

Conference
at
Tirley
Garth



FACES
TO THE
FUTURE

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NEW WORLD NEWS

Vol 27 No 38 11 August 1979 8p

STUDENTS RESPOND TO JORDAN'S VITALITY

by Peter Everington

who has just visited Jordan with a group from British universities

'I HAVE DECIDED to give my whole life for the liberation of my people.'

The speaker was intelligent, devout, 18 years old and Palestinian. Ponder his aim, probe his method, if you wish. But do not doubt his sincerity.

When meeting such a man, those of us who seek the realisation of God's kingdom on earth have to ask ourselves how big our aim is. Is it even as large as our own nation? And is it so passionately held as to determine career, home life and possessions?

Such questions faced six British students and graduates who were guests of Jordan University recently. In 2000 kilometres of travel they met Jordanians, many of Palestinian origin, who had a vitality and assurance that called for a response.

One student said later, 'I was made aware of the extent to which I tend to be an observer. I felt the danger of drifting through life without really bringing any cutting edge to bear on the world as it is. This trip gave me quite a shake-up which is beginning to have some effect.'

Encounter

Jordanians manage to be genial as well as passionate and there is a refreshing absence of class division. The refugee tells you of his grievance but invites six of you for breakfast. The driver of the university minibus follows you into the Under-Secretary's office and joins the discussion.

There is as much pride in showing ancient traditions as modern developments. International visitors gaze with awe at the rock-hewn splendour of the city of Petra. But just as striking is the sight of wheat growing densely in an irrigated area of the Wadi Rum Desert.

It was a former Manager of the Wadi Rum project, now doing research at Jordan University, who helped plan the tour for the British and accompanied them everywhere. He was among Jordanian students who visited Britain and the MRA Assembly in Switzerland last summer.



Kerak: the Crusader Castle and modern town

Jordanian Tourist Board

They had a lengthy discussion with the doctors of the Islamic Law faculty of the University.

One British student told of his first encounter with Islam. He had been part of a large group of youth picking fruit in France during a summer vacation. While other men had slept around with the women, he with his new Christian convictions had decided not to. This led to a comradeship with the one other person in the camp with the same views on sex, who was a committed Muslim Arab. They discovered that while they had important differences of belief, there were practical issues on which they could make common cause.

Past rivalries

How can such personal insights help to create the needed respect between the civilisations of Islam and Christianity? Some of history's evidence is not reassuring.

In the seventh century the Muslim armies of Arabia overcame the Christian armies of Constantinople in one of the decisive battles of history at Yarmouk in Jordan.

Five hundred years later came European crusaders. Their castles and the Muslim castles still stand on Jordan's mountains as a monument to that conflict.

In the last hundred years, it has to be admitted, European powers have been more sensitive to their own strategic rivalries, and latterly their thirst for oil, than to the hopes, memories and beliefs of this Muslim Arab region.

Yet Jordan is the place also where Jacob wrestled with the angel to claim a blessing for himself and a destiny for his people. From the village of Tishbeh in its northern hills Elijah strode forth to challenge the materialism of his age. And of course in the Jordan River, now reinforced with barbed wire on both east and west banks, John baptised those who repented of their sins.

Could the Christians today be the quickest to repent, not just personally but for the way our nations often live and have lived?



Colin Stuart, Aberdeen



Sandra Peachey, Coventry



Mary Jane Richards, Norwich



Margie Mackay, Dumfriesshire



Gaby Kuhn, Canada



Michel Nosley, France

Patrick Turner Oxford

I OFTEN FIND it difficult to stand up for what I believe at boarding school. I need continual encouragement from God that the direction in which I am going is the right one, for often the results do not seem good. All I can do is listen quietly each morning, write down any thought that arrives, see that the thoughts measure up to absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love and do my best to obey them during the day.

Last Christmas I wrote to a boy at school to apologise for bullying him. I did not know whether he would be hostile to me next term as a result. Now he is probably the best friend I have at school.

I think that God has an overall plan for us, a day-by-day route map for living. God is always there to direct you, to unfold His plan for you each day, but He will never force you to listen to His plan. It is there to be obeyed only if you choose to do so. I have decided that the direction for my life will come from God.

Alan Channer London

ONE OF MY PARTICULAR INTERESTS is nature and I have found that God's principles seem to be echoed in the natural world. If we are not unselfish both with each other and with the world's other inhabitants we will upset the balance of nature to such a degree that we indirectly but dangerously harm ourselves. Lack of honesty and love among us can lead to discontent, and discontent to war. Impurity also can and does lead to more broken homes and consequently children without the care to cope with the world. No other mammal prepares its young so inadequately for its environment as man.

I have found that when you have repented of your sins and been honest with someone, a great weight seems to be lifted. The

previous self-centredness and obsession with pleasure and material desires is replaced by a sense of proportion, the freedom to create and to love people not because you feel you ought to but because you want to.

Cynthia Allchin Australia

AFTER SOME YEARS ABROAD and away from my family, I returned to stay with them again. I soon found that the passage of time doesn't change one's attitudes and reactions.

One day I collected my father from work in the family car. He told me I changed gears at the wrong time. I was furious. Then a voice in my heart said to admit I was proud and be ready to learn from him. I did this. He had a list of five points where I could have done better! Again I reacted. I wanted to walk out.

Then I saw the crunch point: deep down I still felt I knew best. It was terribly hard to admit my fault and apologise too. I prayed to God and He worked a change in my heart.



Irene Stephou Cyprus

I WAS 14 years old when the Turks invaded Cyprus. I saw for the first time all the terrible things of a real war. Many relatives of mine were refugees and they lost everything they had. My cousin is still missing. I hated the Turks very, very much.

In 1976 I went with my family to an MRA assembly in Caux, Switzerland. There I met a Turkish girl and we had a meal together. We talked for several hours and after that I felt strange and I realised that all the bitterness and hate towards the Turks had gone away from my heart.

Conference
A YOUNG POLITICAL ACTIVIST sent a message to 66 of his contemporaries at Tirley Garth, the Moral Re-Armament centre in the north of England. 'In Britain today,' he wrote, 'society is being split through the youth. The split is between left and right, black and white. Violence has already broken out on the streets between various factions. 'An alternative is needed, strong enough to win support from all sides, that can cross the barriers of religion, race and politics. Young people who have decided to take part in the battle of MRA must mobilise now before a bitter generation takes over.'
This mobilisation began to take place as young people came from 18 countries to take part in a nine day programme at the end of July on the theme, 'Which way to the future?' They took part in discussions and meetings on current world issues, in workshops for drama, music, the media and creative cookery.



FACES



Francis Evans Cambridge

MANY PEOPLE comment on my accent, I think it's a symptom of my attitude. I was liable to think that I was superior to others.

Last year when I was here I behaved so selfishly to another chap that he was my enemy throughout the conference. Finally, I apologised to him. We are now good friends.

I helped to write a short sketch at this conference. The plot was intricate, the conclusion was good, a few jokes were sprinkled in. I felt very pleased with myself. Then we performed it. All the actors, including myself, missed cues, forgot lines, laughed at the wrong moment. Now, whenever I think how great I am, I just have to remember that play.

Johanna de Boer Netherlands

DURING THIS TIME at Tirley I have been faced with the truth about myself.

I decided to try to find out what God wanted me to do. I told Him that I didn't want to do great things but to live quietly. But He said that I was to be like a pair of knitting needles and leave the pattern of the sweater we were going to make up to Him.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Learning about industry included a visit to a coal mine in Stoke-on-Trent, where retired miners conducted a group round the workings, 700 feet underground.

As the week progressed, participants began to feel the need for a new quality of living which would match up to the challenges of a suffering world. Many made decisions to live differently, which they describe on these pages.

Drama and music played an important part throughout the conference, which ended with presentations of sketches and national items on the final evening. Significant for many was the preparation and performance of Peter Howard's play *The Ladder*, which dramatises the conflicts in a young man on his way to the top. Watching it, said Annemiek Windig from Holland, 'I thought that Jesus was offering His Cross to me—not as a burden, but as a great gift.'

Annette Auger
France

I WORK IN A HOSPITAL and seeing how much people can suffer I have realised how much less important my own problems are. I also know that a person can be contagious in the way he or she lives.

I have a sister of 20—I am older and superior! Six months ago I decided to apologise to her for my selfishness and arrogance, and all the things that I had done to her. I prayed for the strength. Now we can talk and be friends, and she seems happier.

I also criticise my parents a great deal, hoping to change them. A little while ago I realised that I was caring more for others than for my parents and that I had not recognised what a wonderful gift it was to have these particular parents and not others. I decided to love them and to understand them and to tell them certain things that they did not know.

This kind of change is the only way to break the circle of distrust and fear.

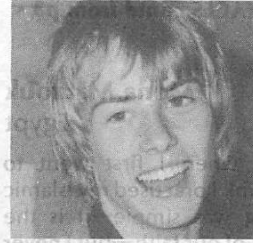
Sia Windig
Netherlands

UP TO NOW I have listened to God when I have had problems. But the rest of the time I have had something in my stomach which said, 'No entry for God'.

One of the things I wanted to decide for myself was which man I would marry. I was afraid He would give me a boring, dull man; or even worse—no man at all. I decided to trust Him and to take time for listening to Him so that I would know what He wants from me. I realised that if God wants to use me, to change the world, He needs all of me.

Stephen Thompson
Norwich

TO ME, obeying God's will means standing up for what I believe—which is no easy thing at school—and trying to help people give their lives to God, for other people. I trust God will give me the courage to do this.



Nick Clements
Norwich

AT SCHOOL we have a club we can join at the age of 17 and we can legally drink. I, like many others, have used it as a chance to drink as much as possible in order to get away from it all. So one of the decisions I have made during this conference is to give up drinking altogether.



Philip Boobbyer
Oxford

I AM A VERY PROUD PERSON, and I think I am much better than I really am; for this reason I get jealous easily of those who I feel might be better than I. I have decided here at Tirley to live completely for others.

Sometimes at my school one might think that no one is interested in anything except trying to enjoy life. But this isn't true. One boy wrote in a school magazine that there must be more to life than just sex, drugs and pop music. Another said to me about MRA, 'We know it is right, but we can't be bothered.'

I find it very easy to be ashamed of God at school and it is hard to stand up in a crowd against impurity—pornography and the like. Certainly I know I have to practise what I stand for and this has involved one or two apologies.

Attempting to live by Christ's principles I find very satisfying, even though very difficult, and I long to show my friends this.

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TO THE FUTURE



Peter Vickers
Leeds

FOR TEN YEARS I built a facade to my friends and others whom I respected, trying to give the impression that I was someone guided by God—when I knew that at times life was hell, and that I was burnt up with impurity and my refusal to do what I knew was right. Although I wanted some day to work with MRA. I was not willing to change the way I was living.

When I was in America in January, I was confronted by two things—by my longing for freedom and real satisfaction, and by the challenge of remaking the world and answering materialism. I knew from some experience that obedience to God's guidance gave direction and positive movement for my life, and that absolute purity satisfied much more than impurity. So I gave my life to God, meaning to stick to this decision. But the next months were very difficult and I considered giving up the whole business.

However at a conference in Montreal similar to this one, and now here at Tirley, I found a company of friends and began to understand what dependence on Christ means, so I retook the decision.



Yunas Nadiadi, London



Veronique Dommel, France



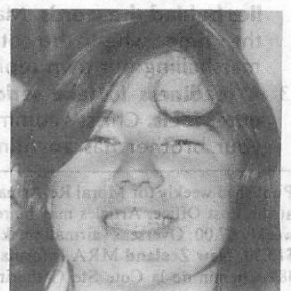
Alistair Milles, Australia



Annette Raetzer, Germany



Stephen Thompson, Norwich



Sharon Taylor, Cardiff



FACES contd from p3

Mona Marzouk Egypt

FIVE YEARS AGO when I first went to Australia, I don't think I practised my Islamic faith at all. Fasting was simple—it is the easiest of the tenets of our faith—but I never conceived that I would ever be able to pray five times a day.

Then I met some people who were so radiant that I knew they had something in their life that I did not have. I asked myself what I could do to try to achieve the things they had.

I took four pieces of paper and wrote down absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, and reflected on them. I must admit at the end of that quiet time I did not feel any better because it was horrifying to see where I did not live up to these standards. Then I had thoughts of the things I had to do. It was a relief to be honest with my parents and to apologise to other people for the wrong things I had done. I began to find that praying five times a day was really no chore at all, because I had started to believe in my faith and understand it.

I found my faith through Christians who really lived their faith and were a challenge to me. My thought then was that I as a Muslim was meant to do the same for Christians: to challenge them to live their faith.

Some of my friends at university have found a faith and started to apply their religion. I feel that we are meant to work together to build a better world.

Rhoda McDonald Fraserburgh, Scotland

I HAVE JUST FINISHED my first year as a Maths teacher in a comprehensive school in Aberdeenshire. Not being long out of school myself, I knew what I was letting myself in for, and was not disappointed.

One class was a particular problem. A favourite occupation was to see how annoyed and angry they could make me. I usually performed for them. I began to dread going into the class.

One day I lost my temper. The class was in uproar, throwing paper, rubbers, putty, and I couldn't catch the offenders.

In desperation I drove 40 miles to see a

friend in Aberdeen. We prayed and put the whole thing into God's hands. Then a picture came into my mind. Jesus seemed to be standing before me, showing me how the whole mess had developed over a period of time. All my feelings of frustration, anger, fear and desperation welled up within me and I let them out.

Then He asked for the chalk and taught my class, quietly handing out pencils and paper to those who had forgotten them, instead of ranting and raving as I usually did. As the lesson proceeded it seemed to me that it could be done. Then one at a time He brought each pupil before me and asked, 'Are you willing to have this person in your class? Do you want to teach him or her? Will you do this for Me?' When He put it that way I did not want to refuse. 'Yes, I want to,' I answered.

The next day the class came in and I was at peace. I explained what we were going to do that day and how. I said I was sorry the class had not been going well and asked if we could start again. They started to work. Another teacher came into the room. She looked at them, then at me, and retreated, puzzled. Later she said, 'What were you complaining about?'

My relationship with the class has not been perfect since then. But God has given me a detailed answer in each crisis.

BEYOND TECHNIQUES TO TRUST

by Peter Hannon in Cape Town

A GROUP OF senior Coloured and white men met one evening not long ago in Cape Town. Suddenly one of them burst out, 'You are just using me. You make me a prostitute.'

He felt that the others—sincerely wanting to learn from him—were still interested in him because he was brown. He would not accept that.

This raises a number of questions. What is the valid basis for dialogue? How can true relationships of trust be established?

I was once asked, 'Do you talk as straight to a black man as to a white? If not, you must want something in approval or appreciation, and he, sensing this, will reject you.'

Dialogue and solid relationships have certain prerequisites:

- 1 **A care for the other person that goes beyond 'Let's all understand each other and be friends'.** In South Africa more and more blacks reject dialogue on that basis. And perhaps the same is true in other countries, not just in race relations but in family and industry as well.
- 2 **An ear that listens and tries to hear what lies behind the words.** Many of us spend the time when the other is talking marshalling our own replies.
- 3 **A readiness to take seriously what the other feels.** Christ's command is clear, 'If your brother has anything against you,

before you come to the altar, go and put that right.' It is what the other person feels that counts.

4 **An answer to 'Who controls?'** I cannot expect the other person to trust me if he knows that I retain the right of final decision. And vice versa. Some people say, 'Oh, but we meet on a basis of Christian principles.' To be effective this must become the Christian experience, 'Not my will, but Thine'.

The crunch could be to say, 'We have all expressed our opinions. Now, in silence, let us ask Almighty God what He wants? At this point a new factor can come in, points of view melt, and unexpected, united initiatives result.

It is not a technique. It is the specific acknowledgement that we hand control to a higher authority.

Reactions

We British are expert at creating reactions in others—though often quite unaware of what we do. Is Afrikaner consciousness not a reaction to British arrogance? Black consciousness a reaction to white consciousness?

A consciousness of our own value is good for our own sake and to honour the same in others. Every man must, however, ask himself, 'Am I truly free in my spirit to be myself? Or

do I get sidetracked by reaction if others treat me wrongly and disagree with me?'

I cannot speak with experience of suffering as many in this country can. But I do know what bitterness can do when I feel unjustly treated. The person who causes my resentment becomes central. He begins to colour everything, as I determine to prove him wrong, to get my own back. I make him dominant in mind and conversation. These are symptoms of a man imprisoned.

To find a cure I must first accept that the prison is of my making, that nothing anyone else does should take from me my inner freedom of spirit.

A mark of a man imprisoned by reaction, be it bitterness because of what the other man has done in the past, or fear of what he may do in the future, is a kind of blindness. However able he is, however near the top of the leadership tree, he seems unable to grasp how things really are. His own facts and feelings so obsess him that the reality of the other man's facts and feelings never impinges.

Solzhenitsyn, in *The Gulag Archipelago*, asks, 'How can we free him who is unfree in his soul?' Schiffrin, another who suffered horrors of degradation in slave camps, answers, 'He alone is free who frees himself from the wretchedness of inner slavery.'