



GUEST COLUMN PETER THWAITES

UKRAINE—A FORERUNNER FOR RUSSIA?

In 988, Prince Vladimir of Kiev, the paramount Russian city at the time, had himself and his subjects baptized in the Greek Orthodox Christian faith. That faith remains the national religion of the Russians today, surviving the sacking of Kiev and 200 years of subjugation by the Mongol empire, the shift of the power centre to Moscow, and the 70 years of official atheism under Communism.

In Muscovite Russia the country around Kiev became known as Ukraine ('borderland'). Its western half came for long periods under Polish-Lithuanian and Austro-Hungarian rule. Over the centuries, and conscious of its distinct language, it developed its own separate identity and sense of nationhood. Finally in 1991 the whole of Ukraine, east and west, successfully declared its independence from the disintegrating Soviet Union.

HISTORIC MOMENT

For a Russia enthusiast it has been fascinating to follow last year's democratic revolution in Kiev, now capital of independent Ukraine. For there can be no foreign city closer to the heart of a Russian than Kiev, embodying as it does the Russian concept of the 'near abroad'. The two countries' history is so intertwined that events in one have a deep impact in the other.

For the Ukrainians it has been a moment when politics attained a spiritual level, experienced as people's power. Participants found themselves actors in a historic moment transcending their individual lives. Peace, order and self-discipline characterized the demonstrations in Kiev's Independence Square against the result of a blatantly rigged election.

A young woman wrote from the Square: 'For the whole week I haven't seen any drunk people. I didn't have a drop during the whole time. I don't

want any!... There are no police at all! No violence!... I am at the Square not because I'm for Yushchenko. Not because I am against Yanukovich. I am against being deceived!'

Another from Crimea in Eastern Ukraine rejoiced that people also demonstrated for national unity.

INNER CANDLE

There is a sense of the miraculous when the 'force of truth' suddenly breaks through the weight of fear, stagnation, oppression and corruption. A Swiss colleague who visited Kiev at the beginning of February writes that those who experienced the change 'seem to walk with their heads held a bit higher, with their inner candle burning brighter as they face the many challenges ahead'.

It has been one more breakthrough in Europe's struggle over the last century to establish peace and win democracy for all the peoples of the continent.

Russia too experienced its own miraculous moment when a short-lived coup in 1991 attempted to turn back the reforms of the Gorbachev era. The Moscow crowd that confronted the tanks outside the Parliament building was able, with Yeltsin's decisive leadership, to persuade the army not to obey the conspirators. But Russia's progress towards democracy since then has been difficult and hesitant.

I was born during the Second World War and grew up at the height of the Cold War. This may have influenced me to see the struggle for freedom and democracy as the fundamental theme of contemporary world history. It can be argued that most other reforms depend on an open society and transparent, accountable government.

For those like myself who value what Russia has already given to the world through its culture, spirituality and history, Russia itself remains a crucial 'prize' in moving the world towards a new era of democracy.

History has made Russians appreciative of strong leadership. True, a high order of leadership will be needed for a future of reform and modernization. But it is also time to recognize that Russia's true strength is in all its people, not in 'strong' government, oil wealth, or an imperial posture. This is not a new thought; it permeates one of the greatest novels of world literature, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

For that ultimate strength to be developed, Russia's 150 million people must be allowed to develop, not only in their famous intellectual powers but in their consciousness of the individual responsibility of all citizens, and their ability to exercise it. Russia will find its future strength in the growth of its own democratic society.

VITAL ROLE OF EAST

A lot could depend on Ukraine's path from this point. An honest presidential election (second time around) with honest media coverage has been a significant national achievement. Maintaining the reform momentum at all levels—a tough task—would confirm this advance and draw together the two halves of the country. As a Ukrainian friend wrote to me during the demonstrations, 'The challenge of shifting from the outburst of truth to abiding in truth is a serious issue.'

Much of the impetus for the latest breakthrough came from west Ukraine with its historical links to Central Europe. But the Russian-speaking east of the country will have an equally vital role as intermediary with Russia. A united Ukraine (also known as Little Russia) with a dynamic democratic culture could have a significant effect on the thinking of Great Russia as it finds its way forward.

Peter Thwaites from Sydney, Australia, is a translator and linguist and a former member of the International Council of Initiatives of Change.

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FOR A CHANGE

HEALING HISTORY/TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS/BUILDING COMMUNITY

AFGHANISTAN

RETURN TO KABUL

Let's hear it for St Anns

Lessons from Ukraine

Crossing Mother Teresa and Richard Branson



Next Issue

PROFILE: John Graham of the Giraffe Project
ESSAY: A heart and soul for Europe
FEATURE: After the tsunami

EAR TO THE GROUND

FROM PAUL WILLIAMS IN WALES

JONES BY NAME

When the South African rugby team took the field against Wales at the end of last year, they must have been bemused to learn that no less than six of the opposition were called Jones. It was highly confusing for the commentators as well.

There is a historical reason for the plethora of Joneses in Wales. Traditionally the Welsh had no surnames but used the formula 'David the son of William' (in Welsh *Dafydd ap Gwilym*). After the Union with England in 1536, surnames soon became mandatory. So *Dafydd ap Gwilym* became David Williams. In the same way *Rhys ap Iwan* (*Rhys the son of John*) became Rhys Johns. Over time, Johns became Jones. Because John had been such a popular first name, Jones became the most widely used surname—closely followed by Williams, Hughes, Roberts and so forth.

REVIVAL IN THE PITS

Wales is currently celebrating the centenary of the great religious revival of 1904-5 which started in Loughor, near Swansea, and swept through the country. Its most prominent leader was Evan Roberts, a 26-year-old former miner and blacksmith.

The revival had such an impact on people's lives that public houses had to close and gambling syndicates went out of business. Hymn singing would take place during work breaks in the coal pits—and folklore has it that the pit ponies stopped responding to orders, because they were unused to them being delivered without swear-words.

Ripples of the revival were felt as far away as North-East India. Among those taking part in the centenary celebrations last year were a

group from the Hmar tribe of Mizoram, who had abandoned headhunting after being visited in 1910 by Watkin Roberts, one of those converted in the revival.

POETRY IN ARCHITECTURE

The £106-million Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff, which opened at the end of last year, is home to seven resident companies, including the Welsh National Opera.

The protruding dome of the front façade is dominated by huge letters. At night they shine out brightly; by day they serve as giant windows. The letters form into words, English and Welsh symbolically overlapping. And the words, by the poet Gwyneth Lewis, make poetry. The English words read, 'In these stones horizons sing'. The Welsh words say *Creu gwir fel gwyr o ffurnais awen*—'Creating truth like glass from the furnace of inspiration'.

MOBILE-FREE ZONE

A sizeable chunk of Wales's economy depends on tourism. How we market our attractions is a constant source of interest and debate.

One of the Welsh Tourist Board's latest posters declares, over a stunning view of Snowdonia, 'AREA OF OUTSTANDINGLY BAD MOBILE RECEPTION'. The small print reads, 'Travellers riding up the Snowdon mountain railway may experience communication problems. Your boss can't reach you. Even dogged telesales reps struggle.' One very good reason for escaping to Wales!

WALES FOREVER!

St David's Day is celebrated by Welsh people the world over. Last year President Bush sent a message of goodwill, highlighting Wales's 'innumerable contributions to America's history'. Eleven US presidents came of Welsh ancestry, he continued, and so did 16 of the signatories of

the Declaration of Independence. 'American education owes a debt to the Welsh founders of Harvard and Yale Universities; American arts to Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frank Lloyd Wright, Sinclair Lewis and WD Griffith.' A stone on the stairway to the Washington Monument is inscribed, 'Cymru am byth!—Wales Forever!'

START SMALL

'Do the little things' is one of the few sayings that have been handed down from St David, who died in 589. His words were echoed by another Welshman, Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his Christmas address. He warned about becoming mesmerized (and eventually paralysed) by the 'big picture'. Rather than trying to 'perfect huge plans that will change the world', we ought, he said, to be asking, 'What is the difference I can make, however small, in this place, at this time?'



'Do the little things'

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Let's make poverty history

Two great windows of opportunity will swing open this year in the fight against world poverty, surely one of the most pressing moral issues of our age. Poverty kills 6,000 children each week—the

equivalent of a tsunami a month.

In July, leaders of the G8 group of rich nations meet in Gleneagles, Scotland, under Britain's chairmanship. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, has been leading the charge on debt remission for the world's poorest countries.

Then in September world leaders will gather at the United Nations in New York to assess progress towards the UN's Millennium Goals. These aim to halve the numbers living in absolute poverty by 2015, an ambitious target unlikely to be fulfilled unless decisive action is taken.

Earlier this year, the rock star and Live Aid campaigner Bob Geldorf introduced Nelson Mandela—whom he described in a moment of hyperbole as 'the president of the world'—to a crowd of 22,000 in London's Trafalgar Square. They were campaigning to 'make poverty history'.

'While poverty persists, there is no true freedom,' the former South African President asserted. 'Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right; the right to dignity and a decent life.' Calling on the crowd to make history in 2005, by making poverty history, he said, 'Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation.'

The priorities of the Make Poverty History campaign (www.makepovertyhistory.org) are debt remission, fair trade and an increase of aid from donor nations to 0.7 per cent of their GNP. In his speech, Geldorf put right an omission from this list by referring to corruption, which bleeds the poor of vital investment and resources.

The great faith traditions regard compassion for and solidarity with the poor as a religious imperative. For all of us, our attitude to the deprivation of every fifth person on Earth is an expression of our common humanity. Not to seize this opportunity would be, in Mandela's words, 'a crime against humanity'.

Mike Smith

MIKE SMITH

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VOLUME 18 NO 2

CONTENTS

APR/MAY 2005



COVER PHOTO
Panos
Street in Kabul

04 LEAD STORY
There's more to St Anns, Nottingham, than the crime that has grabbed the headlines, discovers Mary Lean.

08 FIRST PERSON
Shabibi Shah returns to Afghanistan after 22 years of exile.

10 PROFILE
Teame Mebrahtu taught Eritrean teachers under a tree in war conditions. He talks to Stan Hazell.

18 ESSAY
Pamela Hartigan explains what you get when you cross Richard Branson and Mother Teresa.

20 HEALING HISTORY
Juliet Boobbyer writes from the borderlands where Wales and England have fought it out in the past.

24 GUEST COLUMN
Can Ukraine, sometimes known as Little Russia, show the way for its neighbour, asks Peter Thwaites.

12 PHOTO ESSAY
14 REVIEW
15 SINCE YOU ASK
16 PEOPLE
22 A DIFFERENT BEAT
23 REFLECTIONS

FOR A CHANGE

For A Change is about change, how to make it happen and how to live it. We believe that what happens inside people has an effect on the world around them. At the heart of global change lies change in the human heart.

We draw our material from a wide range of sources, including Initiatives of Change. We give a voice to people all over the world who are making a difference. We invite our readers to join them. Your stories are our stories.



Initiatives of Change

Initiatives of Change (formerly Moral Re-Armament) works for moral and spiritual renewal in all areas of life. It was born out of the work of Frank Buchman, an American who believed that change in the world must start in individuals.

Initiatives of Change is open to all. Its starting point is the readiness of each person to make what they know of God and eternal moral values central in their lives. This personal commitment to search for God's will forms the basis for creative initiative and common action: standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love help to focus the challenge of personal and global change.

These ideas have given rise to an international community in more than 70 countries, working in such areas as reconciliation; tackling the root causes of corruption, poverty and social exclusion; and strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations for democracy.

FOR A CHANGE

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COLIN HAYNES (2)

Below left to right: Michelle Campbell, Glen Williams, Maxine Cockett and Lawrence Fearon

Holding hands outside the Chase Neighbourhood Centre (left) and (above) at St Anns Community Orchard

MELU HAWTHORNE

LET'S HEAR IT FOR ST ANNS!

Mary Lean visits an innercity area of Nottingham, England, and meets the residents who are determined to rescue it from guns, drugs and crime.

On the way into the Chase Neighbourhood Centre in St Anns, Nottingham, there are two police notices. They ask for people to come forward with information on the drive-by shooting of 14-year-old Danielle Beccan last October and the stabbing of 18-year-old Shane Miller last January.

The residents of St Anns won't thank me for starting this article in this way. The killings—and that of 16-year-old Brendan Lawrence in February 2002—have made the neighbourhood notorious, and contributed to Nottingham's tagging as the 'gun crime capital' of Britain.

The title is unfair: the Greater Manchester area has nearly twice as many firearms offences per 100,000 inhabitants as Nottingham. Residents feel that the picture of St Anns as a community dominated by gun crime, drug dealing and prostitution is exaggerated by the media. It blights the attempts of young people to break out of the stereotype and thus perpetuates the situation.

'A lot of the young people feel, "I'm from St Anns, I'm not going to get anywhere",' says Maxine Cockett, a youth worker from the

Sycamore Millennium Centre. 'Some of them feel people look at them differently when they say they're from St Anns.' For some who may have been excluded from school since they were 14, the hurdle of getting into college or finding a job is quite high enough without these additional barriers.

Last July, Cockett was one of those behind an event which brought 300 residents onto the streets to 'hold hands around St Anns'. The idea, according to another of those involved, Glen Williams, was to 'create a special day full of positiveness at a time when there was a very negative and depressing feeling in St Anns. Many people living here have a different view: that's why they still want to live here.' The day culminated in everyone holding hands in silence in a huge circle at the heart of the area, committing themselves to making St Anns a better place.

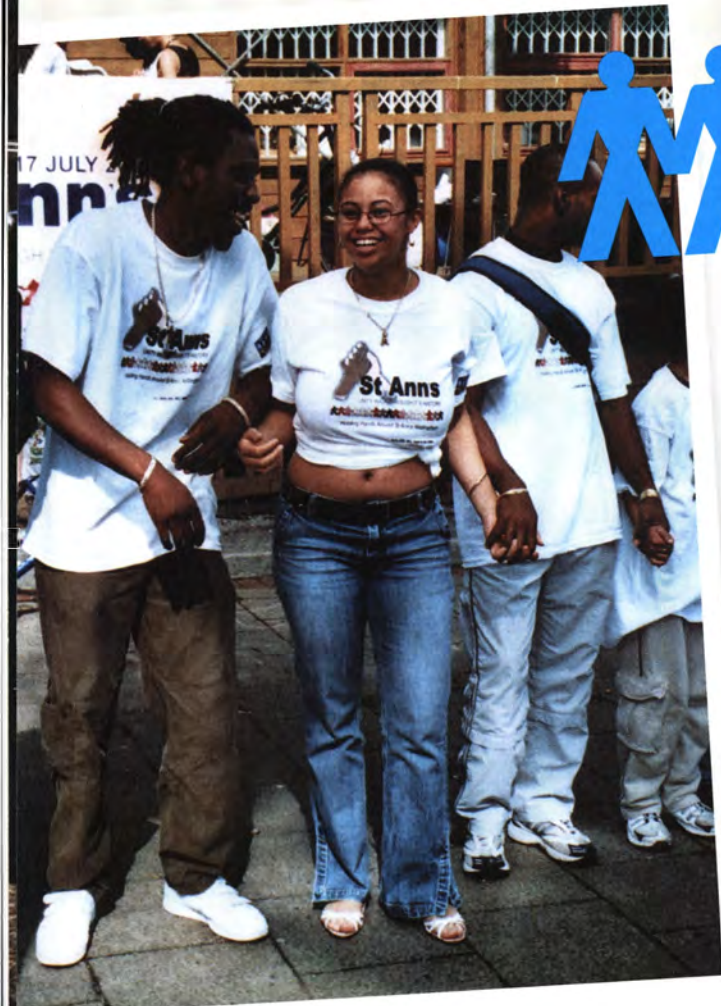
'People found it very moving,' says Cockett. 'One woman came who basically just goes out to the shops and library and then home again. She was overwhelmed by it all. People said we should do it once a year.' The event gained day-long coverage on the local radio station and 'Holding Hands Around St Anns 2005' is scheduled for 25 June.

The day was one of the outcomes of a series of community

dialogues launched by people who had attended conferences at the Initiatives of Change (IofC) centre in Caux, Switzerland. There they had experienced a model of dialogue developed by IofC's Hope in the Cities programme, which emphasizes honest conversation, inclusiveness and personal responsibility. They returned determined to try it out in Nottingham, and four dialogues ensued—three of them in St Anns, in September and November 2003 and in February 2004.

The dialogues took place at the Chase Neighbourhood Centre, a facility at the heart of St Anns built some years ago by local residents. The Centre Coordinator, Steff Webber, was 'dead sceptical' when the idea of the dialogues was first mooted. 'I can remember this guy turning up to book a room. I thought, "Oh God, here we go again. People coming from outside, wanting to do things for people and make them feel so much better, talking and getting nothing done."'

However she came along to the first session, on a Friday evening. 'There were all sorts of people here, sharing all sorts of things. We all came from very different backgrounds, but had very similar experiences in terms of the hardship our parents had been through. My Dad was brought up in the East End of London. I had the same



sort of feeling about what I had heard from him, as other participants did about listening to their own parents, who had been brought up in India. All our parents wanted better things for their children. By the second day I was sold on it.'

Maxine Cockett came along to the second dialogue. 'It didn't really move me on the Friday evening: I'd heard it all before. We had to be back quite early on the Saturday. I was debating, shall I, shan't I?'

The next morning, when the participants were encouraged to talk about themselves, Glen Williams mentioned that he was a police officer. Cockett was horrified. 'I thought, "I'm not sitting near him. What have I come for?"'

In spite of this, as people began to talk, the morning 'started to move' for Cockett. 'By lunchtime I was crying, because I had talked about many things which were close to my heart. Glen came and gave me a big hug. We talked all afternoon.'

'I represented to Maxine the thing that she hated most—the police,' says Williams, who is the Deputy Chair of the Nottinghamshire Black Police Association. 'The trust and confidence which developed between us just knocked me off my feet. So much so that I find I can't lie to her.'

'That afternoon I cried a lot,' says Cockett. 'We all wanted



change. I thought we can do it—we, the everyday people who live in St Anns. Towards the end we talked about aspirations and I said in my head, but it came out aloud, that I had a dream, that it would be good to see us all join hands and work together. We sometimes work in isolation.' The idea of Holding Hands Around St Anns was born.

Cockett was amazed how quickly things began to happen. Participants in the dialogues met regularly to plan, and through them such groups as the Racial Equality Council, Technical Aid for Nottingham Communities, the Nottinghamshire Black Police Association and the Chase Neighbourhood Centre became involved alongside Hope in the Cities.

Seven community centres in different parts agreed to lay on activities during the day, including St Anns Community Orchard, in the heart of Europe's largest expanse of allotments. The Curzon Street Mosque opened its doors to the general community—a rare event. So did the Pakistan Centre and St Augustine's Church and the Sycamore Millennium Centre, where Maxine Cockett works. And while some places—such as the old cinema and bingo palace, chosen for their historic associations—didn't come at the challenge, the organizers have hopes for this year.

In the middle of the afternoon people converged on the Chase Neighbourhood Centre for a celebration of unity, with food, music, crafts, drumming and dragon dancing. Standing outside the centre, listening to the birds and enjoying the sunshine, Williams found himself wondering why, as a policeman, he had been so afraid of St Anns. 'Where are the muggers, the drug dealers, why am I feeling so relaxed?' he asked himself. 'It wasn't until I became involved in this project and met the people who lived here that I realized how unfounded that fear was.'

Steff Webber believes this fear may be one reason why the police have sometimes been heavy-handed in their dealings with St Anns. Observers say there has been a change in police attitudes since the dialogues. A planning meeting in January for this year's event was attended by a community police officer newly appointed to the Chase area. Her first step, she said, would be to go around with a clipboard, asking local residents how they would like to be policed.

Williams believes that the relationships forged at Caux and through the dialogues are key to the Holding Hands process. 'We didn't realize how deep these relationships were until we found ourselves still pulling in the same direction. They're based on coming to terms with things we didn't like about each other, being honest and realizing that individuals all have special skills. So often we lose ourselves in the things we dislike and don't see the good stuff.'

Barrie Brazier of Nottingham's Racial Equality Council agrees. He is so convinced about the process that he has moved to live in St Anns, and is getting further training from Hope in the Cities in facilitating dialogues, with the aim of convening a series with residents' groups in different 'pockets' of St Anns.

Brazier is no stranger to group facilitation, so what's so special about this method? He highlights two elements. First, he says, it's the emphasis on personal involvement: on how I can be involved rather than on what others should be doing, and on experience rather than views. Secondly, where most facilitators are afraid of silence, Hope in the Cities dialogues see it as an opportunity for reflection and

a natural part of a discussion.

'The process is about honest conversation for action: creating an atmosphere where people feel safe and can talk openly, and listen. The

content is secondary to how the group shares and what conclusions they arrive at. Something happens: there's another dimension, which I would call spiritual.'

Young people from the local Youth Inclusion Project (YIP), which works to get teenagers off the streets, have also been involved. Jourdan Blair, who was featured on a regional TV programme in January, was excluded from school as a young teenager. A teacher told him he would end up in prison. YIP helped him to begin to get his life together and now employs him as a youth mentor.

Blair and a friend, Jermain Hollis, offered to help with the refreshments for the first dialogue. 'They participated in the conversation when they wanted to,' says Brazier. 'Their comments fired the residents to want to do something about the situation.'

As Blair and Hollis and their friends chatted with Brazier afterwards, one mentioned that he had a dream of having a trial for Jamaica's national football team. 'Go for it!' was Brazier's response.

With Brazier's help, Blair, Hollis and a third young man, Curtis Shaw, set about raising the £8,000 needed to get themselves to Jamaica for the trials. They called their project, A Dream, Realize It, from the mural on the outside wall of the Chase Centre, which reads: 'Life is a challenge, meet it; a dream, realize it; a game, play it; life is love, share it.' They made it to Jamaica last June. Hollis has been back six times since then to play for the country's under-20s team.

I REPRESENTED THE THING THAT SHE HATED MOST—THE POLICE. THE TRUST WHICH DEVELOPED BETWEEN US JUST KNOCKED ME OFF MY FEET

After 14-year-old Danielle Beccan was shot by a passing car as she returned from Nottingham's Goose Fair, the young people from YIP went into action.

'There was fear on the streets and a lot of potential for youngsters to want to seek revenge,' says Brazier. Blair and others went out onto the streets at night with Brazier to try to calm things down. 'We went to the place where people were leaving flowers for Danielle, to wherever there might be tension, to talk to the youngsters.' The networking between different agencies which had begun through the dialogue made it possible to intervene positively to defuse tension, says Brazier.

Only three months later, Shane Miller was stabbed, plunging St Anns into further trauma. 'Shane's murder was even harder,' says Steff Webber, 'because it seems to have been committed by someone within the community. The kids aren't forgetting this one.'



Barrie Brazier: 'something happens which I would call spiritual'



COLIN HAYNES (4)

In a community where many of the grandparents came to Britain from the same parish in Jamaica, the shock is even greater. 'In the past, a lot of the crime was committed outside the community,' says Maxine Cockett. 'Now a lot of the crime in the community is committed by people who live in the community.'

Cockett has been involved in youth work since she volunteered in a centre for latchkey kids as a 15-year-old in the late Seventies. She knows what it is like to cope with low expectations. 'I left school at 16, with a few qualifications. The teachers just wanted me to be a runner, because I was one of the fastest. At careers advice they told me to be a nurse, because I was a black woman. When I said I might try youth work, they told me to forget it.'

At least, she says, she was able to go to school. A lot of the young people she works with today have been excluded from school at 14 for many reasons, and never returned. The transition back to college is insuperable to many. 'Their clock has changed: many of them don't have school or jobs to get up for. They're afraid of being refused if they go for an interview. And if they do go to college, when they come back home many of their mates are doing nothing. They see it as freedom, even if it is boredom. And for some of their mates, who are in crime, money becomes their drive.'

She is horrified by the sight of young people attending their peers' funerals, and by the attitudes the deaths have engendered. 'If I say something like, "When you have children, you'll understand," many will reply, "Get real, we aren't going to live that long."'

The initiators of Holding Hands Around St Anns have clearly got their work cut out. No one is saying that change will come easily. But Williams and Brazier believe that something has begun to shift since the dialogues.

'Some people will look in and say nothing much happened through Holding Hands,' says Williams. 'It's not grandiose: it's simple, unassuming. But when you are actually there you can see how people's attitudes suddenly change from depression to excitement, joy, confidence, belief in themselves. Holding Hands in St Anns is about that positive empowerment.'

And in spite of the obstacles, the team that are behind it aren't giving up. ■



RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN: MY GREY LAND

Shabibi Shah has been longing to return home for 22 years: the reality was a shock.

When I decided to go back to Afghanistan last November, I was excited but frightened at the same time. I had left 22 years ago, as a refugee, crossing the mountains to Pakistan by truck, donkey and foot with my three children, and eventually found asylum in Britain. The prospect of going back was daunting.

My daughter and I changed planes in Dubai, where we put on Afghan clothing: big scarves and long coats. We were the only women on the plane. As we were about to land, I looked down on a breathtaking view of the wild mountains, the harsh beauty of the landscape that I had missed for so long. From that distance you could not see the ruins that lay beneath.

When we disembarked at Kabul airport, I felt like crying and kissing the ground, which had such deep connections with my past. I was shocked by the difference between the picture I had in my head and the one that I was seeing before me—grey bone-dry land, scattered with old Russian tanks and pieces of cars and lorries. No trees, no greenery and no

flowers. Everything including the people was covered with dust and dirt.

Inside the dilapidated airport building, it was chaotic: we couldn't even tell who were officials and who weren't. Suddenly a woman appeared and pulled us out of the queue, took our passports and then disappeared into a small cubicle. We panicked, but she came back, gave us our passports without asking any questions, welcomed us and let us go. At the time I had no idea whether she was hoping for a reward or was just being kind. Later on, when I understood that others would have asked for money, I felt bad that I had not given her any.

Three men fought over who should take our luggage—and we hired them all, so as not to create any more tension. We passed through the gate and there, waiting for us, were my brother and his daughter. It was such an emotional moment seeing him after so long. He seemed 100 years old to me. He had been in exile in Pakistan for 10 years, before returning to Kabul after the fall of the Taliban.

The taxi drive to my brother's house was a revelation. The

airport road used to be lined by plane trees and marigolds, ending at Pashtonistan Square, with a huge fountain lit by colourful lights at night. Now it does not exist anymore.

The city of Kabul, which was once so beautiful, green and clean, lay beneath clouds of dust. The roads were a mess: no traffic lights, no zebra crossings, no traffic police. There were old men lying on the streets, begging: some with no arms, some with no legs. I felt as if I was watching a horror film set in the Stone Age. I had expected poverty but not to this extent.

My brother's tiny house, which, with us, would be holding 13 people, was falling apart. I cannot describe what it was like to see my brother's family after dreaming about our reunion for so long.

Electricity in Kabul is switched on for about three hours every other night, and is off all day. Richer families have their own generators, but the rest have to make do. My brother's family were overjoyed when I bought them a generator for 6,000 Afghanis (equivalent to £60). Most houses do not have running water: showers and hot water are a dream. There is no sewerage system

and so people have to use holes in the ground. Every now and then a man comes with a donkey to collect the waste and take it to a disposal site or to the plantation areas.

In the streets, pedestrians and cars, cyclists, children, lorries, animals, beggars all share the same lanes. In some well-off areas, police try to bring some sort of organization, but the cars just speed wildly past them.

The roads are cluttered with rubbish. Children play with whatever they can find, burning litter for fun and for warmth. Oddly enough this helps to get rid of some of the germs and rubbish.

Children in Kabul are not children any more. They walk long distances to fetch water and look after their younger siblings while their parents go out to work for a little money. Kids as young as eight or nine work in bakeries or butchers' shops. Others walk around the streets and beg for money. I saw a little girl in the middle of a traffic jam selling two pieces of toilet tissue. There are thousands of children sleeping rough in the streets of Kabul. The Afghan government should make their needs a first priority.

The only hope I saw was



Above: Carrying water home in Kabul. Left: Shabibi (centre) and Parissa Shah (back row second left) with the children of the Khorasan orphanage

THE CITY OF KABUL, WHICH WAS ONCE SO BEAUTIFUL, GREEN AND CLEAN, LAY BENEATH CLOUDS OF DUST.

when I visited the Khorasan organization, a charity for which I have raised money in the UK. In 1999 Seema Ghani started an orphanage for Afghan children in Pakistan. After the fall of the Taliban, the orphanage moved to Afghanistan. There are 16 children living there at the moment, between the ages of seven and 16. They seemed

happy and comfortable. But this small organization is just a drop in the ocean.

I was upset by the degree of mismanagement, poor communication, rivalry, distrust and tribalism in the government offices in Kabul. In every office I entered, they asked for a bribe. For example, a friend sent a fax to me from London to the

Foreign Office in Afghanistan. Every time I went to collect it, I was told that it had not arrived, although the sender told me it had been sent long before. On my fourth trip I managed to find someone who had authority and finally got my fax. If I had paid a bribe I would have got it on my first visit. Retrieving a simple official document from another office cost us 1,000 Afghanis.

Afghan women are still far from equality. The select few who have been picked to work in offices are simply a front. The majority have not been given the opportunity to play a real part in the reconstruction of their country. Women still live under the domination of their husbands, brothers and fathers. Even educated men feel threatened by strong women and will not work under their management. The fundamentalists have shaved off their beards, but they still control the country unofficially.

Despite the fact that people do not like the Taliban and are enjoying their little bit of freedom, they are unhappy about having foreigners in their country. They joke about the US: 'Where is our money?'

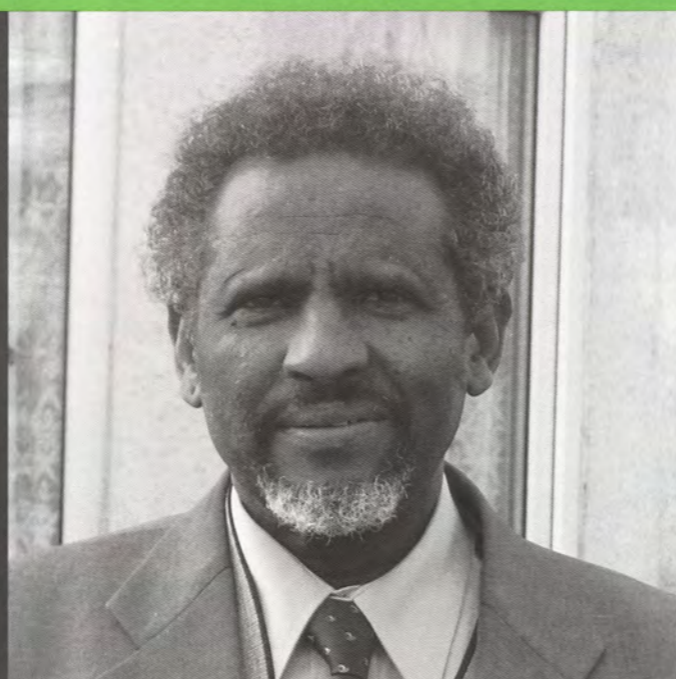
'Where is our help, Big Uncle?' They call Afghans who are associated with Americans 'dog-washers'. They expected the Americans to get fully involved with the reconstruction of Afghanistan rather than just hunting for the Taliban and al-Qaida.

All I saw in the way of reconstruction were some newly asphalted streets and the high-rise buildings which belong to rich people, who have returned from abroad to start up businesses, or to warlords, who get their money nobody dares ask where. Building is booming in Vazeer Akbar Khan, which is a posh area, and the rest of the country is a shambles. I wondered where all the aid had been allocated. The shops in Kabul are full of goods from India, Pakistan and Iran but the prices are too high for the poor.

Now I am back in my little house in London, with mixed feelings. I feel guilty that I am not able to help my countrymen and women, but grateful that I do not have to dream of the luxury of a shower. And I miss the hospitality of my people who share what little food they have with you and jump to their feet whenever you need help. ■

TEAME MEBRAHTU

REFUGEE WITH LESSONS FOR THE WORLD'S TEACHERS



Stan Hazell talks to Teame Mebrahtu—a refugee who has devoted his life to education.

As Ethiopian Mig jets flew overhead during Eritrea's liberation war, freedom fighters and teachers gathered beneath the branches of a 200-year-old tree to attend workshops led by one of Eritrea's leading educationists—Teame Mebrahtu. He had become a refugee in Britain but was now giving something back to his homeland and the wider world of education. His story shows the positive role that refugees can play as they rebuild their lives in a new country.

When Mebrahtu began his career, his country, Eritrea, was fighting for its freedom from Ethiopia—a 30-year struggle which led to independence in 1993 after a referendum. In 1974, after four years as Director of the Teacher Training Institute in Eritrea's capital, Asmara, Mebrahtu was appointed Head of the Department of Education at the University of Asmara. That year a Marxist revolution overthrew the Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie, and the university was forced to close 12 months later.

Mebrahtu took up a scholarship to

study for a PhD at Bristol University in the UK, where he had earlier studied on a British Council Scholarship. He chose as the theme for his thesis: 'The role of the university in national development'. 'I wanted to investigate how you make a university serve its host nation,' he says.

TARGETED

He soon found himself facing up to that challenge in unexpected ways. First, though, an agonizing decision had to be made. He had a call ordering him back to Ethiopia but knew it would be dangerous to return—a colleague at the university had already been killed in the violence which erupted as a result of the new regime. Knowing he had been targeted, he sought, and was granted, refugee status in Britain.

But he declined welfare support and borrowed from relatives to keep himself and his wife and three daughters who had now joined him. 'I wanted to be part of a solution to the country not a burden,' he says. 'I felt it was important to be a contributing citizen just as I would be in the

society I came from.'

So he decided to take his passion for education to the places where it mattered—the local schools. He launched a programme to visit schools all over the south-west of England promoting international understanding. 'I wanted to widen their knowledge of other people's lives and cultures in different parts of the world and to broaden their horizons,' he says.

At first the schools were sceptical. But Mebrahtu won them over by inviting the head teachers to sit in on one of his lessons. Mebrahtu's stories of African animals and the dress and customs of other countries became hugely popular. He got a grant from the Rowntree Trust and was soon self-supporting. The children had trouble pronouncing Mebrahtu's name. So he became 'Dr Tom'. By the time the project ended he had visited over a 100 schools and made many new friends.

It was not long before he was offered a place on the teaching staff of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Bristol. Within a few years he was teaching M Ed and PhD

students and had become Admissions Tutor, a role which also involved pastoral care for the foreign students.

He became a trainer for Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), preparing young people who were offering their skills—from teaching to building—to help in other countries. He also got involved in supporting refugee groups in this country and abroad.

In 1984 he visited refugee camps in Sudan where he was moved by the conditions. 'I saw many sad things including a woman having to give birth without privacy or proper medical care,' he says. When he returned to Bristol he gave talks to local schools. 'I asked them to consider how they would feel if they were refugees,' says Mebrahtu. The children responded generously, donating boxes full of spare pencils, crayons, paper and old books for the few schools in the refugee camps.

ZERO SCHOOL

Those lessons under the tree in Eritrea were also the result of his visit to Sudan. Just over the border from the camps were some of the liberated parts of Eritrea. An invitation from the fledgling system of education within the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front gave Mebrahtu a chance to share his passion for education with his countrymen and women. The outdoor lessons started and before long hundreds of students from what was known as Eritrea's 'Zero School' were turning up. Many had to climb into the branches of the tree to get a better view. The workshops continued for three years between 1986 and 1988.

Mebrahtu was invited back but said he would only go to Asmara, the Eritrean capital. The opportunity came after the fighting ended in 1991 when he found himself addressing 2,000 teachers in a cinema at the invitation of the then Minister of Education. It was the start of a remarkable partnership between Eritrean educationists and the University of Bristol, funded by the Danish aid programme DANIDA.

The Eritrea-Bristol Partnership Programme at Bristol's Graduate School of Education was set up as a result of Mebrahtu's work. Between 1994 and 2003 the programme trained 45 educators at postgraduate level in Bristol and has provided intensive in-service programmes in Asmara for more than 200 school directors, district education officers and supervisors.

Many of those who took part in these courses—and in the ones under the tree—are now in senior government positions influencing educational decisions and policies. The current Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Asmara—Mebrahtu's old department—is among them.

Eritrea is not the only country with which Bristol University has links: in his pastoral role, Mebrahtu has looked after students from over 30 countries. Several of them, too, now hold key positions in the education systems of their respective countries.

Mebrahtu has also organized a series of international education conferences in Bristol on the challenges facing educators in the 21st century and continues to advise countries in the developing world on their education systems.

In his assessment of the link with Eritrea, Mebrahtu offers his students some food for thought which seems to encapsulate his educational philosophy. He reminds them of the need to:

- Earn your credibility;
- Be a part of, not apart from;
- Reflect before you point your finger at others;
- Be a bridge builder;
- Foster independence of thought.

With the conflicts around the world much in mind, he also urges students to assist in the development of sound conflict prevention strategies and to 'be aware of the wide-ranging impact of global interdependence'.

His pastoral role has meant many extracurricular hours dealing with students' problems and 'sharing their joys and their sorrows'. He and his wife Teblez have often invited lonely students into their home. Many have become firm friends and stay in touch.

Mebrahtu is convinced that good education should take account of 'the principle of care'. He says: 'If you don't find out what is bothering the learner you can't impart knowledge to them'. It is, he says, often a question of 'going the extra mile'.

Mebrahtu has certainly gone an extra mile or two for his adopted country. He takes his civic duties seriously and serves as a magistrate.

Some of his countrymen had their own way of expressing their gratitude. They wrote: 'You've been a wonderful, extraordinary teacher. You are our beloved father and brother. You've been there for us. We are proud of you.' ■

LETTERS

Stress test

RECENTLY I developed a low technology monitor for measuring what I call the A/G factor (Anxiety/Guilt). It is a series of five questions, each with a score of 0 to 20. When I ask myself the following questions, what degree of anxiety or guilt do I feel?

- 1 There is a knock at the front door.
- 2 The telephone rings.
- 3 I clear the letterbox.
- 4 I see a police uniform.
- 5 I am tempted to do a U-turn if I see a booze bus (unit for the random breath-testing of drivers for alcohol).

A total of 0 means you are either a saint or your conscience is shot to pieces.

A total score of 100 is bad news indeed. It means you are a very fearful person or you should change your lifestyle drastically and immediately. And have your blood pressure checked as stroke is a major cause of death.

If those taking the test are honest, the diagnosis will be clear.

from Dennis Mayor, Bendigo, Australia

Post-war Germany

Indeed I am appalled by the reference in your February/March issue to babies in postwar Berlin 'born as a result of rape by the Allies and the Russians'.

Stalin's order was that all German women were to be raped (a footnote in Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* testifies to this). But whilst there may have been rapes by Allied soldiers, they were on nothing like this scale.

Having as a schoolboy nursed a profound hatred of the Germans after the bombing of Southampton during World War II, I repented in tears at a Moral Re-Armament meeting in Bonn in the late 1950s. Later my uncle, who was in the RAF during the war, left me a legacy of £2,500. £1,250 was exactly the cost of a stone, with my name inscribed, for the rebuilding of the Frauenkirche, the largest church in Dresden, after the city's near destruction in the Allied bombing of St Valentine's Day, 1945.

from Richard Murray, Horsham, UK

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1,2,4. Trade unionists and students demonstrating in the capital Kiev 3,5. Yanukovich supporters in Crimea 6. Yushchenko followers in Kiev



ARE WE READY TO LISTEN TO ALL UKRAINIANS?

José Carlos León Vargas was in Ukraine during the 'Orange Revolution' in December. What he saw got him thinking.

Ukraine's diversity constitutes its richness, but it has also lain behind continuous struggles throughout the centuries. The presidential elections last December demonstrated the strength of the linguistic and ethnic divisions in this marvellous country, whose west leans toward Europe and whose east towards Russia. They also showed the need to support new democracies by promoting fair and just dialogue between communities.

'Yu-Shchen-Ko! Yu-Shchen-Ko!' was the chant of hundreds of demonstrators in Kiev's Independence Square. Ordinary Ukrainians, many of them young, wearing orange ribbons and scarves, braved the coldest temperatures to demand peacefully that the previous

fraudulent election result be rerun. The international media called it the 'Orange Revolution', describing it as countrywide.

When I arrived in Kiev, I felt as if I was witnessing a colourful parade, with entire families on the streets. The main avenues of the city were transformed into an enormous campsite where unions, student associations and political activists gathered to reject the victory of the government-backed candidate, Victor Yanukovich. Every concert at Independence Square was preceded by a speech in Ukrainian welcoming a new era of democracy for the nation.

So I was greatly surprised, after travelling 16 hours south-east by train, to discover that there is no such thing as a single Ukrainian nation. At Simferopol, the capital of Crimea, I

witnessed a completely different spectacle. Tricoloured Russian flags and blue flags abounded. Hundreds of Russian-speaking protesters were trying to keep up the morale of Yanukovich's followers in the south-east. But where were the reporters and the international correspondents? Nowhere. The only media coverage came from local journalists who took photos of the other side of the 'revolution'; a peaceful but passionate demonstration calling for Russian and Ukrainian solidarity.

Many things can be said about the political careers of both candidates. Neither of them is particularly known for their honesty in the past. Yet, in the middle of this commotion, Ukrainians from the west and the east gave us a unique example of how valuable democracy is. This revolution was not orange or blue, it

was Ukrainian, and the fact that Ukraine is now moving towards a Western model of democracy need not prevent us from listening to those regions with a Russian background.

After their political crisis, Ukrainians need assistance in their transition; but most important, they need to be listened to. This also includes those who lost the election, for the Russian side of Ukraine has an invaluable role to play in the construction of democracy.

As a Mexican, my visit to Ukraine left me with an invaluable lesson. My country also is formed of multiple nations. For us too dialogue can be a useful tool for reducing the frictions between different ethnic groups. Dialogue means talking, but it also means listening to all the actors who take part in it. Are we ready to listen to all Ukrainians? ■

DEFUSING THE DEBT THREAT

Bill Peters, one of the founders of the Jubilee 2000 campaign for debt remission, reviews a new book on the international debt crisis.

Despite Osama bin Laden, WMD, the Iraq War, etc, the rich-poor gap remains the major source of insecurity in our globalizing world. It underlies terrorism, environmental degradation, the issues of freedom and democracy spread over Bush's second inaugural speech.

In her new book, *IOU*, Noreena Hertz updates the post World War II discussion of the remedy, with admirable clarity. Her sub-title, *the debt threat and why we must defuse it*, links the discussion to the acute dangers our children and grandchildren may face, leaving no doubt about its priority for planners, politicians, economists and all of us. Her well-chosen statistics on the contemporary effects of poverty across the continents fully support that conclusion.

Hertz is no less clear about the origin of the rich-poor gap—the comparative advantages cumulatively developed in the regions best endowed with natural assets; the systems and structures, economic and financial, which their populations devise to maintain and reinforce their advantages; the distribution of power which enables them to stay in that position despite the obvious inequality on which it rests. Ajit Singh, mentioned as one of Hertz's advisers, says that the resultant liberalizing and globalizing regime 'is sub-optimal both for the rich and poor countries and is responsible for keeping the world economy functioning below its potential'. This needs remedying, for the sake of both rich and poor.

Hertz bases the remedy she proposes, first, as all good economists must, on Adam Smith, who 'gave a favourable nod to international bankruptcies in 1776'.

But she also cites more recent authorities: two Nobel laureates, Joseph Stiglitz and Laurence Klein, Jeffery Sachs of Columbia University, and the Austrian academic Kunibert Raffer, who has a long record of international bankruptcy research. They recognize the principle that countries should not have to service debts which disable them from meeting the fundamental needs of their people.

To define 'which sovereign debts are repayable or illegitimate, and how debtors and creditors should be treated as a result', Hertz proposes a method of mediation through what she calls National Regeneration Trusts. Most of the Trustees would be nationals of the countries concerned, with a leaven of UN-avouched non-nationals, operating transparent accounts and open processes. This means no more Paris Club (the group of creditor nations which have negotiated with debtor countries since 1956) or Washington Consensus (the long-standing acceptance of consensus among the US government, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as overriding for major economic decisions).

Similar proposals have come from civil society, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and both debtor and creditor-leaning governments. Hertz lists the obstacles. 1) Banks, generally conscious of their past and current bottom lines, don't want it. 2) The US clings to the Washington Consensus and its long-held blocking votes on the boards of the IMF and World Bank, and doesn't want more multilateralism. 3) Middle-ranking debtor countries are fearful for their credit ratings and need foreign investment. 4) Civil society has so far failed to build on the grassroots

support acquired by the Jubilee 2000 campaign, which signed up 24 million supporters of debt remission by 2000. Hertz argues that none of these obstacles is insuperable.

Relevant to the second obstacle is Amartya Sen's comment, 'The (globalization) debate is... about inequality of power... for which there is less tolerance now (than in 1945).' Is he right?—the crucial question. Public opinion could be the clincher and requires much effort, as this reviewer repeatedly urges in print.*

IOU is rich in economic reflections and insights, not least on the differences between John Maynard Keynes and Harry Dexter White, founders of the IMF and World Bank, over where to charge the cost of preserving global financial equilibrium. Keynes' wish to have it shared by rich and poor was blocked by the US Treasury economist, a tragic outcome which has often been reinforced since. His ideas for a supra-national bank for redistribution, however, remain tenuously alive, in such schemes as Gordon Brown's International Finance Facility.

The IMF and World Bank are starkly labelled 'discredited'. Research studies, Hertz reports, repeatedly identify 'the single most consistent effect of the IMF' as 'the ability to redistribute income away from workers'.

An excellent book. ■

*For example 'Let's make a very broad coalition for changing the world'—*Human Ecology*, Issue No. 20, May 2003 pp 7-9.

**I.O.U.
THE DEBT
THREAT
AND WHY
WE MUST
DEFUSE IT
NOREENA
HERTZ**

Fourth Estate, 2004
ISBN 0007-178990



Drop the debt champion, rock star Bono (right) in Soweto

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST GAMBLE YOU'VE EVER TAKEN?

MY SEVEN-year-old son became really worried by the time I had won seven old pence on a machine in a seaside arcade, many years ago. 'Stop it, Mum!' he yelled, pulling me away. I did.

But a rather bigger gamble had come years before when I agreed to get married. I was enjoying my freedom. Being tied to one other person was the last thing I was looking for.

I was only too aware of Ken's hopes and it became a matter of urgency when he was due to go overseas and I had to decide before he went. Fortunately by that time I had already decided that what God wanted for my life was all that really mattered and I finally dared to refer the matter to him. The totally unexpected thought that came into my mind was, 'I want you to give all you can to Ken.' That had to mean marriage and I found myself amazingly contentedly accepting the gamble.

Once married, our oneness grew steadily until he died 61 years later, leaving me feeling like a split pea. We were certainly an oddly assorted couple, and 'giving all I could' didn't always come easily. But we were completely at one in our love of God and our determination to keep him at the heart of our family life.

This meant the endless possibility of change and growth. Asking God where I could have behaved differently, if things went wrong, always worked. We felt we were

discovering a way of living together which could work in any situation if it could work with us.

The gamble paid off with unimaginable generosity.

Frances McAll,
Hampshire, UK

THE BIGGEST risk I ever took was on 29 December 2001. On that day, I came clean. At the time I was in an affair (for one-and-a-half years) and very confused about sexual issues. The confusion and double life standard was tearing me apart inside. I committed to myself that on that night, I would let all my secrets out to my wife and anyone else who wanted to know.

That night changed my life forever in more profound ways than any other moment of my life. On that night, my true vulnerability was let out.

How did it all turn out? Well, I have learned a great deal about myself and other people. My wife did not take my confession too well. We are now divorced after a long legal battle in which I lost custody of my children, something I never imagined could happen. I carry a great deal of guilt over the entire issue and feel a great deal of loss.

Did the gamble turn out as a win? Well, I have my honesty now which is a big plus. However I paid dearly with the loss

of loved ones along the way.

Andy Kurzenberger,
Waukegan, IL, USA

THE GREATEST gamble I ever took was at the age of 20 when I decided to leave university and embark on a life of faith. My inner voice said, 'You will have a different kind of education.' And indeed it was, education in the School of Life.

One reason that it was such a big gamble was that some members of my family were dead against my decision and I had been very dependent on their approval. I had been brought up to think that university education was the only way to go. It represented family approval, personal achievement, pride and security.

The other road represented a living faith with a price to pay. It took me to Africa and South America, to name but a few of the places I grew to love and understand in a way that reading about those places would never have achieved. I don't have a university degree but I have a faith that works.

Cathy Montrose, Drymen,
Scotland

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PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE



KEITH NEAL (2)

Beijing's student volunteers

LI HUANGHAUNG is a third year mathematics major at Beijing University and President of its 400-strong group of volunteers, the Love Heart Association. Every week dozens of its members give time to a range of voluntary activities, from teaching blind children to visiting elderly people at nursing homes. With over 11 years' history, the association is one of the biggest and best-known at the University.

On top of his studies, Li devotes over three hours' work a day to the association. 'I'm leading a happy life so I think I have time and energy to help others,' he comments phlegmatically. 'Besides, I learn how to organize projects and communicate with other people which I really enjoy.'

Keen to learn more, I join some Love Heart members on their weekly visit to Hong Yan School. Founded in 2001, the school offers education to children of migrant workers who might otherwise miss out on schooling altogether.

The bus journey to the school takes us deep into the northern tip of Haidian District, an area of Beijing that was predominantly fields only 10 years ago. Big black Audis share the bumpy roads with horse-drawn carts while rows of greenhouses compete for space with brash new apartment complexes.

Hong Yan school is tucked out of the way over one kilometre from the nearest bus stop. We arrive during the mid-morning break and some of the children, whose ages range from four to 15, literally

clamber over each other to play with us, sing songs, or simply smile, laugh and touch.

Inside the classroom, the crumbling stone walls seem a world away from the cutting edge language laboratories at the University. I face a class of 40 expectant 10-year-olds. After a few raucous renditions of 'Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes', I struggle to maintain order.

I am helped by a tiny girl with glasses on the front row who introduces herself as Helen. Not only does she manage to keep some of the more ebullient boys quiet, but she also translates some key words into Chinese for the rest of the class.

The school's headmaster, Li Xiaoliang, used to be a businessman. He decided to set up the school when he heard that children of his relatives were finding it difficult to receive an education. He is effusive in his praise for the Love Heart members. 'They don't just teach knowledge, but they show my students that life is not only about making money, but also about helping and getting along with others.'

Their biggest contribution, however, is to 'underline the value of education' and 'to encourage my students to learn as much as possible'. When they leave Hong Yan school, some two thirds of the children will go back to their hometowns to enter middle school while the other third will scrape a living on the tough streets of Beijing. Little Helen has every chance of making it to university.

And what does the experience mean to the student volunteers? Wang Yingbo, an active Love Heart member who is majoring in Thai, tells me, 'When I was young my parents told me to be a good person. I received much love from my parents and friends so I want to pass on this love to many others. It's funny but just through giving this love, I receive so much more.'

Rob Neal

For more information about the Love Heart Association visit <http://loveheart.bdwm.net>

A WORLD AWAY FROM THE CUTTING EDGE LANGUAGE LABORATORIES AT THE UNIVERSITY

Above and below: The children of Hong Yan school



From turtles to cosmetics

THE TOWN of Mazunte on the Pacific Coast of Mexico's Oaxaca state is a small piece of paradise, where people and nature cohabit in a harmonious equilibrium. The area is famous for the Olive Ridley Turtles which return there every year to breed.

For generations local people have lived from turtle fishing and processing. But at the end of the Eighties a private consortium industrialized the fishing, raising fears for the species' survival. When the Mexican government banned turtle-fishing in 1990, many of Mazunte's inhabitants were left without work.

Tourism does not provide enough income to support Mazunte's entire community. As a result many of the inhabitants have been drawn to the US, where they work illegally.

Cosmeticos Naturales de Mazunte (Mazunte Natural Cosmetics) was set up in the mid-1990s to provide alternative employment. The company, which was launched with help from The Body Shop and other organizations, uses natural ingredients in its shampoos, conditioners and creams.

Today, the cooperatively-owned company supports 15 families and is completely independent. Its annual revenue is 2 million pesos (approximately US\$200,000).

The company's success is surprising given the lack of infrastructure and education in the area. The nearest city is 30 minutes' drive away and internet facilities are still precarious.

None of the employees have college education: not all of them completed high school. This makes their achievement all the more impressive. Women whose universe a few years ago was their home are now production directors, sales managers or retailers.

After 10 years of growth, Cosmeticos Naturales de Mazunte now faces the transition from a small social project to a micro-enterprise. It needs to find the way to be competitive while respecting equal opportunities and the environment. And to keep on finding new clients, lowering costs without cutting quality, establishing a more efficient organization, changing product design... Its staff are determined to prove that a social enterprise can be competitive.

Change can be difficult, particularly in a rural milieu. The decision-making process is sometimes slow because every worker has the right to express his or her opinion. As a foreign student in Mexico, doing an internship at Mazunte, I have had to adapt and reshape my thoughts.

I have found the experience overwhelming—and a wonderful opportunity to contribute, in a very small way, to Mexican development and to give life to my passion for Latin America.

Emilie Fresneau

After the suicide bomb

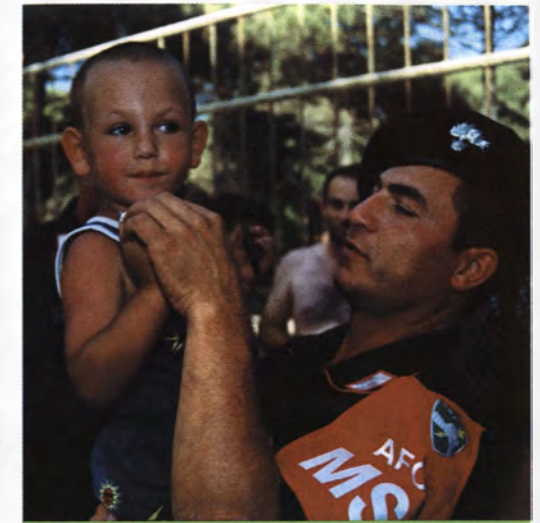
ON 12 Nov 2003 a lorry loaded with explosives and driven by a suicide bomber blasted the Nasiriyah outpost of the Italian contingent in Iraq. Seventeen military personnel and two civilians were killed.

Local dignitaries in Iraq immediately expressed their condolences and their disapproval of the attack. Ordinary people in Italy were horrified by the attack on troops who had combined peace-keeping with responding to the most urgent needs of the population.

Most families of the victims added bitterness to their grief, but not 34-year-old Margherita Coletta from Avola in Sicily, who has lived out her Christian faith in a remarkable way. Her husband, Giuseppe Coletta, was a vice-sergeant in the military police. When she was interviewed on national television right after the massacre, she picked up a Bible and read out the sentence, 'Love your enemy'.

'Yes, even when he has taken away your heart and your breath,' she commented to a journalist from *Avvenire*, who reminded her of her statement a year after Giuseppe's death. 'Giuseppe was the rock on which I rested. We had faced together the death of our child Paolo, who had leukaemia. They say the death of your child is the biggest blow; it is not true: that time being two of us it was easier.'

In their 20 years of marriage they had shared a passion to help



Giuseppe Coletta with a lost child in Albania

people, especially children. When Giuseppe was serving in Bosnia, he used the Carabinieri's heavy duty lorries to deliver food, toys and medicines, which she had helped him collect in Italy.

When he died his colleagues and friends encouraged Margherita to carry on, and suggested she establish an association. She felt too small; yet she sensed that it was not up to her, but to God to decide, and that if he wanted, it would happen. The general staff of the Carabinieri helped her to find her way through the tangle of red tape and the association was founded, with the name 'Giuseppe and Margherita Coletta—Knock and it shall be opened to you'.

Money and commodities immediately started pouring in, but also requests for help. The first was for an Albanian child who

was brought to Italy for an operation. Then they helped a lady in Siracusa, whose son needed an operation. Future plans include helping some nuns from Naples who need desks and chairs for their school in Albania and building a bakery in a village near the school.

Anybody can knock at the door, they will always receive an answer. The main criterion is that every project should not only have a beginning but also a definite conclusion. Ask Margherita where she will find the funds and she answers: 'God will provide'—but she likes to think that Giuseppe is beside him, giving him a hand.

Adriano Costa



Giuseppe and Margherita Coletta

SCHWAB FOUNDATION (3)



Honey Care in Kenya has captured 27 per cent of the domestic honey market.

EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS



Social entrepreneurs aren't just in it for the bottom line—or out of a desire to 'do good'. Pamela Hartigan sees them as the architects of a new social economy.

A social entrepreneur is what you get when you combine Richard Branson and Mother Teresa—a hybrid between business and social value creation.

Most governments, agencies and institutions are stuck in that fragmented world which divides the public and the private sector, the non-profit and for-profit sector, donors and their beneficiaries, and so on. Social entrepreneurs challenge that thinking.

Take Farouk Jiwa, for example. His for-profit social enterprise, Honey Care, introduced new beekeeping technology into Kenya. In partnership with NGOs, Honey Care supplies beekeepers with beehives, trains them in the new method and then buys the honey they produce. In four years, Honey Care has captured 27 per cent of the domestic honey market and has doubled the incomes of 2,500 beekeepers in extremely poor, subsistence-based rural communities in western Kenya.

Rodrigo Baggio had a dream where he saw the poorest children of Rio de Janeiro's favelas using computers. Today, his Committee for the Democratization of Information Technology (CDI) has moved beyond Rio to 869 cities in 11 countries, by applying a franchise-partnership model. CDI works in close partnership with prisons and with community centres in Brazil's poorest and most violent communities to teach computer literacy to the digitally excluded. The material used on its courses is chosen to stimulate awareness of citizens' rights and responsibilities. CDI has certified over 80,000 students, 87 per cent of whom report that computer skills have transformed their opportunities for gainful and dignified employment.

Andrea and Barry Coleman met through their common passion—motorcycle racing. On a trip to Somalia, they were shocked at the number of vehicles, many of them new, that were rotting in car parks and streets. They realized that lack of mobility, particularly for local health professionals, hampers the prevention and eradication of disease in Africa.

They started Riders for Health (RfH) to offer an integrated system incorporating training in vehicle maintenance. RfH has demonstrated that, under this system, a properly managed vehicle costs 50 per cent less to run over a six-year period than an unmanaged vehicle. By using well-performing motorcycles and other vehicles, health and other aid workers in seven African countries have increased their visits to remote communities by 300 per cent. For example, RfH believes that with each motorcycle it runs, 20,000 people receive primary health care each year.

Social entrepreneurs like these have a

mission of transformational social change. They are practical about the limitations of market economics and persistent in finding ways to use markets to empower the poor. Most develop business models that allow the poor to have access to the technologies the rest of us take for granted—from information and health technology to ways of ensuring decent housing, clean water, access to energy, decent wages, relevant education and so forth.

Social entrepreneurs undertake both public and private sector functions simultaneously. On the one hand, they work with the people governments have been unable to reach effectively with basic public goods and services. On the other, they provide access to private goods and services where business has been discouraged by high risks and low profits. They are reshaping the architecture for building sustainable and peaceful societies.

When the Schwab Foundation started just over four years ago, social entrepreneurs told us that they needed three things: legitimacy for the work they do; credibility for the models they have created; and access to networking opportunities with leaders from other sectors, so as to increase the dissemination of their models and access capital and other critical resources.

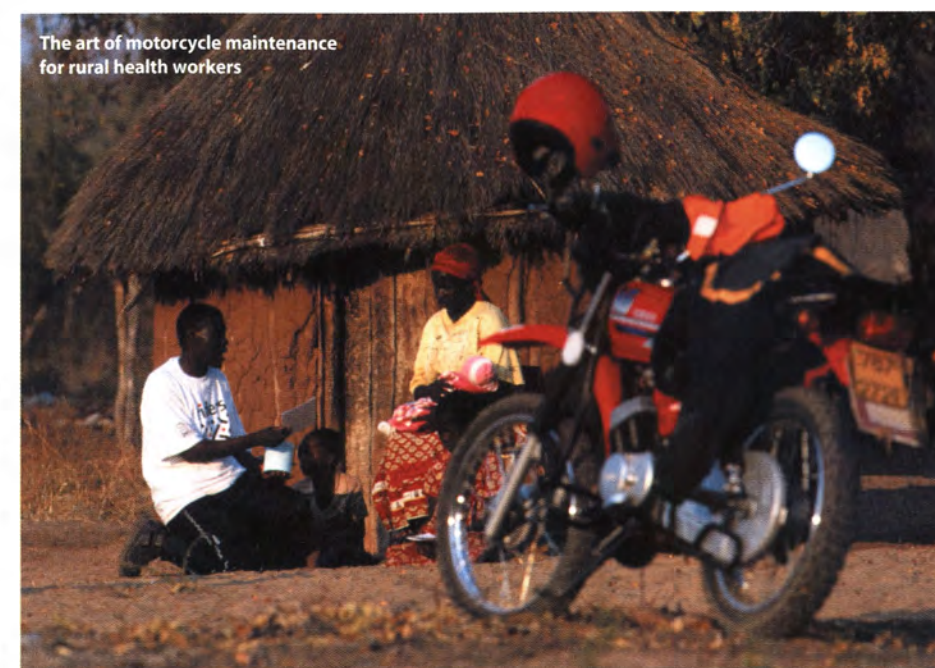
In our trajectory, we have built a community of highly successful social entrepreneurs. They are faced with a number of challenges, springing from the fact that other sectors have not caught up with the field of social entrepreneurship.

First, few governments recognize social entrepreneurship as a legitimate field of endeavour. This means that social entrepreneurs are hampered by tax laws, burdensome regulations, arbitrary decision-making and other onerous requirements and practices. Instead, governments should be encouraging them through fiscal and legislative incentives.

The second challenge is to encourage businesses to discover the advantages of working in partnership with social entrepreneurs. From a financial perspective, social entrepreneurs, with their experience of bringing excluded groups into the marketplace, can help businesses reach untapped markets.

From the human resources perspective, support for social entrepreneurs can make companies more attractive to the top talent they wish to attract. The brightest and best today want more than impressive salaries and stock options. They want something that gives meaning to their work and their lives. Such support shows that companies care about more than the bottom line.

Finally, companies often relegate corporate social responsibility to separate corporate foundations running top-down programmes, while the corporation carries



The art of motorcycle maintenance for rural health workers

THE WHEEL DOES NOT NEED TO BE REINVENTED, JUST ADAPTED TO NEW TERRAIN

on business as usual. Working with social entrepreneurs should be part of the core business strategy of every company.

The third challenge relates to foundations and philanthropists. They are well placed to support social entrepreneurs, as they are free of the two forces that dominate the decisions of governments and business—the voting booth and the financial bottom line. But many foundations and philanthropists seem content to fund demonstration projects that they hope will produce dramatic results in 24 months, an impossible task. We don't need more demonstration projects—we need support for scaling up successful social innovations. The wheel does not need to be reinvented, just adapted to new terrain.

Then there are multilateral and bilateral organizations. Over the last decade these have been criticized for failing to engage civil society and interest groups in consultations on their policies. Some institutions have responded by devoting time and energy to dialogue with non-state actors. But more needs to be done. These institutions have a vital and catalytic role in this interesting phase of new thinking and experimentation. They should make it a priority to spot and legitimize social entrepreneurs who have the capacity to imagine and the ability to implement.

There is little doubt that the exponential

growth of the NGO sector around the world is an expression of the growth of democracy and hope. But there is a distinction to be made between social entrepreneurs and others who seek to do good through advocating a cause or through charitable giving. Social entrepreneurs are practical, tend to shun ideological positions and do not embrace charitable models that seek to alleviate suffering without effecting the necessary changes to restructure the world as we know it.

To what extent does the NGO sector understand and embrace social entrepreneurs as the innovators in the social sector? Can civil sector organizations that 'do good' become more entrepreneurial? How might organizations of the citizen sector embrace entrepreneurial mindsets, or seek to incorporate the transformational models catalyzed by social entrepreneurs?

The academic sector, too, presents a challenge for social entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial mindset has been described as being committed and determined; ready to take leadership; obsessed with opportunity; tolerant of risk, creativity, ambiguity and uncertainty; self-reliant and able to adapt; and motivated to excel. How well are our schools instilling these characteristics?

Social entrepreneurs cannot do the critical work of social and economic transformation on their own. They need imaginative, compassionate and talented people from all sectors to help them live up to their promise. ■

Pamela Hartigan is Founding Managing Director and Member of the Board of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship. www.schwabfound.org



THE SECOND BATTLE OF PILLETH

Juliet Boobbyer tells the story of the restoration of a church on the site of an historic battle between the Welsh and English.

On a hillside, standing sentinel over one of the most beautiful valleys on the Welsh Marches, stands the ancient and weather-beaten church of St Mary's, Pilleth.

This is border country with a long and turbulent history. Everyone knows that borderlands can be flash points. England and Wales meet here and in the past fought it out, stealing each other's cattle, firing villages and building castles to enforce the ownership

of occupied lands. For ordinary people it must have been a precarious existence.

This history has produced a people with an identity of their own. They don't consider themselves either Welsh or English: 'We are from Radnorshire,' they say, using the old county name. Families intermarried over generations and land meant status.

Two miles down the valley runs the 149-mile-long Offa's Dyke, constructed by King Offa of Mercia in the 9th century to mark the border between his kingdom and Wales. When

raiders crossed the dyke, beacons were lit and defenders mustered.

St Mary's Church has been burnt twice. The first time was in 1402 AD, during the Welsh Wars of Independence. At the Battle of Pilleth, fought on the hillside behind the church, Owain Glyndwr, Prince of Wales, vanquished and captured the English Edmund Mortimer. The last battle in which the Welsh beat the English, it has gone into folklore.

Glyndwr was a great Welsh patriot who united Wales, founded a Welsh parliament and

was a consummate guerrilla captain. But on the English side of the border the battle is remembered as one of great carnage. Glyndwr's raids through the borders left a swathe of land where no substantial building was left standing and 52 churches were burned. The twist in the tail of this story is that Edmund Mortimer changed sides and married Glyndwr's daughter!

Glyndwr was one of the establishment, not just of Wales but of England, a big player on the political scene. Part of his education was in London, in the

English king's court. His revolt was triggered by an unjust verdict in a land claim, which finally ignited the smouldering resentment in the Welsh at the way they were treated by the English.

History needs to be told truthfully. It is salutary and humbling to face the truth about one's own people, just as it is about oneself. Telling the truth can begin to heal buried resentments. But there is another side too: all too often the grievances of history are wheeled into service in support of a contemporary political agenda—as in recent historical films that have been at the very least selective with the truth. In some the historical facts have been altered. This is art in service of a lie.

In the newly restored church of St Mary's at Pilleth there is a notice which says, 'Here is a place for quietness and prayer. A place in which to lay down the burdens of the past and look to the future with hope and confidence'—not just our personal burdens, surely, but also those laid on us by history. As we lay them down, our minds can be freed to create the kind of society today where all our people, from so many different cultures, can feel at home.

The second time St Mary's was burned was at the end of the 19th century due to a faulty central heating system. A local benefactor restored the church 12 years later, albeit with a temporary roof, until sufficient funds were available for a permanent one.

Nearly 100 years later the church was still in use, but nearly derelict. The 'temporary' roof was rotten and past patching. So the parish decided to seek funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the church with a new and traditional roof. This was the beginning of what might be described as the second Battle of Pilleth.

The parish was unaware of how contentious the whole area of restoration can be. Central to the opposition that sprang up seemed to be the issue of who controlled the project. Also a very small but vocal minority, considered to be 'incomers', began pressing their own views contrary to the wishes of local people. Here people are incomers for, at the very least, a generation!

To their credit the Heritage Lottery Fund proved more than equal to the situation. After four plans, two architects, six years, an independent architect's enquiry and a consistory court

(the ecclesiastical equivalent to a public enquiry), they offered a generous grant on the condition that the parish raise a quarter of the funds needed, approximately £80,000.

St Mary's, with its nearby holy well, can best be described as a pilgrimage church. Hundreds visit it each year but apart from a few farms it has no natural community around it and no wealthy benefactors. Trying to put together this sum seemed well-nigh impossible at

stressed, Wales' finest hour to leave hundreds dead on a hillside. The climax to the occasion was the announcement of the award of the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Simple country churches like St Mary's are not just buildings. They are the silent memory and the roots of a community. They speak of the poor and the simple. In our rapidly changing society they remind us of where we come from and who we are. A small group of people, of

PUTTING TOGETHER THIS SUM SEEMED WELL-NIGH IMPOSSIBLE

first, but the professionally designed publicity material, all given free, and excellent press coverage generated widespread support.

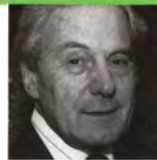
Fund-raising events included three major art exhibitions, concerts, sponsored walks, pub quizzes, lectures on history and roses, fashion shows and a battle re-enactment to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Pilleth. This was a great occasion, which ended with a service of reconciliation on the field, 'for the healing of the nations'. In his address, Bishop David Thomas referred to the *Daily Telegraph's* headline to an article about the battle, 'Wales' finest hour'. It was not, he

which I was part, was responsible for the hands-on running of the project—but it was supported by the goodwill, expertise and generosity of hundreds of others. A precious piece of our heritage has been secured for generations to come.

Unexpected benefits have followed from our response to an urgent practical problem. Across the gaps of culture, background and personality, trust and friendship have grown among people who would otherwise never have got to know each other. The community has been invigorated, a spirit of optimism is abroad. Ordinary people have achieved the seemingly impossible. ■



The Battle of Pilleth



DAVID CHANNER

Pandemonium in court

From the Caucasus, long associated with conflict, comes a remarkable story of forgiveness. Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili of the Evangelical Baptist Church, the largest Protestant denomination in Georgia, has taken a bold step towards furthering religious unity.

For five years the bishop and his church had been the focus of attacks led by a defrocked Orthodox priest, Father Basil Mkalavishvili. The attackers burned Bibles and books (including thousands of copies of books the bishop had written), organized raids on religious minorities and beat up clergy from non-Orthodox denominations. They insulted Baptist clergy, women and children and published a list of 'enemies of Georgia' which included the bishop.

Last March Father Basil and nine of his followers were arrested. Bishop Malkhaz was called to testify at their trial in November. The bishop had visited the priest in prison and sensed no remorse in him but 'realized that he had an absolutely wrong image of the Christian faith'. So he decided in the courtroom to 'preach' to the accused.

The bishop spoke for three hours about the true values of Christianity, about the ecumenical movement and the importance of religious liberty for everybody. The judge, prosecutor and lawyers were attentive and asked questions. 'But everybody was very

nervous,' says the bishop. 'They did not know what would be my concluding word.'

At the end the judge asked, 'What do you wish to happen to them?' 'I demand that these people be pardoned and released from the prison,' the bishop replied.

The defence lawyers could not believe their ears. 'Do you really want to forgive them everything, including the material loss?' 'Yes,' he answered, saying that he desired an unconditional absolution. He had to explain the nature of Christian love and forgiveness. 'I do not demand anything from them except the red wine which we will drink together when they are set free.'

The whole courtroom dissolved in laughter. Then the Bishop, ignoring court rules, rushed to the cage where the prisoners were held and shook hands with them all. 'That was one of the most moving experiences in my life,' he says. 'People were crying, clapping hands, weeping.... When I was leaving the crowded room a small boy made his way to me. He grabbed a sleeve of my frock and told me with grateful voice: "Thank you Bishop!" I blessed the child.' It was Father Basil's grandson. That evening the Bishop received a message from the prisoners: 'Even if we are not released from prison we will be ever grateful to you.'

It would have been unacceptable, he

believes, to make Mkalavishvili confess in front of the TV cameras. 'I wanted to forgive these people without depriving them of any human dignity. If through this act of forgiveness Christ spoke to their hearts and minds, which I believe he did, then they will certainly repent either openly or secretly before the Lord. We can be sceptical about their conversion but I am convinced of my own conversion that day.'

In a nationally televised ceremony marking the tenth anniversary of the bishop's ministry at the cathedral, tribute was paid to the work of the church building bridges between the Georgian and Western cultures. He received many gifts but the most precious, he said, were two small icons and a huge anniversary cake sent from prison by Father Basil.

At the end of January Father Basil was sentenced to six years in jail. Now the bishop is working for an amnesty for him. Writing to his friends, thanking them for their support over difficult years, the Bishop said, 'In the past we were praying that Mkalavishvili be arrested, now we are praying that he is released from the jail.'

Michael Henderson is the author of 'Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate', Grosvenor Books, 2002, ISBN 1-85239-031-X. Visit his website at www.michaelhenderson.org.uk

STEP TWO TO REMAKING THE WORLD

Engage others

THIS IS a radical agenda. When I write about 'remaking the world', I do so in the context of my belief that there is a Divine intention behind creation, both loving and dynamic. Remaking the world is about embracing that original vision and the transformation it will require of us all.

It means responding to the call, both personally and collectively, to create a new culture which replaces that of greed and growth, conquest and control, expansion and exclusion with one where justice, compassion, integrity and faith inform the doing and being of nations. Where forgiveness and generosity are the order of the day and no one starves because of another's greed or suffers because of another's lust or is rejected because of another's fear.

It means living as if the other person really mattered: being the change we want to see in the world. And it expects us to give everything to it. A friend of mine found himself sitting next to Mother Teresa on a flight. She told him, 'Do not ask young people to give their weekends, ask them to give their lives.'

In the first article of this series we looked at hearing the call to be a part of this agenda. In the second, we looked at how—and why—to start the transformation process in our own lives. The next stage is to engage others—and engage with others—in the service of God and this vision.

Every encounter holds the potential for mutual transformation. Whether we like it or not, we have an impact on other people the entire time, for better or worse. In engaging others to become part of remaking the world we are becoming more intentional about that impact.

Krishnadas Shah was a young teacher when he joined Mahatma Gandhi at a Quit India Rally. He volunteered to keep the toilets clean at the site. Later Gandhi asked to meet him and asked him whether he would give the rest of his life to the digging of hygienic toilets through the villages of India. 'But I have a wife and family,' he replied. 'Can you start tomorrow?' responded Gandhi. And 40 years later, an old man when I met him, he was still doing it.

Many people are advocates of change, but only those involved in the process of personal transformation themselves can be agents of a change of heart. It's like the measles. You can talk about measles but you cannot actually give the other person measles unless you have them yourself!

The start is to create a hospitable space where friendship and trust can be built. Our caring and the humble and honest sharing of our own change journey can open the door to give a glimpse

of new possibilities—both for the individual and the community. Asking the right questions, being willing to learn, and listening, for hours if need be, are primary tools of engagement.

Transformation begins when any person faces, names and disempowers the destructive habits and attitudes that have control in their lives. Healing and liberation follow as love and forgiveness are empowered instead and new relationships are built. Agents of change are created when that new life and liberation are put at the service of the community in teamwork with others.

A young African friend found this freedom recently when he was reconciled with his father and offered to pay back money he had cheated from the company where he worked. He is now on the cutting edge of an anti-corruption campaign across Africa and engaging other young people in it with him.

So what blocks us from engaging people in this way? I find that fear often holds me back.

The fear of rejection, of looking stupid, of having nothing to give. The fear that I do not have the right to tell another how to live. (Of course, I don't, but I am gifted with friendship to offer and hope to share. And the other person is free to engage or not.)

The fear that my hypocrisy will be shown up. The fear of manipulation and mind control, of getting out of my depth.

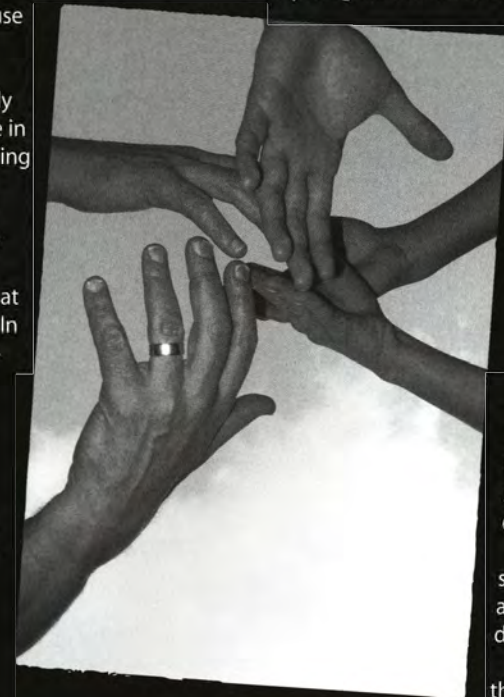
These and many others. And, yes, they may happen. I may get hurt or even hurt others. I do make mistakes,

but if my motive is love and I am honest with myself, fear loses its power and change and forgiveness are always possible.

And if at the same time I practise inner listening, in silence, to the voice of love and truth, seeking the wisdom of God, with no defences or pretences, I open myself to be corrected and led.

And I can engage with others in this universal practice which underlies all the work of transformation. From LaoTse to Elijah to Buddha to Jesus to Mohammed to Gandhi, the tradition of listening to the inner voice is the untapped reservoir of wisdom, of direction, the 'mother tongue of the universe'. Then together we can engage in a radical remaking.

This article is part of a series of five. Return to this page in the next issue for step three: 'Create answers'.



HAYDEN RUSSELL

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