

GUEST COLUMN PATRICK COLQUHOUN

ROMANIA DESERVES BETTER THAN MEDICAL TERRORISM

Over the last 14 years, 160 British health professionals have made 267 visits to Romania under the auspices of Medical Support in Romania, a charity which provides equipment and training. Bemused by this, a young Romanian asked me why such numbers want to go to Romania, when young Romanians in their droves want to leave.

Endemic corruption is one factor behind the exodus; whilst the warmth, generosity and hospitality of the Romanian people lie behind the enjoyment of those who go there. The Romanian people do not deserve the endemic corruption which is so catastrophic for their country.

The giving of under-the-table bribes to doctors—and in some cases other hospital staff—is common to virtually all former Soviet bloc lands. The practice of “informal payments” to doctors for faster and better care equals 5 to 30 per cent of all health care spending in most countries in the region,’ stated an article in the *McKinsey Quarterly* 2003 Special Edition, *Global Directions*.

WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION

A 621-page report by the Open Society Institute in 2002 stated that Romania’s health service was ‘ranked as the most corrupt institution according to citizens’ actual experience’. It placed healthcare at the top of ‘loci of corruption’ in Poland, said medical corruption was ‘widespread’ in Hungary, and found that almost half Bulgaria’s population ‘believe most or all doctors are corrupt’, with ‘doctors ranked only lower than customs officers as the public officials exerting the strongest pressure to obtain bribes’.

Such euphemisms as ‘presents’, ‘brown envelopes’, ‘collateral things’, even ‘bribes’ do not describe the reality. This system of bribes is best described as medical terrorism. Bribes are what doctors receive. Terror is what the population experiences.

In 1998 a woman told me, ‘The anaesthetist said that unless I gave him enough money before the operation, he would not wake me up afterwards.’ In

2002, the same anaesthetist told another patient, ‘I would rather let you die than give you an anaesthetic, if you do not give me enough money.’ ‘My mother paid the bribe, because she was terrified not to,’ a young woman said of her uncle’s emergency admission to hospital.

EMERGENCY ADMISSION

People believe that if they do not pay the bribe, then they, or their children, may not be treated properly or even looked at. It is mass terror, in an area of maximum human vulnerability.

Corruption also extends to major medical equipment contracts. No wonder the Romanian health system is virtually bankrupt, with many hospitals unable to buy even basic items.

In 1999 a World Bank loan funded the installation of X-ray units in 28 TB departments in Romania. When British X-ray specialists tested this equipment in one hospital, they found that it gave 16 times the standard dose of radiation and did not comply with EU standards. Cheaper, better units were available in 1999. One of those on the committee who chose the model was closely linked with the firm that imported them.

In October 2000, a \$21 million contract was agreed for sterilization equipment for 60 Romanian hospitals. The next Minister of Health unsuccessfully tried to stop it. One item of equipment was described by a British sterilization expert as a ‘potential bomb if badly maintained’. Maintenance in Romania tends to be crisis-related rather than preventative.

These examples happen to be drawn from Romania. But similar scandals take place to varying degrees throughout the former communist world.

The origins of medical terrorism are simple; the outcomes foul. A senior Hungarian civil servant told me that the early Stalinist leadership of these countries needed doctors, but wanted to

pay them the same as road sweepers. Whole populations were encouraged to pay bribes. This gave the Party the added advantage of being able to exert political pressure on doctors, who were breaking the law by taking bribes.

With the fall of communism, rising pay and many doctors in lucrative private practices, many hoped that these under-the-table payments would die away. But the problem has got worse, with surgeons able to take £1,000 a week.

This criminality is slowly destroying the whole medical profession. Too often medical decisions are not medically driven. A Romanian doctor said: ‘Forget the Hippocratic oath, it is meaningless in Romania today.’ He wants to leave and practise outside the country.

A few doctors actively refuse bribes. Quite a number will not demand them. But because of the behaviour of the worst doctors, patients tend to assume that all doctors expect bribes. This damages the medical profession’s integrity and credibility.

PROMISING EXAMPLE

If the medical profession chose to put patients first, and to renounce bribery, a moral revolution would occur. Honest doctors would be catalysts for ending the endemic corruption in other spheres which is so catastrophic for these countries.

In one Romanian hospital, in Zalău, three families of patients, who did not give bribes, instead gave sponsorship to the new Paediatric Surgical Ward—a promising example, with the current under-funding of Romanian hospitals.

Tackling medical terrorism could be the strategic lever for shifting corruption in the former communist world—and I believe that Romania could lead the way.

Patrick Colquhoun is Director of the British charity, Medical Support in Romania.

Next Issue

Lead Story: For *A Change* celebrates 50 years of the Civil Rights movement in the USA.

Profile: From Albania to the Solomons, a Scottish agriculturalist’s work for development.

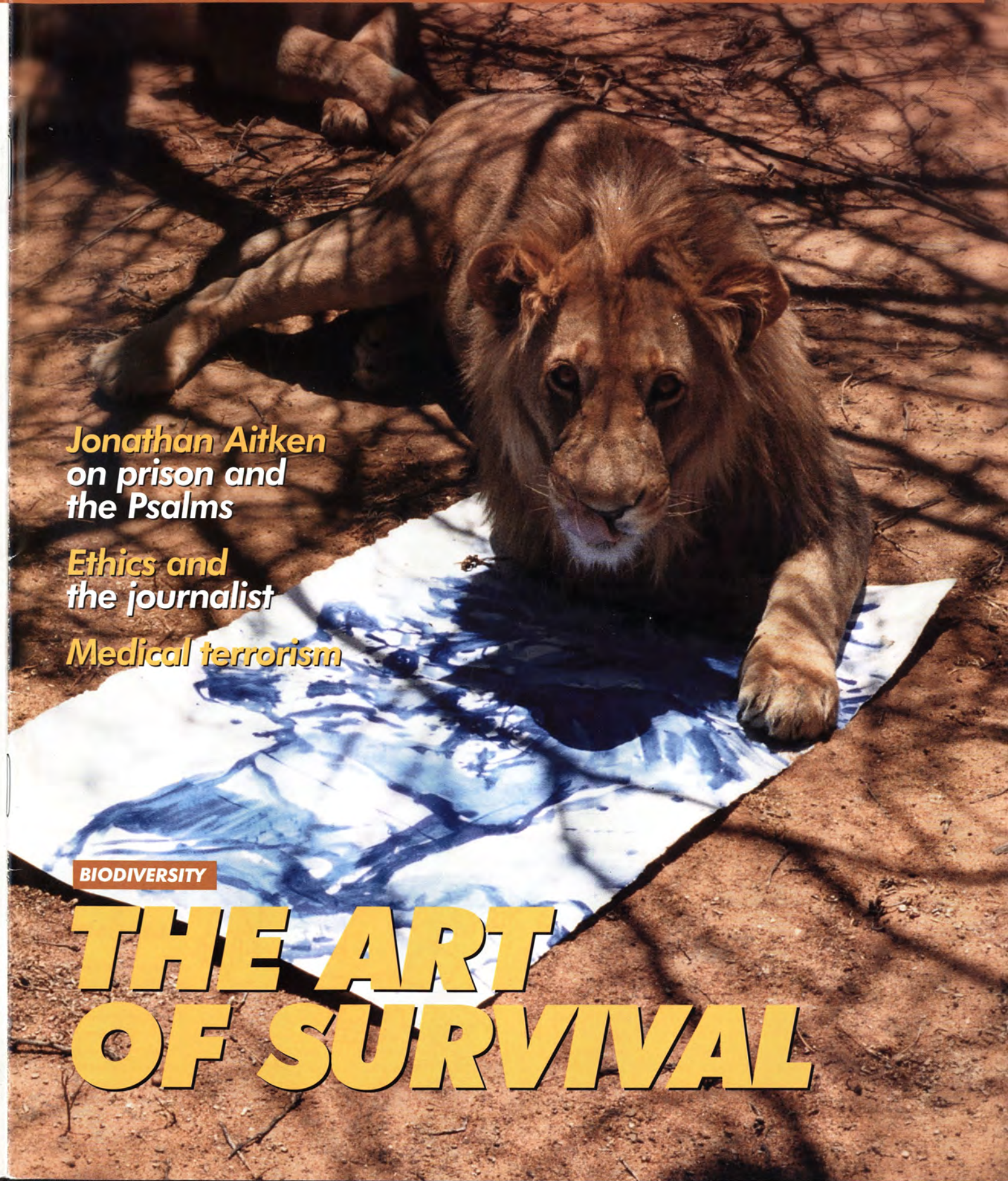
Feature: FAC meets Indian grassroots activists.

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FOR A CHANGE

HEALING HISTORY/TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS/BUILDING COMMUNITY



Jonathan Aitken
on prison and
the Psalms

**Ethics and
the journalist**

Medical terrorism

BIODIVERSITY

THE ART OF SURVIVAL

EAR TO THE GROUND

DIGNA HINTZEN IN COLOMBIA

BREATHTAKING

It's not only the altitude of 2,700 metres which takes your breath away when you arrive at Bogotá airport. The sight of this city of seven million inhabitants is impressive, as it sprawls out onto the savanna in three directions and is held in line by mountains in the other.

Although Colombia's capital is near the equator, its altitude gives it the mild average temperature of April in England. The climate of the rest of this huge mountainous country (twice the size of France) varies from subtropical to tropical. It borders on Panama, and is the only South American state with coasts on both the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean.

WARMTH AND WAR

The welcome one gets from friends could not be warmer. The way they offer to take you wherever you want to go, by car or on foot, is typical—even if, as an individualistic European, you would sometimes rather go by yourself!

People are very courteous. When you approach a bank clerk, for instance, you cannot simply blurt out your problem or question. First you must ask how they are today and how they have been. And be sure never to pass a phone call straight to the person who is being called—first have a nice conversation with whoever is on the other end.

And yet... this is a nation that has known bloody civil wars and where, since 1965, guerrillas have ruled part of the country, intimidating the other part by extortion, kidnapping, murder and sabotage. In response to this, and the army's failure to protect its citizens, local defence forces (known as

paras) have sprung up.

Both the *paras* and the guerrillas, who started out of a desire to bring social justice, have strayed far from their original purpose. They are now locked into a fight for power, with arms bought with money raised by the drugs trade and extortion. Villagers who have been exposed to unimaginable cruelty from both sides have fled in their millions to the cities.

TOUGH APPROACH

The previous government's attempt to negotiate with the guerrillas led to interesting televised debates but to no ceasefire whatsoever. After this, the nation overwhelmingly elected Alvaro Uribe, who has set out, with US help, to defeat the guerrillas by military means (and by trying to negotiate a ceasefire with the *paras*).

In Uribe's 17 months of government, guerrilla activity has dropped dramatically. For

the first time in years people can safely drive by car from one city to another.

This tough approach has also led to excesses, and accusations of human rights violations have been rife. But, as the daily newspaper *El Tiempo* asked: 'What about the human rights of 40 million Colombians, who have been terrorized by armed groups which do not show the least respect for the lives or possessions of the population?'

Every Saturday at 6.30 am, Uribe flies out to some remote part of the country, accompanied by the relevant minister or civil servants, to listen to the people and find out how to address the blocks to local progress.

TRAFFIC

One feature of life in Bogotá is *pico y placa*, ('rush hour and number plate'). The final figures on your number plate decide which two days of the week you are not allowed to

drive between 7 and 9am or 5 and 7pm. Fines are high, so this restriction has to be factored into social engagements. Taxis (inexpensive) and buses do good business.

LOVE OF COUNTRY

In January, 40 people, half of them under 25, took part in a weekend course run by Foundations for Freedom in a lovely retreat centre in the mountains outside Bogotá. Many more wanted to take part. The course helps people identify the changes needed in the world and the way these relate to their own lives. The love people feel for their country makes them open to new truths about themselves and proves a solid ground for hope for a peaceful future.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to the EU!

On 1 May, the European Union will have 75 million new inhabitants—and ten new member nations, bringing its total to 25. The 'rich man's club' is opening its doors to its less wealthy neighbours—amid muttering from many of those already ensconced in its comfortable armchairs. It may seem strange—even presumptuous—for a publication based in the UK to welcome the new arrivals. To the rest of Europe, Britain has sometimes seemed an awkward member of the club, carping about the rules, resisting change and casting aspersions on everyone else. Although our government championed the enlargement, the prospect has sparked a xenophobia in some quarters which is matched only by attitudes to asylum seekers and refugees. Behind the fears of job-seekers (or worse still, 'benefit tourists') flooding into the country lurks a less tangible anxiety about the loss of national identity.

The fears are based on the fact that Britain and Ireland (at the time of going to press) are taking a more generous attitude to the jobs issue than the rest of the old EU, allowing migrants from the new countries to work right away—although, after an outcry from the right, Britain is attempting to restrict their eligibility for benefits.

Any influx resulting from the larger EU is likely to be temporary. Similar predictions greeted the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the admission of Spain, Portugal and Greece—and did not materialize. Migration is expected to decline, and eventually reverse, as standards of living rise in the new member states.

And what is all the fuss about anyway, at a time when half a million jobs in the UK stand vacant? The hotel and catering industries are short of workers, small businesses cannot find skilled labour and the health service is scouring the world for doctors, nurses and dentists. Why are we so chary of those who come to us unsolicited?

In the 1960s, a group of shanty town leaders told the Governor of Rio de Janeiro, 'We are not one million problems, but two million hands ready to solve the problems.' Europe's 70 million new inhabitants are part of the answer for the ageing, labour-poor societies of the West.

The same could be said for asylum seekers and refugees.

MARY LEAN

www.forachange.co.uk

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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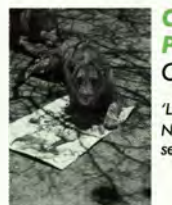
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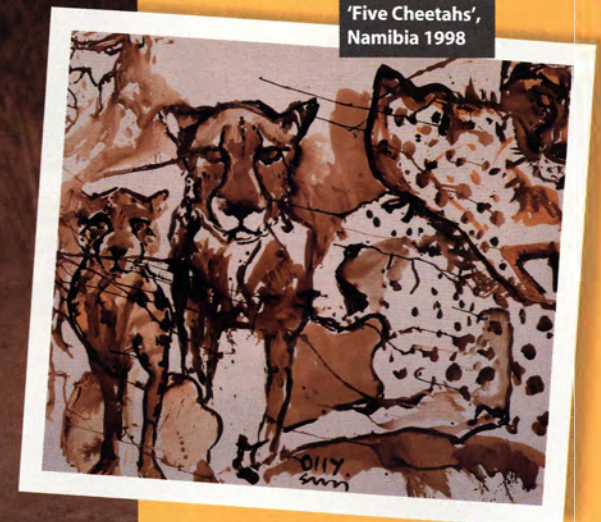
'Lion & painting',
Namibia, 1998
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Olly and Suzi with 'Feeding Frenzy' and its subjects in Tanzania



OLLY & SUZI WITH GREG WILLIAMS

'Five Cheetahs', Namibia 1998



THE ART OF SURVIVAL

Kenneth Noble looks at the importance of maintaining the Earth's biodiversity and, first, meets two daring artists who aim to let nature speak for herself.

A large, rather austere studio off Ladbrooke Grove, London. White walls, exposed metal girders and a large extractor fan below the roof-lights which are the only source of outside light. A few chairs and a sofa. Yet wildlife painters Olly Williams and Suzi Winstanley seem faintly embarrassed about it. 'For 10 years we didn't have a studio,' says Suzi. 'The bush was our studio.'

'Bush' is meant in the general sense of the great outdoors. For, as the title of their recent book* suggests, arctic, desert, ocean and jungle have been the scenes of their collaborative paintings. Some of their works are so dramatic you wonder they survived to bring them home—few artists can have landed on an ice floe near a polar bear in order to paint it in its natural environment; or swum among sharks clutching paper and pens.

Olly and Suzi are passionate about their work. But it is not just art for art's sake—they aim to share their love for the animals they portray. At the beginning of their book they say: 'Through live and direct interaction we aim to document the passing of animals, habitats and tribes that are here now but may not be for much longer.'

Their best known painting is probably one of a great white shark which, when finished, they let drift upon the sea. Today it bears the 'most beautiful marks' of a shark's fearsome teeth. Not that fear is a word you associate with Olly and Suzi. It certainly doesn't prevent them from sitting

patiently waiting in the Arctic tundra for a wolf to approach, or from working collaboratively alongside wild dogs in the heat of Tanzania. Olly's brother, photographer Greg Williams, accompanies them on some of their expeditions so their book provides plenty of startling images of them getting 'up close and personal' with grizzly bears or hoiking an anaconda shoulder-high through an Amazonian swamp.

When asked what is most important to them, their art or the wildlife they portray, Olly says, 'We are artists first.' But there is no doubting their passion for the wildlife, habitats and, lately, tribal people that they paint. Olly points out an enormous photograph on the studio wall of lions lying near the remains of a kill beside a waterhole in the Ngorogoro crater in Tanzania. 'There are 13 lions there. That's not just a happy coincidence. It's called *The Last Supper*. In the Serengeti, about 300 miles from there, there's an Aids-like disease killing lions. Twenty years ago there used to be 300,000. Now there are 20,000. In ten years they could be endangered.'

Their next expedition, to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, will be their 11th to the polar regions. They are outraged at plans to drill for oil in such an 'incredibly delicate and massively diverse ecosystem'. 'Six years of desecration in order to provide 1.9 billion barrels of oil—enough to keep the US going for six months,' fumes Olly. He outlines in some detail the threat to the caribou which breed there and on which the Gwichen

THE ART OF SURVIVAL



Left: 'Shark Bite', South Africa 1997
Below: 'Drawing Orang-utans', Sepilok, Borneo, 2002



Indian people's traditional way of life depends. 'Our message is a positive one,' stresses Suzi. 'We're not just standing on a soap-box saying, "Isn't this awful; the whole world's falling apart." We're saying, "Look at this; this is beautiful; this creature's wonderful."' 'We're not Greenpeace activists,' adds Olly. 'We're not brave enough.' (This I doubt.)

I ask about a large painting hanging on the wall—an intricately woven pattern of animals, including an elephant, a psychedelic dragonfly and, unexpectedly, a curved dagger. 'This is our latest theme, tribal peoples,' explains Olly. 'This is Nepal. It shows the similarities between people as well as the differences.' And indeed it is echoed by another work of similar size in which a Sami knife and creatures of Lapland appear.

Olly and Suzi talk in turn, each picking up the thread where the other leaves off. They paint in the same way, leading Australian broadcaster Clive James to write in his introduction to *Arctic Desert Ocean Jungle*: 'Olly and Suzi are a unique artist.'

Their collaboration began at Central St Martin's School of Art, London, in 1987. They cannot say exactly how, but within a matter of weeks they had decided that 'we should always work in this way; hand over hand on the same painting at the same time'.

They found that they shared many common interests—art, photography,

cinema, music and travelling—but they had different friends and recreational pursuits. 'When we came to paint together our varying sentiments, visual perspectives and moods acted in our favour, providing a dynamic catalyst for our painting.' Their collaboration evolved and 'slowly we gained a huge respect for each other's ability to finish the other's line, and began to refine the growing arsenal of marks and creative techniques that would soon form our collaborative style and artistic signature'.

In 1988 they took up an exchange scholarship at Syracuse University, New York. Finding the course inadequate, they abandoned all classes, rented a large unfurnished house and started painting. Mohawk myths and learning about the universal Native American respect for animals, which are seen as relatives, quickened their interest in the environment. On a visit to New York city, they were struck by a mural of a giant hippo on a warehouse and on their return to Syracuse 'started to make paintings in earnest'. Later, a university tutor called unannounced, saw their prolific output (some 25 large-scale works and hundreds of drawings), interceded with the head of the course and saved them from expulsion. In fact they were given top grades, and were asked to speak to the other students about 'self-motivation'.

During their final year at St Martin's they concentrated more and more on predators, especially sharks. Upon graduation they began work in the

'LOOK AT THIS; THIS IS BEAUTIFUL; THIS CREATURE'S WONDERFUL'



Below: 'Going down the Autana River', Venezuela, 2000

fashionable London district of Chelsea—when they weren't on their frequent travels. Their first solo exhibition was in Stuttgart in 1991. Five years later, in search of fresh inspiration, they decided to make 'the wild' their 'studio' by making their work on site. This phase, which is the main focus of their book, gave them great freedom. They could live more cheaply in remote places than in London.

Now both of them have families, so constant travel is no longer an option—though they are quick to assure me that they still do three or four expeditions to remote areas each year.

From July 2001 to May 2002 they worked with the London Natural History Museum's scientists as artists-in-residence. Their works, both inside and outside the museum, showed interactions with predators under the general title, *Olly and Suzi untamed*.

Olly and Suzi write in their book: 'The hunter sees before anyone else what is happening in the forest.... He is the eyes and ears of wild places and ultimately holds in his hands the future of the wilderness.... A traditional respect and understanding for what he loves most is at the centre of his being. To try to understand the wild without understanding those who depend on the wild for their survival is to miss a valuable point.'

To stretch Clive James's phrase, Olly and Suzi are a voice that needs to be heard.

*'Arctic Desert Ocean Jungle', by Olly & Suzi, Harry N Abrams, New York, 2003, ISBN 0-8109-4266-6



ALAN CHANNER

OUR HAND IN THE FUTURE

What can be done to avert mass extinction on a scale not seen since the age of the dinosaurs, asks Kenneth Noble

Last summer I saw an extraordinary sight. A dunnock, a bird of the size of a sparrow, was feeding a young cuckoo which was about eight times as big as itself. European cuckoos lay their eggs in the nests of other species. Each female cuckoo has evolved to exploit a particular species, often laying eggs that bear a striking resemblance to the foster mother's own. When the cuckoo egg hatches, the fledgling ejects any other eggs and young from the nest and then makes as much noise as a whole brood of normal chicks so that the host parents are stimulated to feed it as much as they would several of their own young. Meanwhile the parent cuckoos are making their way back to a comparatively easy life in Africa.

To me nature is a constant source of fascination. There is so much drama, beauty, mystery and diversity. The challenge is: how to keep it that way? A study published in the journal *Nature* (January 2004) says that as many as half-a-million species of plants and animals could become extinct by 2050 as global warming increases. It would be a mass extinction on a scale not seen since the time when the dinosaurs disappeared.

Some will dismiss the study as alarmist but there is ample evidence that many species are in trouble (see box).

Few species become extinct solely as a direct result of persecution by humankind—the pigeon-like dodo and the huge flightless New Zealand birds called 'moas' are recent exceptions. But we are largely to blame for such indirect threats as habitat loss and degradation; pollution; the introduction of species into places where they don't occur naturally; and climate change. Every plant

OLLY & SUZI (2)

and creature is part of a complex ecosystem, few of which are well understood and some of which are extremely fragile.

Even well-intentioned efforts can have serious consequences. For instance, cane toads were introduced to Australia from Hawaii in 1935 to control scarab beetles that were damaging sugar cane crops. The toads are large (up to 1.3 kgs) and breed quickly. Females lay 8,000–35,000 eggs at a time and may produce two clutches a year, although only one in about 200 eggs will survive to maturity (which takes a year in tropical areas). The species has now spread through much of northern and eastern Queensland in what one columnist described as 'a plague of near biblical proportions'. The toads are toxic. They poison many native animals which prey on amphibians, eat large numbers of native insects and even poison pets and humans.

Does any of this matter? Certainly the world would be less colourful without the tropical birds and the coral reefs with all their extravagantly coloured fish. But few would mourn the passing of cockroaches.

'IF THE GRASSES DIED OUT WE WOULD NOT OUTLIVE THEM'

Biodiversity is important for more than aesthetic reasons. On a purely pragmatic level, the totality of all the Earth's ecosystems—what might be called the worldwide web of life—is mankind's support system. We may like to feel that we are the lords of creation but if, for example, the grasses died out we would not outlive them. We simply don't know how many holes can be punched in the eco-web before it tears and loses the strength to support us in significant numbers.

Also, we do not know what resources we are destroying. Many plants have medicinal uses. The classic case is the rosy periwinkle, found in the tropical forests of Madagascar. Without the drug derived from it, many more children would die from leukaemia. How many benefits may one day be derived from other plants and animals, if they are still available to researchers? Half of all medicines prescribed worldwide are originally derived from wild products. And the US National Cancer Institute has identified over 2,000 tropical rainforest plants with potential to fight cancer.

Medicine is only one of many areas where animals and plants have unknown potential benefits. Imagine if rubber trees had been wiped out before their value was known. New animals are still being discovered at a rapid rate. We should not let them die out

before we've even classified them.

There is also a moral argument. No generation has the right to deny all future generations the chance to see, wonder at, study, harvest and benefit from the huge range of living species that inhabit the Earth. It would be—and increasingly is—an act of vandalism of unprecedented proportions. We could be denying our children the resources they will need to keep them alive.

The main driving forces behind the despoiling of our planet stem from human failings—apathy, greed and materialism. We want to plunder natural resources without taking the human and environmental costs into account. In August 2002 the BBC reported the closure of a \$0.5 billion Brazilian government agency, Sudam, because of corruption. Sudam was set up to fund much needed environmentally sustainable projects across the Amazon. A federal prosecutor reported that every one of some 70 projects investigated had 'problems'. All of them had had resources diverted, varying from 30–100 per cent of their grants.

Earlier this year, another press story reported that Chinese gangs were planning how to exterminate the rhinoceros so that their stockpiles of rhino horn would become more valuable. Fragile environments are put at risk in our rapacious hunt for oil. And whatever the pros and cons of genetically modified crops, it is hard to believe that the love of money is not one of the loudest voices in the debate.

Indignation comes cheaply. It is far harder to take effective action to reverse the dangerous trends that are daily gaining momentum. Yet there are many things that individual people can do, including:

- supporting conservation organizations;
- turning your garden into a nature reserve—the combined area of all Britain's gardens is one million acres, equivalent to the county of Suffolk. Even a small organic garden with plenty of native plant species will support many forms of wildlife. A garden pond adds further value (and interest);
- lobbying for environmentally-friendly policies in local and national governments;
- adopting a conservation-friendly lifestyle (by saving energy, recycling, avoiding waste, using renewable resources);
- working for a society that is based less on materialism and more on a global sense of solidarity with other people and the natural environment—and making sure that our own life choices are shaped by our ideals.

Changing the world is a tall order. The alternative may be for humankind, like *Tyrannosaurus rex*, to become nothing more than a fossil record. ■

BIODIVERSITY UNDER THREAT

■ *Newsweek's* cover story of 14 July, 2003 asked, 'Are the oceans dying?' In the last 50 years, overfishing has removed nine out of ten large predators such as tuna and cod. In 1992 the Canadian government was forced to impose a moratorium on cod fishing, but in 11 years the fish have not come back. Nobody knows why.

■ Zoologists estimate there are 500–600 tigers left in the Sundarbans—a 10,000 square km mangrove forest in the Bay of Bengal—down from about 100,000 at the start of the last century.

■ Approximately 4,000 species of exotic plants and 500 exotic animals have established free-living populations in the United States. Nearly 700 are known to cause severe harm to agriculture.

■ A fungal disease called 'sudden oak death' which has killed 80 per cent of one oak species in the western US has been found for the first time in several British tree species including beech, and holm oak. There is no known cure for the disease.

■ The epitome of urban birds, the house sparrow, is all but extinct in central London.

■ Researchers from the US and UK estimate that each year approximately 308,000 cetaceans (whales, porpoises and dolphins) are unintentionally drowned by becoming entangled in fishing gear.

■ An official 'audit' of British wildlife in 2003 warned that farming methods and industrial pollution were threatening wild thyme, cowslips and hundreds of other native British plants by raising the levels of nutrients in the soil. Their loss would reduce wild bird populations.

■ According to a study in *Science*, the Amazon forest in Brazil, the world's largest remaining wilderness, could vanish within two decades, largely as a result of the 'Advance Brazil' development programme, which will include new highways, railways, hydroelectric projects and housing in the Amazon basin.

■ British botanists say that they are near to achieving their goal of saving the seeds of all UK seed-bearing plants. The Millennium Seed Bank, organized by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, already has the seeds of all but two of the UK's 1,400 native species.

■ Many more examples can be found at www.massextinction.net



KENNETH NOBLE (2)

Why should they be good citizens?



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James Wood teaches a subject which challenges both schools and society at large.

Since September 2000, Citizenship has been a compulsory subject in English and Welsh secondary schools. Its aim is to develop young people as fully-fledged members of all the communities to which they belong, from their school to the global village; to help them make sense of the world and to know how they can take part in it.

Being a citizen is more than voting or joining pressure groups; Citizenship, they say, is 'not a subject but a way of life'.

At the secondary school where I teach, students of all ages spend between two and five hours a fortnight studying a combined course in Citizenship and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education). In later years, this also includes RE (religious education). The Citizenship staff are also responsible for careers education.

This apparently unconnected set of topics can be complementary. Religious education should contribute to a student's basic understanding of the world, and spiritual experience influences our view of the personal issues, such as drug use, relationships

and personal safety, which are discussed in PSHE. This in turn links to the Citizenship curriculum which asks students to consider the operation of the law in areas such as marriage and sexuality.

At the heart of Citizenship is the concept of rights and responsibilities. The subject encourages students to develop such skills as discussion and teamwork, both through the classroom and through activities like the student council and sports.

The hope is that what is discussed in Citizenship will influence students' thinking in the classroom, on the sports field, in the playground and beyond the school gates. Questions such as 'Should I drop litter in the playground?' or 'Is it right to buy this brand of coffee?' are just as important as understanding that each student has the right to their opinion and that the school community demands certain standards from its members.

There is some truth in the suggestion that Citizenship asks us to teach children what their parents ought to teach them. Two key questions now dominate in my thinking. First, is

Citizenship just a formalization of what schools and communities always did? Second, how can we succeed without a moral consensus beyond the school gates?

In a society which is losing its values and direction, students do not come to school with an established and agreed morality. Without an implicit agreement between teachers, parents and students as to what is expected, a school community cannot function effectively.

The introduction of Citizenship to the national curriculum shows that the government has understood that it cannot hope to solve Britain's social problems without first addressing their underlying moral causes. Unfortunately addressing these issues in schools will be no more than a drop in the ocean unless it is allied to a change of heart in society at large.

Without this change of heart students who are involved in crime or who hold prejudiced points of view will simply be hardened against authority. Their question, 'Why should I?' is a good one. Why should they obey the law, avoid drugs and vote in elections? These are questions on which society holds no consensus.

As part of our Citizenship and PSHE courses, I bring in guest speakers on issues such as drugs and law. There are many people queuing up to tell our students what not to do but I have yet to find the people who can offer young people a positive vision for their future. Teachers can contribute a great deal, but this is also the role of society at large: we cannot do it on our own.

Citizenship has had success in informing our pupils, and in connecting them to the life of our local community. It has taught them about their rights and responsibilities and the effects of their decisions. But the 'Why should I?' question remains unanswered. Why should I take part in the life of my community? Why should I treat others with respect? Why should I obey the law if I can get away without doing so? Teaching Citizenship in a moral vacuum makes finding meaningful answers impossible.

James Wood is head of Citizenship at a secondary school in Hertfordshire, England.

PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE



JUSTIN LEIGHTON

The F-word

THE F-WORD: *Images of Forgiveness*, a powerful and moving exhibition which ran in London in January, gave voice to 26 people from around the world who had experienced tragedy or atrocities. Their photographs, by Brian Moody, were accompanied by interviews by Marina Cantacuzino.

Most of those featured had found it in themselves to forgive. Many had set up grassroots organizations involved in conflict resolution, victim support and reconciliation. Some had now befriended and work with the perpetrators.

There are those who see forgiveness as an immensely noble and humbling response to atrocity—and those who see it as a weak gesture which lets the violator off the hook and encourages further violence,' Cantacuzino tells me. 'This is why we called the exhibition *The F-Word*. For some people, forgiveness is a very dirty word indeed.'

As a journalist, Cantacuzino has spent her life telling people's stories, often using their own voices. The idea for the exhibition came to her in 2002, during the lead-up to the Iraq war, when the media was full of talk of retribution and revenge.

She saw a TV interview with the father of a child who was killed in hospital when given laughing gas instead of oxygen. 'The media reports these terrible accidents when children are killed and usually the parents, quite understandably, want retribution and reparation,' she says. 'This father, though, saw the pain of the surgeon who had made the mistake, hugged him and told him he forgave him.'

Cantacuzino was deeply moved. 'These are the stories I want to try to find and tell,' she says, 'and I believe these are the stories people want to hear. The desire for retribution is understandable, but it is an endless cycle, there is no hope there. I passionately believe there is the possibility

'I BELIEVE THESE ARE THE STORIES PEOPLE WANT TO HEAR'

Above: Launch party for *The F-word* exhibition: Brian Moody (left), Bishop Desmond Tutu (centre) and Marina Cantacuzino (far right), with Jo Berry, daughter of one of those killed in the Brighton hotel bombing, and Patrick Magee, who set the bomb

for change in the other approach.'

She had already worked with Brian Moody on a words-and-pictures exhibition about mental health, *1 in 4*. They decided to try the same format with forgiveness. In the end, Cantacuzino says, the project turned out to be more about the struggle for dialogue and understanding, the fight to see humanity in the face of the enemy, to understand why people get trapped into violence and do what they do.

All those whose stories were depicted were invited to the opening of the exhibition. Fifteen came, including Alistair Little, a former Protestant paramilitary in Northern Ireland, and David, who had murdered two members of his family. The sympathy for the victims was, of course, great, but here were two perpetrators who had had the courage to come and talk to others who had been hurt. Animated, intimate conversations took place between Alistair Little and Camilla Carr, who was repeatedly raped while being held hostage in Chechnya; and between Marian Partington, the sister of one of serial killer Fred West's victims, and David. All said it had been such a healing experience meeting and talking with each other.'

These were outcomes that Cantacuzino had not envisaged when she started the project. 'If people can see forgiveness and understanding happening, then there is hope for the future,' she says.

The exhibition was attended by over 5,000 people, and received a good deal of press, TV and radio coverage.

It can be viewed at www.theforgivenessproject.com, which invites submissions of further stories of forgiveness and reconciliation. Meanwhile the exhibition itself will be touring the UK, has an invitation to South Africa and is available for booking. *Eddie Campbell*

Restoring a Bosnian jewel

WHEN DONALD REEVES retired as Vicar of St James Church, Piccadilly in London in 1998, his mind turned to Europe. 'I still had some energy, and a lot of conviction, left,' he says. 'I began asking myself about the state of Europe's soul.'

This thought led him to Bosnia and finally to the administrative capital of Republika Srpska, Banja Luka. (Bosnia, after the Dayton peace accords, has been divided into two entities: the mainly Serb Republika Srpska and the Muslim-Croat Federation of which Sarajevo is the capital. Sarajevo is also capital of the overall state.)

Having decided to focus his efforts in Banja Luka, Reeves launched the 'Soul of Europe' with help from a London-based benefactor, who promised to match whatever he could raise in three months. Reeves threw himself into the task with characteristic energy. The result was a working fund of £80,000.

After much work and many visits, Reeves persuaded Banja Luka's Orthodox Bishop, Catholic Bishop and Muslim Mufti to travel together to the Centre for Reconciliation in Coventry, UK. This breakthrough led to Soul of Europe opening an office in Banja Luka and to the creation of the Banja Luka Civic Forum. Modelled on the Scottish Civic Forum, it aims to be a place where 'those who do not usually speak are heard by those who do not usually listen'.

The Forum's foremost project at the moment is the re-building of the 16th century Ferhadija Mosque. Along with 13 other mosques it was completely destroyed in the 'purges' in the early 1990s. The mosque, designed by the great Ottoman architect Sinan, was once a source of pride for all in Banja Luka. Reeves describes it as 'a jewel of the Ottoman Empire'. Fund-raising for its restoration is well underway.

He has so far managed (despite some rumblings from elements within the Serb majority) to associate all the three religious groups with the endeavour, which he sees as an act of reconciliation and an opportunity for a fresh start. He intends to invite prominent peacemakers from other parts of the world to the opening.

The project is symbolic for Europe as well as Bosnia, believes Reeves. 'European Muslims need to be involved in the soul of Europe,' he says. 'Rebuilding the mosque will help to focus a deeply-divided community on the future—beyond the mess. I see Banja Luka as a city where one day Islam, Orthodoxy and Catholicism will flourish together.' *Paul Williams*



SOUL OF EUROPE

A haunting image of the ground where the once magnificent Ferhadija Mosque stood. Built in 1583 by Ferhad Pasha Sokolovic, the Mosque was destroyed at 3 am on 7 May 1993, when the people of Banja Luka were woken by the sound of two large explosions. Several thousand pounds of dynamite had been detonated under the Ferhadija Mosque and its sister mosque, the Arnaudija Mosque, built in 1587. The ruins of the mosque were then taken away and the site was leveled.

Lesson from the dying

WHEN CANADIAN volunteer Leslie Davies set out to make a difference to the lives of the poor in Calcutta, she was surprised at the difference they made in her own.

A former high school teacher in Calgary, Alberta, Davies now works as a human rights advocate in southern Mexico. In 1996 she spent four months helping out at Mother Teresa's Home for the Dying in Calcutta.

Among those being cared for at the home was a woman, unable to speak, who was suffering from the high fever, chills and delirium of malaria. On this particular hot, humid day, she was incontinent.

As Davies walked past her bed, she thought to herself, 'Oh man, not again!' She even hoped that, if she kept going, someone else might clean up the mess. But in spite of this, she stopped.

'I went up to the head of the bed and I looked into that poor woman's eyes and what I saw there stunned me,' says Davies. 'I saw shame. In the midst of her fever and the chills that wracked her body, this woman was ashamed that she could not control her bowels.'

'I wanted to fall on my knees in the face of her suffering and my own selfishness, I who in the riches of my health and skills, was petty enough to pity myself for having to clean up her mess. And I stroked her face and held her hand, and from my own shame I did my best to convey to her that she had no

reason—no reason at all—to feel shame.

'A poor, dying street woman in Calcutta, in her humility, taught me a great lesson that day,' she says. She captured that lesson in a poem:

*The mute appeal in your eyes
as they meet mine
tears me in two.
I bend over you, caress
your face, so sorrowful,
and my heart aches for you
in your humiliation.
How to let you know that
there is no shame?
Your body wracked with fever,
chills shaking you,
life-force draining an
almost empty cup.
Yet not empty.
Your eyes tell me you have
not succumbed;
your soul, though weary,
struggles feebly
within your ravaged body.
Who can know the anguish
of your life,
your sojourn here on earth?
Feel loved, touched, cared for.
But please
feel no shame.*

Davies adds, 'One of the greatest gifts we can give one another is to be present; that is, to truly bend our heart and spirit towards others, to take time to listen and to care.'

*Warren Harbeck
Poem © Leslie Davies*



Leslie Davies

JONATHAN AITKEN

PRIDE, PERJURY AND THE PSALMS

Twenty-three years in Parliament, nine months in the Cabinet, seven months in prison—Jonathan Aitken talks to **Mary Lean**.

For a British national newspaper to print an extract from a new book on the Psalms* is unusual, to say the least. All the more so, when the book is by someone who has waged an acrimonious libel battle against the paper—and when the interview accompanying the extract is largely sympathetic.

When I meet Jonathan Aitken, a former Conservative defence minister who spent seven months in prison for perjury, he is amazed by *The Guardian's* decision to run the extract. "They said that they would like to extend a hand of reconciliation," he says. "When that comes your way, you have to seize it gratefully."

Society today is stronger on tolerance than it is on the possibilities of redemption and change once the intolerable has been committed. So it's perhaps not surprising that when I told friends I was going to interview Aitken some of them were skeptical.

He resigned from John Major's Cabinet in 1995, after *The Guardian* and Granada television accused him of corruption and sleaze involving his links with the Arab world. At the press conference which launched his suit for libel, he portrayed himself as a crusader wielding 'the simple sword of truth' against the 'cancer of bent and twisted journalism'. This claim rebounded on him when he was found to have lied on oath—and to have persuaded his teenage daughter to lie in his support. In *The Guardian's* reconciliatory interview, he agreed that his pre-prison life had 'followed a pattern of deceit'.

So how, I ask him, do you win back trust in such circumstances?

He doesn't quite answer the question, but says that he tries not to be bothered either by those who see his conversion as a 'charlatan's trick' or by those Christians who are 'wildly enthusiastic' about it.

'As far as the cynics are concerned, I'm rather sympathetic. I think in my old incarnation I would have been a bit cynical if I'd had a colleague who'd got into the same sort of trouble as I did, gone to jail and come out saying, "I've found God."'

However, he says, God is the only audience that matters to him now—and he presumably knows his inner motivation. 'If he knew that I was putting it all on for some charlatan, cynical, public relations purpose, He would be very hard on me on the day of judgement.' And, he adds, all through history high profile converts have had to cope with cynicism.

PRISON FELLOWSHIP

So he tries not to be swayed but to get on with what he believes God is asking him to do. This includes serving as director of a number of Christian charities, among them Prison Fellowship International, whose founder, the Watergate conspirator Charles Colson, supported him during his trial and sentence. He earns his living as an author and journalist and also speaks unpaid at a large number of Christian events. Many of these are connected to the Alpha Course, a programme which played a key role in his conversion. These occasions, he says with some surprise, draw 'what a politician would regard as enormous audiences of 700 or 500 people'.

He traces the first steps of his path from 'self-centredness' towards 'God-centredness' to taking part in a series of Lenten

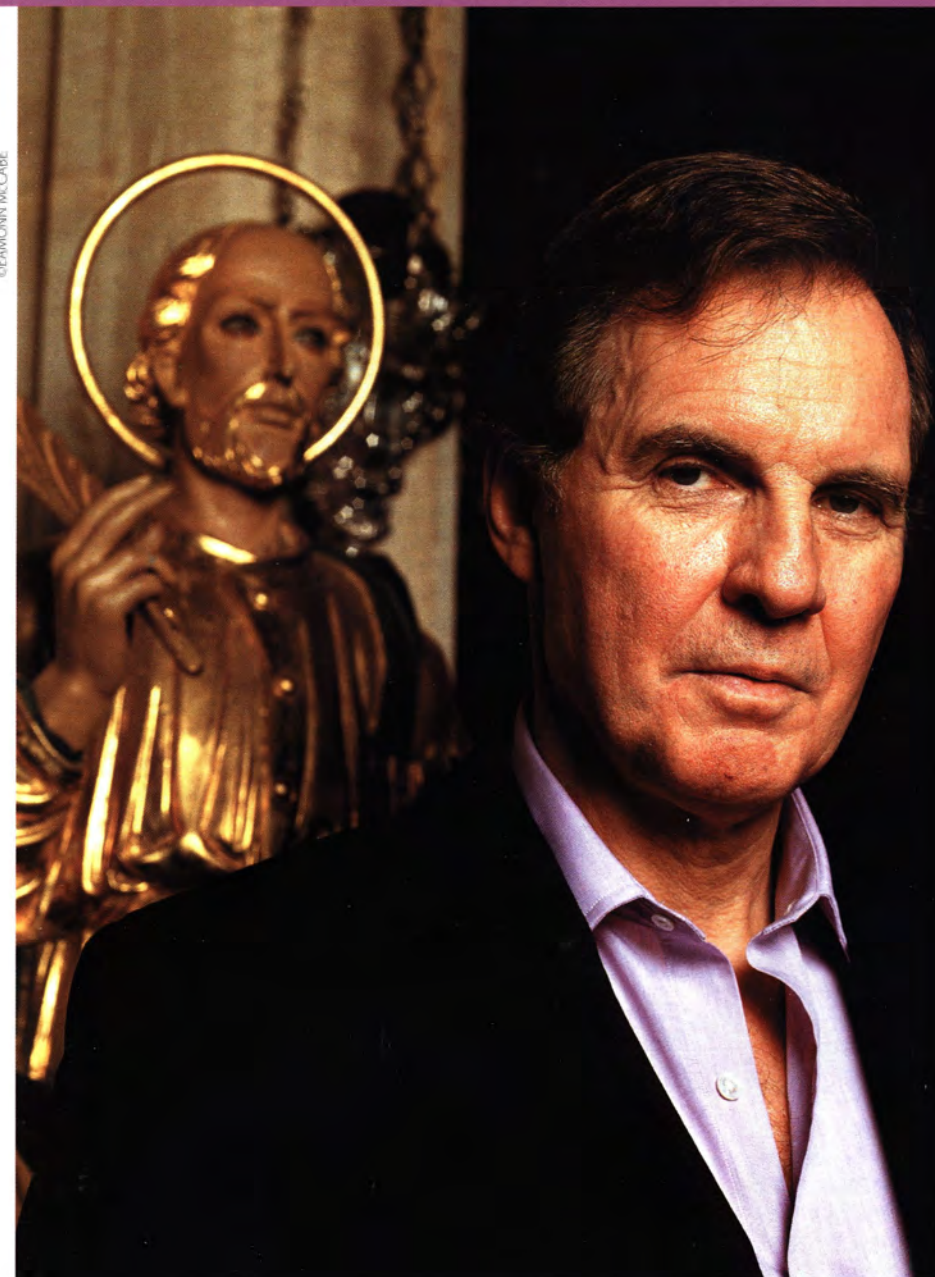
'Parliamentary Prayer Retreats' while still in the House of Commons. At that time, he maintains, he was a member of the 'Church Reticent wing of the Anglican church'. The 'sin of pride', he says, blocked him from a real relationship with God.

What does he see as the main turning points on his spiritual journey? 'Remorse, repentance, adversity, brokenness, pain were a sort of crucible in which God spoke to me. I listened and started to form a relationship which became of fundamental life-changing importance. It's very difficult to pinpoint any one moment, it was much more a journey of stumbles and falls. People sometimes say to me, "Oh wonderful, you're a born-again Christian," and I say, "Yes, but I'm very conscious I'm a failed-again Christian."'

By the time he arrived at Belmarsh, Britain's highest security prison, in June 1999, Aitken was 'trying a different path in life'. He had been through defeat, disgrace, divorce, bankruptcy (later annulled) and jail—a royal flush of crises by anyone's standards'. On his first night, as he listened to his fellow prisoners shouting out what they planned to do to him, he found reassurance by reading Psalm 130: 'Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord'. He writes in *Psalms for People under Pressure*, 'Suddenly, I realized that I was not as lonely, scared, helpless or vulnerable as I had thought. The author of the psalm had been there before me.'

After this frightening start, Aitken soon found himself much in demand as letter-writer and reader for fellow inmates who—like some third of Britain's prison population—were illiterate.

One night a young burglar, Paddy, invited



© JONATHAN AITKEN

'I REALIZED I WAS NOT AS LONELY, SCARED, HELPLESS OR VULNERABLE AS I THOUGHT'

him into his cell for a coffee and offered to give him a present 'on behalf of all the lads'. From under his bed, he pulled out a pile of hardcore porn magazines and offered Aitken his pick. Aitken demurred, saying that although he used to like such magazines, he was now trying to follow Christ's teachings. After a long silence, Paddy said, 'I'd really like to try that path myself.'

Against all his former instincts, Aitken found himself suggesting that they pray together. After they had done this for a couple of nights, Paddy—'who had in him the qualities of a good recruiting sergeant'—persuaded a burglar, an armed robber, a fraudster, a pickpocket and a murderer to join them. By the time Aitken left, their numbers had grown to 20—giving a new meaning, he quips, to the term 'cell group'.

He is still in touch with several of its members.

His entry in *Who's Who* lists Eton and Belmarsh under 'education'. Prison was a humbling experience, he says, but also a learning one—in that it expanded his horizons—and an enriching one. 'I saw the power of the teachings of Christ to change lives, as real today in the 21st century as back in Galilee in the first.'

These days, keeping his head down doesn't seem to be part of his rehabilitation plan. In January, he shocked many by speaking out in defence of Robert Kilroy-Silk, an outspoken chat-show host who resigned after expressing inflammatory anti-Arab views. 'I thought what he said was rubbish,' he tells me. 'But what sort of a country are we living in now where you can't express vigorous and wrong opinions?'

In February, he was back in the news when Conservative activists in his former constituency of South Thanet, Kent, petitioned for him to be allowed to stand for selection as their candidate in the next general election—a suggestion hastily quashed by the leader of the Conservative Party.

Aitken's connections with the Middle East date back to 1966, when as a young journalist he was sent to cover a coup in Abu Dhabi. As a 'born-again' Christian, with many Muslim friends, what is his take on interfaith issues? 'As a Christian I of course believe that "No one comes to the Father except by Me", he says. 'But I've been enough in the Muslim world to understand a bit about the power of prayer by a completely different route, and so I'm respectful of other people's faiths and commitment. There are many routes to God's grace and I don't think we know all of them.'

THE FIRST SEEDS

Just as, he says, we don't always know who plants the first seeds of faith in us. In his memoirs, *Pride and Perjury**, he describes the influence of a nun who looked after him when, as a small child, he spent three years in hospital in Dublin with TB.

Some years later, as a law student in Oxford, he used to visit my parents' home, which acted as a centre for Moral Re-Armament (now Initiatives of Change). At much the same time, he toyed with the idea of entering the church, but was put off by the 'cold academic Anglicanism' he encountered at the university.

'I think your father and others sensed that somewhere in me there was something interested in serving God,' he says now. 'Looking back on it I think it was a door which came open and I closed it. Why I can't really explain—I was too interested in the worldly prizes, enjoying an immoral life too much probably.'

Does he reflect at all on what might have happened if he had gone through such a door at that stage?

'As I now look back on it, I think it was fairly clear from an early age that God was giving me various wake-up calls. Service of God can take endless forms. If I had been better at it I could have been a perfectly good servant of the Lord through politics. But along the way I rejected many a seed-planter, many a wake-up call. Perhaps the old Lutheran dictum, "it is in our pain and brokenness that we come closest to Christ" was true of me.' ■

**Psalms for People under Pressure*, Continuum, 2004, ISBN 0-8264-7275-3
Pride and Perjury, Continuum, 2003, ISBN 0-8264-7274-5

BUSINESS

Employees at Loch Fyne Oysters celebrate taking over ownership of their company



Workers' butterfly aims to start a whirlwind

How can enterprises better serve the wider community? David Erdal has a radical solution, reports Michael Smith.

'Corporate social responsibility' has become a business mantra. But how to make it practical? It is one thing to pay decent wages, support local charities, or clean up the environment. But businessman David Erdal has a more radical solution. He advocates making all the employees the owners of their own enterprise.

It is a 'natural way of sharing the wealth', rather than concentrating it in the hands of powerful or remote shareholders, says Erdal, one of Britain's leading advocates of employee-owned companies. Any enterprise needs to serve its customers well, he says. But for the community to be well served, the interests of employees also need to be fully met, he adds. They and their families are, after all, community members.

Erdal is executive director of the Baxi Partnership, a £20 million trust-owned

investment fund based in Scotland, which aims to 'foster employee ownership of small- and medium-sized companies'. It has recently completed its fifth deal, restructuring and funding an employee buyout of the Gloucester-based window-maker, Swiftshield. Swiftshield's employee trust now owns all the shares, up to half of which will be distributed over time to all the employees.

'All the evidence is that companies become more productive once the employees become involved,' Erdal says. He quotes a recent study in Britain, by Harvard economist Richard Freeman, which showed that companies where managers own shares can expect a 12 per cent increase in productivity. But companies where the entire workforce becomes the owners see an increase of almost 18 per cent. 'That benefits the employees as well as making

the local economy more competitive,' Erdal says.

Erdal was Chairman of Tullis Russell, a family paper-making business in Markinch, Scotland, from 1985 to 1996 (See Profile, FAC, April/May 1995). Even as a child he had been disturbed by the poverty of some of his schoolmates. Graduating in Chinese from Oxford, he was at first attracted to Marxism before joining the family business and gaining his MBA at Harvard business school. He now maintains that a competitive free market is the most honest system for allocating goods and services. But he has lost none of his social conscience.

He instigated the transfer of the company's ownership to its employees. The handover was completed nine years ago, and he now reckons that, even with the slowdown in the world economy since 9/11, each of Tullis Russell's 1,100 employees have seen the value of their shares grow to some £6,000-£7,000, without putting their other savings at risk. Each person receives shares free in profitable years, and they can also buy shares if they wish. The company has retained its reputation as one of Europe's leading specialist paper-makers.

The £20 million Baxi Partnership trust emerged in 2001. Philip Baxendale had inherited the leadership of the Baxi central heating boiler company in the 1950s and built it up from 60 employees to 1,200. In 1983, when he retired, the company was valued at £50 million but Baxendale and his cousin sold it to an employee trust for £5 million—'an extraordinary act of generosity', Erdal says. In the late 1990s, however, the new chief executive drove through an ill-advised £500m acquisition of Blue Circle's heating division. This overstretched Baxi, says Erdal, and led to its forced sale to a venture capital group, ending its employee ownership.

Baxi Partnership, based in St Andrews, is the phoenix out of these ashes. In its first three years it has made long-term loans to the all-employee buyouts of five enterprises. The loans, up to a maximum of £2 million, go into setting up company employee trusts, which buy the company and retain at least 50 per cent of the shares. This has the virtue of giving stability to the employee-owned company as well as creating an internal market for employees to trade their shares. Over time the company passes out free shares to each employee, under the government's tax incentive scheme.

Take, for instance, Loch Fyne Oysters, an hour north of Glasgow, which cultivates oysters and mussels and smokes fish, exporting them to 22 countries. The company also runs a popular seafood shop and restaurant. The major shareholder died

suddenly and the company was put up for sale. A large food-processing firm put in a bid. But the workforce of 120 wanted to keep the ownership local, to avoid the risk of asset-stripping by an outside company or subsequent closure. Baxi invested £2 million in a 15-year loan at seven per cent interest.

Managing Director Andrew Lane says Baxi's investment has benefited the company hugely. 'Without them we would not be in existence,' he says. There had long been an ambition to put the ownership in the hands of the workforce. 'We could only see the staff having to hock their houses and cars to get involved before Baxi came along. Baxi offers a totally different route for well-run companies. It is very exciting.'

Erdal comments: 'People who sell their companies to employee buyouts like this can sleep easy at night, knowing they have not sold out their employees but left them in charge of their own destiny.'

He thinks that employee ownership works best for companies of up to 200 employees, where each person feels really involved. There are examples from much bigger companies. The John Lewis Partnership with 60,000 employees, or 'partners', is one of Britain's most successful retailers. But when employees at United Airlines in the USA acquired 55 per cent of the company's shares, the management and unions failed to develop an inclusive culture and the airline went bust. 'Ownership alone is not enough,' Erdal comments. 'Management's approach needs to be strongly participative, with communication, consultation and involvement at every level becoming second nature.'

Employee-owned companies still represent a tiny minority. But Erdal believes that employee ownership 'could become the general model. It is a much more natural way of organizing our lives, of sharing the wealth. We are a butterfly beating its wings, hoping it will turn into a whirlwind. But that may take two or three generations.' ■



David Erdal: 'Natural way of sharing the wealth'

MY BIGGEST MISTAKE

I WAS 14, and had been fostered on and off since birth. My mother visited me regularly and paid for my upkeep. But since I was 11 my foster mother had indicated many times that she'd be glad to see me go—she blew hot and cold.

I recall standing in her kitchen; she had a letter—apparently my mother and the man she later married, Laurie, had arranged for me to go to a boarding school in Devon. The first I'd heard of it.

Did I want to go, my foster mother asked me? Inside I felt exhilaration—also a little trepidation. I didn't realize I had a choice, but she was implying I had. She was dead against it. 'If you want to go there, with your mother's foreign friends, after all I've sacrificed for you—well!'

I was in turmoil. If I said yes, it looked like rank ingratitude. I wanted to go, but mumbled that I'd stay. That was my really big mistake.

I was 'encouraged' to write to my mother saying I never wanted to see her again. It meant stopping going up to London to see her and Laurie, in the advertising agency he owned. She stopped her payments, and I had to go out to work. So I lost my mother, a new father, and my inheritance.

Nine years later I was praying the Lord's Prayer—'forgive us... as we forgive those who trespass against us'. It dawned on me that I'd nursed resentment towards my mother. I finally found her and apologized—the hardest decision I ever made, but the most creative.

John Munro, Arundel

WHEN YOU MAKE important decisions, on issues such as marriage and career, you know little about their consequences. I am now doubtful about my decision to become a teacher. My heart was in something else that was more 'me', something I

often dreamed about sitting in my car on my way home after a difficult day at school.

A very sad story? It is like that for many people.

The time I was alone with a class in the training school of the college and it ended in chaos was decisive. I decided, 'From now on I will just do my best without trying to please anyone.'

I approached many of my classes with fear. Thinking it over during periods of quiet before work, I found a new way of teaching, talking much less myself. But sometimes I had to apologize for my short temper.

Most importantly, because of my faith I had got something bigger than myself and what happened to me to live for. And when I failed I could seek forgiveness and start anew.

Growing older, and also because of my bad hearing, the noise and stress at school became too much for me. So nine years before reaching retirement age I stopped teaching in class and did other less satisfying things. Perhaps this was the price of choosing the wrong career?

We should not be too afraid of having made mistakes. Life must go on. A friend said to me: 'God can often bless and use also the wrong things which we have done in faith.' I would add, that he can use anything we have done that we have turned over to him. Even if it wasn't the right or best decision to become a teacher, I took it in faith. Somehow, despite that, it became blessed anyway.

Jerker Mila, Sweden/The Netherlands

I AM A cautious and reserved accountant, who has spent most of his life checking other people's work.

On one occasion, when checking a tax assessment, I fiddled the results. My boss found out. He was not

amused. Luckily the client did not suffer.

I was brought up by God-fearing parents, who sometimes knocked the fear of God into me! I well remember my father chasing me around a room for something I had said that annoyed him!

They taught me to live by absolute standards and the guidance of God—something for which I shall always be grateful. That gave me direction for my personal life. But it was only after I retired that I received a sense of a greater calling—the part I was meant to play in remaking society in industry. I wish I had let God speak to me earlier, and then accepted that bigger vision for my life.

Tony Thomas, London

ONE OF THE biggest mistakes I ever made—in terms of its inescapable visibility to a great number of people—happened while I was living in India. I was helping in the circulation department of the Mumbai-based English-language weekly *Himmat*. One of my tasks each week was to commission the fly posters which, with some intriguing headline, would help sell the latest issue.

We wished to highlight our coverage of one of the very first airliner hijackings in the Middle East, one where the plane was eventually blown up in the desert.

I intended the poster to scream, *Drama in the desert*. But, because of a certain haziness of mine over basic spelling, what people read on posters splashed all over Mumbai was a headline that seemed to have more of a domestic flavour about it: *Drama in the dessert!*

Paul Williams, Bangor, Wales

NEXT ISSUE:

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

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What does it take to make a responsible journalist, asks Henry F Heald.

Bob Lowery, an award-winning journalist based in Thompson, Manitoba, once remarked to me: 'If God could trust us with success, we'd have changed the world long ago.' As a fellow journalist, that set me thinking. Dealing with failure is fairly straightforward. You hurt for a while; and then you pull yourself together, apologize for your mistake, put things right with the people you hurt, and get on with your life.

Dealing with success is much more difficult. The adulation of the crowd, a word or two of praise from your publisher, a couple of awards for outstanding work and you begin to think you can't do anything wrong. You drift along on a cloud of euphoria, forgetting about the needs of the people around you. It may last for weeks. It may last for years. But eventually something will bring you back down to the real world.

When I worked for newspapers or for government departments, I always had an editor. Some were better than others, but they all served to help me keep my feet on the ground, and to puncture the balloon when I got a swelled head. When you freelance, you have to be your own editor, and it can be dangerous. On one occasion I wrote something that deeply hurt a dear friend. When I sat down to ponder how I could have done something so stupid, the thought came clearly: 'It wasn't stupidity, it was arrogance.' I was proud of my writing ability and in my arrogance thought I could write whatever I liked. I realized then that rather than being proud I should feel humble that God, in his love, had given me such a talent.

This essay is not a sermon; it is a commentary on journalism. Journalists are human beings. We are the communicators. People learn about society through what we write. If we want to create a humane society we need to be humane beings. We have to expose evil, but our real job is to champion the

good. If you get your kicks out of beating up on people, you should be a prizefighter, not a journalist.

A couple of years ago, former Beirut AP Bureau Chief and hostage Terry Anderson attended a meeting of the International Communications Forum in Denver. The delegates included about 60 media professionals from a wide range of organizations and many levels of authority.

Anderson, who was a journalism professor at the time, asked the delegates how many of them had been the subject of media interviews? Quite a number of hands went up. Then he asked how many were dissatisfied with the media coverage they received? Almost all the same hands went up again. If we journalists can't get the story straight when we are interviewing our own colleagues, how often do we get it wrong when we interview politicians, community and business leaders, or victims of crimes? No wonder the public doesn't trust the media!

Pressure of deadlines is no excuse for sloppy work. A story isn't a story if it isn't right. Better to miss a deadline than to print a falsehood. Deadline pressure is often used as an excuse when the real culprit is laziness, ignorance or arrogance.

CRITICAL REPORTERS

We often have to write about people who abuse public confidence. Can we do it with a clear conscience? I'm amazed at how often reporters criticize the amount of travelling done by politicians or senior bureaucrats. For a factory worker or a clerk in a small business who flies to California or Nassau for a holiday every couple of years, a lot of travel sounds exotic. But as journalists we know better.

You know how it is. You fly across the country, or across the ocean, to a conference in some big city. You arrive jetlagged. You eat too much. Maybe you drink too much as well. You are up half



'DEALING WITH FAILURE IS FAIRLY STRAIGHT-FORWARD. DEALING WITH SUCCESS IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.'

the night working on your story in a dry hotel room with lousy lighting. You miss your son's soccer game, and you arrive home tired, headachy and smelling of cigar smoke. If you are lucky your luggage arrives with you. Is that glamorous? Yet when a politician does it, all too often you try to make your readers believe he is enjoying himself at public expense. It is dishonest.

The media got quite exercised when a reporter at *The New York Times*, Jayson Blair, turned out to be a con artist. *The Times* turned itself inside out trying to discover how it happened. It happened because there are always people who don't want to live by the rules, and because most of us in democratic societies refuse to live in security cocoons. If we were not prepared to take risks to enjoy our freedom we would live in gated communities inside a police state. We would refuse to drive our cars, visit other countries or even speak to strangers.

The Jayson Blairs of this world are not dangerous; they are just a nuisance. What is dangerous is the decline of moral standards and ethical behaviour among large segments of society—journalism not excepted. Blair's game would have been spotted early on if staff at *The Times* were part of a democratic operation. But media corporations are autocratic states. Democracy is something about which publishers and editorial writers pontificate. It is not something practised in the newsroom. Reporters are encouraged to show initiative in the exercise of their craft. They are not

expected to show initiative on the structure of the company.

It has been said that we live in the age of communication. That is only half right. There is certainly more information available on the planet today than ever before. But that doesn't mean we are communicating better. There is also more misinformation. And with the lack of controls on the Internet, there is more unbalanced information and more propaganda posing as information.

MORE CROOKS

What do people do with all the information? Just telling them that there are more crooks, more violence and more risks than ever before is hardly enough. People just turn off. It is a question of what is your agenda? People have different agendas. For many it is just to make money and enhance their reputation. But what is money or reputation if your country is taken over by a dictator? Or if your son or daughter

is killed by a terrorist?

Communication is power. What do we journalists do with our power? There are as many good stories to tell as bad ones. There are as many people working to build a good society, as there are committed to destroying society. Those are the stories we should be telling. Yes, we need to blow the whistle on corruption wherever we find it, but we must go farther than that. We journalists should aim to increase moral standards.

I want to be the kind of person who will make his country clean, honest and compassionate. I want to write what will help people build a caring, sustainable global society in which everyone has enough because everyone cares enough and shares enough. And if that means living by absolute moral standards, I'm ready to accept the challenge. ■

Henry F Heald, a freelance journalist in Ottawa, Canada, specializes in agriculture and international development.

FOR A CHANGE

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Professor Gerald Pillay (right) with Taher Ali Qassim, Chair of the Liverpool Yemeni Arabic Club and his daughter, Lila

Hope in Liverpool

IT WAS A weekend of hope as representatives from communities from around the UK got together in February to discuss initiatives being undertaken to bring opportunities to deprived areas.

The occasion was the Hope in the Cities National Consultation, which this year took place in Liverpool in partnership with Liverpool Hope University. These consultations have been taking place since the 1980s and they 'strive to promote social inclusion through community cohesion, by emphasizing the importance of moral standards and empowering communities'. Participants came

'BY GIVING THE COMMUNITIES A SECOND CHANCE... EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT'

from London, Newcastle upon Tyne, Leeds, Huddersfield, Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, and Nottingham.

Professor Gerald Pillay, Rector of Liverpool Hope University, gave the keynote welcome address. He described how the

Anglican and Catholic churches in Liverpool had made a commitment through Hope University to regenerate deprived areas in the city. 'Our job is to create hope where there is hopelessness,' he said.

The university runs Network of Hope. One of its activities is providing courses for Muslim women in the nearby town of Blackburn who otherwise would not be able to attend university. 'By giving the communities a second chance, giving people dignity and empowering victims, everyone can benefit,' Pillay said.

Throughout the weekend the community leaders highlighted some of the projects in which their communities were involved.

Workshops were held on: 'Asylum seekers: integration, training and jobs', 'Police, youth and the community', and 'Enhancing trust in building community'. Ana Pereira

ENCOURAGING GOOD GOVERNANCE

IF ONE WERE to total up the collective number of years of experience among the audience present, a new Indian centre for governance was launched amidst several centuries of work in that field. The IC Centre for Governance was inaugurated in December in New Delhi, although it will function at Asia Plateau, Panchgani, in western India.

The former Chief Justice of India, MN Venkatachaliah, attributed the failure of the Indian bureaucracy to rise to the challenges of contemporary governance to 'the collapse of individual conscience'. India had made rapid strides in economic development since independence, but at the same time there were glaring examples of large-scale non-development, with large

numbers deprived of basic amenities. Cautioning all those involved in governance about growing unease in the country, he called on the bureaucracy, industry and academia to join civil society in endeavouring to create better governance.

A conference on 'Better governance—from fear to opportunity' took place at Asia Plateau in March.



IC WEB INSIGHTS

A SERIES OF signed commentaries has become a weekly feature on the international website of Initiatives of Change.

Writing after a visit to Lebanon, Indian academic and author, Rajmohan Gandhi, said how impressed he was by Beirut, which 'provides a most impressive demonstration of renewal. For 16 years until 1990, the city had witnessed a savage civil war (Christian vs Muslim, East Beirut vs West Beirut) that smashed into ruins

vast areas of a once-proud city and forced business and people to flee.

'Today Beirut shines again. Block after block after block has been brilliantly recreated. Apparently Lebanese of every kind were involved in the renewal, including Muslims and Christians, Sunnis, Shias and the Druze, Maronites and the Orthodox. Arabs from outside Lebanon also helped. Surely Arab pride has been bolstered by the creativity and boldness that said, "We will not use up all our energy in denouncing the enemies of Arabs. We will raise a new Beirut."'

www.initiativesofchange.org

CALL FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN SWITZERLAND



CORNELIO SOMMARUGA, President of the Caux Foundation, spoke at two public meetings in Geneva in January

on 'Switzerland after the federal elections; the world after the war in Iraq'.

International civil servants, diplomats, retired ambassadors, young and old were present, and took part in the lively discussion that

followed the speeches.

Sommaruga noted that the Swiss Federal Constitution opened with the words, 'In the name of God, the all-powerful'. He appealed for greater spirituality in politics, and for good governance inspired by ethical principles.

A working democracy, he went on, demanded a heightened sense of responsibility among its citizens. 'It is up to each of us, to our organizations of civil society, religious, academic, humanitarian, economic, to shoulder our responsibility and participate in public life,' he said, noting that the turnout for the recent elections had been less than 45 per cent.

Beyond hunting, shooting and fishing

The once dilettante scion of a Scottish business family tells Paul Williams of the revolution that God brought to his life.

DAVID HOWDEN HUME, who was born into a well-to-do business family in Scotland, pinpoints the major turning point in his life to an evening out at university.

In the early 1950s, Hume spent his period of national service as a junior officer in a cavalry regiment. This was followed, as he puts it, by 'hanging around' at Edinburgh University. He explains that he had lazily opted for a non-graduating two-year economics course, because he lacked the French that a graduate course then required. Some years later, he was to earn degrees from the Open University and the University of Ulster.

'One day in my last term at Edinburgh,' Hume says, 'I bumped into the Secretary of the Student Representative Council, who invited me to join a party going to the opening night of a musical at the King's Theatre. On enquiring who else was going, he told me that all the office bearers of the SRC would attend. Flattered to be in such illustrious company, I accepted!'

It turned out that the musical was *The Vanishing Island*, produced by Moral Re-Armament (MRA). 'It was colourful, tuneful, entertaining and above all challenging,' he recalls. 'In a nutshell, its message was that God has a plan for your life and for the whole of humanity—and if you want to see the world different, the best place to start is with yourself.' That seemed eminently sensible to him, but there was a catch. 'To make this a reality,' he says, 'I would have to accept to live by Christ's standards set out in the Sermon on the Mount and encapsulated by absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. I instinctively

knew that this would create a revolution in my life, as my goals up to that point had been hunting, shooting, fishing and yachting, pursued with passion and supported by an ever-increasing bank overdraft!'

So he took a deep breath and decided to accept the challenge to give his life unconditionally to God, 'in whom I did have a belief but who I had never taken seriously up to that point'. This decision led swiftly to a totally unexpected experience on another continent—Africa. 'My generous father was not entirely enamoured of his younger son's newly found purpose in life,' he explains. 'Perhaps hoping to get me away from it all he invited me to accompany him to South Africa where he had business interests.' It was a time of great turmoil. The 1950s Treason Trials were in full swing and the apartheid government had imprisoned many leaders of the African National Congress on Robben Island.

Against this background, Hume's new MRA friends had decided to take a stage play round the main university towns. They

Hume comments, 'Not unnaturally, this experience was a never-to-be-forgotten seminal period in my life. Here was a drifting dilettante from a privileged background, suddenly pitched headfirst into a revolutionary situation. Through the play and the reality of our conviction and commitment, we were battling for the soul of a nation: only the living God could have been responsible for that.'

Other experiences in different countries followed and after ten years of travelling, he settled for some years in his native Glasgow. There he was part of a group that met with Clydeside shipyard workers from different yards, who were trying to create a new spirit on the shop floor. Divisions and demarcation disputes, which often contributed to yards being uncompetitive, were among the issues tackled. But in the end the yards closed.

Hume now lives in Northern Ireland with his Irish wife Ruth, 'visiting his native heath' from time to time. Looking back to his involvement with the now silent shipyards, he reflects, 'Our efforts, though worthy in themselves, had barely scratched the surface

'MY FATHER WAS NOT ENAMOURSED OF HIS YOUNGER SON'S NEWLY FOUND PURPOSE'

aimed to win the hearts and minds of the younger generation to God and to a vision of a fairer society. 'Appropriately the play was called *We are Tomorrow* and was set in a university,' he recalls. 'It had a cast of students and a professor:

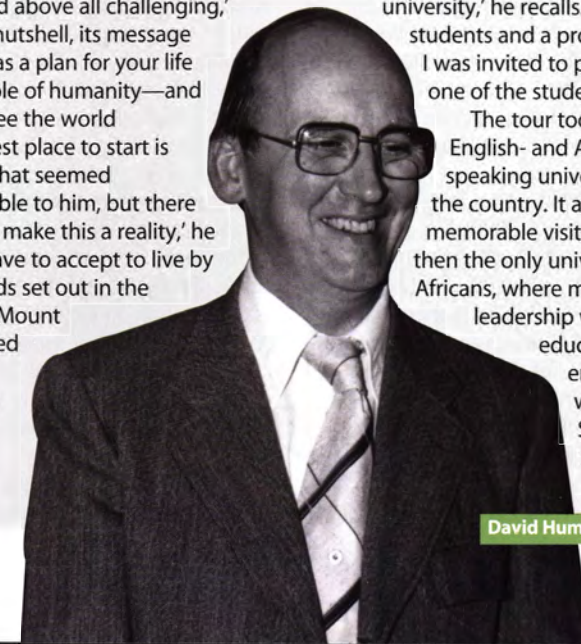
I was invited to play the part of one of the students, a poet.'

The tour took in both English- and Afrikaans-speaking universities all over the country. It also included a memorable visit to Fort Hare—then the only university for black Africans, where many of the ANC leadership were

educated—and ended in what was then Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia.

of the problem, as there were economic and political factors, which were totally beyond our control.' He considers the possibility that if major decisions had been made closer to home things might have turned out differently. 'Since then a new devolved Parliament has been created in Edinburgh and Scots are now responsible for their own mistakes as well as their own government.'

Hume believes that too many in the business and professional class (with which he identifies) appear to have opted out of devolution, probably 'because they prefer the old status quo, in which they have always been well established'. He is convinced, however, that 'their whole-hearted energy, imagination and loyalty are needed in the new Scotland, so that everyone plays their full part in creating a fair society. Otherwise, out-of-date class attitudes will be perpetuated, which would be sad and a great opportunity missed.' ■



David Hume

THE POWER OF MUSIC

English musician Kathleen Johnson Dodds talks to Ann Rignall about song-writing, India and Renewal Arts.

Kathleen Johnson Dodds has always loved music. Even as a small girl she used to make up tunes. However, when she came to leave school in Hertfordshire, England, the idea of a musical career had never occurred to her. 'I was smothered with suggestions from teachers and parents and I felt more and more confused,' she says. Then somebody asked her, 'What do you enjoy doing?'

'She was the first person who used the word "enjoy". Of course I knew the answer, and along with the decision to go to music college came an amazing peace of mind. I come from a family of preachers, and I was trying to escape from organized religion. However, that sense of inner release felt new to me.'

During her time at the Royal Academy of Music, she was inspired by one of her professors, who had earlier taught in schools. 'Her enthusiasm was infectious. All her ideas were drawn from real classroom experience and soon the unglamorous prospect of teaching had become fascinating.'

REWARDING

She decided to give teaching a try and says that it 'mostly' remained fascinating. 'What I really enjoyed was working with smaller examination groups, because they had chosen to study music and we got to know each other very well. Piano teaching is also rewarding, because each pupil is a unique character. Teenagers can reach a point when life seems to allow no time for practice. Yet the ones who are truly enjoying it do make time and find it the perfect antidote to pressure.'

After three years teaching in Kent, she moved to a school in Switzerland. It was here, in the holidays, that she began to get involved with the plays and music at Caux, the international centre for MRA/IC.

At that time, around 1960, there was serious violence in Cyprus, involving Greek and Turkish Cypriots and Britain as the colonial power. 'A Greek and a Turkish girl in my school had attacked each other with razor blades. At Caux, a delegation from

Cyprus was presenting a play about what was at stake on the island. It had some haunting music and I was asked to be part of the piano duo that accompanied it.

'I had accompanied operettas before, but this had a different quality. It was connected with real people from a life-or-death situation. My self-centred mindset had been blown right open into something bigger.'

Two years later she was in London for an interview for a post in a big school. The night before the interview she could not sleep. She felt something telling her this job was not for her. 'I said "OK God, if this is not it, then what do you want me to do?" Absolutely no answer came back. But next morning I phoned up and cancelled the interview.'

SPACE IS SO STARTLING

What she didn't know was that a musical called *Space is So Startling* was already being written. It set the search for meaning, which characterized the 1960s, against the background of the superpowers' race for space. When she reached Caux that summer, music was already coming hot off the presses.

Kathleen was invited to travel with the show on a tour of five countries, the last of which was India. Here hundreds of students flocked to meet the cast and to take part in leadership training camps run by MRA.

One morning as the tour ended she woke up with the thought, 'You must stay on here. You are needed.' She stayed for four-and-a-half-years, living in people's homes. It was during this period that she began writing songs.

Her first was written on a long train journey from Madras to Pune. The train travelled for hours through bare drought-ridden countryside, where the soil had been bleached almost white. The words of *Water for a Thirsty Land* came from 'deep within' her and the rhythm of the train helped to create the music:

*There is a stream of water
Which will fill and satisfy
It comes to you as you give it away
And it never, never runs dry.*



Kathleen Dodds sharing her enthusiasm for music with kindergarten children in Thailand

It was a personal testimony as well as a statement of what she saw around her.

In India there was a constant stimulus to write songs. At one point, Kathleen travelled with a group of young Indians who often gave presentations in schools. The pupils were used to hearing talks about good behaviour, but the idea of changing India by starting with oneself was an angle that caught on, especially if conveyed with humour and music. Creativity flowed from many Indians as well, until eventually the musical revue *India Arise* came to birth. It toured both India and Europe.

When she returned to Britain, Kathleen collaborated with several writers, resulting in a succession of musicals, some produced at the Westminster Theatre, then owned by MRA. 'From a composer's point of view, it is a liberation to tackle a full-length drama. A wide spectrum of moods and emotions is called for. The sound of the human singing voice has been one of my great loves, along with the fascination of combining words and melody.'

In 1985, she married the former Essex cricketer TC 'Dickie' Dodds, who was

involved with an innovative development programme in Thailand. They spent their honeymoon there, the first of six visits. This led her to learn about and appreciate Buddhism, the country's main religion. Recently she inherited the diary of her grandmother, whom she never knew, and discovered that she had also studied Buddhism, as well as being a singer.

Dickie shared her love of music and remarked more than once that sport and music between them could change the world. He was supportive, until his death in 2001, as a worldwide network of artists began to evolve, called Renewal Arts. It was formally launched at a conference in Caux in 2000, and will host its third conference there this summer (24-30 July).

'The seed of Renewal Arts was planted when the first caveman did his first wall-painting,' says Kathleen. 'The essence of art's transforming power comes from the Creator.'

'At the heart of artists' calling is a mystery which defies logic. Freud is said to have disliked music because he couldn't analyse what it was doing to him. But I find that it

is at this very point, where we don't know and can't explain, that the power of music lies. How is it that over and over again, difficult circumstances have enabled composers to produce their most profound and positive work? What can the world learn from this?

WAVE OF COMPASSION

'I have been rediscovering the variety of ways in which listening to music can alter my whole view of life.' She gives a recent example of returning home tired and putting on a CD of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto. 'In the second movement an overwhelming wave of compassion hit me. It didn't say I ought to have compassion for others, in fact it released me from the straitjacket of "ought", and just showed me what it's like to be on the receiving end. It was as if I'd not grasped the meaning of the word before. I couldn't keep the tears back.'

'Beethoven knew much pain. He has at last got through to me the unconditional nature of God's love. It takes the strain out of life, and I'm finding the "fizz" that I thought I'd lost!' ■



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KARIN PETERS

Cracking coconuts for God

On a recent visit to Bangalore I met a South Korean martial arts teacher with an extraordinary story to tell. When Lee Jaeku was five he started training in Tae Kwon Do. Now over six feet tall, he towers above his students, who address him as Master Lee. His passion for Tae Kwon Do and his commitment to help young people has led him from South Korea to south India. He travels through the villages of Bangalore, gathering students.

Lee had been director of the World Tae Kwon Do Mission, a South Korean Christian organization that sends instructors to poor countries to teach the martial art and carry out missionary work. India had asked for a teacher. At first Lee was not interested but felt God calling him and, after a two-month struggle, packed his bags and went.

He travelled around demonstrating Tae Kwon Do by cracking coconuts with his bare hands. He was soon in great demand, teaching 2,000 students each day.

He became so poor that he would fall down from hunger. But his students began to bring him food. He says that he was never full but able to survive.

At night he prayed, 'I want to go back to Korea.' But he still felt that he was called to stay. Then an Arab family offered him good money to give private tuition to their

children—on the condition that he would give up all his other classes. 'For money, I should have joined them,' he says, 'but for God I could not.' He continued his work for the next three years.

Lee's experience of getting married is also quite remarkable. With no time to meet young women he began to pray that God would send him a wife who 'loved God above all else' and played the piano. Then he received a letter with the telephone number of a young woman who lived in Korea. He knew that she had been to India and had attended one of his classes. But he did not remember what she looked like.

She was Na-Soon Sook. Upon returning home to Korea she had felt that she should pray for Master Lee even though she did not know him. When she had seen him in India his hair was long, and he had only one set of filthy clothes that he had to wash and dry each night. She told God that she did not want to marry such a man.

After praying for Lee for one year she felt that she should spend one week in fasting and prayer. She decided if she was to marry him then he must call by the end of the week. At midnight on the seventh day a call came through from India.

When Lee heard Na-Soon Sook, he could not understand why she sounded so happy.

Three times she said, 'I want to see you.'

In 1998 he returned to Korea to meet Na-Soon for the first time and to marry her. Their wedding was paid for by his friends and of course there was a Tae Kwon Do demonstration. Then the couple returned to India with enough money to set up their own home and continue his ministry.

Master Lee teaches only Tae Kwon Do in his classes but some 200 hundred students come to his church on Sundays. When his students have problems at home he visits them and prays with their families. He can now provide them with some food and medical care. Today many friends support him in his work.

Master Lee claims that 'without God I could not exist here'. He now has a gym and is aiming to train a world Tae Kwon Do champion. Of his students he says, 'They don't have money but now they have some faith, joy and confidence in their families, school and colleges. Not because of me but all through God.'

Master Lee and Na-Soon now have two sons, Lee Dae Ho, five, and Lee Myong Ho, four. Both are learning Tae Kwon Do.

Nigel Heywood is an Australian fine arts graduate now travelling in Asia with IC's Action for Life training programme.

REFLECTIONS

GERALD HENDERSON

Too busy not to listen



THERE IS SO much talk today—sound-bites, TV, radio, mobiles, internet chat. Do we take time to listen, even to think?

We sometimes comment 'I hear you', but do I listen to what is behind the words—the pain or the joy, the fear or the hope, the desperation or the cry for help? How often those engaged at community level hear the complaint, 'They don't listen!'

In this rushing busy world do we take the time and care to listen to the other? Do we take time to listen to what is deepest in our hearts, to ensure we are on the right road and not rushing in the wrong direction?

One of the greatest gifts that my mother gave me, when I was 12, was to teach me to listen in quiet to that inner voice before the day began. I see it as taking time to seek God's purpose and plan for my life and in my dealings with others. Others might express it differently.

I started out with 10 minutes first thing in the morning. Now I find I need an hour. It is a time of seeing where I need to change and put thing right, and also of seeking insights on my dealings and relations with others, on priorities at home, on the job out in the world.

One of my mentors over 20 years ago was Chief Executive of the City Council of Liverpool for 13 particularly crisis-racked years. He had started the practice of beginning the day with a time of quiet when he was a student and he told me that it had led him, as a young solicitor, to Liverpool rather than taking a comfortable job in a more rural setting.

During his years as Chief Executive, when it looked as if the situation in the city would 'blow up in his face', he would bring all his fears and apprehensions into those daily times of quiet, let go of them and pray. Sometimes he would get a thought, act on it and crisis would be averted. He said that it also sensitized him to unexpected ideas which might come in the middle of a busy day.

On one occasion, he was sitting at his desk in his office writing a letter to another department elsewhere

in the city. He had an arresting thought that he should deliver the letter himself by hand—not something that a Chief Executive would normally do. As he approached the other office, he met a member of the government from London, whom he had not known was in the city. They had a private conversation in the corridor, which prevented a crisis that could have had disastrous consequences in the city.

Over a number of years I have been involved in the sometimes very confrontational struggle on race equality issues in Liverpool. One morning, when things were particularly tough, I had the thought, 'If you find someone difficult, open your heart wider and walk towards them.' I have been astounded how this approach has enabled me to build relationships of trust and comradeship in

situations I would have never expected. Often it has helped me to see that I am the one that needs to change first.

At one point when I was pondering some difficulties a colleague and I were having, I realized that what I had seen as my support for this colleague was in fact 'control', as was my keenness on communication between us. You may recognize the sort of attitude I mean: 'He is meant to be working with me, so why doesn't he...?' This subtle control leads to frustrations, lack of understanding and misunderstanding on both sides.

Since then, we have been moving towards a relationship where we put all the cards on the table without demand, and with a level of transparency that is risky in the sense that it reveals what a difficult cuss I am. Yet, when I seek the best for both of us rather than what suits me, this lays a sound basis for community.

Amidst the pressure, pain and puzzlement of today's world, the much neglected practice of listening—both to the other and to the inner voice—is crucial.

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