.

The entrance to the Union Society building is down a narrow lane. Members of the University Communist Party picketed this lane, handing out leaflets attacking MRA. The picketing had little effect because the hall soon filled with approximately 500 graduates and undergraduates. A former German Luftwaffe pilot seized the attention of the audience. He apologised for his actions in the war, particularly the firebombing of London, and pledged himself to work for a new and changed Germany.

Tom Keep, a leader of the biggest docks strike in British history, then spoke. In the middle of his passionate address the building was plunged in blackness. The lights had been turned off at the main switch in the basement and the Communists in the hall stamped their feet and shouted in a determined bid to stop the meeting. They had chosen the wrong moment to turn off the lights as Keep carried on speaking, without pause or interruption, ignoring the opposition and winning the bulk of the audience who anyway wanted to hear what he had to say. Kitchin went down into the basement, turned the lights back on and the meeting continued, the opposition rebuffed.

Keep, as President of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers Union, had led what was called the Beaverbrae strike, which cost the UK in 1949 in lost trade and earnings more than it was granted that year by the postwar American Marshall Aid programme. He said that his hatred of the managerial class, the injustice of conditions in the London docks and his Marxist ideology had together caused him to lead the strike. Following the strike he said that he had met, through MRA, senior managers and directors of industry who had changed deeply both in their attitudes to their workers and their motivations in business. These were men with whom he could now work, he said, for fairness and

justice in the ports and for the betterment of society. "This can signal the end of the longest war in human history, the class war," he thundered concluding his speech. The Secretary of State for the Co-ordination of Transport, Fuel and Power, Lord Leathers, commented later in the press on the turnaround in the ports as the result of the changed attitude of Keep and other dockers' leaders and managers.⁴

I saw that there was a direct connection between change in the individual and the changing and improvement of society. I explored MRA further and went to a combined Oxford and Cambridge Easter weekend conference, attended by about 20 undergraduates. Through visits to factories and mines we learnt at firsthand from managers, trade unionists and workers how the change in individuals could and did precipitate transformation in the running of businesses and industry.

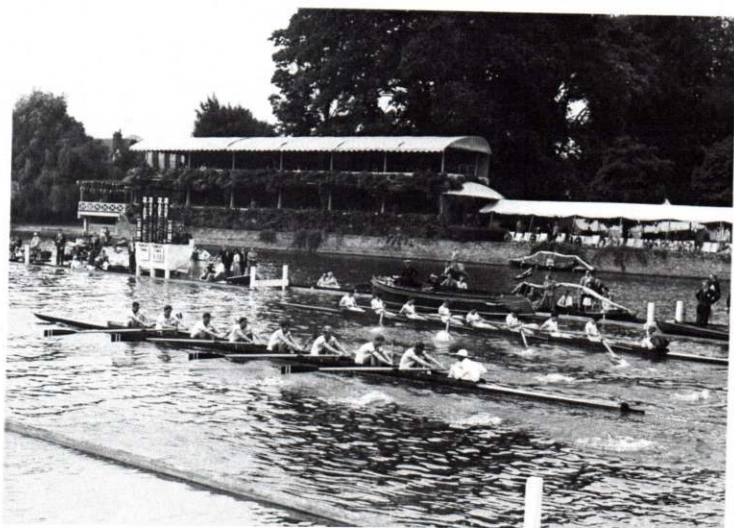
Incident 7

'Made a hell of a difference to you'

It is one thing to see a truth: it is another to act on it. A year or more later I faced a choice. The man I was meant to be working closest with was the man from whom I was most divided through jealousy. Was I prepared to take action to change the relationship? Michael Rodd and I were both keen oarsmen and rowed for our college, Peterhouse, the foundation college of the University. He was elected President of the Boat Club and I was elected Secretary. I had won an Exhibition to enter University and came from a grammar school. He came from a public school background and his father was managing director of Walls, a major manufacturer of ice-cream. Being British we always managed to maintain a polite and reasonable relationship until one day he criticised my rowing, blaming me for the crew's poor performance. I responded that another crew member was to blame. He said that he was captain of the crew and that was it. I did not back down.

This all went on at the boathouse in front of our crew and other club members. To avoid further

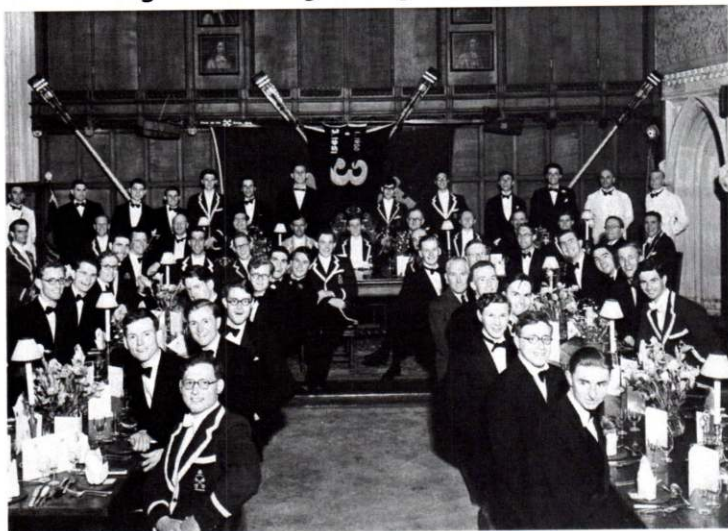
embarrassment and the loss of club discipline, we both shook hands and stopped the argument. But the division between us remained. The next day I decided I would ask God what to do. Three clear thoughts came into my heart. "Go and see the man immediately and apologise for having shaken hands with him the day before without really meaning it. Apologise for the hatred and jealousy of him. And pledge yourself to work with him on a new basis." I went to see him at around 7 o'clock in the morning.



Winning a race at the Henley Regatta photo: George Bushell

He invited me in and asked me what I wanted. He was having breakfast with a friend and the radio was on. I did not find it an easy situation to say what I

had in mind. Anyway I apologised for shaking hands insincerely the day before and for my divisiveness and jealousy and pledged myself to work with him on a new basis. He got up from where he was sitting and joined me on the sofa and said, "Well, the same can be said for me." He never became my best friend but we did work together in a new way. This experience showed me that if I carry out what I believe God asks of me through listening to the inner voice, then he begins to change things in my human nature,

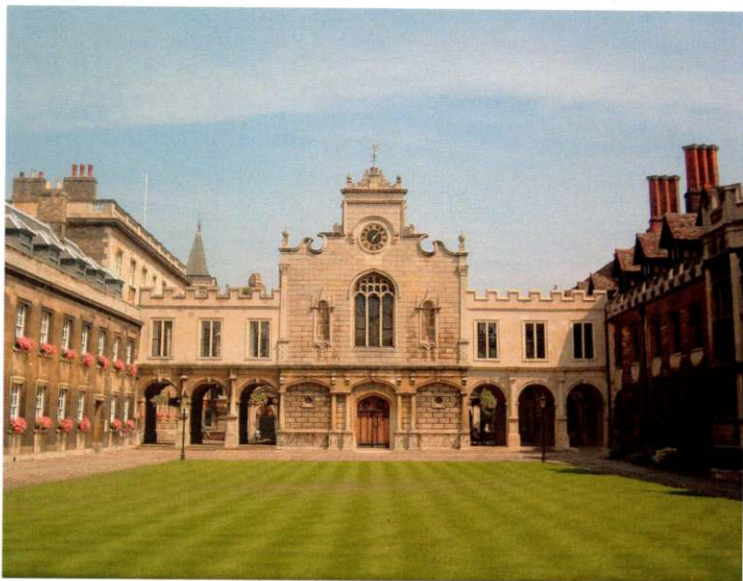


Peterhouse Boat Club Annual Dinner

photo: Stearn

which I cannot change, such as pride and jealousy. The emphasis being on "begins", as I find that my need of God remains constant.

This all aroused a certain interest in the college in what I was doing. One man said to me, "I don't know much about MRA, but it has made one hell of a difference to you." Sometimes however I came under attack, when for instance an upper class Law undergraduate disparagingly said, "I hear you are with the Buchmanites, Brian." I quickly responded, "Why do you take *The Daily Worker* line on MRA?" He did not respond. Perhaps it was news to him that



Peterhouse, Old Court, Cambridge University photo: Azeira

he was repeating a Communist line as the Communist-daily had first coined the word Buchmanite in an attempt to discredit Dr Frank Buchman, an American

Lutheran minister, the initiator of MRA.

With the permission of the Fellows of the college I arranged a meeting in the Fellows' Common Room. With a number of the dons, postgraduates and undergraduates present I spoke about what I had experienced through MRA and ended by saying that I had learnt more in three months from MRA than I had in two years at the University. Looking back on it, not the most winning thing to have said!

The MRA team at the University met regularly at 7.30 a.m. to share the thoughts we had in our early morning quiet times and plan our actions. Guy Grant⁵ from Kenya suggested that we should study love as expressed in 1 Corinthians 13. I read the passage and reported the next time we met to the merriment of all present that there was nothing about "love"; it was all about "charity". So much for the King James Version and my poor understanding!

Incident 8

'I think you are a bloody fool'

On the prompting of a friend, Richard Spurin⁶, I decided that I should be confirmed. Earlier as a schoolboy I had declined, although practically all my form (class) was at the time confirmed. My confirmation in the Church of England in the Chapel in Selwyn College was an important stage in my spiritual understanding and growth. In my final year at the University I considered several options for employment on graduation: the Colonial Service in Africa, a shipping firm that traded in West Africa, the Ford Motor Company in the UK or the BBC. I researched these positions, attended seminars and talked with representatives of the organisations who visited the University. Then one morning I was praying in the college chapel and the conviction grew in my heart that I should offer my services on a voluntary, "faith and prayer" fulltime basis to MRA. I had not considered this before, partly I think because the emphasis in MRA was on the application of the philosophy in the workplace rather than on the role of fulltime workers. The more I thought about this, the more I became convinced that it was right.

When I told my father that this is what I had in mind he replied, "It is not for me to say what you should do, but I think you should know what I think. I think you are a bloody fool." However in 1953 after graduation and competing in the Henley Regatta in our college eight for the Thames Cup, I left for the MRA international conference centre at Caux in Switzerland (*see www.caux.ch*).

My personal finances which were slight were immediately improved when I sold my Norton 500 motor bike for £90. Leslie Marsh, who was at university with me and later ordained as a Methodist minister, covenanted a fixed annual gift, as did my father later and another friend Stan Hazell, a TV journalist, for my personal support. When a person covenanted to give regularly a fixed amount over seven years to a charity or fulltime voluntary worker, the recipient of the gift received also from the UK Government the income tax which the donor had paid on the sum. Many people in this way contributed regularly to the work and outreach of MRA and to individual fulltime workers.

Two years later a number of influential Africans from many parts of the continent - politicians, trade union leaders, student leaders and business people - a cross-section of those engaged in the struggle for independence, came to Caux. They decided as a group to write a play, depicting their experience of



Mountain House, Caux sur Montreux, Switzerland

the struggle, and delegated three men to write individually the three acts of the play. It was called *Freedom*. The dramatic impact of the play was in the clash between those who sought power through intrigue or violence and those who overcame their hatred and jealousy, changed radically and worked together for a hate-free, fear-free, greed-free Africa. The play was based on their experiences.

I was present at the opening night of the play in the theatre in the Caux conference centre. The response from audiences at Caux was so great that the Africans later accepted invitations to perform the play in the capital cities of Scandinavia, Finland and the UK. The Africans needed to lay aside their plans to return home. Difficult decisions had to be made and large sums of money raised to finance the tour. At one of the planning meetings the Nigerian chairing the meeting called for a time of quiet, asking people to listen to God and so seek what they should give. A thought immediately came into my mind: "Put God first in your life, not mountaineering. Sell your mountaineering equipment and give the money to the Africans." It was a thought which did not appeal as mountain-climbing was the passion of my life.

Later that evening I shared the thought with a colleague to get a second mind on it, hoping that he would say something that would give me a satisfying reason for not doing it. As it happened he said nothing either for or against. Next morning he came up to me and said that he would like to introduce me to a Swiss friend of his. I naturally agreed. My colleague then said, "This is so and so. He deals in second-hand sports equipment." My colleague departed and I carried out the thought, which I believe was from God, and sold my climbing boots, socks, cram-

pons, ice axe and rope for 67 Swiss francs and gave the money to the *Freedom* campaign fund. Not a large amount in terms of what was needed, but it marked the point in my life when I really began to place my resources, plans, hopes and aims at the disposal of God and His plan. I later had the privilege of travelling with the Africans in Europe and was their media representative.

Incident 9

Terrorist asks 'Does God forgive?'

At Caux I was invited to join those responsible for ensuring press coverage of the conference through daily news reports and interviews. It was demanding and interesting work. It was about this time that I made a decision before God to take on engaging journalists in the task of remaking the world. It was a bold, even crazy decision in one sense as I did not know how to go about it or where it would take me, but I had an inner sense that I should go ahead. Several others had made or were making similar decisions and in the years ahead I think God honoured our decisions. Not that there was anything special about us: it is just the way God often seems to work. In the pages ahead I will relate from my own experience why I think this is so.

In 1955 I was asked to room with an Italian journalist, Giuseppe Palozzi, who was making a short visit to the conference. He was the Geneva correspondent for *Il Tempo*. He told me that he had been trained in the Soviet Union's Maxim Gorki Institute

of Literature in Communist tactics and assassination techniques. I sensed however he was searching for a different aim in life.

One day over a cup of tea he asked me, "Does God forgive a man who has killed men?" Realising that this was not an abstract question, I said, "I believe God forgives a man anything that he is really sorry for and repents of. But the man may need to face the penalties of the law." Palozzi replied that towards the end of the Second World War on instructions from the Communist Party he had killed six men, Milan factory managers and directors, by throwing them into the blast furnaces of their factories. He said that under Italian law he could not be punished because these events took place in the interregnum between the German retreat and the Allied advance into the industrial cities of northern Italy. This was the time when Mussolini was summarily executed by Partisans as he tried to escape to Switzerland. His body was taken to Milan where it was hung upside down at a petrol station for public viewing and to provide confirmation of his demise. It is a period which does not exist as far as Italian law is concerned, Palozzi said.

He went on to say that, although he could not be charged under Italian law, he was deeply troubled in his conscience and wished to seek forgiveness from God. We went to our room and he prayed at

length in Italian seeking the forgiveness of God.

Palozzi's father was a successful manufacturer in Spain of Vespa motor scooters, but was separated from his wife, Palozzi's mother. The break-up of the family home and the fact that his father, as a member of the capitalist class, represented everything Palozzi as a Communist detested, helped lead I believe to a hatred and division between Palozzi and his father. Palozzi told me that he would like to be reconciled with his father but it was impossible. There was no way that he could speak to him or write to him. His father's secretary would ensure on his father's instructions that no communication from the son would be accepted. If Palozzi wrote or phoned him at his residence he would tear up the letter on seeing the handwriting on the envelope or put the phone down. Communication was impossible!

Summarising his experiences at Caux he said, "Communism uses men to change the world. MRA loves men so that they can change the world."

Some months later in 1956 I met Palozzi again, this time in Paris. He had seen an advertisement in the press announcing *The Dictator's Slippers*, an MRA play which posed the question "What happens in a totalitarian state when the strong man dies?" He rang the theatre and found out where the

cast and the MRA support team ate before performances and located me. He told me this extraordinary sequence of events. Shortly after leaving the Caux conference, Palozzi returned to Geneva on his newspaper work. Sometime later the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, arrived in Geneva for negotiations on the future of Vietnam. North and South Vietnam were on the verge of conflict. There was a press conference, which Palozzi attended.

An American journalist asked Dulles what his attitude was to his son, Avery Dulles, who had recently been ordained a Jesuit priest⁷. Dulles, who was a strong Protestant and son of a Presbyterian minister, launched into a public attack on his own son before representatives of the world's press. This outburst shook Palozzi who said to himself, "If the foreign minister of the most powerful nation in the world comes to Geneva to try and prevent war in Vietnam but feels such bitter prejudice towards his own son, what hope is there for the world?" Then he realised that if he had bridged the gulf between himself and his father he may have been in a position to say something to Dulles. Disturbed in his conscience he immediately left the press conference and returned to his hotel room where he wrote a letter to his father apologising for his hatred and for his part in the years of estrangement.

Within forty-eight hours his father on re-

ceipt of the letter was on a plane to Geneva and father and son were reconciled. This reconciliation prompted a journalist couple in Geneva, friends of Giuseppe Palozzi, to take steps to restore their relationship and save their marriage. Palozzi told me that he intended to bring this new approach and spirit to the attention of the politicians he interviewed and met. In 1958 he interviewed Nikita Khrushchev, challenging the Soviet leader's attitude of national superiority⁸. Palozzi later was killed, I believe, in North Africa covering the war in Algeria between the French and the Algerian nationalists.

Witnessing this change in Palozzi reinforced my decision to take on the aim of changing the pressmen of the world and in the years ahead I pursued it further.

Incident 10

Bridging racial divisions in America

Later in 1956 I was invited to the USA by Dr Frank Buchman. My job was, along with one or two others, to cover the MRA international conferences for the news agencies, Associated Press, United Press and International News Service as they then were. We were under the tutelage of Peter Howard, dramatist, author and earlier one of the top newspapermen in London's Fleet Street and close friend and colleague of Buchman. He taught us that the key to writing news stories lay in three things: short sentences, one idea per sentence and no adjectives. The most important sentence in any report was the first: it had to grab the reader. We often wrote two stories a day of 200-300 words, over a period perhaps of two to three months, which I found a rigorous challenge. Still there were rewards - often these news reports from the MRA international conference centre on Mackinac Island, Michigan, were published in newspapers right across the US. They high-

lighted the experiences and views of national or overseas leaders and covered a surprising range of issues: labour-management relations, the cold war, America's relations with South America, Europe, the Soviet Union or Asia and race relations in the USA, particularly in the southern states.

Race was an explosive issue following the Supreme Court decision on the integration of the school system and the growing demand for justice and equality for Afro-Americans. The violence in Little Rock, Arkansas in late 1957 was a challenge to positive-thinking people to find an alternative to violence. At the Mackinac Island conference centre a team of theatre professionals voluntarily undertook the writing and production of *The Crowning Experience*, a musical play based on the true story of the black American leader, Mary McLeod Bethune. The play starred Muriel Smith, the internationally acclaimed Afro-American mezzo-soprano, Ann Buckles, Broadway actor, and Louis Byles, renowned Jamaican singer, all of whom gave their services despite, in the case of Muriel Smith, receiving lucrative offers from American producers. Through the staging of this play MRA heightened its efforts to change American racial attitudes - hatred and bitterness on one side and arrogance on the other. I travelled with the play to Atlanta in the Deep South. One of my tasks was to invite the media to the opening night in

the Civic Auditorium. The auditorium was packed with both black and white people, segregated by law at that time, and the police were expecting trouble. Uniformed police were outside and plainclothes police in the audience. There was no trouble and so on subsequent nights the police no longer patrolled the event. Eleven thousand people saw the play over the first weekend. Attitudes in the city began to change. One of the people who changed was Al Kuttner, Atlanta bureau chief of United Press. I sat with him and his wife, Helen, in the auditorium on the opening night and talked with him afterwards. A few days later he went to the Governor of Georgia, Samuel Marvin Griffin, and apologised to him for having told untruths about him in the press. The following day the Governor said to the press that he was committing himself to the policy objective of "Not who is right, but what is right". The success and effectiveness of the performances in the Civic Auditorium led the owner of the Tower Theatre to open the doors of his theatre for both black and white in equal dignity and with equal seating for performances of *The Crowning Experience*. This was a first for any theatre in Atlanta.

I was in Atlanta for several months. A leading black lawyer, Colonel A. T. Walden, said, "After the visit of *The Crowning Experience*, Atlanta will never be the same again." Integration was calmly and

wisely achieved and President Kennedy later sent for Walden to hear the story behind this. Drew Pearson in his nationwide syndicated column, describing the impact of *The Crowning Experience*, wrote, "Behind what happened in Georgia is an even more amazing story of how dedicated people from all walks of life are organising to find solutions to a problem that our political leaders have been unable to resolve—the explosive challenge of Little Rock."

The following year, 1959, I was in Kentucky where there was fierce political argument, as in other Southern states, whether the public school system in the State was going to be integrated in accordance with the Supreme Court decision of 1954 or not. In this highly charged situation I worked with a group of local citizens in Louisville, committed to MRA, who were working to bring a change in the relationships between black and white. In America at that time was a group of black and white Africans, working with MRA, who had a powerful message of reconciliation and to back it up a full-length film, shot in Nigeria, called *Freedom*, based on the play, *Freedom*. Recently screened in Little Rock before black and white audiences it had, as with *The Crowning Experience* in Atlanta earlier, a history-changing impact in Arkansas race relations⁹. The Louisville group believed that the State's political leadership should see and experience the impact of

the film. One member of the group briefly informed Ted Eigelhart, whom he knew and who was the secretary of the State Governor, about *Freedom* and arranged for three of us to have lunch with him. Sensing the importance of this, we sought God's inspiration and came to the conviction that we should talk solely about what Eigelhart was interested in. So during the lunch we talked, not about the film *Freedom* but about Wedgwood pottery—Eigelhart's great passion. In the circumstances I was beginning to wonder what the point of the lunch was. Then at the end of the lunch he said, "I guess you guys want to see the Governor? Come with me." He took us to meet Governor A B "Happy" Chandler, whom Eigelhart had obviously primed about the purpose of our visit. On receiving a full briefing on *Freedom* and its impact in Little Rock, Chandler decided that both Houses of the State Legislature should combine and set aside time to see the film. He called in the President of the State Senate to arrange the timing and the hire of the local cinema in Frankfort, the State capital of Kentucky. A week later Manasseh Moerane, vice-president of the black South African Teachers' Federation and later editor of *The World* (Johannesburg), introduced the film to the assembled legislators. During the film I sat with John Breckinridge, who became State Attorney-General and later a US Congressman. At the conclusion of the film all the legislators queued to shake Moer-

ane's hand and to thank him for the film, an unusual gesture by white men towards a black man in the South of the US in the 1950s. I rode back to the Legislature with Breckinridge in his car. Thoughtful, he commented, "The film makes you feel like a crook." He never elaborated what he meant.

The next day Speaker of the House Morris Weintraub, I learnt from him later, got up in the Legislature and said, "In the spirit of the film *Freedom* which we saw yesterday I would like to apologise to the Representatives of (naming the electorates) for what I have called them in the past. In the spirit of the film we saw I hope they will forgive me." He had called these five representatives "hillbillies", a term of abuse and disdain used against people from the mountain areas of the State.

Then one of the five men rose from his seat, Weintraub told me, walked to the clerk's table below the Speaker's chair, pulled a gun from his hip pocket, laid it on the table and said with tears streaming down his face, "I guess I won't be needing this anymore." The four other men followed and did likewise.

Weintraub relayed to me the significance of this remarkable development. Old hatreds were dissolved but the impact of this went beyond personal reconciliation. The five men had organised a boycott of various legislative committees ensuring that quo-

rum were not achieved, thereby halting government business. By State law the Legislature could only sit for a limited number of weeks each year and time for the passage of Government legislation was running out.

As a result of the reconciliation with the Speaker, the five Representatives immediately halted the boycott. Weintraub said that legislation which was then passed helped speed up the desegregation of the school system already underway, enabling African-American children to attend the same schools as the white children. Kentucky was the first State in the South to lift the ban on interracial education in private schools.

Incident 11

‘Gentlemen,
I hate everything you stand for’

During the years 1956 to 1964 I had made two extended visits to the United States. On returning to the United Kingdom I continued my aim to contact people in the British media and also foreign correspondents from the Soviet bloc. I was helped in this by Michael Henderson¹⁰, a friend and colleague, who introduced me to Simon Scott Plummer¹¹ who was then on the Foreign Desk of Reuters. He and I visited journalists, including Communist journalists from Eastern Europe, to invite them to MRA public meetings or to performances of plays at the Westminster Theatre. The Westminster staged high quality plays that showed how a growth in human character, beginning with yourself and your own nation, could meet the challenges facing the world. A good number of Soviet and East European journalists came to the plays and we had vigorous discussions after the performances.

One Soviet journalist in London who responded to MRA was Viktor Rodionov, correspondent of the *Economic Gazette*. After a visit to the Westminster Theatre with his family he wrote me, saying "I would like to thank you for your help in understanding certain things. I consider it quite important." I did not grasp the full significance of Rodionov's remarks until twenty-seven years later.

Other Soviet journalists were not so open-minded. Jim Coulter¹² and I went to see Oleg Orestov, dean of the Soviet journalists in London and correspondent for *Izvestia*.

Orestov's opening remark was blunt: "Gentlemen, I hate everything you stand for." Jim had been an RAAF pilot in the Second World War and so was not easily put off and I had made the appointment with Orestov and so felt we should continue with what we had in mind. That was to give him, as a foreign correspondent, an invitation to the opening of a major new Arts Centre attached to the Westminster Theatre. Rajmohan Gandhi, a leading Indian figure and eldest grandson of the Mahatma, was to give the address. Orestov said on that particular day he would be in Birmingham but even if he were not he would not come. He nevertheless invited us to come in and sit down.

He wanted to assure us that when Communism

took over Britain there would be no killings or persecution. We disputed this assertion that Communism would win in Britain and secondly that if there were a takeover it would be peaceful. What about the millions who had been killed in the wake of the Communist take-over of China? Russian Communism was different, he claimed, and that would not happen in Europe. Before leaving we outlined the philosophy of MRA and its role in bringing a change of motive to both capitalists and communists. This was the most effective way of changing the world, we said. Orestov's attitude was typical of many Soviet journalists. His threatening talk however was not idle.

A leftwing pro-Soviet take-over of Britain in the late 1960s and through the 1970s was a real possibility¹³. In 1963, Arthur Koestler, news commentator and writer, had written, "Communist influence in the Unions increased ...today it is the dominant factor in industrial relations and its disruptive effects are more strongly felt in this country than anywhere else in Europe. The nation gets only episodic glimpses of the true state of its affairs...and believes that they are isolated incidents. In fact they are the result of a planned, centralised and extremely well-organised campaign. The real danger...is a situation patterned on the General Strike of 1926, but with more disastrous consequences." (*Sunday Times*, London, 21 April 1963)

My experience of this threat was certainly limited but nevertheless real. In the late 1960s there was a strong move in the media to amalgamate the Institute of Journalists (a professional body as well as a union) and the stronger National Union of Journalists. The move failed because the IoJ (I was vice-chairman of the London District at the time) eventually realised that this proposed amalgamation was merely a step towards one union representing all employees of the national newspapers, that is editors, reporters and printers. One union representing all employees would mean that the national press could be strangled by strike action. At that time a serious issue as the national press was powerful and influential: *The Daily Mirror* for instance had a daily circulation of five million. The General Secretaries of both the NUJ and the largest printing union, either of whom was likely to take the leadership in the new body, were pro-Soviet sympathisers. George Glenton, President of the IoJ and leading crime reporter on *The Daily Mirror*, said to me and a number of colleagues that "materialism and Maoism must be tackled in the Fleet Street¹⁴ offices." We campaigned hard to ensure that the IoJ did not accept the unification plan which fell apart.

In contrast to Orestov, when Rodionov left London he introduced me to his successor correspondent, Vladimir Sukach, and gave me his own

home phone number in Moscow. Twenty-seven years on in 1993 I gave this phone number to Peter Thwaites, a friend and colleague, who was going to Russia and asked him to look up Rodionov and give him my greetings, which he did. Once Rodionov knew that Peter was in MRA he wanted all the information on it so that he could publicise it in the Moscow press. Sometime later three articles by him appeared in the Moscow press. In a personal letter in December of that year he said "About Moral Re-Armament. I do not belong to any form of its organisation. But my heart is with it. It was always so, especially now. To prove it I published an article in a Russian paper *Literaturnaya Gazetta* and I hope soon it will be published as a feature on the same topic, mentioning Peter's visit to Moscow." This took place in *Vechernyaya Moskva* (*Evening Moscow*, 18 February 1994).

His opening sentence read: "Late in the evening the telephone rang. 'I'm Peter Thwaites from Australia. I'm troubling you on behalf of Brian Lightowler, your friend from London, who now lives near Sydney.'" The article then described the worldwide and positive influence of Moral Re-Armament and the power of forgiveness, concluding with the words:

"This is easy on paper (i.e. practising forgiveness) but difficult in life. Nevertheless steps have to be taken

in this direction, by each of us who is capable of freeing ourselves from hate and the desire for revenge. Such is the way suggested to us by Moral Re-Armament's more than half a century of experience, by its actions which are inconspicuous day by day but visible over a half-century of human life. It teaches us what is simple and great. Forgetting strife and holding our hands out to each other, we can break the vicious circle of hate and by that means discover a new world.

"We have the duty, we must rearm morally. In this lies the chance of salvation and of entry into the family of civilised nations."

In another article in the English-language *Moscow Times* (19 October 1994) he wrote that some Soviet international correspondents had been aware of the lack of truth and bias in much of their news reporting and feature article writing.

"It would be a mistake to think that all of us who were harnessed to the chariot of propaganda thought in unison and that none of us ever had doubts about what we were doing.

"It would also be a mistake to say simply that this propaganda consisted of nothing but blatant lies. It was all much more subtle than that. The truth was leavened with innuendo and a little bit of

the author's imagination to give the reader a distorted view of actual events."

Incident 12

Turbulence in the family

On my invitation my parents visited me at the conference centre on Mackinac Island, USA, for several weeks. Mackinac Island is possibly unique in America in that no motor vehicles or motor cycles are allowed on the island. The only means of transport is by horse and buggy or in winter by horse drawn sledge. The mail for the conference centre at Cedar Point was collected in this way each day by an elderly Afro-American, Brookes Onley. My father happily joined him in doing this.

At the conference centre there was a great variety of people from different backgrounds and countries whom my parents enjoyed meeting and talking with. One day however something totally unexpected and dramatic took place during a lunchtime conversation. A Canadian couple, down to earth people whom my parents had got to know, talked about the difficulties and challenges they had encountered in life and how they had found a way through them by listening and praying to God and obeying the promptings that came. Suddenly my mother burst

out and said to my father, "I have hated you these last 30 years." My father was pole-axed and asked why. She said because she reckoned that he had dropped me as a baby and didn't seem to care about it. I wasn't hurt or injured but my mother's feelings over the incident were nevertheless deep, intense and long-lasting. My father was at his wit's end.

After lunch he and I went to a room to talk. In his bewilderment at my mother's feelings he decided he would pray for an answer and would give his life to God. Together we knelt and prayed. He also said that he would take time each morning to seek God's guidance and ask my mother to do the same, which they both did regularly after that. They often had different ideas on what God was asking them to do, but they did decide that they should return to England and start on a fresh basis together. When I was back in London my father once a month would come to London from Brighton to do a day's work on the accounts of the MRA work. I used to visit them, whenever I could, for a day or so in Telscombe Cliffs near Brighton or in Eastbourne, where they later lived.

One weekend in 1969 when I visited them in their small flat in Eastbourne, I knew immediately there was something seriously wrong. There was a lack of joy or warmth—a sort of greyness in the

room. Over lunch I found out why. My father was visiting another woman, a widow, in France and was about to go on holidays with her in France. My mother said she would stay in the marriage but was obviously deeply hurt.

After lunch my father and I went for a walk to discuss the situation, but to no avail as far as I was concerned. My father did not change his holiday plan and there was no movement towards a healing in my parents' relationship. Dad's view was God gives you three score years and ten and any years after that are a bonus to enjoy. At the time I was going out occasionally with a young woman journalist which when I was honest with myself knew was not part of God's plan for either of us. Would my talk with my father have had a more life-giving and happier outcome if I had been free myself of a wrong attraction? Shortly after talking with my father I ended the contact with the young woman and asked God for forgiveness for going down a track I knew was not part of his plan.

My father died in 1976 at home in Eastbourne in his sleep. . Mother sent me a telegram saying that "Dad has passed away." In the intervening years since our talk my father had broken off the relationship with the Frenchwoman. My father's passing hit me very hard and it took several days to face the loss. I did not return to England at the time and on

later reflection realised I should have gone to give support to my mother.

When Lorna and I were in England at different times we invited my mother to come and live with us in Brisbane. She graciously declined at each occasion until a crisis arose. My mother had a lease on a flat in a large Victorian terrace house in Eastbourne. There were three lessees: the one on the top floor had just died and the second one was considering selling her lease to the owner of the house. The owner was keen to sell the house and so was putting pressure on my mother to sell by turning off the water and other unfair acts. Richard Carter, a friend and a quantity surveyor with whom we had visited on different occasions, rang me from the UK to tell me the urgency of the situation. I took the next plane to the UK with the plan to invite my mother to join us and to work with Richard to deal with the difficult situation she was in. As he was a quantity surveyor he had a good idea of the value of the lease and that the offer being made was inadequate by a wide margin.

My mother accepted our invitation and so I then embarked on the lengthy process of getting a permanent resident visa on the family reunion basis. She was entitled to enter under that scheme as I was the only son and living relative she had. But as

she was 88 years of age the doctors working for the Australian Immigration Dept in Sydney were concerned that she would be a burden on the Australian health system. There were repeated requests coming from Australia to my mother for medical tests and examinations to be carried out even though the doctors in Eastbourne had repeatedly informed the Sydney doctors that she was in good health. One UK doctor on receiving another request from Sydney said in exasperation , "Don't they trust us!"

Richard achieved a reasonable price for the lease and eventually the residence visa was granted and so once that was achieved we packed up the flat and left for Australia. We got to Brisbane in time for Christmas in 1994.

Mum naturally missed Sussex where she was born and brought up. My cousin, Marion, and her husband lived in Eastbourne and Marion cycled to my mother's flat to visit her each week. Mum settled in well to life with Lorna and myself and our many friends and all the comings and goings in the house. She joined us regularly at church and was touched by the warmth of the welcome she received and the openness of the church building. She was a regular participant of the Meeting Place, a group of older people who met weekly for a variety of activities.

My mother had a way of opening people's

hearts. On Lorna's 60th birthday there was a large number of well wishers enjoying the occasion at our home. Mum was in bed in the guest room suffering from heart failure. A number of friends went to see her and talk. One younger woman shared the news of her engagement first to my mother before anybody else.

Two days later my mother died. Lorna and I stayed beside her during this time before her death and our church minister, Rev Alan O'Hara, made several visits. On one visit while I was there he said, in response to something my mother had said, "Jesus loves you." My mother replied, "Yes I know, but I have not loved him." I don't think either Alan or I replied to that. Alan asked her if she would like to pray and she said, "Yes." So we prayed together and at that point I believe from what she whispered, as talking was difficult, that she sought Jesus' forgiveness. I was witnessing a miracle and it is an experience that remains with me.

Incident 13

Love at first sight

It was in London that I first met Lorna in a lunch buffet queue. She had just arrived from India where she had been working with MRA. There was a large crowd of people at the meal in 12A Charles Street, London W1, a home leased by MRA on a long-term lease. Lorna and I didn't talk at any length but I knew she was the woman I wanted to marry. Before this fortuitous meeting, however, I had proposed some years earlier to another girl, but that had not worked out and also, as mentioned earlier, I had had a relationship with an attractive journalist which I had broken off.

Later Lorna and I worked together on a weekly news journal, which MRA was producing at the time. Not always plain sailing - sometimes I needed as editor to cut some of Lorna's copy. Sometime later after discussing my feeling for Lorna with a few close friends and praying about it, seeking God's guidance, I proposed to her. Lorna graciously declined in a letter, saying that she did not feel at this time it was right and therefore felt she had to say no. I was

devastated. And I started to question the validity of faith in the leading of God. Can God really guide in the important questions of life? The answer seemed



Lorna in London *photo: Strong*

to me to be "no". That did not lessen my commitment to work with MRA - that remained - but one of the bulwarks of my faith, the confidence in God's leading, was shaky.

Sometime later a friend, whom I had consulted earlier, asked, "What is troubling you?" He knew of course but I told him all the same.

He then asked me three questions.

"Did you have guidance from God to ask her?" I said, "Yes." "Did you have guidance when to propose?" I said, "Yes." "And did you have guidance what to say?" I answered, "Yes." He then said, "You have obeyed what God has asked of you. What Lorna does about it is between her and God."

Strange as it may sound I found this totally freeing and satisfying. I began to realise that life is not about results and achievements but about obedience, obedience to God. This new thinking challenged my ambition- and accomplishment-centred life.

Six months later I was invited to India by Rajmohan Gandhi and Russi Lala to join them in the editing of the weekly newsmagazine, *Himmat*¹⁵ (Courage), based in Bombay, now Mumbai. This English-language paper sought to address the current issues in India and the wider world from an ethical perspective, rather than from a partisan political point of view. It sought not to take sides, promoting who or what party or group was right in a given situation, but sought what may be right and what could be the way forward. It had an influential readership, particularly in educational, professional, business and political circles.

I prayed for Lorna every night. I believed

that at some point things would change and that we would be married. Early in 1973 I felt the time was coming when I should propose again. She was then back in Australia. I had not seen her since I left the UK, except for a few minutes at a friend's apartment when she very briefly passed through Bombay on her way to Australia.

In April 1973 I wrote her a letter proposing marriage. She was living in Melbourne. I cannot recall what I said except I expressed my love for her and that I was planning to visit Australia. Airmail letters usually took four to six days between Bombay and Melbourne in those years. After the seventh day I felt that her response must be "no". If it were "yes" she would surely have phoned or cabled me, I thought. On the tenth day she phoned me in the *Himmat* office and said, "Yes, with all my heart!" The letter had only reached her on the tenth day.

Lorna writes:

"Saying 'no' to Brian when he first proposed marriage was about the hardest thing I've ever had to do. I realised that such an answer would hurt deeply, when one has honoured you with their love, and you turn it down. The proposal was a surprise. For many days I tried to find what God really meant for me. My thought was that it could be right at some time but I needed to say 'no', so that he would

be free.

"Two years later back in Brisbane I was asked by Ron Howe¹⁶ to be part of a group to speak in an evening church service. I was speaking on 'Thy will be done'. In preparation for this I asked God if there were any places in my life where his will was not being done. Almost at once two definite areas were shown to me where through fear I like to be in control and God said trust me. So I shared these thoughts with a friend and together we prayed and I committed myself to trust God. Next morning in my hour of quiet and Bible study I wrote in my notebook, 'You are meant to marry Brian.' I was stunned. I was quite sure having seen what effect my refusal had had that I was the last person he'd ask. For three weeks this thought was there but I couldn't accept it. Then I decided to say 'yes' to God and a marvellous thing happened. He in return gave me a deep love for Brian. It was overwhelming.

"I told my parents what my guidance from God was . Six months later at Christmas Ron Howe asked what I saw for the coming year. I replied to go to Melbourne to work with MRA and that I would be getting married. Now Brian had no idea that all this had happened in my heart. I might add that I didn't find it easy to be patient and trust God to move him in the right direction.

"So when in May 1973 I received a letter from Brian proposing marriage and saying also whether or not I said yes that he was coming to work in the Australian region I had no hesitation in saying 'Yes'. I rang him in Bombay, no letter this time. His letter had taken ten days so I could well



Our wedding, October 6 1973

imagine he would be getting a bit concerned."

There were eight of us in the office when Lorna phoned, late on a Saturday afternoon. Francis Matthew, a young Indian on the staff, quickly went downstairs to order eight Coca-Colas from the man who daily sold drinks outside our office. A couple of minutes later the man returned with only one Coca-Cola bottle. When asked why, he replied that Francis

had said, "ek Coke" (ek is one in Hindi and is pronounced 'aik'). He quickly returned with a further seven. Such was the auspicious start to our engagement.

Naturally I wanted to go to Australia as soon as possible. But responsibilities with *Himmat* prevented an immediate departure. When it was clear to go I told Lorna I was coming, but then things would change, as is often the case in the news business. I was acting editor while the editor was overseas and he announced he would be returning later than expected. This was due to scheduling important interviews for the paper. This happened twice and so I did not arrive in Brisbane until 14 August. On both occasions as a signal of my sorrow for the delay I sent Lorna roses, but nevertheless the minister of her church asked Lorna whether I was a figment of her imagination! Eventually I arrived in Brisbane. Lorna met me at the airport. I placed the engagement ring on her finger. She asked me what I would like to do and I replied, "Let's go to the countryside." So we drove to the top of Mt Coot-tha, the famous Brisbane landmark. Six weeks later we were married and I began life in Australia. Our wedding was at the Anzac Memorial Methodist Church in Indooroopilly, Brisbane and the reception afterward in the spacious garden of the home of Professor and Mrs Hartley Teakle.

Noelle Kable generously loaned us her new car for our honeymoon which we spent at Dickie Beach at Caloundra in a holiday home loaned us by Lex and Beryl Moyle. My parents were not able to come to our wedding but my mother visited us in Australia and my father when we were in India in 1975.

Lorna came from a big family and had always hoped for a large family herself. As the months and years went by we found that we could not realise this hope and had to face the sad reality that my sperm count was too low and could not be raised sufficiently.

Incident 14

Meeting Mother Teresa in Calcutta

In April the following year after our marriage we both were invited back to India for twelve months and I took up my work again on *Himmat*. Stan Hazell, a UK TV journalist friend, visited us for two to three weeks in that year. Stan at that time was news editor of HTV in Bristol, an independent TV station. He had come to assist with the MRA work in India and he and I went on a journey across the country meeting people and speaking at gatherings. In Calcutta, now Kolkata, we stayed in the home of a businessman. At seven o'clock on the first morning at breakfast Stan announced, following his morning quiet time, that we should see Mother Teresa. I thought it a crazily impossible proposal. Stan was nevertheless convinced and rang up the hospice. The nun who answered the phone informed him that if we got to the Khalighat home by ten minutes to nine we could meet Mother Teresa. At that hour of the day even taxis moved slowly in Calcutta, but we reached there in time, just.

We were welcomed by a nun of the order and ushered into a small room with whitewashed walls, a small table and chairs. On time Mother Teresa entered, making us feel by the warmth of her welcome that we were her long-lost sons. We said we were working with MRA and she told us she supported it and had been on the Calcutta invitation committee for the MRA musical, *Song of Asia*. Two things she said, in the twenty minutes we had with her, remain in my mind.

One day she was washing, caring for and praying with a woman, she told us, who had just been brought in off the streets and was dying. Just before her death the woman took Mother Teresa's hand and said, "Thank you, thank you," and then died. Mother Teresa asked herself, "Will I, when I lay dying with my last breath, thank someone or will I be thinking only of myself?" She told us she found this dying woman's attitude a great challenge.

Family life was, she said, the strength of India. Although millions live on the streets in India's cities, they live as whole families. She had observed in the West however that people who live on the streets often do so because they have been thrown out of their families or have a drug addiction or there has been some division in the family. I remain challenged by her life and what she said to us.

Incident 15

'This could cost me an arm and a leg'— radio journalist

Lorna and I were back in Brisbane in 1988-89 when the media unmasked high level police and government corruption. The public were stunned by the revelations. The Public Enquiry into Police Corruption, headed by Tony Fitzgerald QC, not only shook the mineral rich State, but brought into sharp focus questions many Australians had about the soundness of State administrations and of Australian society in general. The Enquiry, which had the powers of a Royal Commission, led to the jailing of the Police Commissioner and other officers and also of three government Ministers.

In his report Fitzgerald called on the Queensland government to make far-reaching administrative and legal changes, but warned that the Enquiry had only uncovered the tip of the iceberg. His primary task was the prevention of future corruption and so he set about exposing the system and its

"social culture". But he warned that "propriety and ethical behaviour were difficult to encapsulate in legal and structural terms" saying that "the ultimate check on maladministration is public opinion".

It so happened during the Enquiry we had a group of friends join us for breakfast on a weekly basis at 6.30 a.m. The idea was that each of us before breakfast would have a time of quiet for personal insight and growth and to seek inspiration. One morning in my quiet time the conviction grew in my mind that we should make a public stand, not only against corruption, but for integrity, personally and publicly. The result of this was the launching of the grassroots initiative, *Our Decision for a Corruption-free Queensland*. It aimed to challenge dishonest community practices and provided a focus for the expression of public opinion. Dr Roger Duke, a lecturer at the University of Queensland and one of the breakfast group, said in the press: "We members of the public are tired of sitting back and expecting the politicians to do everything. It's up to us Queenslanders to do something as well."

Starting with ourselves we called on individuals to commit themselves to a five-point "super honesty" programme, as Perth's Radio 6PR put it.

The points were:

1 To make no false claim on any expense

account, government or private;

2 To pay taxes honestly;

3 To offer no bribe to win administrative favour, personally or on behalf of a company or business;

4 To accept no bribe or inducement to give favourable treatment;

5 And finally, if a corrupt or dishonest practice had been entered into, to make appropriate restitution.

Some in our breakfast group found this final point difficult to accept. Surely it is sufficient to make a commitment for integrity in the future, they argued. Would they be satisfied if the police commissioner, charged with serious corruption, took the same approach and pledged himself to integrity in the future, in effect saying the past is past, I responded. They agreed that that would not be satisfactory and so the fifth point was unanimously agreed to in our joint commitment.

Our Decision for a Corruption-free Queensland reached the public through churches and the press and radio. In it we said: "Any system, however well designed, is only as effective as the people who operate it and the community environment in which

it functions. In the final analysis the only effective and durable answer to corruption is incorruptible men and women."

Some who pledged themselves to the five points contacted tax or social security offices to make restitution. I was interviewed by an ABC radio commentator. He asked who had signed the *Decision*. Had the Premier signed it? I told him so far not, but all Queensland Parliamentarians were being approached and then asked him if he would sign it himself. His comment on air was, "This could cost me an arm and a leg."

With the support of Deputy Opposition Leader Tom Burns, who later became Deputy Premier, we visited or wrote to all State MPs, outlining what we saw as basic to public integrity. At the height of the corruption debate in the State Parliament two Government MPs commented on the relevance of the *Decision* and committed themselves to it. The Moderator of the Uniting Church in Queensland, the Rev John E Mavor, sent the declaration, signed by himself, to all parishes in Queensland, urging his fellow ministers to invite members of their congregations to take it on and inform their local State MPs.

News of this initiative in Queensland became known in other parts of the world. In 1991 when we

were in Taiwan we were asked on many occasions by our friend and colleague Liu Ren-Jou to speak on the campaign and what lay behind it. The Queensland initiative proved to be the laboratory experiment for a much larger action in Taiwan called *The Clean Election Campaign*, aimed at the corruption of vote-buying. More of that later but these two campaigns illustrated for me the hinge connection between personal integrity and effective public action in challenging corruption.

As one MP graphically put it to me, "Corruption doesn't start with \$30,000 bribes. If we are to tackle corruption we need absolute moral standards. Relative standards haven't a chance."

Incident 16

New look on money

Our first visit as a couple to East Asia was in 1983 and since then we have made 11 visits to Hong Kong, mainland China, Taiwan, Japan and Korea. In 1990 we were invited by Liu Ren-Jou and his wife Grace to Taiwan to live and work with them in the MRA programme for up to a year.

To help prepare ourselves we went to a weekly two-hour Mandarin course at the University of Queensland. While the course helped, we found on arrival in Taiwan in March 1991 that Taiwan Mandarin often sounded different from the Beijing Mandarin we had been taught. Although we had already been to Taiwan a number of times, we found living with a Chinese family a totally new experience. Taiwan is a modern and affluent society and so on a surface level there are great similarities with Australia. But below the surface the differences are considerable. Aware of this, I tried not to see things from a Western perspective or feel that the Western way of doing things was necessarily the right or best way. That holding back from comment

however does not always work, as I soon learnt.

Ren-Jou and I had a series of appointments in the centre of Taipei. As Ren-Jou parked the car outside a tall building I noticed it was directly beside a fire hydrant. I did not say anything, thinking that the rules are probably different in Taipei and who am I as a visitor to criticise Ren-Jou's driving and parking. We had a good 45 minutes with the person we had come to see in the tall building but when we returned there was no car!

Chalked on the pavement was a message from the police saying that the car had been taken to the vehicle pound, at the edge of Taipei some distance away, and that it could be released on payment of the equivalent of A\$75, a goodly sum in 1991. The question Ren-Jou faced was how to get to the pound. Fortuitously a friend, Wang Hsu-kuang, saw us standing puzzled on the kerbside as he came by on his motor scooter. He stopped and, when he understood our predicament, offered to take Ren-Jou to the pound, riding pillion.

The next morning, reflecting on this incident in my quiet time, I felt I should offer to pay half the cost of the fine. This was not some act of generosity but a response to my failure to tell Ren-Jou of the fire hydrant. I saw that I was equally responsible for what happened to the car. So there is

more to cultural sensitivity than simply being non-critical.

Ren-Jou saw the humour in the whole story. It also gave our relationship a deeper note. We were free to speak honestly to each other on any matter without inhibition. This was important because two major issues arose shortly afterwards.

A friend had given us a generous gift and Lorna used part of it to have her eyes tested and buy a new pair of glasses. In Chinese culture the family generally expects that any money given to or earned by an individual is not only an individual's but is also regarded potentially as part of the family's income and finances. In the minds of Grace and Ren-Jou we were not guests in their home but were members of the family. So Grace who looked after the Liu family finances was upset by what she perceived as our lack of openness. Coolness grew in our relationships, until one day Ren-Jou said, "Grace, you will have to tell them what you feel," which she did. We then understood what family expectations are in the Chinese culture and trust was restored. From then on all money coming into the Liu household, whether from ourselves, Ren-Jou and Grace or the two children, was made potentially available for the needs of the family or member of the family. Grace kept a record of incomings and outgoings. It worked well.

In the wider sphere, business and industry were rapidly expanding and Taiwan was the new "Asian tiger". Some businesses exploited employees or pursued profit without integrity, by cutting corners or bribery. Dr Casper Shih, President of the China Productivity Center, whom Ren-Jou knew, believed strongly however that industry and business needed an ethical basis. We went to see him and out of these discussions, Dr Shih agreed that the CPC and MRA combine to hold a conference to address the ethical issues in Taiwan's economic expansion.

Ren-Jou put this proposal to the MRA board confidently believing he would have support, but found the board members had questions about the timing of the conference and the arrangement with Dr Shih, whom they did not know. Ren-Jou was devastated by the board's response which he saw as lack of support and understanding of a potentially important development.. As a consequence the next day I went to see Jack Huang, a partner in Jones Day, the international legal firm, and an advisor to the MRA board. I knew Jack reasonably well as Lorna and I had stayed with him and Shelly, his wife, earlier. I said to him that in a God-led work based on voluntary commitment, such as MRA, I believed people who make a criticism of a proposal, which he had done, have an obligation to find the right course of action. Jack responded and said that he would like

to meet Shih and if together we decided to go ahead, he would work with Ren-Jou and Shih in organising the conference. With the chairman of the MRA board, Jack, Ren-Jou and I talked with Shih and his colleagues and it was agreed to go ahead.

Sun Yun-suan, who as Prime Minister had initiated Taiwan's industrial expansion and speedy growth into a modern economy, opened the conference with a powerful and uncompromising call for integrity. I was honoured to be among a panel of speakers who then followed. I recall that Casper Shih amusingly compared the industrialisation of Taiwan to a personal computer. The hardware was the factories, equipment, construction work etc and the software was the moral factor, human relationships and integrity. A computer needed both hardware and software to function: similarly it was so with a nation. Do not forget the human factor in business and industry, he said.

Two businessmen, who had attended the conference, some months later told Ren-Jou that they were fearful of Mafia-style influence in Taiwan politics unless the practice of vote-buying was curtailed. Ren-Jou told me that the next day "during a time of reflection I had a strong inner thought to initiate a clean election campaign."

He brought together a group of lawyers, aca-

demics and journalists to consider taking this on. They all said that it was a good idea and necessary but they were too busy to be involved. He also discussed it with the Moral Re-Armament team in Taiwan. The team decided over the next five years to go all out to promote a clean election campaign in all elections, national, state and local.

To give a flavour of the public response I refer to the comments of the leading Taiwan magazine, *Global Views Monthly* (July 1993). In an interview with two of the Campaign's leaders, Liu Ren-Jou and Jack Huang, a legal adviser to several major enterprises, the magazine reported: "It was Liu who conceived the idea of launching the 'anti-corruption movement'. Some friends criticised him as a Don Quixote but he persevered. His conviction that 'human nature could be changed' inspired others in MRA to join him." The article added that Huang's tactical skills had won the full cooperation of 68 other civic groups who also became partners in the campaign.

The magazine reported that in response to criticism, Liu said, "We are not engaged in a political struggle. Indeed, all those running the Campaign were personally committed to maintain political neutrality; seek no personal advantage or gain; generate no hatred towards the corrupt but inspire love of country as the motive for ac-

tion; and run the public demonstrations peacefully and with joy." As the weeks went by the impact of *The Clean Election Campaign* grew and became "a raging fire", the magazine said. Some 670,000 voters, in signed statements mailed to the MRA office, committed themselves not to accept a bribe for their vote or vote for any candidate who offered a bribe. The results of the elections for the Legislature were hailed by the media generally as a miracle of the Clean Election Campaign or the victory of people power.

Similar Campaigns were undertaken in Brazil (1994), Kenya (1997, 2002 and 2007), the Solomon Islands (2006), Sierra Leone (2007) and Ghana (2008).

Incident 17

Writing 'Corruption: Who Cares?'

All this led me to believe that I should write about the people leading this fight to heighten integrity and reduce corruption. I had not written a book before although I had written many news and feature articles. I was in India in 2001 and in Taiwan the following year. This gave me the opportunity to interview many people committed to the fight for integrity in business and politics, notably Dr Ma Ying-Jeou, then Mayor of Taipei, now President of Taiwan. The action he took against corruption when Justice Minister in 1994 was described by *The China Post* as "like an earthquake...rocking the main opposition Democratic Progressive Party but also the Kuomintang (the governing party)." He told me that the Clean Election Campaign and his crackdown campaign as Justice Minister had interacted well. On returning from Taiwan I started writing the book which was ultimately entitled, by Lorna's inspiration, *Corruption: Who Cares?*

Sometimes in Australia we think corruption is committed chiefly overseas by foreigners. Tony Fitzgerald, speaking on the 20th anniversary of the

release of his 1989 Queensland police corruption report, thinks differently. Commenting on government and politics in Queensland today in 2009, he said:

"Ethics are always tested by incumbency. Secrecy was re-established by sham claims that voluminous documents were 'Cabinet-in-confidence'. Access (to Ministers) can now be purchased, patronage is dispensed, mates and supporters are appointed and retired politicians exploit their political connections to obtain 'success fees' for deals between business and government.

"Neither side of politics is interested in these issues except for short-term political advantage as each enjoys or plots impatiently for its turn at the privileges and opportunities which accompany power."

One day I was talking with a friend, Bruce Robertson, who said his company, an Australian firm, had fought against corruption and won. I asked him more and later interviewed Dr Bertus de Graaf, managing director of the company, Ross Mining. Ross Mining had got gold mining underway in the Solomon Islands. At the height of production the Gold Ridge mine produced 30 percent of the Solomons' Gross Domestic Product.

Denis Reinhardt, a Queensland businessman who had been made *persona non grata* in Papua New

Guinea, and the high profile Australian law firm, Slater & Gordon, however worked together to put the mine out of business. They allegedly persuaded some Solomon Islanders by various means to take Ross Mining to the Solomons' High Court in several attempts to stop the mine. The attempts failed.

Eventually Ross Mining responded and charged Slater & Gordon, Reinhardt and his company Merthyr Holding Pty Ltd with Conspiracy, Maintenance and Champerty (an illegal sharing in the proceeds of litigation by the party promoting it). Ross Mining charged the defendants with unlawfully procuring certain Solomon Islanders to commence and prosecute proceedings in the High Court against Ross Mining for collateral and improper purpose and to make "false and defamatory" remarks about Ross Mining in the Australian media and the Australian Stock Exchange in an attempt to close the mine down. Slater & Gordon and Reinhardt only challenged the jurisdiction of the Solomons' High Court to try the case as "the cause of the action" alleged against them they claimed took place outside the jurisdiction of the court. The Chief Justice judged that the High Court had jurisdiction.

Surprisingly Slater & Gordon then made no defence against Ross Mining's charges which were surely a challenge to the defendants' integrity. The Chief Justice ruled in favour of Ross Mining, grant-

ing the mining company damages. Slater & Gordon and Reinhardt then sought to have the Solomons' Appeal Court overturn the High Court's decision. The Appeal Court rejected the appeal and in the words of the Appeal Court Slater & Gordon again "made no attempt to defend the case on its merit".

Slater & Gordon and co-defendants were ordered to pay damages and costs to Ross Mining. Slater & Gordon stated at the time of the settlement with Ross Mining that it regretted that it became involved in proceedings against Ross Mining and acknowledged the harm done to the mining company. The harm done to the mining company was settled but the damage done to the Solomons continued.

As Sir Mekere Morauta, then Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, said in the Papua New Guinea Parliament: "These events were factors in the civil war that all but destroyed our neighbour (ie the Solomon Islands)."

Corruption, conspiracy, secret deals or buying favour are rarely just personal matters but have consequences sometimes affecting nations.

In 2003 Grosvenor Books published *Corruption: Who Cares?* in Australia and in 2006 an updated edition was published in India by St Paul's Publications, the Catholic publishing house. Launched

in Melbourne in 2003 by Henry Bosch AO, formerly head of Australia's National Companies and Securities Commission and Jim Carlton AO, former Federal Minister for Health and Secretary-General of the Australian Red Cross 1994-2001, the book reached a wide audience.

Here are some reviews and comments:

"Message of hope..the courage to challenge the corrupt" *Jeremy Pope, pioneer campaigner against global corruption, co-director of TIRI and formerly a director of Transparency International*

"An important publication...in the fight against corruption...on a global scale." *Ma Ying-jeou, at the time Mayor of Taipei, former Justice Minister and now Taiwan President*

"This small but very powerful book cannot fail to influence your view of life. For many of us, corruption... happens mainly in other countries. This book will change your mind." *Southeast Asian Times, Rod Jensen, Emeritus Professor of Economics, University of Queensland*

"Brian Lightowler details the culture of corruption...through people who have stared it down." *Insights, Rod Ellis*

"A very important contribution on a subject which financial experts and economists totally ignore." *R M Lala, Indian author of The Creation of Wealth and other books*

"I would like the book to be read by every student of management and public administration, every decision-maker and leader of civil society"

Disha, V C Viswanathan

Incident 18

'Winds of forgiveness blow strong'

The Solomon Islands, rich in gold, timber and other resources, has gone through difficult years since 1998 when violence on a large scale erupted between the Guadalcanalese and the Malaitans. In 2003 the Solomon Islands Government accepted the offer of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific island nations to assist in restoring order, effective governance and justice in the country. RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands) under the agreement was to disarm the fighting groups, help re-establish the courts and the rule of law, rebuild the police force which had been divided within itself by the fighting, advise on matters of economic reform and growth and assist government departments with training and equipment.

Its purpose was not however to deal with the misunderstanding, hatred and division, which had precipitated the violence and remained entrenched in many quarters. That remained the responsibility of the Solomon Islanders.

Realising this, a group of leading Solomon Islanders organised a conference in 2004 in the capital, Honiara, with the support of Initiatives of Change, Australia (IofC, formerly MRA). Their stated aim was "to help rebuild personal and public integrity and ethnic harmony in the Solomon Islands." The Solomon Islanders invited a number of Australians, including myself, and other overseas people.

Two things struck me at the conference: the wind of forgiveness between people who had greatly suffered in the violence¹⁷ and the determined fight for integrity in business and politics. Joseph Wong, a Malaysian logger, said that in 2000 he had decided to break with dishonesty. He paid 1.5 million kina (US\$600,00) to the Papua New Guinea Government which he estimated he owed in unpaid tax. He also dispensed with guns as reserve tools in business negotiations. He bought 200 copies of *Corruption: Who Cares?* to distribute to loggers in the Solomons.

Shortly after the 2004 Solomon Islands conference, Lorna and I put our hands up to organise an IofC international conference in Brisbane in the following year, 2005. At a meeting in our home sometime later eight Queenslanders joined us in taking on corporately this responsibility. Towards the end of 2004, as conference preparations were getting more demanding, Lorna became ill. We then

asked Dr Lesley Bryant, a microbiologist from the Gold Coast, if she would take on being conference coordinator - a vital role in overseeing conference preparation and anticipating the needs of people coming from many different countries and cultures. She said, "I can't think of any good reason why I shouldn't." And so took on the role. Lorna, thankfully, recovered and continued playing a major role in conference preparations.

The conference was largely a live-in conference, attended by 230 people from 14 nations, and ran for four days, 1-5 July 2005 at the University of Queensland. Its title was *Together Making a Difference*.

How do we make a difference? The conference drew on the experience of people with answers to hatred and violence through reconciliation or to corruption through openness and a commitment to integrity.

Among those I invited to attend were Dr Mohamad Abdalla, Director of Islamic Studies at Griffith University, and Col Dillon, whistle-blower at the Fitzgerald Enquiry into police corruption in Queensland.

Dr Abdalla said at the conference, "A week

after 9/11, our mosque was burnt down. I think the first in the world to be burnt down. Emotions were running high. On that day I was meant to be the



Col Dillon



Dr Mohamad Abdalla

spokesman for the community. I had to deal with the Muslim community and also the media and everybody else. The attitude from our side was, 'We forgive whoever did it.' You can't move forward until you learn to forgive. You can't build communities until you learn how to forgive."

Col Dillon served in the Queensland Police Service for 36 years, becoming Australia's highest ranking Aboriginal police officer. He recounted being offered - and refusing - substantial bribes in return for allowing criminal activity to continue. In the late 1980s he was the first police officer who voluntarily testified before the Fitzgerald Enquiry; his evidence proved to be a watershed for the Enquiry leading to the jailing of the Police Commis-

sioner for 14 years and the imprisonment of other officers. At the time of the conference he was a Strategic Adviser to the Queensland Government on Indigenous policy. He told the conference: "My career in the police force was finished after I gave that evidence. For months later not one of the senior police officers came near me to see how I was managing. I was getting death threats at work and in phone calls. I stayed right up until April 2001, but I was frozen out. I had no job to do.

"People who knew me came to me and said, 'That was a very brave and courageous thing you did. How did you sustain yourself and continue right up to 2001 before you retired?' I said, 'It was not of myself. It wasn't Col Dillon. It was from the power above, from my God, who sustained me, who gave me the strength and courage at the time when the call came to give evidence. If that hadn't been so I never would have been able to do what I did.'

"I can tell you though that Queensland is far worse today than it ever was pre-Fitzgerald (*refer also pp 96-97*). I make this appeal to you as fellow citizens. We are the watchdogs of our society. We have to have the courage of our convictions, to stand up whenever and wherever we see the slightest bit of corruption or even a suspicion of corruption."

A large delegation of Solomon Islanders came

to the conference, including the Governor of the Central Bank, Rick Houenipwela; Joseph Wong, managing director of a major timber company; Joses Sanga, then Opposition spokesman on Foreign Affairs and the core group of young men and women who took on the Clean Election Campaign in the Solomon Islands the following year.

Incident 19

Finding a hole in my heart

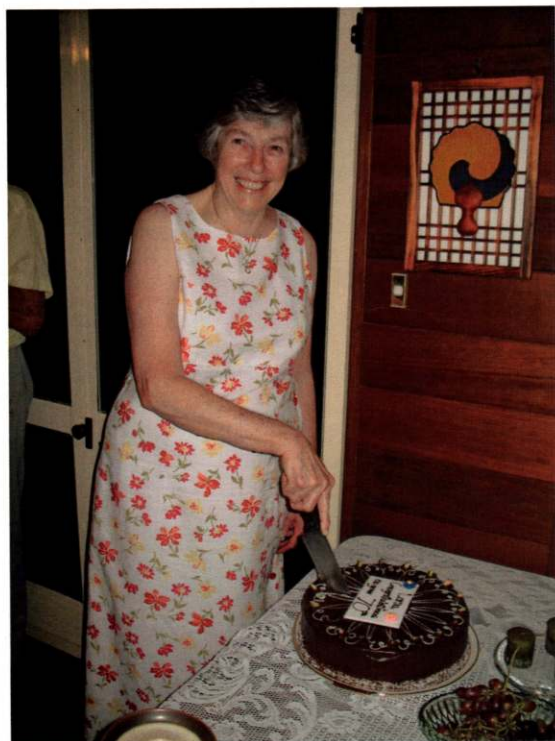
Driving back to Brisbane from Melbourne, just past Goondiwindi, I was about a 100 metres behind a car when my eyes suddenly saw two cars on two roads on top of one another. I pulled over to the roadside. After about three minutes my sight corrected itself and from thereon to Brisbane Lorna took over the driving. This was 2 November 2003.

Medical specialists believed that the incident had been caused by a clot reaching the eye from a hole in the heart, which unknown to me had been there since my birth.

In June 2007 I was climbing the 300 metre Mt Boulder near Gympie with a hikers' group from our church. I became quite exhausted in the climb. A doctor in our party said that my pulse was very faint and later hardly noticeable even in the carotid artery. Fortunately there was no damage to the heart. However it was a warning sign that what in the past was normal and easily achievable was no longer the

case. Not being able to scale a 300 metre hill when I had climbed on many occasions to heights ten times, even 15 times as high, in the Alps was a real wake up call. I could no longer do the sort of things that had been natural to me all my life. I had to come to terms that age had caught up with me. I felt I needed to learn not to push myself but pace myself.

In April 2007 Lorna celebrated her 70th birth-



day at a large party in our home.

To mark the occasion I wrote and recited this poem:

*Nigh forty years on from when we first met
No fairer sight my eyes had yet seen.
And where you may wonder was that to have been
In London's old town would be a fair bet.*

*In Mayfair we met in London's West End
From Mumbai by letter I asked for her heart
From Melbourne her joyful reply she did send
In Brisbane our wedding—a truly great start.*

*Fast forward the years to twenty O seven
Lorna's now 70, true love of my life,
Marriages truly are born in high heaven
Then let us toast Lorna, my wonderful wife.*

Our friends in Taiwan and Hong Kong had sent a birthday gift of A\$4000 inviting us both to visit Taiwan and HK for a break and the chance to see them all again. We could not make the journey to Taiwan that year but we went in April 2008, arriving in Kaohsiung, the large city and port in the south of the island.

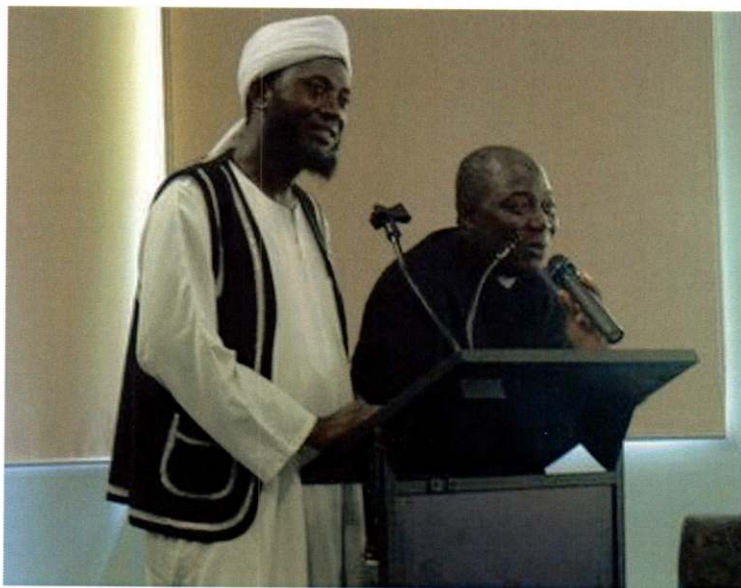
Incident 20

Just as his prophet had led him to forgiveness...

In November 2008 we were hosts to Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye from Nigeria for five days during their three and half weeks' visit to Australia. These two men had been violent militia leaders, experienced in fighting to defend their respective religions at all costs but were now non-violent warriors for reconciliation and peace. Their story of reconciliation, after years of bloodshed, is told in the short film and DVD, *The Imam and the Pastor*. In six public meetings in Brisbane and Toowoomba, people found their openness to one another refreshing as was their readiness to deal fully and frankly with difficult questions related to the Bible or the Koran. Asked what in each of their religions challenged them to end their enmity and work for reconciliation, they said, "We don't have full agreement on beliefs and values of course, but we are children of Abraham and sons of Adam and as such have a duty to each other as fellow humans."

Says Imam Ashafa, "Peace-building has been hard. We are held in suspicion in some parts of our communities. The biggest enemy we have to overcome is ignorance.

"The Koran teaches that Islam is inclusive and acknowledges other religions. All those who believe in God have their reward. Mischievous religious leaders with the help of political interference have led people to follow hate and twisted the teachings. We hope people move their thinking from *us or them* to *us in them and them in us*."



Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor Wuye at a meeting in Brisbane

Pastor Wuye responded. "The Bible says to pursue peace with all men, and holiness without which we cannot see God. When Ashafa sought to show respect and compassion and seek forgiveness I was troubled and wept, 'How can I forgive this enemy of mine who has killed my countrymen and caused the loss of my right hand in the fighting?' Just as his prophet had led him to forgiveness, so did Jesus challenge me. Before we had programmed people to train and to kill as militia. Now we had to go back to our true teaching and re-programme people. We are teaching people through radio broadcasts and mediation meetings. This has brought a huge reduction in violence."

Incident 21

Abseiling into the future

Sometimes I read about my contemporaries in the obituary columns of newspapers. My generation of the 1920s and 1930s is passing. From the time of ancient Rome men and women of the older generation believe their experiences hold the key to solving the challenges facing the generations of their sons and daughters and grandchildren.

As a student of history I would say believing that is a risky temptation.

Nevertheless the experience of an unknown author still speaks to me after more than 1200 years. At our wedding service we chose the Irish hymn he wrote. The fourth verse goes:

*Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
thou mine inheritance now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
high king of heaven, my treasure thou art.*

Sometimes experiences of people of one generation can speak to people of another. "Just as his prophet had led him to forgiveness, so did Jesus challenge me," said Pastor Wuye.

These are powerful words: they signal the right approach to healing the division between the world of Islam and the West. Greater secularisation and less religion, as some in the West today urge, will not bring a healing or an answer. Rather people who turn to the roots and true expression of their faith and practise it will bridge the dangerous gaps in today's world.

Life is about abseiling into the unknown. All of us are abseiling into the unknown even when we like to believe we are secure and in control. So it is natural sometimes to ask, "Is the rope firm round the rock? Do the two ends reach a ledge below and not hang in space?" But whom do we ask? Financial advisors, medical specialists, politicians, husband or wife, family and friends? All of them perhaps at some point and in some cases. The Incidents I have experienced with Italian journalist Palozzi, Russian journalist Rodionov, American journalist Kuettnner, Kentucky politician Weintraub, Australian nursing sister Lorna Barrett, Taiwanese integrity campaigner Liu, Nigerians Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye, linked to my own life experience, convince me that the "still small voice" speaking through the con-

science and to the human heart and mind is the surest. And worth trying.

It is almost 60 years since I read *The World Rebuilt* as a 20 year-old at university. Three choices faced humanity then - world dictatorship, world war or a world rebuilt in the words of Peter Howard, the author. Today we can be thankful that we have avoided both world dictatorship and world war and we still have the chance to reshape our world if enough of us are ready to commit ourselves.

References and background information

1 British sportsman, journalist, author and playwright and close colleague of Frank Buchman, initiator of Moral Re-Armament . He was for many years one of the most influential columnists in the British press, captain of England's Rugby Football team and member of Britain's 1936 Olympics bobsleigh team. His books sold over four million copies in 12 languages and his plays were produced in London's West End, on New York's Broadway and in many theatres around the world.

2 International movement launched in London in 1938, now known as Initiatives of Change, with the purpose of remaking the world based on moral and spiritual change in people. Its initiator was Dr Frank Buchman (1878-1961). Cardinal Franz König, an outstanding leader of the Catholic Church in the 20th Century, commented, "Buchman was a turning point in the history of the modern world." Later he wrote of Buchman, who was a Lutheran minister, "His great idea was to show that the teaching of Jesus Christ is not just a private affair but has the force to change the whole structure of the social orders of economics, of political ideas, if we combine the changing of structures with a change of heart. In that sense he opened a completely new approach to religion, to the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the modern world." (*qv Frank Buchman: a life*; by Garth Lean, pp 2 and 532; Constable, London 1985)

3 Later President of the National Chamber of Trade

4 The London Shipping Trade Journal *Fairplay* (October 1951) states, "It was reported that several former active members of the self-styled London Port Workers Committee — the body which instigated and 'directed' the dock strike in 1949 which cost Britain losses estimated at well over £200,000,000 — had since enlisted in MRA and had been instrumental, in that capacity, in averting a similar strike this year."

5 In 1964 Grant bought a bloc of land in Kenya and has developed it so that today it is the outstanding 14,000 acre El Karama ranch, wildlife sanctuary and holiday retreat

6 Spurin was later ordained as a Church of England priest, later becoming a canon and served for many years in Kenya

7 In 2001 Avery Dulles was made a cardinal by Pope John Paul II

8 In a wide ranging interview he questioned the Soviet leader on Soviet nationalism, the superiority towards "second-rate" nations, the controlling power of the Soviet Communist Party over the Italian Communist Party and other parties. Not surprisingly Khrushchev attempted to repudiate the questions. But interestingly the full report of the interview was included by Khrushchev in his collected speeches and interviews, *For Victory in Peaceful Competition with Capitalism*.

9 Garth Lean wrote in *Frank Buchman: A Life*, "They (i.e. the Africans) showed *Freedom* first to leaders of the white community, then to the Federal troops who had been despatched there, to the school authorities and to the leaders of the black integration committees.. Among the latter was Mrs L C Bates, then President of the Arkansas NAACP. She had risked her life taking to a white school each morning a group of black children over whose presence there the riots had broken out. After seeing *Freedom*, Mrs Bates came with a party of both races from Little Rock to Macki-

nac. She there decided to visit the Governor of Arkansas, Orval Faubus, who, unknown to her, had also seen *Freedom*. The resulting interview was described by a CBS radio news commentator, summing up the principal events of 1959 as 'possibly the most significant news event of the year which marks the end of a hundred years' civil war in the United States of America.'"

10 Journalist and author of *The Forgiveness Factor, No Enemy to Conquer* and other books on the theme of reconciliation

11 Now chief foreign leader writer on *The Daily Telegraph*

12 A West Australian, journalist, WWII pilot and lifetime sports buff. A former chairman of MRA (Australia) and author of *Met Along The Way*

13 See article headlined Treason most foul by Douglas Eden, Associate Fellow, University of London, in *The Australian* 12 June 2009. He wrote that "the election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, not only ended a long period of Labour rule but also defeated the Left's attempt, led from the trade unions, to transfigure British parliamentary democracy into a form of Soviet state."

14 Fleet Street was where the head offices of the main daily newspapers were located at that time.

15 *Himmat* This English language news weekly sought to address national and international issues, not from a partisan political stand but from an ethical viewpoint. Jayaprakash Narayanan, a national hero and disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, said that *Himmat* had "been keeping the flag of democracy high" during the years of authoritarian rule by Indira Gandhi in the late 1970s. Bernard Levin writing in *The Times* (London) said, "It is significant of Mrs Gandhi's fear of criticism that the Government threatened *Himmat's* printers requiring them to show cause why their presses should not be forfeited for printing *Himmat*." Rajmohan Gandhi and

Russi Lala, both experienced journalists, launched *Himmat* to meet the nationwide public response to a campaign they had led across the country from the south to the north in 1963 to build a clean, strong and united India. Gandhi, eldest grandson of Mahatma, called on his countrymen to rebuild their country through drastic change in people, their attitudes and motives, beginning with themselves.

16 Methodist minister and first chairman of the Wesley Hospital in Brisbane

17 Most powerful of the incidents of forgiveness was the forgiveness a Guadalcanal woman, Mrs Susan Kutiki, showed towards the Malaitan men who had killed and beheaded her cousin brother. She said that she did not know who exactly had done the killing but she had decided to forgive those responsible and did so at the conference. The *Solomon Star* wrote that the killing and the dumping of the decapitated body in the Central Market in April 2000 "was a signal to many Solomon Islanders that their nation was reaching crisis point."

Matthew Wale, an organizer of the conference and a prominent Malaitan accountant, was violently attacked in his home three times by Malaitan armed groups because he had tried to build bridges with the Guadacanaliese. Wale said, "So the conflict has been a personal journey for me, knowing that forgiveness works, though may be not immediately. It takes courage to cross a bridge and even more to build one.

Wale is now a Member of Parliament, Minister of Education and close adviser of the Prime Minister.



*Imam Arhafa, Pastor Wuye and friends
Brisbane 2008*

and life goes on!