

A scene from *Turning Enemies into Friends* at the Coolmoreen opening.

NEW WORLD NEWS

Vol 26 No 18 18 Mar 1978 7p

Filling a vital need

THE SEASONAL RAINS held off as over a hundred people, black, white, coloured and Asian, came to Coolmoreen Farm, just outside Gwelo, in the Rhodesian midlands, for its opening as a conference and training centre for Moral Re-Armament last month. The multi-racial crowd included groups from Bulawayo and Selukwe, and a special bus from Salisbury.

Takayendisya Nyamupingidza, a Gwelo businessman, and member of the Executive of the African Chamber of Commerce, chaired the meeting. He introduced Alderman GA Sulter, Mayor of Gwelo, who described the centre as 'filling a vital need in developing the whole man'. In opening the centre, Alderman Sulter said, 'Coolmoreen has a vital part to play in helping Rhodesia to be a nation united in purpose.' He referred to the success of similar centres in other parts of the world.

When men established the right relations with God, he continued, then communication

between the races was possible. Rhodesia could find true liberty, he said, freedom from fear, want and discrimination, freedom of worship and speech. 'Anything less and we will have missed the mark,' he concluded.

Nancy Brereton, who has given her 300 hectare farm, with its 100-plus Jersey herd, to MRA, has been farming at Coolmoreen for over 30 years. She was giving her farm, she said, 'to promote the Christian faith and to deepen the faith of all people'. *The Rhodesia Herald* quotes her conviction that the centre will become 'a beacon of hope in southern Africa and the world'.

Peter Loch, who with his wife, Jean, has come from Kenya to manage the farm and centre, said that the situation in the country underlined the urgent need for such a meeting point. 'It will be a place where everyone who comes can find God, and find their part in His plan,' he said.

He launched a development fund of \$6,000 for the initial extensions and improvements to the centre, and he announced a first gift from one lady of \$1,000.

Mr Nyamupingidza stressed that the Lochs had taken responsibility for the centre, without salary, because of their conviction that

SPECIAL EASTER ISSUE

this was God's will, and he continued, 'Miss Brereton's vision can only be fulfilled through our sacrifice.'

The meeting saw the premiere of a new short play, *Turning Enemies into Friends*, written by Steven Sibare and produced by a young 'mobile force' of black and white Rhodesians. They have been invited to perform their play in other parts of the country.



The Mayor of Gwelo is welcomed to Coolmoreen. On the left is Nancy Brereton.

Punctured in Zimbabwe

by Stephen Haisaid, former President of the Oxford Africa Society



Stephen Haisaid

I WAS BROUGHT UP near Fort Victoria in Rhodesia. I went to the Dutch Reformed Church mission school there.

When I began working in Salisbury I wanted to continue to practise my Christian faith. I persuaded three of my friends to come with me to church.

It was not until we began to file towards the door of the church that I noticed we three

were the only Africans amongst the crowd. When we got to the door, the usher said, 'What are you doing here?' 'We have come to the church to worship God,' I replied. 'Can you read?' he asked. 'Of course we can read,' I said. 'Look over there and read that sign, then,' said the man, pointing to a sign on the side of the path. The sign was marked 'Whites only'.

I cannot describe how I felt. My friends whom I had managed to bring said, 'We told you—God is only for the white people.' I left my faith, and began to hate every white man. I put my energies into the struggle to get them out of the country.

Some time later, I was driving a lorry from Salisbury to Fort Victoria. On a deserted part of the road, the tyre blew and the wheel rim was damaged. I began to think I would have to spend the night on the road. I was scared I would be robbed. After some time a car drove past with some young Africans in it. They were drunk, and when I waved them down and asked for help, they spat on me and drove on. I could not believe the way I

had been treated by my own people.

Then another car came. In it was a white woman with a small child. To my surprise, she stopped for me, picked me up and gave me a lift to the nearest town. She waited while the tyre and rim were fixed and drove me back again to my lorry.

That woman changed my life. I wouldn't know her again if I saw her, but she changed me. I realised then that it wasn't a question of colour, but of the individual.

MRA stands for total change. That is why it is relevant for Africa. I have always opposed the discrimination of the white governments in southern Africa. But looking at the horrors that have happened in other African countries, the erosion of justice in such places as Uganda, it is clear that all have to do things differently.

This is taken from a speech made last weekend at an MRA conference in Norwich, where Mr Haisaid is doing a post-graduate degree in development studies.

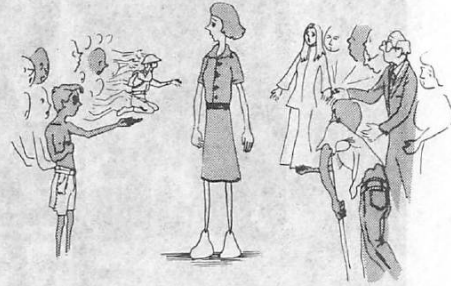
THE DONKEY

1



Once upon a time there was a very ordinary girl.

2



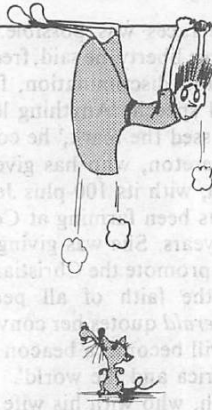
Sometimes she felt life asked a great deal of her.

6



'Or why not one of those people who are brilliant at everything?'

7



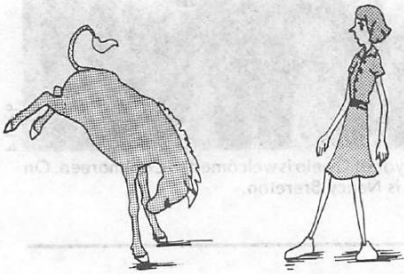
'Or at least someone less afraid...?'

8



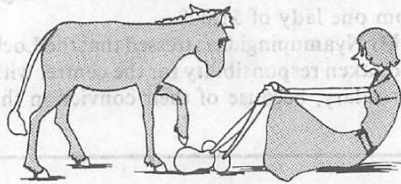
'I'm just useless.'

12



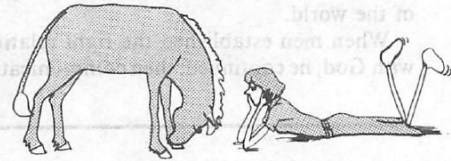
'...and I can be stubborn and moody.' 'Oh!' said the girl, 'You as well.'

13



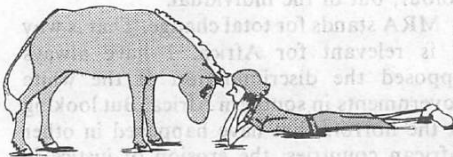
'But a long time ago,' said the donkey, 'a man chose me. Not a dashing white horse—but funny old me!'

14



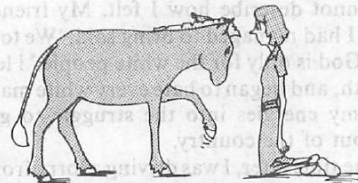
'He was heavy and the road was long. But He was a friend—He gave me strength to get there.'

18



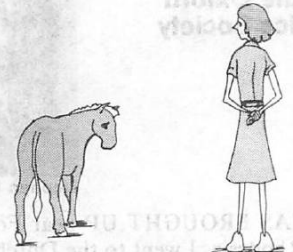
'But when the people saw me carrying this man, and I wasn't clumsy, and I didn't kick or grumble, I just obeyed, they didn't see me they saw a miracle—something happening that was bigger than me.'

19



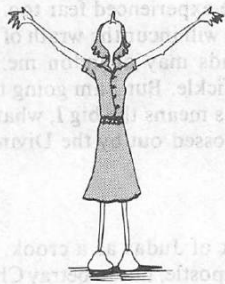
'He doesn't need another genius—He needs a few donkeys who know they have to depend on His strength—not theirs His wisdom—not theirs His words—not theirs.'

20



'And the other thing about being a donkey is ... every now and then...'

3



'Why me?' she asked.

4



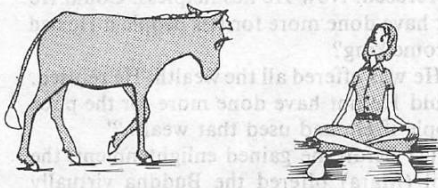
'Why not someone else, with more sense, and someone more reliable—I always make mistakes.'

5



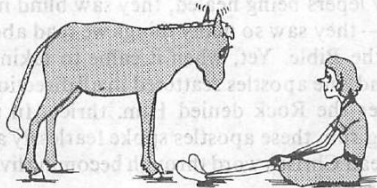
'... or someone who knows what to say. When I want to say what I feel, hundreds of words race to the edge of my mouth fighting to be the first to come out... and they all get mixed up.'

9



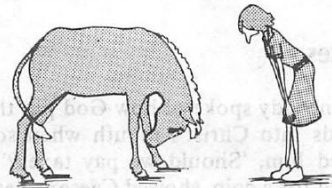
'Oh! ...A donkey!'

10



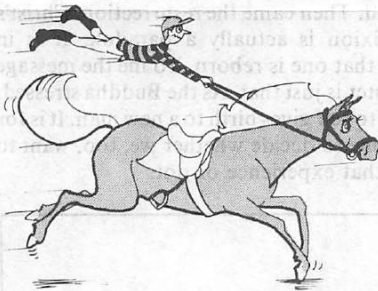
'Just look at me,' said the donkey, 'I've got long funny ears...'

11



'...my legs are too short...'

15



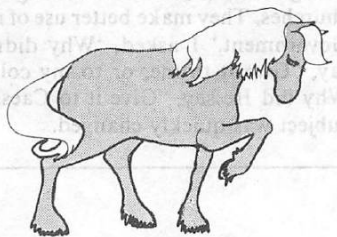
'When a race-horse goes fast, no one is surprised.'

16



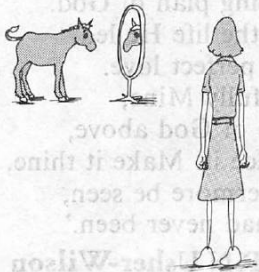
'When a beautiful beast is graceful, people can see it's natural.'

17



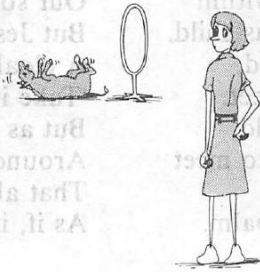
'And no one is startled when a farm horse pulls a heavy load.'

21



'...I stand in front of the mirror...'

22



'...and have a good LAUGH!!!'

**words and drawings
by Margaret Gray**

© Margaret Gray 1978

What Easter means to a Buddhist

by Vijitha Yapa from Sri Lanka

a broadcast on Radio New Zealand

DOES EASTER MEAN ANYTHING to a Buddhist? This was the question that went through my mind during a brief visit to New Zealand. I was invited to a Bible study group. It was the first I had ever attended. Instead of making the Bible relevant to the age we live in, many of those present were talking about the beauty of God's creation and the power of Christ nearly 2,000 years ago.

Taxes

One lady spoke of how God put the right words into Christ's mouth when someone asked him, 'Should we pay taxes?' Christ asked for a coin, showed Caesar's head on it and said, 'Return to Caesar what is his.' I interrupted the discussion at this stage and said, 'Let's relate it to modern times. How many of you do not pay your taxes absolutely honestly?' There was a shocked silence. One bald-headed businessman, his face and head resembling the rising sun (when viewed from a Sri Lanka beach) as it changed colour, said, 'Well, we give it to the churches. They make better use of it than the Government.' I asked, 'Why didn't Christ say, "Give it to me, or to my colleagues?" Why did He say, "Give it to Caesar?"' The subject was quickly changed.

When they discovered I was a Buddhist, they told me in no uncertain terms that I would not be saved if I did not accept Christ as my saviour. This was when I began to ask myself, what does Easter mean to a Buddhist?

To me, Jesus Christ did not come to earth to start Christianity. He came for all men everywhere. In Jesus' lifetime, the name Christians had not been invented. He showed all a road along which they could travel, an experiment if one likes to call it that.

Jesus Christ came at a time when the Roman Empire was the mightiest nation in the world. It could be equivalent to America or Russia of today. Yet, Christ did not organise a revolt, though He was a rebel against the status quo. His revolution was through a change in people—and what happened to the Roman Empire as people lived Christ's standards is now history.

Christ spoke to thousands but it was 12 men He chose to carry on His work. He spent a lifetime training these people. They saw lepers being healed, they saw blind men see—they saw so many things we read about in the Bible. Yet, when it came to taking a stand, the apostles scattered in all directions. Peter the Rock denied Him, thrice. In the long run, these apostles spoke fearlessly and spread Christ's word through becoming living examples.

Public opinion

To me, one of the most challenging parts of the Bible is when Christ prayed in that garden: 'Not my will, but Thy will'—in other words, 'I do not want to die, but I know it is the Divine Will, so help me to obey.' He was human, just like us. It is so similar to the Buddha's life. The Buddha's father tried to prevent the Divine Will by keeping him locked up in a palace, but human engineering cannot prevent what is to be. The Buddha ventured out into the outside world. He was

the reality of life and found the way to conquer desire.

When Christ says, 'I am the way', to me it means, 'I have experienced fear too. I know taking a stand will incur the wrath of people. My best friends may abandon me. Public opinion is so fickle. But I am going to stand firm. The cross means the big I, what I want for my life, crossed out by the Divine Will.'

Paradox

Many think of Judas as a crook. He was chosen as an apostle, not to betray Christ. He chose to mouth the right phrases, made the right noises in public and at prayer, but there was no moral decision to change. He may be the man sitting next to us at church or temple. He finally betrayed Christ but took his own life.

I am a journalist by training. If I had been at Mount Calvary and seen Christ crucified, I would have probably said to myself, 'Jesus was offered a chance to be king of the world. He refused. Now He lies helpless. Could He not have done more for His people if He had become king?'

'He was offered all the wealth. He refused. Could He not have done more for the poor people if He had used that wealth?'

Just before he gained enlightenment, the devil (Mara) offered the Buddha virtually the same things, but the Buddha refused. In both the Buddha and Christ, they were deliberate choices. Both showed that it is not material things that count, but obeying the Divine Will.

To some who watched, the crucifixion was the end. Then came the resurrection. Christ's crucifixion is actually a paradox. It is in dying that one is reborn. To me the message of Easter is just that. As the Buddha stressed, death to self gives birth to a new man. It is for each one to decide whether we, too, want to have that experience or not.

There is a grace

There is a grace which takes us as we are,
Requiring not the need to strive and earn
A prerequisite goodness which is far
From our capacity to do or learn.
God's love ne'er leaves us, even while we sin.
When passions keep our captured wills beguiled,
His grace, unknown to us, *still* works within
Our hearts; God in His love *still* calls us child.
We may feel helpless, lost, and far afield,
But there's no need to try retrace our feet.
If *what* we are, in truth, to Him we yield,
Then *where* we are He comes Himself to meet
And rescue us from ev'ry fearful harm,
Pouring upon our wounded souls His balm.

New York City, Easter 1978

There is a Christ who takes us as we are,
The Son of God Himself who comes to seek
For those, perhaps like us, who've wandered far
And dare not come to God, for our sin's reek
Declares us outcaste, needing more the rod
Of wrath than that for which we daily pled—
Our souls redeemed by loving plan of God.
But Jesus Christ wove, by the life He led,
A cloak of sinlessness and perfect love.
'Take it,' He tells us, 'It is fully Mine,
But as you near the throne of God above,
Around your shoulders place it. Make it thine,
That all your sins may nevermore be seen,
As if, in God's eyes, they had never been.'

R N Usher-Wilson