

# GLOBAL

EXPRESS

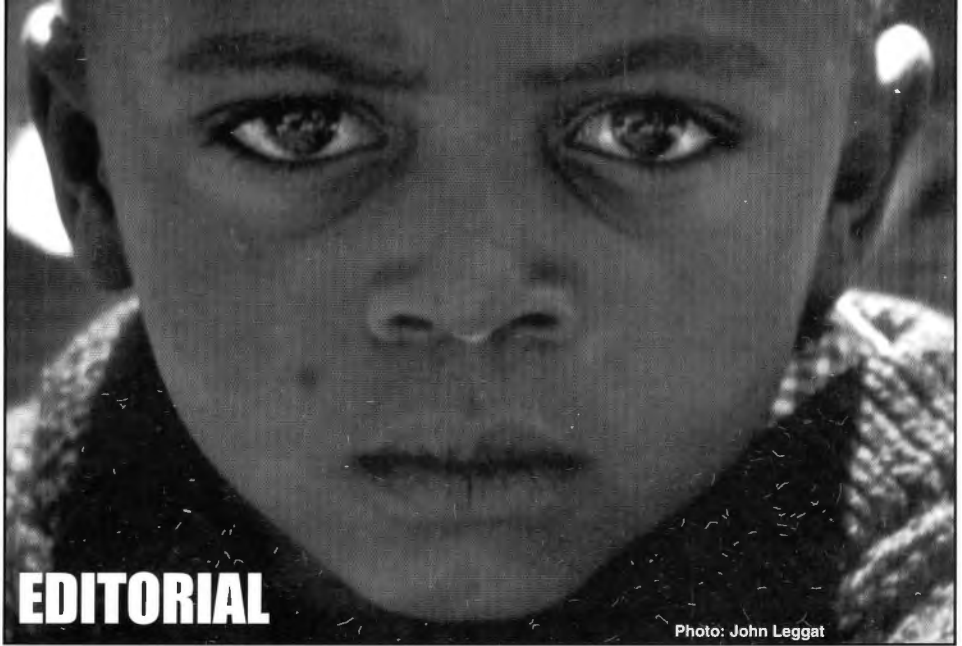


## DISCOVERING



## THE OTHER





## EDITORIAL

Photo: John Leggat

**W**hat does it mean to discover the other? As our lead article suggests, encountering those that differ from us is becoming a fact of life in today's world. Many individuals, communities and societies seem to shy away from it, even react against it. Yet there are also those who actively seek to reach out, to understand, to care for a common humanity. As we sought articles on this theme we uncovered ordinary people who are doing just that. To look on these merely as community building projects or 'feel good' activities, is to forget the real challenge in discovering the other. In *Reaching Out*, Henri Nouwen writes that reaching out to others in hospitality 'is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines... It is not a method of making our God and our way into the criteria of happiness, but the opening of an opportunity to others to find their God and their way'. It is a challenge that strikes at our deepest prejudices and insecurities, but by identifying these we are given the chance to move beyond them—perhaps one of the most precious experiences in discovering the other.

We feel privileged to feature the story of a young Aboriginal woman who talks of forgiving those responsible for the suffering of her people. Aussies also appear in a lively discussion on co-habitation, and in the final word a Canberran asks whether we are awake or not. Though *Global Express* has been produced from England for the last five years, it is wonderful how each issue has had a connection with Australia, where it began.

For various reasons the time seems to have come to lay the publication down. Whilst we remain committed to inspiring young people to make a difference with their lives, there will only be one more issue after this one. Our final theme will be 'Renaissance' and we would be grateful for ideas and articles by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003. May we take this opportunity to thank you for everything (!) and to wish you peace, happiness and more as you start 2003...

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# WHY GLOBAL EXPRESS?

Global Express (GE) was started in Melbourne, Australia, in 1994 to link up young people who care about the future. Dissatisfied with what we were being offered by commercial youth magazines, we felt an alternative was needed.

Our aim is to inspire people to believe in themselves, and to believe they can make a difference. In GE you can question the way things are, and search for solutions. It is also a great opportunity to make contacts outside your 'comfort zone'.

Most of the GE team met through Initiatives of Change (formerly Moral Re-Armament), a worldwide network of people working for personal responsibility and conflict resolution. Absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, together with a search for inspiration from God (or the inner voice), are central to this approach to life. Initiatives of Change is a Non Government Organisation recognised by the United Nations.

More information: <http://www.initiativesofchange.org/>

**not all opinions expressed are shared by the editors**

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# DISCOVERING

Earlier this year I heard the following quote:

**'The spiritual discovery of others in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will be the greatest challenge and the greatest gift for the human race.'**

In the context of all that is happening in the world these words of Marc Gopin, an American Rabbi and author, immediately resonated with me.

You could argue that each century has a defining theme: in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century it was Empire and Colonialism, in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century it was Ideology. Right now, it looks like Globalisation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The combined effect of modern communications, an interdependent economy, and ease of travel mean that we are thrown up against others more than at any previous time in history. Unprecedented numbers of peoples are on the move trying to escape war or famine or simply seeking a better life in the countries they know so well from TV. Faced with these mass migrations, even countries

Mike Lowe, UK

# THE

# OTHER



## **“we are thrown up against others more than at any previous time in history”**

which once welcomed refugees are closing the doors, fearful that they might lose something.

Fear is the great barrier that has to be overcome before we can accept others, and the process of discovering the other is one of overcoming our fears. We are afraid that the beliefs and values we hold dear will not be accepted or shared by others—for after all, they are not like us. This can be a paradox, because one of the things we might be afraid of losing is our tradition of tolerance!

In the West this tradition grew out of the religious wars of the Reformation. Up until that time societies were pretty homogeneous with everyone sharing

the same beliefs. The one exception was the Jews, who were subject to suspicion and not infrequent persecutions and pogroms. The Reformation led to civil wars as Protestants fought Catholics, even dividing families. In the end neither side could be victorious, though the wars lasted for over a century.

This experience led the thinkers of the Enlightenment to conclude that religion should be taken out of the public arena and should be a purely personal choice. This simple premise lies at the heart of our modern secular society, and we take it as an unquestioned universal truth rather than the cultural assumption that it is. Even churches have been affected,



with many people coming to see themselves as members of a club which meets on Sunday. One lifestyle choice among many.

The problem comes when we assume that this premise is the only blueprint by which different people can live alongside each other. We may laugh at the religious adherents who claim that the path to peace is to make everyone more Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu or whatever. But it is no less naïve to believe that peace can be achieved



by everyone accepting the Western secular model.

People cannot live without a sense of identity and purpose. As religions have become marginalised they have left a vacuum of meaning. Can shopping really be the purpose of our existence? Do I define what I am by what I own? The bumper sticker which reads: 'The guy with the most toys when he dies wins!' says it all. In this vacuum, groups which offer certainties about the meaning of life have a strong appeal—the more emphatic the certainties, the stronger the appeal. The world is currently seeing a growth of

fundamentalism in all religions, and consequently an increase in religious tensions wherever different faiths live alongside each other.

As a white British I was surprised to discover that some immigrants to Britain dislike the phrase 'inclusive society' because it signifies tolerance of life-styles and behaviour which they find abhorrent. This illustrates another central problem: the fear that if we are going to accept others without condition they might behave in ways which are threatening to us. Fear leads to attempts to control, which inevitably give the message that others are not acceptable unless they become more like us.

I believe that the answer to this fear is two-fold. On the one hand we need dialogue—to really listen to others, to understand their values and beliefs, and to ensure that ours are also listened to and respected. On the other hand we need a basic trust in human goodness. The two things go hand in hand—without that trust there will not be the willingness to engage in dialogue, and yet dialogue can be a way of discovering the goodness of others.

Fortunately, there has already been much dialogue between the religions. The Parliament of World Religions in 1995 produced a 'Declaration of a Global Ethic' which shows the remarkable extent to which different faiths agree on how people should live their lives. This gives great hope that when I really start to listen to others I will find a core of decency and integrity which I can respect—even though there will be much that I do not understand. Furthermore, as I seek to understand the other through listening and being listened to, I come to a deeper understanding of my own beliefs. Through discovering others I also discover myself.

# Listening to the voice within

## Farheen Mukri, Singapore

A very loud 'other' exists within all of us. Sometimes it guides, sometimes it distracts, and sometimes it seems to lure us away like a wind beckoning from afar. How we relate to this voice within—whether we tune it out or in—demonstrates our desire

Numerous chances are missed when we let our preconceived ideas blind us. We knock opportunities twice, thrice over, not realising what we are doing. Consider the words of Robert Pirsig in his book, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*: 'The truth



Photo: Christine Cross

to understand and discover more about ourselves.

Many times in my work as a youth facilitator I've seen how important it is for that little voice to breathe. Travelling through Indo-China gave me that breathing room myself: looking out the bus window at acres of grasslands, rice fields, palm plantations, and red desert was a chance to learn, to reflect, to experience...

The voice within may well speak to us about our biases, static judgements and short-sightedness. Often we go through life making conscious or unconscious judgements about situations and people.

knocks upon the door and you say: "Go away! I'm looking for the truth." And it goes away.'

In order to accept others as they are compassion is needed. This paves the way for creativity, growth and personal development. And expanding our little worlds is easy if we want to. Whether it is care for the environment, the elderly, or human rights, it comes from desiring 'good'. When we want something we will work towards it. And if ever we find the challenge missing from our lives, we have to make the decision to look within, listen to 'the other', and take a new step into the unknown.

## Faye Heywood discovers the isolation of the gay community in rural Australia

Within rural Australia, the discovery that you, your son or your daughter are gay opens an immediate chasm between your world as it was and a world of unseen minefields. For most people knowledge of what it means to be gay or why someone might be gay is non-existent or coloured by myths. The knowledge most do have is that being homosexual or having a gay family member is not a subject one can talk about freely because so many people have homophobic attitudes. Such homophobia is often expressed in negative, judgmental comments or self-righteous pronouncements about 'cures' and morality. This extends to acts calculated to intimidate: for example, a young man found a bicycle smashed through his windscreen.

Family members, neighbours, friends and colleagues can be rejecting, creating subtle barriers in relationships.



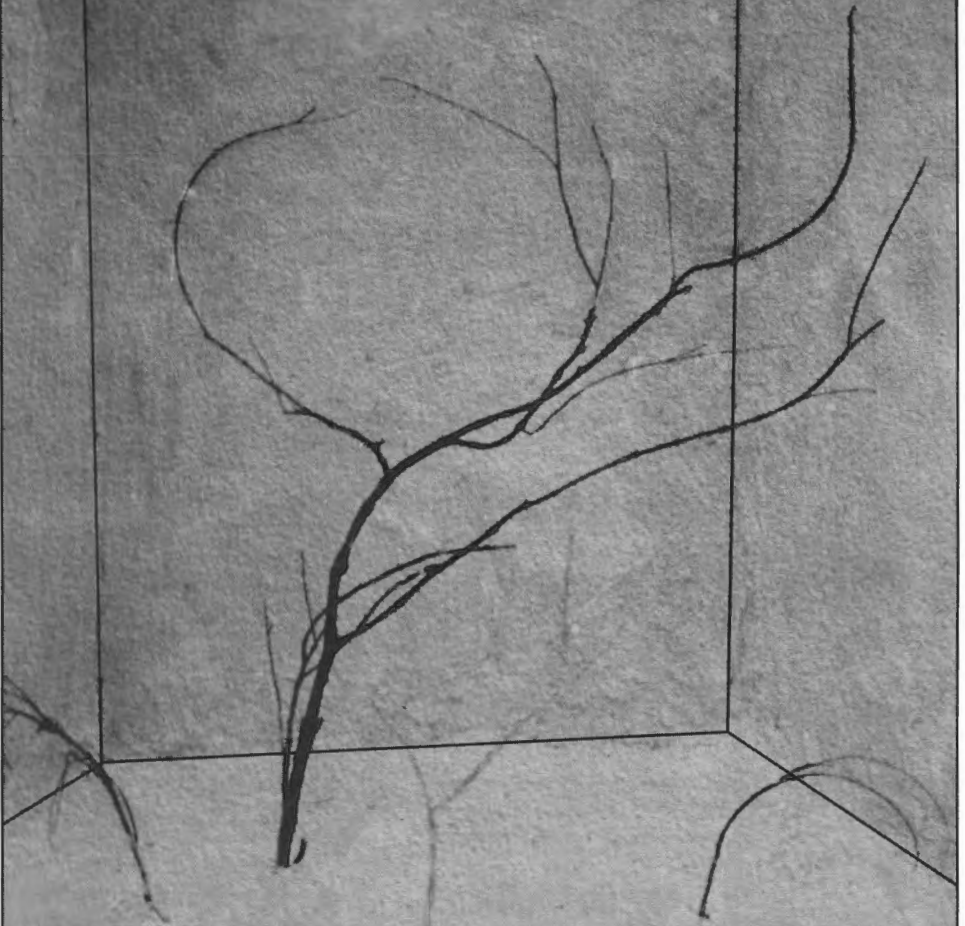
It's extremely hurtful to know that grandparents will not come to family functions if gay offspring are to be present. It hurts to know that, because you are gay, some relatives will no longer remember your birthday. They do not want to know that being gay is not a choice. Generally it is an awful realisation that is kept secret for as long as possible, particularly from parents, for fear of rejection.

For many parents, the discovery that a son or daughter is gay starts a process of grief; even those who seek to understand, accept, and support their gay offspring can experience isolation. Getting accurate information and being able to talk about feelings is impossible for many parents. Who will listen to fears that a son/daughter is depressed, sometimes repulsed, about their gay identity and so desperate that suicide is an attractive option? Where can a young married man with children go for help when he realises that he is gay? Who is there to turn to?

The support group, Parents and Friends of and for Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), provides a confidential forum where people can raise their fears, explore possibilities, and find resources



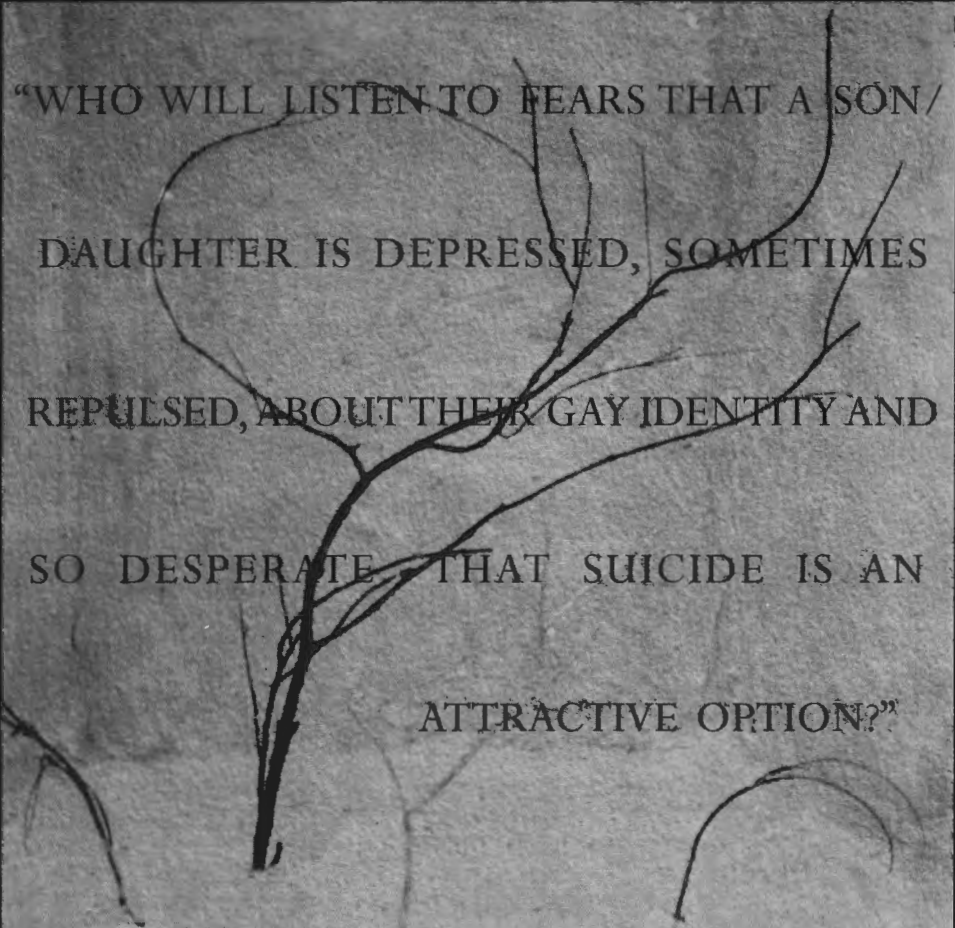
# OUT



and personal support. I accepted the challenge to help get one such group going in New South Wales about two years ago. From my perspective as a school counsellor, it seemed like a positive and needed option. As a Christian, I felt God was nudging me to be involved. It has been a steep learning curve. My role seems to be one of giving hope and speaking out in public.

As fear and grief are two of the dominant feelings for parents, all issues

need to be discussed with sensitivity and empathy. Fear can be crippling, preventing people for months from venturing to their first meeting. In order for people to feel safe we are unable to advertise the actual meeting place. People have to ring and ask where it will be held. Some only ring to talk after months of seeing the advertisements in the local paper, and even then may not have enough courage to come to a meeting.



“WHO WILL LISTEN TO FEARS THAT A SON/  
DAUGHTER IS DEPRESSED, SOMETIMES  
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SO DESPERATE THAT SUICIDE IS AN  
ATTRACTIVE OPTION?”

My discovery has been that this community of people is virtually invisible. It is often a hurt and bewildered one, but at the same time caring and resilient. When they find each other in safe places, they become more courageous and their natural strengths grow. When someone from our group speaks out publicly to a group, on radio, or in writing, others with needs come forward.

There is so much that is not known about homosexuality and sexual identity. For those of us for whom sexual identity is not a problem, there is much to learn and understand. The challenge is to value and accept each person for the special individual they are, without

allowing one's beliefs and attitudes to limit the relationship.

Each family's story is different. Yet it has been in the honest sharing of stories that we have come to know, understand, and support each other. I have been humbled and privileged to share in a small part of their lives, particularly where vulnerability is an issue. Hearing another's story is a first step to understanding. Continuing the journey alongside them enables trust, respect, care, friendship and a discovery of who they really are. It is a sure way to take fear and the unknown out of our differences. I encourage everyone to try it.

## Barbara Boxer helps refugees build a new life

A few years ago I saw an advertisement saying, 'Go international without going abroad'. It offered training to teach migrants English. I am a teacher by profession and very much a people person so I applied and did the course.

Talk about the United Nations! Through conversation groups I have encountered over fifty different nationalities. They range from overseas students to skilled migrants and refugees, who have fled their homelands to make a new life here in Australia. Some have traumatic backgrounds. What they have in common is their need to learn English.



Art: Nigel Heywood

# “TO US THEY WERE NOT ASYLUM SEEKERS AND QUEUE JUMPERS,

(continued) In one class I had the privilege of meeting an accountant and a physician from Iraq who had recently arrived in Adelaide from a detention centre. Several weeks later I met Haider, the accountant, again. I asked if he needed any help to which he replied, 'We don't have any beds.' I said I would see what I could do but had no idea where to find beds! He also said, 'My wife needs a friend.'

My husband and I went to visit them in their cold, sparsely furnished home. Haider was depressed, his wife Tara had been crying, and the children, who didn't understand English, played with the little they had. They missed their extended family and felt alone. A year later they would tell us their tragic story, a story they will share with others when they feel comfortable doing so.

To us they were not asylum seekers and queue jumpers; just people in need. We resolved to help them, as we would any relative or neighbour, and began asking around for surplus furniture. The first response came from friends of friends who were moving house and said we could have anything they no longer needed. Wow. We picked up everything from lounge suites and beds, to wardrobes and pictures.

We have been through highs and lows with this family and have seen them grow in confidence. A particular highpoint was the way in which Haider found employment. We introduced him to an accountant who had helped

disadvantaged people in the past. A few weeks after an interview Haider was offered work experience, and help in getting his university qualifications recognised. Amazingly, a year later he found a full-time job with a reasonable salary.

They in turn have included us in family celebrations and religious festivals, and have been a bridge to many others from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. On one occasion there were two families living in two bedrooms. At first we had nothing to give them but a friend was soon in touch with news of furniture for collection and before long almost every need had been met.

To date, 60 families have helped us to help others. We have collected, stored and delivered a multitude of household goods. It's our policy not to offer anything we would not be happy to use ourselves, so we have learnt how to repair furniture, and make cushions, and mattress covers etc.

Many organisations give vital help and aid agencies do a fantastic job, but they can't do everything. Some of these people have had a horrific introduction to our country and the best gift we can offer is friendship and understanding. A young man from Afghanistan said to me, 'Barbara we are not bad people. We are human beings and the detention centre was a nightmare.' If enough of us reach out and show them we care, these nightmares can end and dreams of a new life can become a reality.

# JUST PEOPLE IN PEOPLE NEED”



Barbara (back right) and Bernie (left) with Haider (centre) and Tara (front right) with their boys Yousif and Ali

## A footnote from Haider and Tara (Iraq):

When we arrived in Australia we were like fish out of water. Everything was new: the language, the lifestyle, the people, the daily practices. Even the traffic was on the other side of the road. We were lost in the beginning. We didn't know anyone who could show us how to make

a life for ourselves. After four months (a very short time on the calendar but a very long and hard time in our lives), God sent us two angels—Barbara and Bernie. This was a turning point; they became the window through which we saw our new life.

# Letter to a Muslim Arab friend

Bjørn Ole Austad, Norway/Malta

How can we engage in a meaningful dialogue these days? Over a year has passed since the tragedy of September 11. The terrorism of that date fuelled too much talk about a clash of civilisations. And let us not be naïve.

Although neither the Muslim nor the Western world is a uniform entity, there are considerable differences between our cultures, ideals and values, the ways of practising our faiths and organising our societies.

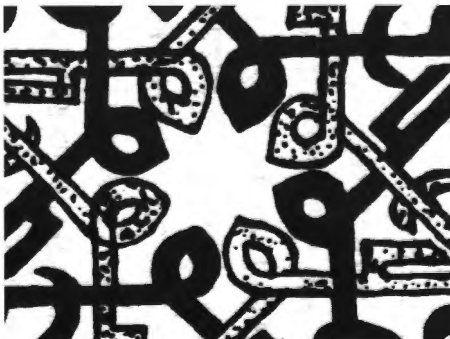
However, it is equally true that the Western and Muslim worlds are in a partnership, highly dependent on one another. I write to you because I believe that the thinking and actions of ordinary people, like you and I, matter in the shaping of history, not only the policies of our elected or self-proclaimed leaders.

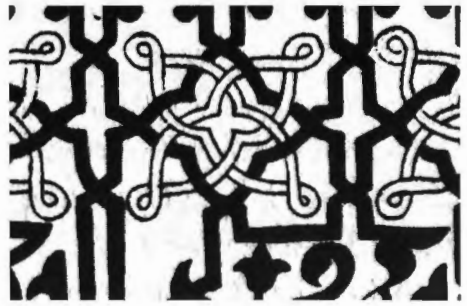
You are Arab and Muslim. Ten years ago you were unknown to me, someone about whom I would only have generalised impressions, coupled with prejudices picked up from others and the media.

Today you are not one, but several friends whom I have got to know and appreciate. I am from Northern Europe and a Christian. For the past ten years I have lived in Malta, geographically close to your Muslim Arab world.

I am not an expert or a scholar with great insight into your religion, traditions or history. I want, however, to engage in dialogue with a listening ear, an open heart and respect for your convictions.

In the *Guardian Weekly* of August 22-28, 2002 its Middle East correspondent for two and a half years, Suzanne Goldenberg, gives a chilling description of the violent conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and its effect on ordinary people on both sides: '...despite the proximity in which they live and die, Israelis and Palestinians, in the main, are interested in knowing only their strand of the story. 'Focusing only on the suffering of their own people and turning a blind eye to that of the enemy, hatred is fuelled to justify escalation of violence.





In contrast to this, a Palestinian friend wrote to me some days ago about the need for all people in the Holy Land to feel the pain of others: 'True love will come if we honestly listen to the feelings of the others, if we can prove that we have enough capacity to understand the other side and not to direct or control their way of expressing their pain.'

When violence escalates, stereotypes about people on the other side grow in strength and power. They take hold of our minds and emotions until we do not see individuals any longer, only the enemy.

Dialogue is about breaking down prejudices, fear and stereotypes, discovering the diversity of people on the other side and the individual amid the millions. More than anything else, it is about feeling compassion for people on the other side.

This applies to all conflicts, including the one between your Muslim and my Western world. We need compassionate hearts for the suffering of everyone. Too

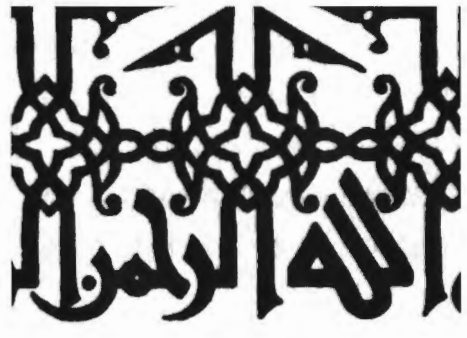
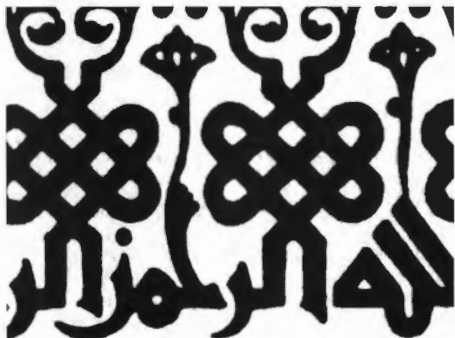
many hearts are politically and religiously biased.

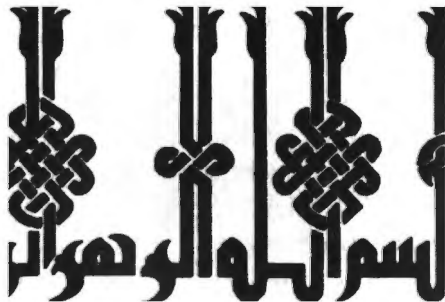
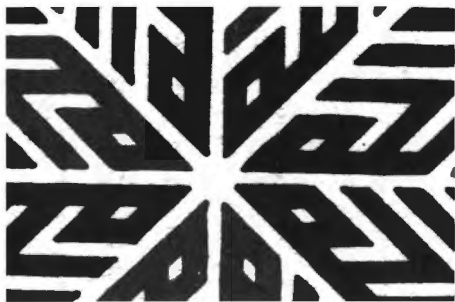
The Palestinian-Israeli conflict may be the biggest obstacle to a good relationship between our two worlds at the moment. We in the West have failed to understand the degree of injustice that the Palestinians suffer.

Both sides use equally extreme means of violence to further their goals, but in addition the Palestinian people suffer occupation and oppression. They are constantly humiliated. The Muslim, and particularly your Arab Muslim world, identify with that suffering to the extent that it becomes your own humiliation.

I believe that I cannot begin to understand your points of view and the heat and anger with which you express them, unless I enter the injustice inflicted on Palestinians and let their tears become mine.

The failure of the present US government is its lack of compassion and understanding for this humiliation of the





Palestinian people. There are many Americans who think differently and express solidarity with people and nations who are humiliated. But as one American friend said recently: 'They are not winning the national dialogue at the moment.'

On the other hand, Muslim and Arab voices could show compassion for the traumatised Jewish people and assure them of their place in the Middle East. This might throw them a lifeline of trust that could break their entrenched position.

In saying this I am not forgetting that Europe to a large extent is responsible for the trauma of the Jewish people. The persecution over the ages, which culminated in the Holocaust, has inflicted incredible harm on the Jews and in turn on the peoples of the Middle East.

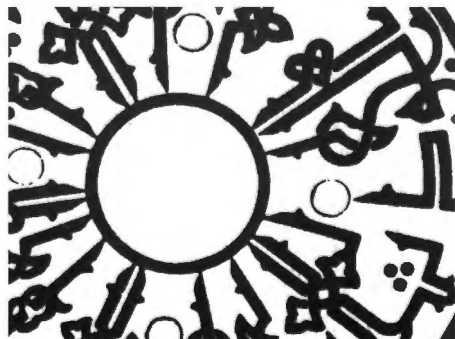
If the Palestinians and the Jews, and all their sympathisers and supporters on both sides, were to find compassion for everyone involved, the Middle East and our Muslim and Western worlds might take a giant leap towards peace.

There are other issues that affect the relationship between our two worlds. Since September 11 last year I personally have come to believe more firmly in the value of democracy and freedom. I reject authoritarian rule that suppresses diversity of human thinking and expression.

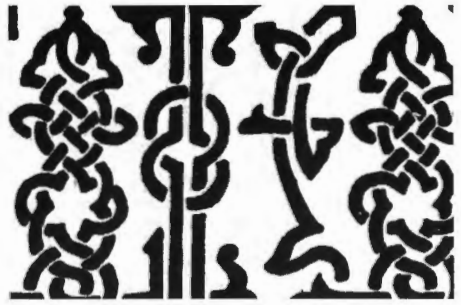
On the other hand, I am ashamed of the abuse of freedom in the Western world. The prevalent thinking says that freedom is freedom from moral guidelines.

On the contrary, democracy depends on commitment to honesty, integrity and a strong sense of responsibility for the welfare of others. Sound family life, faithfulness and the rejection of sex worship strengthen respect and trust between the citizens and are important ingredients of a democratic way of life.

When the terrorists claiming to represent Islam destroyed the World Trade Centre, Muslim voices across the world rightly protested saying that this was not the true Islam at all. It was an extreme







distortion, a hijacking of religion that offended millions of its followers.

This was an important message. It received a strong response from non-Muslims who engaged in meaningful discussions with Muslims and stood by them against any possible hostility. However, I long to hear more Muslim voices rejecting the political manipulation of Islam that leads to authoritarian rule and the stifling of freedom in many Muslim countries.

I do not want to underestimate the courage it takes to express dissent under an authoritarian regime. Maybe there are many who speak up without receiving due publicity. Still, I sense that there is a lack of self-criticism in the Muslim world. You seem too eager to target and blame the West and the US in particular for the injustices you suffer.

I would add: in the West we too easily focus on the wrongs of the Muslim world. We both have work to do on home ground.

Let me try to conclude: I reject the

idea of a clash of civilisations. However, I believe it will take a lot of bridge-building and change from both sides to avert a clash.

A dividing line goes through both our worlds. It is not primarily between moderates and extremists. There are also corrupt moderates who just want a pleasant life and thereby create fertile ground for conflict.

It is between good and evil, accepting that good and evil exist in both our worlds. Neither the Muslim nor the Western world can claim to be the bastion of good against evil. We need each other. Humility and honesty about our own shortcomings is a sign of God's presence.

First published in *The Sunday Times of Malta*, 08/09/02. Illustrations are re-printed by kind permission of Charis Waddy, author of *The Muslim Mind*. She writes: 'The oneness of God and the essential unity of His creation are basic to Islamic Art, as they are to all Muslim life and thought. This is reflected in an exactness of mathematical design which gives serenity in architecture and undergirds all the arts.'



# KENYA

PHOTOGRAPHS AND WORDS BY JOHN LEGGAT



**I felt like a change. I needed a change.**

**I needed to experience something challenging and totally different. What better continent to rediscover those aspects of life than Africa? After a chance discussion in India by some of my family with a group of Kenyans, I was invited to join them and aid them in their outreach work.**

**Kenya is a country of outstanding natural beauty and diversity. It boasts the majestic Mt. Kenya, the magnificent Masai Mara and the hectic port and stunning coast of Mombasa. But it also boasts all the problems and plagues that infect most of Africa's nations. Kenya is rife with AIDS, disease, poverty, corruption and exploitation. It is run by the corrupt, for the wealthy, and it is the majority who suffer.**

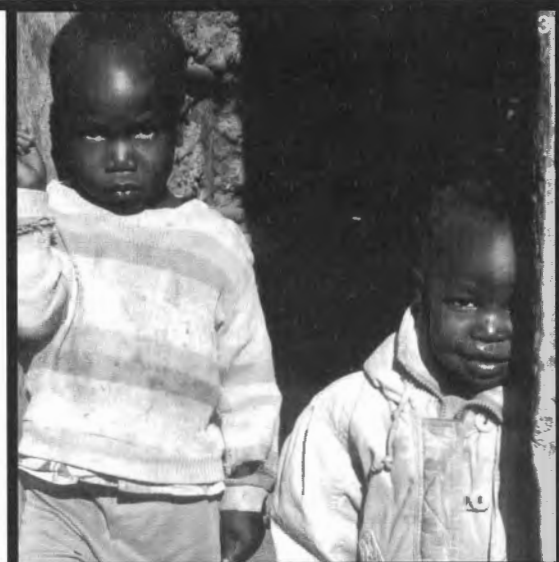
**Having never been to Africa or a truly developing nation I was apprehensive about how I would relate to people whose lives are so different to my own. I was to spend most of my time in small rural communities where life is basic. What greeted me was heartbreaking but inspirational. In the face of hardship and adversity Kenyans showed me the ultimate positive thinking. I**



was taught how to possess thankfulness for what you have rather than bitterness for what you don't. To greet each day with joy no matter what it held in store. As a photographer, I felt it was important not to use the wonderful subjects I had around me for my own benefit, but to give in return. It is all too easy, and potentially destructive, to pry and then hide behind my lens. I needed to live with them and share with them to begin to understand them.

As a white man I had to make sure I was embracing their culture as well as explaining mine. And reassurance that I was not going to exploit them was often required. Trust was something time gave and I was considered an honorary villager by most after proving to them that not all white men want luxury. The luxury of remembering what it is to live was enough reward for me. Here are some of the images that illustrate the amazing three months I spent there.

**What greeted me was heartbreaking but inspirational**



1. I spent most of my three months staying with Joseph Wainaina and his family. Joseph heads up an outreach education programme in rural villages in Kenya's Central Province. He speaks to local people about reconciliation, morals, environmental issues and AIDS awareness. He lives with his wife and six children on an acre of land where they grow potatoes and greens. 2. John Leggat (left) and Joseph Wainaina. 3. The two children of Wainaina's eldest daughter.

1. A typical large town street scene. Few roads are sealed outside the cities. The main mode of transport is bicycle or the small bus-like matatus.

2. Kenya has a huge lion population; these lions are part of a massive pride of thirty-two. They sleep for most of the day and don't hunt till the cool of the evening. Lions are called Simba in Kiswahili.

3. A son helps his father load two sacks of charcoal onto his bike. The charcoal is made from burying burning logs and smoking them for three days. All the timber has been illegally logged from native forests.



6. Chameleons are common throughout East Africa. This one was caught for me by some local boys. Although they are totally harmless, many Kenyans believe them to be the Devil's creature and will kill one if it is seen. They also suspect you will die if it ever comes in contact with your hair.

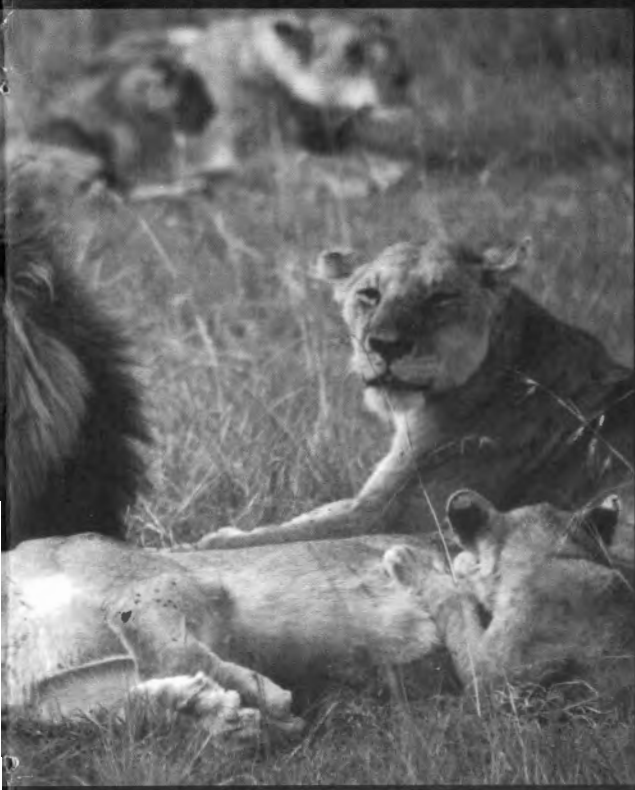
7. Two years ago this forest was alive with native timber, monkeys, deer and rare birds. Three thousand acres have been cleared so the President's son can have a third holiday home.

**"THREE THOUSAND ACRES HAVE BEEN CLEARED SO TH**



4. Wainaina's eldest and youngest sons. The siblings spend most evenings huddled around the fire in the kitchen hut discussing everything from Kenyan politics to English football.

5. With serious transport problems and over 40 denominations in Kenya, churches with congregations less than 20 are commonplace. This Pentecostal church has a total of six regular worshippers. Pastors can have as many as 15 churches in their care.



3

7. (cont) The rainfall has halved in the area since its destruction and farmers are facing ruin. Although it is still public land, we were not welcomed and our guide was questioned on the destination of my photos.

8. It was strange for me to see the widespread use of mobile phones in such poor communities. There are no other fast communication routes as the telephone wires have been removed for scrap throughout Kenya. Calls are very expensive.

**PRESIDENT'S SON CAN HAVE A THIRD HOLIDAY HOME"**



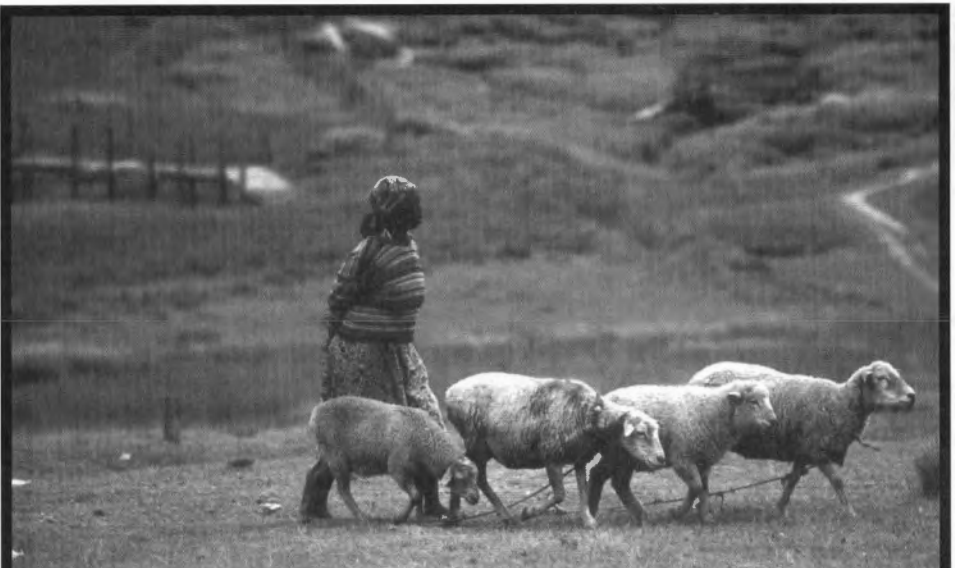
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7



8



A woman tends her flock at dusk. The sheep will belong to her husband but shepherding is considered to be the work of women and children. Most of the household and farm chores are seen to be beneath the man of the house. In almost all of Kenya's 46 tribes men are banned from the kitchen by their own decree. Sheep rustling does occur and punishment for thieves is carried out by a village militia. It usually results in death for the culprit.

1



1. Impala are the favourite prey of nearly all Africa's predators, including the Masai Tribe, and therefore have large roaming herds. Each herd has a dominant male who watches over his harem.

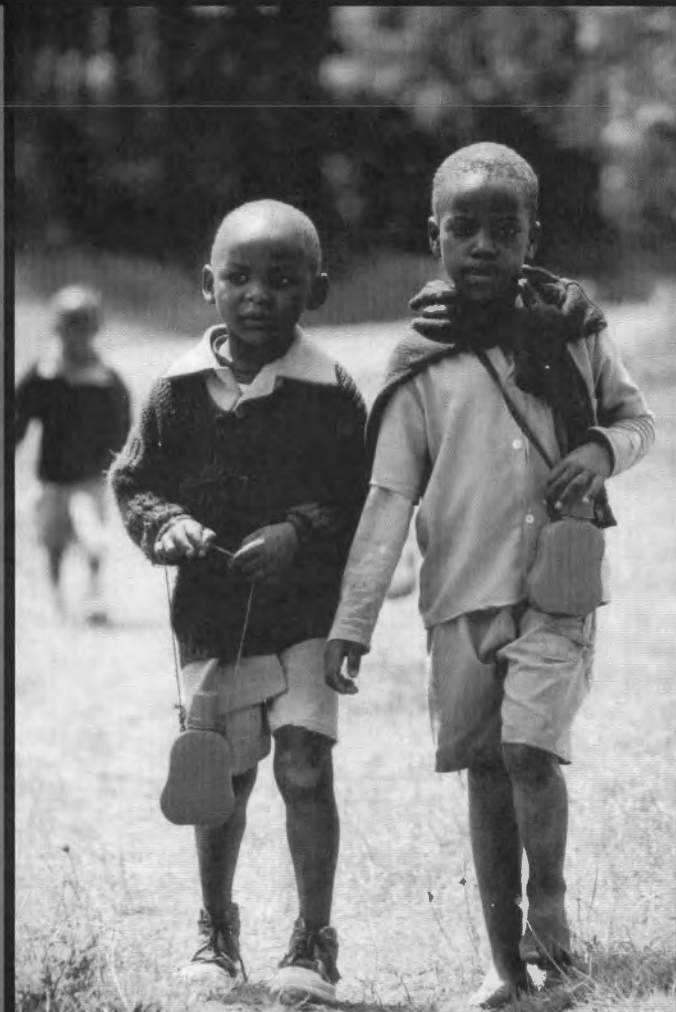
2. This boy's parents were unable to afford the fees at the local school. Many children walk for hours to attend lessons.

3. On visiting a school I performed my New Zealand haka to wide-eyed amazement. In return they duly performed some English nursery rhymes and songs. These children are fortunate as this school is run as a non-profitable institution.



A group of young girls in their church clothes are amused by the white man and his strange camera device. Too shy to speak, they scattered when I approached them.

**Food is scarce and money even more so in this part of Kenya. Children are encouraged to bring their own lunch from home to reduce the school fees. The bottles carried by these two 7-year-olds contain their staple diet of porridge. It is made from local grain and is fermented with cows' milk for healthy bacteria. Dinner usually consists of boiled potatoes and cabbage so most children suffer from malnourishment; stomach ulcers kill many when they are older.**



**Tobias, his wife and son stand over the grave of their daughter who was murdered. Her boyfriend dragged her out of their house and stabbed her repeatedly in an unprovoked attack. The family blame 'bangi' (cannabis) for the boy's actions.**



**A rogue elephant is one of Kenya's most feared animals. I had a close call when chased by elephants through forest near the home of Wainaina. This bull is grazing in the Masai Mara National Park where I spent three days on safari. The African elephant is the largest land animal in the world and very unpredictable. I took this photo from the safety of a van. Hundreds of Kenyans are killed by elephants each year.**



**The Masai Mara sits in the crater of the Great Rift Valley. Vast swathes of forest give way to oceans of rich, yellow grasses. Trees are few and far between in this part of the Mara but they lend themselves to some wonderful minimalist images.**

# **WOMAN OF AFRICA**

*Shades Classics* is a group of young Kenyans who have employed themselves in creating art, poetry and musicals to give messages of hope. In addition they try to participate in the eradication of problems such as HIV/Aids and prostitution through their acting. This poem was dramatised by them.

**The beautiful woman of Africa  
with strong white healthy teeth  
which glitter in the sun as she smiles.  
Singing a lullaby to the young ones  
as she watches the cooking pot on the fire  
getting ready to provide for the family.  
Woman of Africa are you not a special being?**

**Woman of Africa  
mother of our homeland  
before the cock crows she is already up  
swinging her hips  
as she approaches from the stream  
with the pot on her head  
ready to begin the daily chores  
of tilling the land ready to plant.  
Woman of Africa are you not a special being?**

**The woman of Africa  
has endured many problems  
child bearing, a duty not a choice  
like a beast of burden, baby on the back  
luggage on the head.  
Subjected to rape  
and the offender walks free.  
Forced to marry.  
For she is there to be seen and not to be  
heard.  
Education for a woman, a luxury not a  
necessity  
but educate a woman and you educate the  
Nation.  
Woman of Africa are you not a special being?**



**Woman of Africa  
special yet rejected.  
With the death of her husband,  
she is inherited,  
if the inheritor has AIDS she inherits it too.  
Circumcision for women  
another killer disease.  
Wife beating almost a right  
and not inhuman.  
But the Woman of Africa  
smiles and bears it all.  
Woman of Africa are you not a special being?**

**The wars in Africa  
have not spared the women  
Burundi! Rwanda!  
Liberia! Somalia!  
Have all been torn by civil wars.  
She becomes a refugee,  
not for her sake, but her children's  
When her husband goes to where fate  
takes men,  
she bears full responsibility,  
to educate, feed and clothe.  
Oh! Woman of Africa are you not a special  
being?**

**The woman of Africa is no longer in the dark.  
In politics she shines like any man.  
In education she has reached all levels.  
In marriage she has a choice to marry or not.  
Wife molesting is now counted as law  
breaking.  
Banning circumcision has made her a whole  
human being.  
Equality in the place of work is just  
but normal.  
For no one is safe until all women are safe.  
For know woman! You are a special being!**



Art: Nigel Heywood



# COHABI COHABITATION

## ALLISON WOODRUFF, USA

There must be so many different reasons why people choose to live together; some are afraid of marriage or haven't formed an opinion about it. First of all, it is important not to judge others, and secondly, if you believe in marriage don't be afraid to say why.

Marriage is about creating shared meaning and a powerful life force of love that spills over to others. This begins when you decide to honour each other's journey, helping your partner find their true, altruistic self. To me, cohabitation was never a comfortable concept because it always sounded like people were just sharing the bills and living with someone that they thought was 'alright'. The whole idea lacked passion for me. Where was the romance and excitement?

I wanted someone who believed in me so much they wanted to marry me and take care of me until I died. I wanted to take on the world with somebody, not some soul who dropped out of heaven into my lap, but an ordinary human being who made the conscious decision that I was worth marrying. Fortunately I found that and my husband did too.

# TATION

## COHABITATION



### GUAN XUE-LING

### C H I N A

As the average age for marriage rises, cohabitation is becoming increasingly popular among young people in China. I have many friends who began living with their partner while at university.

Cohabitation offers several advantages. Many couples see it as an opportunity to deepen their understanding and care for each other. It also cuts down living expenses. And with the relaxing of social assumptions, cohabitation can be seen as a valid way of satisfying sexual needs within a committed relationship.

Nonetheless, I would prefer to marry later rather than cohabit. As a Chinese I have grown up in a more conservative tradition, and I know that living together without being married often brings opposition from friends and family. If a child were born into such a situation, they might not have the stability that most youngsters have.

**COHABITATION**



Art: Nigel Heywood

**CHRIS EVANS**

**UK**

I get the feeling that much of the energy which used to be spent deciding whether or not to adhere to accepted norms, is now expended on whether there are any valid norms and, if so, which ones they are. It is no longer a quest, as it often was in the '60s, for more and more licence. It is a widespread and quite serious search for a valid basis for lasting relationships, in my own generation as well as younger.

That basis does exist, and can be found. Each of us has to find and re-find it, but a loving God did not set us up for the repeated agony of broken families. Life lived in search of His way is not dysfunctional, though we can all make it appear so at times.

I want to live in ways that maximise positive spiritual energy, my own and other people's. If treating marriage as sacred helps, then that's good enough for me. My wife and I have just made it to our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Believing in traditional marriage, and the demanding boundaries that go with it, has not been a problem for us. Living them out? Well, we try hard, keep no secrets, and trust each other. We count ourselves lucky people.



**COHABI**  
**COHABITATION**

**CATHERINE**

**AND SVEN**

**LANCASTER**

**USA, AUSTRALIA**

Before we got married we lived together for a year in the USA. It was not a decision we took lightly, and there was a lot of discussion about it. We had been engaged for six months and Sven was coming to North Carolina to study for a year. So being in the same country we naturally wanted to be close to each other. Financially it made sense to live together. But the foundation of our decision was our firm commitment to a life shared with the other.

We feel that this is the most important ingredient. Living together brings with it a lot of demands and expectations. As well as the joys of sharing time and energy, there are a lot of shared responsibilities. Compromise is required daily as you navigate decisions, from managing expenses to how to cook tonight's chicken. There is a loss of independence: in every decision there is another to think about. Without the basis of commitment, the demands that naturally arise can lead to tension or resentment. For us, we knew where we were headed, we weren't 'trying things out', and this provided the context in which we made those decisions and created a life together.



## N A B N I T A J I T I N D I A

Even in metropolitan cities in India the western practice of cohabitation is rare. It does not have social and cultural sanction, and the institution of marriage is still as valued and sacrosanct as ever. In my society pre-marital sexual relationships inevitably lead to social and emotional problems. Social unacceptability and lack of identity affects children born into such arrangements. Marriage is a natural milestone for young Indians, and I am at a point where it is the obvious next step for me. Cohabitation seems to lack the support and commitment that marriage brings. To be honest I have never even considered it as an option.

**TATION**  
**COHABITATION**

## N I G E L H E Y W O O D A U S T R A L I A

In a recent poll 25% of couples wish they hadn't married and fantasise about getting a dog rather than remarrying. The divorce rate is soaring; it seems that marriage is irrelevant.

These days we have so much available to us so fast that to experiment with the Hollywood ideal of love seems a viable option. We want everything now and if a relationship doesn't work we move on to the next one. Does this culture of 'serial monogamy' make it harder to delay instant gratification in order to give more to someone else?

I have learnt a lot from past relationships but equally from being single. I have had many battles within myself which I would have lost had I been living with someone in a sexual relationship. At times my hormones drove me to distraction. This, along with personal insecurities, impelled me to look for a partner. When I was in a relationship it was exciting. However, it always ended with a fair degree of confusion and my insecurities at the same level as before.

As I learn the difference between my needs and my insecurities I am glad I did not rush into living with someone. Marriage for me is a public statement: I am committed to this person and they are committed to me. Until I can make that commitment I am happy to stay living out of such a relationship.



**A L L E S O N**  
**M A S O N**  
**J A M A I C A**

Cohabitation can help a couple see if they are truly compatible and ready for marriage. However, from a Christian standpoint it is not ideal. God intended for a couple to live as man and wife after entering together into a sacred covenant with Him. Even though there are some very committed unmarried couples living together, cohabitation cannot be seen as a substitute for marriage. The husband and wife partnership provides an essential foundation for our societies.

**B H A V E S H**  
**P A T E L, U K**

I am not against two people living together outside marriage. If they are both committed to each other, trying to live to the best of their spiritual understanding, and helping each other grow, then I see nothing wrong with cohabitation or sex outside of marriage. I also believe true love and spiritual growth transcend gender. So if two people of the same sex want to be together, that's okay. Marriage is not the seal of approval for me—an inner understanding, the practice of love, and commitment is much more real. We should be asking ourselves what commitment really means and involves, not making rules or judgements.

**N I C C I L O N G**  
**A U S T R A L I A**

Our societies try to channel us along particular pathways—and conventions are part of what makes our communities work. But we must also think for ourselves, make our own commitments. Cohabitation, living together before marriage, suggests pre-marital sex. One convention says we must wait until after marriage; another tries to push us into sex long before this. There's no point in following convention without thought—these life choices are personal. For me, marriage is just one point along a process of commitment, and whether living together comes before or after it depends on the personal commitments and choices of the couple involved. I'd rather see a thoughtful couple cohabiting than a couple living apart until marriage because convention decrees it should be that way.

**C O H A B**  
**COHABITATION**





# **TATION**

**COHABITATION**

# **M U H A M M A D**

# **B A C H R U L**

# **I L M I**

# **I N D O N E S I A**

Cohabitation, in other words sex before marriage, is an age-old issue which needs deep thought. There are significant social and medical consequences, notably AIDS, which wrecks families and whole societies. The great religions seem to agree that sex is sacred. My faith, Islam, totally forbids pre-marital sex. Freud is famous for his theory that man is driven by his libido. But in my opinion it is not only possible to rise above carnal desires, it is essential if we want to experience the full breadth and beauty of our humanity.

# **S A R A H**

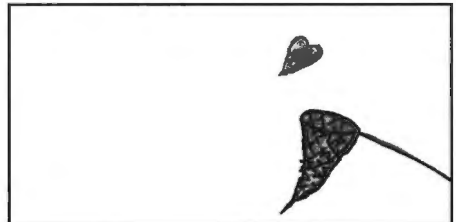
# **M c D O N A L D**

# **U K , A U S T R A L I A**

I lived with my husband before we married because it was the only way we were going to find out whether we had a future together. I came to Australia with a working holiday visa (from the UK) and our time together was short. Living together seemed the only way to get to know each other and to determine our commitment.

Saying that, I was committed after about five minutes with Macca! I would have married him after picking up my luggage from the carousel. We had met two years before, but it had taken a chain of events and a lot of letters to get us in the same country at the same time. But I knew that Macca needed more time to be sure of his feelings, so living together was the best option.

If we had met in more conventional circumstances, I don't think I would have lived with him. To live with someone without a sense of permanence may be convenient, but I don't think it would be fulfilling. Cohabitation is a promise in itself. It speaks of loyalty and trust, companionship and partnership. I wouldn't have lived with someone without the intention of formalising those values.





## My name is Yaritji Green

and I am Anangu (Aboriginal). My mother is Yankunytjatjara, from central Australia. My father is Djaru, from the Kimberley's in Western Australia. I have one brother and one sister, both younger than me. I introduce myself this way because I am proud of my heritage, and it tells you where I come from and who I belong to.

friends you haven't met yet'. It was settled—these people were my friends, they just didn't know it yet. I was here to stay and I was going to have a good time.

We had a session called 'Facing the facts of history'. After watching a video of the white man appearing to a group of Aboriginal people for the first time, I was asked to comment. I spoke about how the

## “THE STEALING OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN WAS TO MAKE THEM ‘WHITE’ ”

Recently I found myself in Melbourne on a personal development course called 'Life Matters'. I arrived late and tired. Lots of young people were milling around, chatting as if friends from way back. I felt like a complete stranger. I don't care how brave a person brags they are, you always get that initial, 'Oh my God, what have I got myself into?' You might say, 'Oh Buddha', or 'Oh Allah'. It doesn't matter which, we all turn to that higher power when we realise that, just maybe, we might be out of our depth. That's how I felt. The split second where you either believe in yourself to get out there, or you run and hide. The old Irish proverb popped up in my mind, 'Strangers are the

British invasion affected every aspect of the lives of Aboriginal people. First they stole their land, then they brought their diseases, and then they stole their children—their future—the one thing that would destroy the hearts of the Aboriginal people. The Australian Aboriginals have not had a happy history since the British declared 'terra nullius' over Aboriginal land.

My mum was part of what they call 'The Stolen Generation': Aboriginal children who were kidnapped from their families. Herded into different parts of Australia, these children had to wait for a white family to either adopt or foster them. They were forbidden to speak their native language,

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**“FIRST THEY STOLE THEIR LAND, THEN THEY BROUGHT THEIR DISEASES AND THEN THEY STOLE THEIR CHILDREN—THEIR FUTURE—THE ONE THING THAT WOULD DESTROY THE HEARTS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE”**

or to talk about where they came from or who they were.

The stealing of Aboriginal children was to make them ‘white’, get them educated, and prepare them to live in ‘proper’ white society. The Government called it assimilation. The white people didn’t think that Aborigines were able to look after themselves, much less look after

someone who wants to deny the past and forget it ever happened? You have to understand that the people this happened to are still alive today. You cannot fully understand the hurts of the Aboriginal people unless it happens to you.

My mum was taken at the age of five. She did not find her mother until she was 20. She did not find the last of her sisters and

**“GET THEM EDUCATED, AND PREPARE THEM TO LIVE IN ‘PROPER’ WHITE SOCIETY”**

children. We were considered less than animals in our own land.

My mum was the oldest child in her family. She was the first to be stolen. Out of eleven, the only child my grandmother was able to keep was my uncle, who was born just two years before me. You might say, ‘Oh but that happened in the past, it really doesn’t affect us today’. But I ask you, who is ‘us’? Is ‘us’ the mothers who had their babies torn from their arms or taken through trickery? Is ‘us’ the children who were denied their families, their language, their heritage? Is ‘us’ the children of those who were ‘The Stolen Generation’, someone like me? Or is ‘us’

brothers until she was in her forties. But she found them all. She brought her family back together. My mum is a strong and courageous woman.

Later I was asked to say something in the session on ‘Forgiveness’. What I have learnt from my people, my family and my own life is that if you are unable to forgive you are a prisoner of your past. When you forgive the person who has wronged you, you set yourself free.

Two years ago I read Desmond Tutu’s book, *No Future Without Forgiveness*. I recommend it to everyone. It’s the story of how admitting the wrongs of the past

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**“YOUR BITTERNESS AND HURTS WILL CHAIN YOU TO THEM  
UNTIL YOU ARE ABLE TO LET GO”**

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Life Matters Course, Melbourne, July 2002

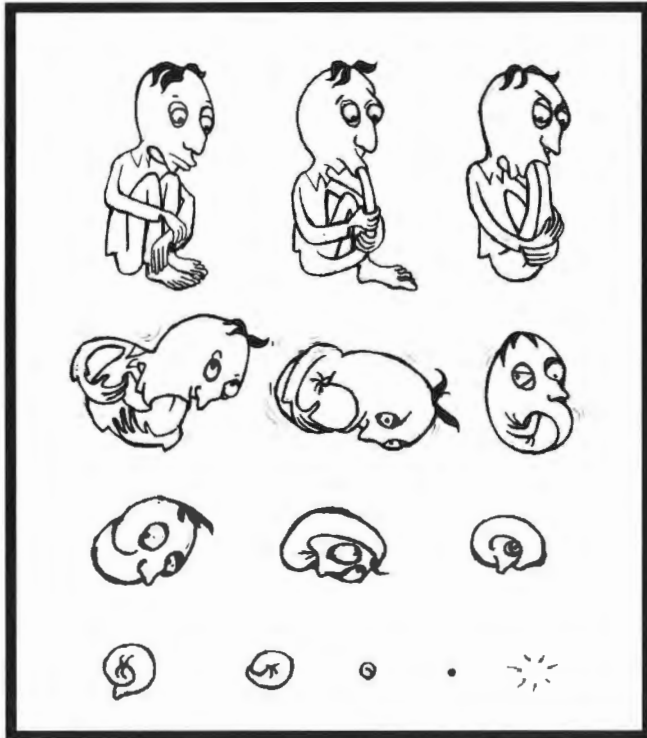
allowed South Africa to move forward into a better future. Here is a country that didn't want to have 'an eye for an eye'. Nor did they want the same situation that happened to Germany after World War Two. They wanted peace in their hearts and peace in their land.

The Aboriginal past has not been easy. The many hurts and sorrows have led my people along bitter paths lined with drugs, alcohol and ill health. Sometimes the person who has hurt you is not ready to say sorry when you want them to. It is

hard to forgive when you don't receive 'sorry' first. But let me ask you a question. Do you want to be chained to the person who has hurt you, forever waiting for the words 'I'm sorry'? If you are unable to forgive then you are a prisoner of the people who have hurt you. Your bitterness and hurts will chain you to them until you are able to let go.

I don't want to be a prisoner. I've learned how to forgive. Let the person who has wronged me say 'sorry' in their own time. I want to be free to live life to its fullest.

**For those who would like to know more about 'The Stolen Generation' the film *Rabbit-Proof Fence* by Philip Noyce is a must. Based on a true story, it follows the journey of three young Aboriginal girls taken from their family and forced to assimilate into white society. This is a powerful revisiting of one of the darkest chapters of Australian history.**



© Nigel Heywood, 2002

by Chris Lancaster, Australia

## up call

**H**ow awake are we? How alive are we to all that our living and being involves? It can be easy to fumble along without noticing what we are doing, who we really are, and who other people really are. Perhaps this is because we recognise that if we really observed these things closely we would be forced to respond. It is how we respond that is the key to how we live.

A few months ago I was asked to consider any burdens I might have, and my immediate thought was of a relationship with a certain friend. It had often felt burdensome because it had been so difficult to approach in a right spirit, seeking to encourage my friend's own unique depth and breadth regardless of what it meant for me. As I

others as well as ourselves, is itself love: not just a feeling but rather a definite action emerging from our own effort and choice. Our love then needs to pass through the filter of honesty: a total commitment to understanding things as they really are. Only then can we begin to see what we might be, as we glimpse a life of wholeness or purity which becomes the ultimate goal of our living.

Seeing ourselves as we are, and could be, thus offers a powerful enough vision to move us beyond the comfortable status quo where we must keep trying to defend our weaknesses. And with those defences no longer relevant or necessary, we in turn no longer need to stand at the centre of our motivations: instead we find the unselfishness to live for others rather

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**“Seeing ourselves as we are, and could be, offers a powerful enough vision to move us beyond the comfortable status quo”**

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subsequently allowed my response to be turned aright, the relationship started to become a gift once again rather than a burden. How we respond is indeed the key to how we live.

But to go back a step, what would it mean to strive for an awareness of ourselves? It means responding to what is deepest in us: recognising its uniqueness and sacredness but also being honest enough to examine what is holding us back from fully living out our deepest and best. This awareness, of

than ourselves. Living for others means first seeing them, being aware of them, and in that process of love we must also be aware of ourselves and where we prevent ourselves from seeing them accurately. And so the cycle goes around.

All that sounds wonderful in theory, but I find it takes the experience of calling to impel me into that cycle. Os Guinness<sup>1</sup> offers some helpful questions pointing to our need to discover calling and the riches which it can unearth in each of us. I found some particularly relevant to my own struggles and doubts:

<sup>1</sup> Os Guinness, *The Call*. Word Publishing: Nashville, 1998; Spring Harvest Publishing Division, and Paternoster Lifestyle: Carlisle, 2001.

- Do you want to accept a challenge that will be the integrating dynamic of your whole life?
- Do you act as if calling was for you alone? Or do you know yourself so well that you know calling is all a gift and all of grace?
- Do you have the habit of looking around at others with callings close to yours? Do you feel that their success is more than they deserve and yours somehow less?
- Do you lead a saturated, overloaded, and fragmented life? Are you frustrated at yourself over the times the best in your life is diverted by the good?
- Has your vision suffered from leakage since you were young, or are you still paying its price and closing its gap with reality?
- Does the unfathomable wonder of calling grip you like a grand compelling you can never satisfy or shake off?
- Do you try to march to your own drum? Or do you live with your eye upon God and the assurance that your times are in his hands?

However each of us hears it, this call will always be something continually coming out to us. The habitual practice of listening enables us to discover our calling afresh day by day: to realign ourselves to the big picture of where our lives are directed, and to discover smaller-scale, specific initiatives which guide us in living out our calling on a practical level. I find that without holding on to this continual sense

of calling I cannot summon from myself the drive to live up to my best. Or, to put it another way, it is only calling which draws a response of commitment. The more aware I am of being called, the greater is my response of commitment. Once again, the cycle of awareness and response. Once again, I have to ask myself: "How awake am I?"

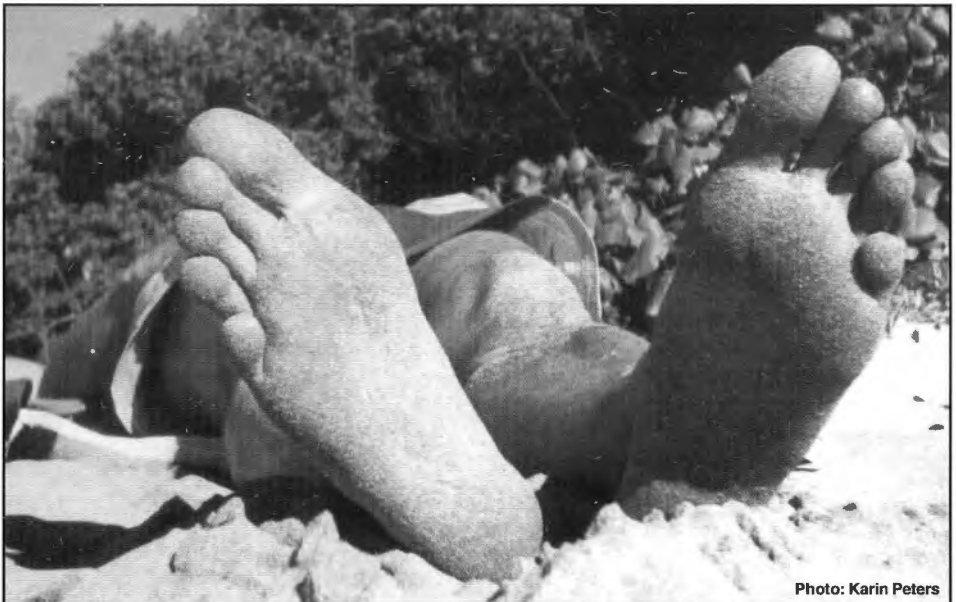


Photo: Karin Peters

# Scattered Thoughts

Only an open heart will allow you to float equally between everyone

- Mitch Albom

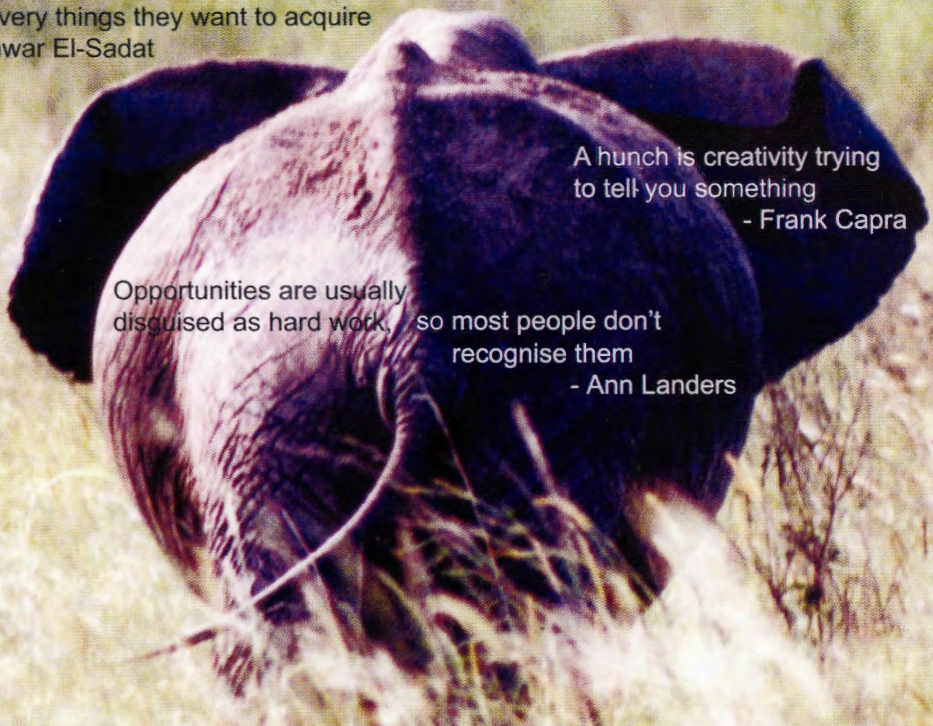
Either nothing has meaning, or everything has - Paul Tournier

Sacrifice that promotes the good of the other is the cost of true friendship

- Nigel Pollock

Most people seek after what they do not possess and are thus enslaved by the very things they want to acquire

- Anwar El-Sadat



A hunch is creativity trying to tell you something

- Frank Capra

Opportunities are usually disguised as hard work, so most people don't recognise them

- Ann Landers

Don't humble yourself, you're not that great - Golda Mier

Things turn out best for people who make the best of the way things turn out

You must do the thing you think you cannot do - Eleanor Roosevelt

To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else, means to fight the hardest battle which human beings can fight and never stop fighting - E.E. Cummings

Never try to baptise a cat - Eileen, age 8