

NEW WORLD NEWS

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WHAT IS TO BE DONE ABOUT BRITAIN?

by John Lester

WE LIVE IN TURBULENT DAYS. We may feel bruised, battered and bewildered. Yet we need not be. The issues are clearer in many ways than they have ever been.

Marxists and those who make profit their primary goal hold philosophies which are inevitably opposed to each other. Yet both philosophies can be considered on one side of the balance when weighed with Christian philosophy on the other. For both are the product of materialism. The theistic approach brings in a different dimension.

Materialistic philosophies seek to build the kingdom of heaven on earth. They seek to build a world of prosperity, for some at least. Christianity is simply not about that. It is concerned with creating the kingdom of heaven within the heart of an individual. If that was all then it would have nothing to say about modern society, which is the weakness of those who speak only of personal religion. But if the kingdom of heaven is born in the hearts of individual people then that produces a change in society and becomes the means by which Christians believe the kingdom of heaven on earth will arise.

This must never be interpreted as meaning that Christians do not passionately want to change society or can ever be happy with the status quo. There is a longing to see society reflect God. But with it goes the recognition that peace in the world can only be built upon a change in the human heart, and that change can only spring from transformation.

The class war arose through the exploitation of one group by another. The prosperity which we can all now enjoy resulted to a great

degree from the success of such exploitation. The bitterness sprang from the injustice of it.

Each one of us has a choice. We can choose to recognise the historic wrong, and therefore live differently in our present day attitudes; or we can choose not to, to enjoy the fruits and forget the sin, in which case we perpetuate the injustice. If that is our decision we have to live with the consequences, which now lie starkly before us.

Bitterness is the opposite of love. Indifference is the absence of love. Bitterness and indifference, together, produce class conflict. Both stem from an absence of God, for neither belong to a God of love. It is not for us to judge which is worse: better by far so to live that they become things of the past.

The first battle for those who pursue evil is not against an individual, a class or a race, it is against conscience.

Sadly, too many who condemn bitterness and the violence it has produced fail to recognise the indifference in themselves or comprehend how it fuels bitterness. Others condone bitterness and its violence arguing that such people cannot help it, which is an intolerably patronising attitude.

What most people would like from their Christian friends would be an idea of what to do; a position on the political spectrum which represented God's view; a compromise acceptable to all; a vigorous standing up for one view or another. Yet this is often impossible. Individual Christians may have strong points of view. But Christians as such do not have a commitment to an idea as the Marxist does. Instead they have a relationship with a living Being from whom all ideas flow. What is available therefore is the promise that anyone who is prepared to forsake those things which divide us from God can have a relationship with Him.

Most people would like to be able to say to the Church, 'OK then, what does God say? What should so-and-so do?' But that is the nub of the dilemma. For what God can give to an individual who searches for His will is not the product of human reasoning and not amenable to forecasting. Otherwise we would all be gods and not need Him.

The struggle in Britain is one for control, not fundamentally for control of Westminster but of the soul of the nation

So, what Christians can say is that the way forward lies in those concerned listening to what God has to say to them, without being able to guess what He would say. It is an approach. It is not and cannot be a ready made solution.

We have to learn to recognise evil. When Hitler began many millions failed to comprehend the evil fomenting in his mind. After the holocaust no one could deny it. The philosophy that the end justifies the means, whoever applies it, is a licence for evil. The first battle for those who pursue evil is not against an individual, a class or a race, it is against conscience.

The present dispute in the mines remains locked by the confrontation of two opposing philosophies. This, in turn, produces an even more important conflict in the consciences of many people.

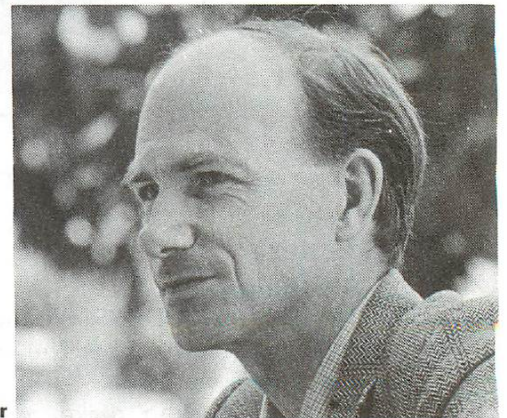
There is a battle, for example, not just between working miner and striking miner but in the heart of every miner over such issues as the morality of violence and the cowardice of giving in to intimidation.

The importance of this is that the aim of the ideologically motivated can only succeed if the British dislike of violence is weakened.

The difficulty for the lovers of freedom is that the Christian conscience of all of us has been poisoned for years. In the first place we have not allowed it to be nurtured by Christ Himself. Then we have poisoned it with permissiveness.

One of the cataclysmic events of this century has been the invention and introduction of the contraceptive pill. I use these terms simply because its introduction made possible the permissive age. For the first time large numbers of people could do what they had always wanted to do without any anxiety.

Yet our consciences, overpowered on sexual matters over the last 25 years, are still active on questions of violence. This is now the moral picket-line. We are under threat from those who seek to submerge conscience altogether.



John Lester

Like the sexual revolution before it, the violent revolution could go either way. That is why these days are important. Will we allow our appetite for violence to be whetted, in which case as with sex it would be enhanced?

We used to say of sexual matters that any behaviour was acceptable so long as no one got hurt. Now we are saying we can legitimately hurt people if there is sufficient injustice. Both statements are untrue. The increase of violence, like the increase in permissiveness which preceded it, is not caused by an increase in provocation but by a decrease in conscience.

In the light of this assessment, what is happening falls into the category of true evil—for such attacks on conscience are attacks on God. If allowed to develop they would prelude the end of liberty.

I have often reflected on how Hitler came to power. Evil was not recognised, intimidation was not resisted, conscience was overcome and the appetite for violence was whetted. The result was the holocaust.

The struggle in Britain, as elsewhere, is one for control, not fundamentally for control of Westminster but for control of the soul of the nation. It is a struggle between God's Will and man's sin.

These comments, stimulated by industrial upheaval,

apply in some measure to other situations such as the relationship between Britain and Ireland and also between the races.

It is dangerous not to recognise evil for what it is. At the same time we must understand that it is not enough to perceive an evil and confront it—to be simply anti-violence, for example. We must never be selective in what we condemn and what we condone. The fact that certain groups which oppose us embrace evil makes them wrong, but that does not of itself make us blame-free. We could acknowledge our faults, now and in history, and learn the painful truth that such sins may have encouraged others to their evil deeds. This does not excuse them one iota but it means that we also are in need of the same forgiveness. To accept our need of change may be more fruitful than pointing out others' need of it.

The fact that certain groups which oppose us embrace evil.... does not make us blame-free.

We have to decide also with what to confront evil. Simply to try to contain it is not an adequate response. The Christian is called not to compromise but to confront evil with love, which is not necessarily our first emotion when our people are attacked; but it needs to become so.

If we take this seriously it has profound repercussions in our present situation. If we British can learn to love all the Irish, in spite of what has happened, we may well need nothing more complicated. For such loving involves feeling their pain as well as our own, and so produces repentance for where we have wronged them, which may be the forgotten key.

In the same way if those of us who are middle class come to love the workers of Britain it will banish our indifference and with it our ignorance of their feelings.

A political answer in Ireland or in industry seems impossible but a spiritual experience for its own sake in each of us may unlock doors which seem closed forever.

If this could happen it would free us from a state of national self-absorption to focus our attention, imagination and energy on those areas of the world, exemplified by Ethiopia at present, which need help most.

If we British can learn to love all the Irish..... we may well need nothing more complicated.

One form of violence is necessary—we need to do violence to the sin in our own nature, to deal violently with the lusts for sex, for power, for money in our own lives. With God's help, such a transformation is possible, a transformation which creates an environment in which change occurs without violence and in which violence cannot thrive. It is the road to a new world but it also produces that peace of heart which makes people unafraid whatever happens.

This is the truth which all men and women of faith are called to give at this time. ■

Strikes are settled, peace is negotiated, riots die down—crises fade out of the public consciousness as rapidly as they appeared. Yet life does not carry on as if conflict had never been. Wounds of the body take time to heal. More than time is needed to heal a wounded spirit. You can try to forget a hurt but, years later, the mention of a name or an incident can trigger off violent reactions. You realise that the hurt is still there, as tender as ever.

Yet there is a cure for wounds of the spirit. Not only individual wounds, but generations-old cycles of oppression and revenge have, in some instances, been washed by a healing stream. There is no fixed technique for releasing this stream. But in each instance someone has decided to give up their hatred or their refusal to face their own wrongs. There is, of course, no guarantee of a response from the other party to a quarrel. But such decisions do allow freer reign to the healing Force, the God who not only heals but shows what part you can play in spreading healing.

The following articles feature people who have, in some measure, played a part in binding up their nation's wounds:

STRENGTH TO WIN ENEMIES

One of the most moving moments during the international conference for MRA at Caux this summer was when Irène Laure, former French Member of Parliament, and Rosemarie Haver from Germany spoke alongside each other. Madame Laure recounted how, when visiting Caux in 1947, she had gone through great inner turmoil when some Germans arrived. She hated Germany so much that her first impulse had been to leave. But she was challenged, 'How will you rebuild Europe without the Germans?' After three days and nights without food or sleep, she had addressed the conference. This summer she recalled, 'I said all that I was feeling about the Germans, and then I said, "I'm sorry, I ask your forgiveness for my hatred. One cannot forget but one must be able to forgive."' A long silence had followed. Then Frau Haver's mother had gone up to Madame Laure and held out her hand. 'At that moment,' said Madame Laure, 'I knew, I literally knew, that I was going to give the rest of my life to taking this message of forgiveness and reconciliation to the world.'

Frau Haver then spoke:

OUR TWO NATIONS, France and Germany, have lived through three terrible wars in a hundred years. Much blood has flowed on both sides. I grew up with the firm conviction that France was our enemy number one, and that we simply could not live in peace with them.

It is now 37 years since we first met here, Madame Laure. At that time my mother and I were refugees from the East who had lost our home, all our possessions and almost all the men in our family. Your courage in bringing your hatred to God and asking us Germans for forgiveness was a deeply shattering experience. When I saw my mother go up to you and ask you for forgiveness too, my whole world collapsed about me. I then felt deeply ashamed at what Germans had



Rosemarie Haver (left) and Irène Laure

C Spreng

done to you and your family. I slowly began to understand that these Germans who had also brought much suffering on my own family had acted in the name of Germany, which meant in my name also.

Because I love my country this realisation made a wound which is still not healed today. Therefore there is nothing left for me to do in front of you all but to say that, if you personally or your people have suffered injustice at the hands of my people, I ask for your forgiveness once again after all these years.

I have discovered what it means to overcome hatred. Out of that comes a strength which can make enemies into friends. This new strength did not let us look back, only forward.

Ask young Germans today what they feel about France and they will tell you, 'A marvellous place! I have many friends there.'

On 25 August I watched the 40th anniversary of the liberation from German occupation on TV. I can honestly say from my heart that, with all of you, I was delighted. I was also grateful for the German men who refused to obey the order to leave Paris and large parts of France as piles of rubble. For that they were executed when they returned home.

WHILE THE BOMBS FELL

SPYROS STEPHOU, a former Cypriot freedom-fighter with EOKA, told the Moral Re-Armament summer conference at Caux, Switzerland, how he and his wife had exploded over one hundred bombs in the port of Famagusta in their efforts to drive the British out of Cyprus. After a visit to Caux in 1960 he realised that independence had not solved all his country's problems—he still could not get on with his wife, and his former colleagues in EOKA were now quarrelling over the jobs which the British had vacated. Mr Stephou had decided to make a fresh start, putting right wrong relationships and trying to find God's plan. His marriage was saved and he established a new trust with his boss at the port. In 1963 there was a serious outbreak of communal violence in Cyprus. Fighting between Greeks and Turks led to deaths in many districts. Because Mr Stephou had established a friendship with a Turkish leader in his district he was able to phone him and prevent an outbreak of violence there. The commander of the UN troops in Cyprus at the time commented, 'If you multiply this you will find the solution to the Cyprus problem.'

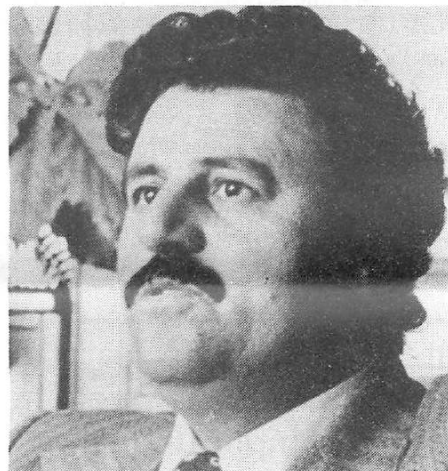
We print here an extract from Mr Stephou's speech:

IN 1974, TURKEY invaded Cyprus. Forty per cent of the population—200,000 Greek Cypriots—were chased out of their homes to seek refuge from the Turkish tanks, planes and troops. The Greeks in Cyprus were frightened and full of hate. Everybody had lost something or somebody.

When this happened my wife and I were on the point of joining all the other Greek Cypriots who were demonstrating in the streets against the British, the Turks and the Americans. But then we looked at each other and we both said, 'Why don't we try to find out what God wants us to do?'

We sat in the safest place in our house, the corridor, and were quiet for 15 minutes, seeking God's direction. Practically the same thoughts came to both of us. 'This is not the time to blame anybody. This is the time to bring all your friends together.' A crazy idea! But it came to both of us while the bombs kept exploding.

So we invited about 20 friends to our house—Members of Parliament, judges, journalists and senior government officials. We planned together how to keep the atmosphere in



Spyros Stephou

B Almond

the town calm, and to meet everybody's needs throughout the crisis. One of those who met became a Government Minister a month later. I worked alongside him through that dangerous period.

We have not yet solved our problems in Cyprus. The Turkish army is still keeping the small island divided. There is still much blame and bitterness. However, my wife and I and many others are determined to go on working to answer blame and bitterness wherever they occur until the vision of our late President, Archbishop Makarios, is fulfilled—to make Cyprus a golden bridge of unity between East and West, North and South.

'NOW IS THE TIME TO HEAL'

In August Rajmohan Gandhi, the Indian writer, gave an interview to 'The Island' newspaper of Sri Lanka. We reprint extracts from his dialogue with Mohan Bhagwandas:



Rajmohan Gandhi

Question: Your Grandfather (Mahatma Gandhi) gave his life to bring freedom to India through non-violence. Today however India and South Asia is caught up in violent movements. What is your analysis?

Answer: If the terrorist's gun is in the end a weak argument, and one that a superior force can knock down, the State's gun is also in the end a weak unifier. The gun can restrain the outward behaviour of dissatisfied citizens, it cannot cure their dissatisfactions. We in India should not imagine that we are the first to discover the army's capacity to fight terrorism (in Punjab). Many other nations have known and deployed this capacity. In no case has this deployment altered what is in people's hearts. An army quells, it cannot expel negative sentiments.

Question: What then do you suggest?

Answer: Our aim has to be unity in freedom. Gun-point harmony is insufficient and also not without risk. Such obligatory harmony is no doubt preferable to the fear and compliance induced by the guns of terrorists but it cannot be more than a short-term exercise.

Question: What is the long-term solution? What should be the approach to such problems?

Answer: The good of harmony in liberty is not easy. It will take much wisdom on the part of rulers and many initiatives on the part of countless ruled. Some will need to let their minds and hearts broaden, some others to forget, some to forgive, some simply to love. What we need is a growth in human sensitivity. No agency, governmental or private, can summon this growth into being.

We will also need to rid ourselves of some myths. One is that extremists and subversives are responsible for most of our troubles. They have played their sorry part, for which many of them have also paid their full price. But prejudice

and ignorance among large sections have also caused havoc. Many of us have succumbed to the epidemic of smallness. We think in Hindu, Muslim or Sikh terms. Indianness is becoming more and more elusive, less and less popular. We have rebelled against our destiny, which was to show how people of different faiths can live as brothers.

Question: What is the way out of the emotive and volatile conflicts within our countries?

Answer: Of course there are difficult and costly political decisions to be made. There are also deeper human issues. You remember the Pope's visit to the prison cell where he met and pardoned the man who tried to kill him? The Pope's deed spoke, not his words. Somehow this simple act moved me. It holds obvious meaning for many situations—West Asia, South Asia and elsewhere. Is the human heart the source of all conflict? Does the short supply of what men and women want cause it? What cannot be disputed is that conflicts are aggravated and perpetuated by an unwillingness to pardon.

Question: In some situations would not the act of pardoning be viewed as a sign of weakness or used as an excuse for control?

Answer: Forsaking any wish for revenge does not necessarily mean that you should give fresh opportunities for violence to the man intent on destroying you. As far as is known the Pope did not ask the Italian authorities to free Mehmet Ali Agca, but he has beseeched and allowed God to free his own heart of resentment against Agca. Pardoning and releasing are separate issues. Even on its own the former has beauty.

Question: In all our countries we seem to be living in an atmosphere of violence. Is this because we are witnessing a crisis in leadership?

Answer: In a democracy respect for political leaders is synonymous with respect for authority. We have lost it as a consequence of men and women in high politics jettisoning integrity. With respect for authority gone, people commit crime, including terrorist crime, with impunity.

As a people and as a government we have done things that we should not have and we have left undone things that need doing. There is a time for congratulating ourselves, and a time for contrition. It would seem that we have entered the latter phase.

Question: What impact does violence have on the general mass of people?

Answer: The headlines about violence jolt us once or twice. After a week of such headlines we stop reading the item and think of pleasanter things. To the family of victims such an escape is not easy. For them the headline is more than a trend or a figure or merely a shame. It is a particular face that will be seen no more, a specific hand that will no longer be offered in support, special footsteps that have gone silent, an accustomed salary that will cease. Violent incidents also show up greatness in some individuals.

There are some who lose a loved one but show great wisdom. After Y Shaiza, the former Chief Minister of Manipur, was gunned down, his brother Lungshim Shaiza told a large funeral gathering of relatives and supporters that retaliation was one option they should never think of. 'There is a time to fight, a time to laugh and a time to weep! Now is the time to heal,' he said. ■

MANAGEMENT MUST LISTEN

by **Robert Lawler**, recently retired Managing Director of a hire and rental company in Queensland

I USED TO BE an impatient, bad tempered reactionary—ask any of my family who had to live with me, or those who had to work with me. I was the 'Boss' both at home and at work where, as managing director of a small company of nine people, I made our lives hell. I started to apply absolute moral standards in my life through asking the forgiveness first of my long suffering wife and family and then of the friends I worked with. It was not easy, and it's an ongoing day by day challenge, but harmony started to replace bitterness and mistrust.

Over the years since then our company philosophy has developed on the basis of building trust and co-operation at work. This originates from my finding those two qualities first in the family. We learned to put people before profit and not to look on our staff as 'economic resources'. This eventually led to our having worker participation meetings.

I well remember two notable occasions taking place on the basis of everyone participating in decision-making. We first had our evening meal together, supplied by the company at our place of work. Then we had our meeting on the basis of input from all and equality for all present. The two most important issues of the day in industry were discussed—wages at one meeting, and hours of work at the second. The answer to these two issues came on the basis of what was right, not who was right—in other words what the majority decided and not what I, as Managing Director, thought.

I am not saying managers do not have to make decisions—they do all the time. But when an issue affects each member of the staff who are working closely with you, management needs to listen to what those teammates are thinking and feeling. In that way trust—the answer to conflict—is built, and a cross-fertilisation of opinion achieved, consensus reached, and team spirit built. I believe there is a valuable lesson here for the solving of the industrial turmoil going on all round us.

If a battle is going to be fought in industry on the basis of the maximisation of wages and profits, I can see our nation going down the drain of materialism. If we are prepared to listen to the superior wisdom of God, and not try to do it man's way all the time, we can still reverse the destruction of family and industrial life. ■

JERSEY PRIORITIES

AFTER 40 YEARS OF PEACE, prosperity, political stability and general good fortune, Jersey is the envy of most of the rest of the planet,' says Senator Ralph Vibert. Last month he gave a major interview to the *Jersey Evening Post* as he prepared to hand over the top position in the Government of the island—President of the Finance and Economics Committee of the States (parliament). He told the paper that Jersey's remaining problems were those associated with learning to live with the dark side of success.

The 72-year-old lawyer-politician's involvement with MRA is well known, the paper reports. He said that his Christian faith had been important during his long political career, as in all spheres of activity, but that he had tried to approach the island's problems undogmatically. His philosophy had been that 'what is right in any situation, without preconceptions, is what is desirable and in the States the important thing is relations with other States Members'. In football terms: 'It is very easy, and a great temptation, to play the man and not the ball.'

One of his concerns was the way in which wealth and success can blind people to the needs of others. 'Forty years of busy prosperity can have a confusing effect,' he said. 'Self-satisfaction can become the main aim. I am particularly saddened by the high level of divorce and separation, with its grievous effect on the children and the whole social fabric, and by the increase in crime, largely drink-related. I wonder why this human unhappiness is caused. Are we forgetting the basic priorities as defined by Jesus—to love God and to love your neighbour as yourself?'

Senator Vibert added, 'We must learn to cope with the degree of prosperity we have, which is not enormous for a lot of people but is comfortable, and at the same time to really care for people, both in the home and in general.' ■

Thoughts for a distant homeland

by **Roland Wilson**, from Britain but now living in Australia

IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY to watch from afar mounting difficulties in one's homeland, and remain free from faithless anxiety. There is so much one would like to know and so little one can humanly do. There is a longing for easement, which can jostle one's mind and heart away from the deeper commitment to a fundamental answer.

Yet in the Christian faith no one is impotent. We have access to, are indeed summoned to, emboldened prayer—not least for those we react against most. Prayer is the great purifier. Its results are certain, but by us incalculable.

Then there is the decision—and decision it is—to have faith. We are told that faith is the victory that conquers the world. It is a force. God uses it beyond our knowing, and apart from our human efforts. Hourly the decision to grasp faith can be renewed. Any known compromise, however small, clouds the clarity. Every victory, however private or seemingly unimportant, forwards the whole battlefield, and strengthens God's hand. He is the great worker. But He works in His way, through us, and far beyond us.

A country's calling can be sustained, even in the toughest times, by the deliberate faithfulness of the few. The few can become many. And often God gives an unforeseen bonus. He also uses the unexpected person. His values and perspectives are different from ours. I am in immediate comradeship with all those in my homeland who are at this very hour finding and following the simple programme God dictates to them. No one can change that truth. No one and no distance can rob me of that share in strengthening my country's destiny. The unfolding future, in its wonder, is reached by the sustained quality of my belief in it today. ■

NEWSBRIEF

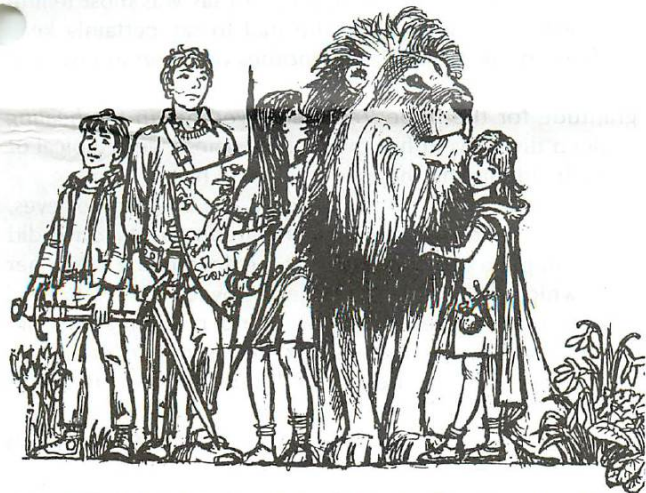
THE HISTORIC CAMPUS of Georgetown University in the heart of old Washington will be the site of a major conference next June on the theme, 'Making a World of Difference'. The conference will take place from 16-23 June and the initiators say that it will involve leadership from industry, the trade unions and public life, as well as hundreds of ordinary Americans.

In the meantime over 60 Virginians have signed an invitation to a conference in Richmond from 16-18 November. Its theme will be 'Unity in Diversity—will Richmond lead the way?' The conference will explore how to pursue the fight for justice in a spirit which brings people closer to God and to each other instead of dividing them. ■

'DON'T READ WHAT follows if you're not worried about India!' begins a full-page statement which has appeared recently in several Indian newspapers. Headlined, 'A promise to India', the page gives nine of the signatories' 'sentiments'; 'our acts of constructive initiative that touched or impressed' them; and an 11-point 'People's Manifesto'.

The sentiments include, 'The upsurge of violence that we have witnessed may have had a connection with the downswing of character. We sowed dishonesty and reaped a crop of knives and bullets.... Often we suppress our personal convictions and swim with the current. But there is a better side to us. Our consciences, at times sleepy or comatose, aren't dead and gone. Now and again they are heeded. Now and again an inner impulse supplies inspiration, or courage, or an appreciation of the opposite point of view or a glimpse of the lives of the forgotten.'

'A, having written the BSc exam at Madras, felt he should tell the University that he had copied in one of the papers and that he was ready to face the consequences,' says the report of the first constructive act. 'His result was withheld. The Disciplinary Committee of the University summoned him, gave him a hearing—and granted the degree. "We are surprised by your honesty," one of the committee said to him, adding, "What are your ideas for reducing cheating in exams?"' ■



C S LEWIS'S CLASSIC children's book, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, is to be staged for the first time in the West End at the Westminster Theatre, beginning 20 November.

Full details from Box Office, Westminster Theatre, Palace Street, London SW1. Tel: 01-834 0283.

Honor Barnes and Vera Dennison, two British women who died recently, had little in common in their backgrounds or circumstances. Yet in committing themselves to finding God's plan for their lives, each found a part in MRA's global bid to reshape society in line with God's will.

HONOR BARNES



Honor Barnes

M Sisam

HONOR BARNES came of a family accustomed to the good things of life, but with this went an adventurous spirit and a readiness to serve. Her great-grandfather was Edward Parry the explorer, who sailed the Arctic waters in search of the North West Passage to America. Her grandfather patrolled the Bight of Benin and fought naval skirmishes to stamp out the slave trade. By the time she was 21, Honor was driving an ambulance in France in World War I, and learned to take an engine apart and effect running repairs on the job.

The man she was to marry, Anthony Barnes, also served in France. He was with the Yorkshire Regiment and won the DSO and bar for personal gallantry. They met after the war and were married in 1920.

Anthony Barnes went to work in a bank and this meant constant moves for the family. But, wherever she went Honor created a home. It must have been six or seven in the space of as many years. By the 1930s they were living in Egypt, in Alexandria. Here they met Frank Buchman, originator of the Oxford Group (or MRA, as it is now called). They went to the meeting thinking it was something to do with universities and education. Instead, they heard a challenge to live to remake the world under the guidance of God. This deeply impressed them. Their home became a modest centre for this work, and embraced Arab, Jew and Christian alike. Honor had been brought up without a faith. From now on she began to find one.

World War II brought separation. Honor was in Britain to make a home for her three children. Anthony had to remain at his post, with responsibility for a large area that included the Middle East and West Africa. Settled in a Hertfordshire village, Honor opened her home to refugees from the wartime bombing. She also gave much of her time helping in the MRA centre in London, through which passed hundreds of men and women from the armed services and industry. She did her best to help make a temporary home for them, just as she would for her own family. ▶

In due course, Anthony Barnes became a director, and later a vice-chairman, of the bank to which he was attached. He returned to Britain, and Honor was able to re-establish the family home and provide a suitable and necessary base, this time in Surrey. There were no distinctions in this home. All were welcome, regardless of age, class or race. For several years, she used to go up to London once a week with armfuls of azaleas and rhododendrons (or whatever was in season) from their garden, to decorate the same MRA centre where she had helped during the war. Both she and her husband gave continuing support to this work, in an unobtrusive yet effective manner, both practically and in an advisory capacity.

Her commitment continued after her husband's death. In her later years she welcomed artists and writers to her home, particularly from the world of theatre. This provided them with a regular venue for the exchange of ideas and for planning how to make the theatre a constructive force in the nation.

Having been blessed with comparative wealth, Honor accepted the responsibility of it and the stewardship it involved. She used it to help others and in the building of a better world—something far more difficult than disposing of it completely, either by profligate spending or renouncing it altogether. She gave generously and self-effacingly. Her own needs being modest, she shared her widow's pension with others.

Her last days were in a nursing home. Here, she quickly discovered that although she was quite badly incapacitated, there were others far worse than she. So she set out to comfort and care for them. This gave her great happiness. She thought a great deal, too, about the staff and their families.

She was a rare person. Someone said of her that she was 'the epitome of the best of British women, with all the character, fidelity and a certain tough, practical quality that contributes a real backbone to the nation'.

Peter Sisam

VERA DENNISON

THE DEEPEST IMPRESSION I had of Vera when I visited her the day before she died was of her peacefulness. Her face reflected the gratitude she expressed for all God was giving her and especially for her family. A smile hovered around her lips all the time.

It was not always that way. I first met Vera some 20 years ago. She was an extremely bitter woman. Her husband, Les, could do nothing right. He had been a Communist for 22 years. She felt he cared more for his philosophy than he did for his home and family so when he was a prisoner of war in the Forties she gave away all his books and told him they had been destroyed in the blitz. She brought up four sons and a daughter in a home with little money and many violent quarrels. She herself worked in a dry-cleaners.



Les and Vera Dennison

D Channer

A revolutionary change came in Les's life. He began to listen to his 'Inner Voice' and to find faith in God. Vera didn't think much of it—another of Les's bright ideas, a passing phase, another activity that would take him away from the home. She denounced him for every wrong he had done to her and the children. But she was intrigued as Les's whole lifestyle changed, especially when he sought out his eldest son and apologised for when he had thrown him out of the house. The family was reconciled.

At the international assembly for Moral Re-Armament at Caux, as we sat at lunch Vera flung the question across the table, 'How do you find a faith?' She did not tread an easy path as she found that faith in God. The great iceberg of bitterness melted away in her heart. She and Les listened to God together for direction and prayed together in the ups and downs they experienced. They helped each other to put God's will and way first in their lives.

During the last years, Vera's and Les's faith radiated out to the world as they travelled together to Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Japan.

On one of the many occasions Vera and Les spoke together, a leading Roman Catholic dignitary was moved to say, 'I was certainly impressed by Les Dennison, yet I must admit that what his wife Vera had to say was most telling and heart reaching. What she had to say certainly kept his feet on the ground.' On another occasion in Osaka in Japan a senior Japanese woman bowed to Vera in tears of gratitude for the hope Vera had given her in the healing of deep divisions in her own family. These were typical of many incidents that happened around her.

When Vera went blind suddenly, Les became her eyes, her helper and her dearest companion. Never once did Vera complain or grumble about the devastating loss of her sight which meant the end to her beloved needlework and household activities. There were no recriminations nor condemnation. That last year or so was indeed a rich time when their life together spoke louder than words of the miracles of God's healing power.

Irene Massey

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