



GUEST COLUMN NIKETU IRALU

## WHO WILL BREAK THE CHAIN OF HATE?

A chain of revenge and counter-revenge starting from unhealed hurts is the story inside every conflict. The chain becomes bloodier with every act of 'paying them back in their own coin'. Some current conflicts threaten to spiral out of control. It is easy for those outside to pass judgement from comfortable distances. But for those directly involved, the possible consequences of defeat are so grave that hitting back good and hard, to cause maximum damage, is seen as the only safe road map to follow. Meanwhile, more and more families and communities are subjected to fear, hate and destruction beyond what the human spirit should have to bear.

We must all take responsibility for the terrible legacy of revenge. It is after all the human family which has nurtured this legacy, and allowed it to become the monster it is. Each of us has to recognize where we have ignored the hurt we have caused others, and made them think revenge is the answer. 'An eye for an eye will make the whole world blind', as Mahatma Gandhi said.

### CRUSADING

In his novel, *The Devils of Loudon*, Aldous Huxley wrote, 'Those who crusade not for God in themselves, but against the devil in others, never succeed in making the world better.' When I came upon this recently, it jolted me. I realized with shame that in my work for reconciliation among my people in Nagaland, I had gone quite far in crusading against the devil in others and received applause and public recognition for this. I felt I was exposing evil, weakening 'anti-social elements'. But I was not aware of how this had killed my sense of my need for God and his guidance, grace, purity and wisdom. One day a friend told me that the

way I had made my point at a meeting of Naga leaders had deeply embittered a group of people. After careful reflection I wrote to the person I was told I had embittered, asking him to forgive me and to help me to see the things in me which hurt or annoy others. He immediately wrote back thanking me and asking for a chance to talk.

### NAGA PLEDGE

For half a century we Nagas, who live on both sides of the Indo-Myanmar border, have struggled desperately for our aspirations. A sketch, written in the 1970s and based on the true story of a Naga family, tells of a mother who has lost two sons in inter-tribal rivalry for control of the struggle, and whose third son is about to set off to avenge their deaths. She cries out:

*Who will break the chain of hate?  
Who will break the chain of sorrow?  
Ancient wrongs shed blood today,  
Wrongs today shed blood tomorrow.  
Who will break the chain of hate and fear?*

Thirty years on Nagas are still struggling. But our struggle now includes a parallel search 'to break the chain' so that the peace process and unconditional talks going on with the Government of India may lead to an honourable settlement. Nagas have understood the urgency of going beyond the blame and revenge which have paralysed relationships within the Naga family.

In December 2001, Naga Hoho, the apex body of all Naga tribes on both sides of the Indo-Myanmar border, and the Nagaland Christian Forum launched an initiative for reconciliation. At the launching ceremony, the presidents of 29 tribes read out a pledge they had signed on behalf of their tribes.

The pledge stated: 'We will start a process whereby we will truthfully examine the ways and areas in which we

may have hurt others so that the needed changes may begin with us, leading to practical steps of restitution to make healing lasting. We will go beyond seeing only where others have hurt us and be ready to see where we too may have provoked them to hurt us, so that forgiving and being forgiven will become possible.'

It was a powerful moment. Many wept as they heard a choir sing, 'Healing in our nation'. Ten orphaned children, victims of the political violence in Nagaland, stood beside, or were held by, the singers. Others spoke, forgiving those who had hurt their families grievously, or simply said they had come to learn about forgiveness as they too wanted to play their part.

### NEW WAY

Many Nagas do believe we have been given a dependable road map which all sides can trust as we walk together to find a just solution. It has come from our acknowledgement of the failure of past ways to meet present and future needs. May the first steps taken together in faith inspire us to transform the obstacles ahead into our common strength. This is our prayer and commitment.

Other conflicts are, admittedly, more complicated, older and wider in scope. But they too are often sustained by a failure to acknowledge that we each have our share of responsibility in the wrongs of others. The decision by the Nagas to try a new way in their corner of the world may help others in their reflection on new ways forward.

*Niketu Iralu was Convenor of the Coordination Committee preparing the ground for renewed negotiations between Nagas and India, and is a member of the Nagaland Baptist Church Peace Committee.*

### Next Issue

*For A Change* discovers how to narrow the gap between ideals and interests at this summer's conferences at the Initiatives of Change centre in Caux, Switzerland.

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# FOR A CHANGE

HEALING HISTORY/TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS/BUILDING COMMUNITY

Stolen generations memorial

Freedom, the US and the world

Wales' Honorary Consul for Lesotho

## WHERE COMMUNITY SPIRIT TAKES WING

## EAR TO THE GROUND

JANE MILLS IN SYDNEY

## GOOD LUCK ATHENS!

As the Olympic Games prepare to return to their home city of Athens, Sydney warmly recalls its turn as host four years ago. We remember the marvellous Ghanaian swimmer dubbed Eric the Eel, and the way the last of the marathon runners received as big a cheer as the first (possibly because their arrival signified the start of the closing ceremony!). One young Sydney-sider, Rob Thwaites, describes the Games as 'one of the most memorable times' in his life. 'Visitors were welcomed by the residents with open arms, and strangers had time to stop and converse in the streets. A party atmosphere enveloped the whole town at night. The Australian spirit of camaraderie and openness was at its best, a reference point we need to keep alive in our heads.'

## THE JEWISH JUDGE

In his recently published book, *Tampering with Asylum*, Father Frank Brennan, of the Jesuit Social Justice Centre in Sydney, recalls how he was inspired by the 'resolute hope' shown by detained asylum seekers. He

regularly visited one group of Palestinians at Woomera, a now-defunct outback detention centre. 'One of the Palestinians, Akram Ouda Mohammad Al Masri, decided to challenge the legality of his detention in the Federal Court,' writes Father Brennan. 'I felt obligated to inform the Palestinians that the judge was Jewish with a fine reputation for upholding human rights. Akram won his case and was released.' When Brennan next returned to Woomera the three remaining Palestinians had decided that they would also like to take a case to court and asked him, 'Do you think we could get the Jewish judge?' Brennan comments, 'In the middle of the Australian desert, some of the most complex conflicts seem resolvable.'

## COMING TOGETHER

Though seemingly geographically remote from Middle Eastern upheavals, Arabic is Sydney's second language and bridges of understanding need to be

constantly built and walked across. Recently an initiative called Journey of Promise united 30 young Christians, Muslims and Jews who spent a week together in Sydney's north visiting a variety of secular and religious places and talking with various faith leaders. Catholic Kelly Millward said, 'Before the event... I knew Muslim women wore veils and Jews ate kosher food, but by the end I came to appreciate that, despite differences, we were all pretty much the same, struggling to apply our faiths in our own lives.'

## OPEN MINDS-OPEN DOORS-OPEN HEARTS

George Negus, a well-known Australian journalist, has just launched his book, *The World from Islam*. In it he writes of a mosque in Jumeira Beach, Dubai, which runs an 'Open Doors, Open Minds' project to bridge the gap between Islam and the non-Muslim world. This reminds me of Australia's annual Open Homes, Open Hearts Day which encourages everyone to invite someone of a different culture into their

home. Last June, Joyce Fraser of Marrickville, one of Sydney's most multicultural suburbs, booked a community hall and brought together neighbours and local councillors to share a plate of food, a song or a dance from their culture. The walls throbbed with concentration as we attempted Greek and Israeli dancing, a Tonga haka and African singing! A wonderful way to break down barriers.

## VALUABLE?

In Australia the debate has raged about the moral philosophy behind public education, with the Prime Minister calling it 'values neutral'. The Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen disagrees, "Values"... is a typical 20th century coinage intended to suggest that morals arise from within ourselves and are personal to us. We speak of "my values" or "our values". But the language we once used was "virtues" and "standards", which suggested that there were obligations coming from beyond ourselves.'

## KEEPING FAITH

Sydney MP and Minister for Health in the Australian Parliament, Tony Abbott, spoke recently of the challenge of living a life of faith in politics. 'It means giving others the benefit of the doubt; seeing the good in opponents; hiding one's own light under a bushel; forgiving people not once but seven times 70; and being ambitious for the higher things rather than the higher office.'

A good note to end on from a city not known for its spiritual depth!



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

## We must all look to our wrongs

Anyone in the West who has the arrogance to think that Muslims don't understand the concept of forgiveness should read a new booklet produced by a British Imam and 19 co-religionists.

*Why Terror—is there no alternative?\**, compiled by Abduljalil Sajid, Chairman of the Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony, UK, gives a voice to Muslims who have forgiven in circumstances where many Christians and others would fail the test. After six years in solitary confinement, how many of us would seek out the man who put us there and offer him our forgiveness? How many would let go of our hatred for those we blame for the deaths of thousands of our people or for driving us into exile?

It's hard to buy the generalization that Islam is a religion of violence when you read of the young Lebanese militiaman who laid down his gun when he realized that the civilian in his sights could have been his grandmother. Or read the Qur'anic injunction, 'He who has killed one innocent soul, it is as if he has killed all humanity.'

The contributors to the booklet do not mince their words when it comes to the need for change in the Muslim world—an approach picked up with approval by the columnist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown in the British daily newspaper, *The Independent*. She quotes Hisham Shihab from the Lebanon, 'The lack of democracy and human rights in Muslim societies creates a vacuum of leadership that is often filled by extremist groups. We must look to our own wrongs.' And she responds, 'Amen to that I say.'

And if Muslims must look to their own wrongs, so the West must look to its policies in the Muslim world, and to its apparent indifference to the sufferings of those who live in poverty and conflict. The widening gap between rich and poor, the plight of refugees, the injustices, humiliation and desperation suffered by millions combine to create a breeding ground for bitterness and revenge. Palestinian researcher Imad Karam puts the need succinctly: 'We need help in convincing our own people that the West can change.'

We too must look to our own wrongs.

MARY LEAN

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## FOR A CHANGE

*For A Change* is about change, how to make it happen and how to live it. We believe that what happens inside people has an effect on the world around them. At the heart of global change lies change

in the human heart.

We draw our material from a wide range of sources, including Initiatives of Change. We give a voice to people all over the world who are making a difference. We invite our readers to join them. Your stories are our stories.



Initiatives of Change

Initiatives of Change (formerly Moral Re-Armament) works for moral and spiritual renewal in all areas of life.

It was born out of the work of Frank Buchman, an American who believed that change in the world must start in individuals.

Initiatives of Change is open to all. Its starting point is the readiness of each person to make what they know of God and eternal moral values

central in their lives. This personal commitment to search for God's will forms the basis for creative initiative and common action: standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love help to focus the challenge of personal and global change.

These ideas have given rise to an international community in more than 70 countries, working in such areas as reconciliation; tackling the root causes of corruption, poverty and social exclusion; and strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations for democracy.

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at home if she is to advance freedom worldwide.

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Ros Newman

## FOR A CHANGE

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# WHERE COMMUNITY SPIRIT TAKES WING

Mary Lean visits Bergh Apton, an English village which shows what communities can do when they get going.

The Countryside Agency, statutory 'watchdog and champion' of England's rural areas, has been devoting a lot of mental energy recently to developing ways of measuring 'community vibrancy'. Perhaps its researchers should spend a weekend, as I have just done, in the south Norfolk village of Bergh Apton, a community which positively explodes with creativity.

At first sight, Bergh Apton doesn't seem to have a lot going for it, apart from the beautiful countryside around it. There's no school or pub, no cottages clustered around a picturesque green, no high street to stroll along, no geographical heart. Because it started out as two villages, Bergh and Apton, its 187 houses are scattered in clusters linked by narrow country lanes. The church is over a mile from the village hall and the shop.



These apparent disadvantages have helped Bergh Apton to resist the expansion which threatens many rural communities. England is experiencing the reverse of the developing world's flight to the cities, with net migration into the countryside standing at over 100,000 a year. But there are no new housing developments at Bergh Apton, though many older homes have been extended. This has the upside of preserving the village's unspoilt charm—and the downside of pushing house prices beyond the reach of young local people. As in most rural areas, most of Bergh Apton's population is middle-aged or older.

In spite—or because—of this, Bergh Apton's 420 inhabitants are not short of energy. In 1997, 1999 and 2002, they drew thousands of visitors and raised a total of over £60,000 for charity by opening their gardens as exhibition spaces for sculpture. Between these events they found time to stage a pageant for the Millennium, and to support a host of different societies and projects—including the Conservation Trust (which manages the village's nature reserve), arts and crafts workshops (a spin-off of the Sculpture Trails), a youth club and the Bergh Apton and District Society (which arranges talks and trips). And don't for one minute think that this lets them out of running a village fete!

It's hard to pin down quite what it is that sets Bergh Apton apart from other active villages, but there does seem to be something in the water—or the spirit of the inhabitants—that makes people take initiative for the common good.

Take, for instance, the two young mothers who decided to stop moaning about the lack of a mother and toddler group and start their own—the first in the area for 20 years. Or two other mothers who raised the money for the village's state-of-the-art play area. Or the two brothers who gave up their careers to run the post office—the only one in the five nearest villages—after their parents died.

Take Evie Sayers, who grew up in the village, and with her late husband Tony raised £40,000 to address cardiac risk in young people after their 18-year-old son died of a heart attack. Or Chris Johnson, a painter and decorator who has become the world authority on a crucial World War II battle in Assam in





Village pageant, 2000



Conservation Trust at work

COUNTRYSIDE FACTS

- 28.5 per cent of England's population live in the countryside.
- Most of England's 16,700 rural settlements have less than 500 inhabitants.
- Between 2001-2002, 115,000 more people moved into the English countryside than left it.
- 44 per cent of the rural population of England is aged over 45 (as opposed to 37.7 per cent of city and town dwellers), but only a tenth of people moving into the country are retired.
- Less than 5 per cent of people in the countryside now work in farming.
- 31 per cent of England's businesses are situated in the countryside: 85 per cent of these enterprises employ less than ten people.
- Two thirds of the population of the UK have access to broadband internet connections: but only 7 per cent of the population of rural villages.

Source: The Countryside Agency

which his father fought.

The village is full of extraordinary people. The Chair of the Parish Council (the lowest tier of local government) spent eight years living on an otherwise uninhabited island off the Welsh coast with her husband and two small children; one of her colleagues was a ports organizer for the Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race; one of the District Councillors, who was raised in the local market town, is an internationally acknowledged expert on Korean culture and cuisine.

Then there are the originators of the Sculpture Trails, Pat Mlejnecky, an English teacher married to a Czech, and Maria Phillips, who came to Britain in 1947 as a young refugee when the Communists came to power in Czechoslovakia. She was awarded an MBE for helping to set up the Citizens' Advice Bureau in the Czech Republic after the fall of Communism.

If you scratch beneath the surface in any village you'd probably find equally remarkable people. But there's something at Bergh Apton that encourages them to thrive and work together.

The parish clerk, Lorie Lain-Rogers, traces the village's ethos back to 1980, when the owner of the Manor House, Major Colin Mackenzie, was appointed as Church Treasurer. 'He persuaded the Church Council and the Village Hall Management Committee, which had previously run the annual fete in his grounds on its own, to work together to raise funds,' she says. 'The first year was a struggle, but subsequently we discovered how much more we could do together than separately.' The two committees went on to cooperate with the Parish Council in running 'Welcome' evenings for newcomers to the village. The experience has formed the base for most initiatives since.

TOO LONG A WORD

Pat Mlejnecky sees the village as a pattern of what other communities could achieve if they only tried. 'People say, "Nothing happens in my community," but what's stopping them?' she asks. When she retired from teaching 14 years ago, she felt it was time to get involved locally. She and Maria organized an Open Gardens event which went through several permutations over the years before evolving into the Sculpture Trail. 'I have a horror of getting stuck into a rut,' Pat explains.

They started out with a modest plan to invite six sculptors to exhibit in the village. 'Then we got bolder and said, "Let's have ten."' In the end about 45 sculptors from all over eastern England got involved—as well as one from Germany. The event takes place over three consecutive weekends: the next will be May/June 2005. 'When we started people said, "You'll never get people to work a whole weekend,"' says Maria. 'Never is too long a word for me.'

'A lot of people are reluctant to go into galleries,' says Pat. 'They think they are for a certain sort of person. Galleries deaden things. If you put sculptures where there is

a play of light on them, in nature, they become alive.'

The trails include an exhibition of art and craft by villagers. Visitors are transported from one garden to the next on trailers pulled by tractors. A story teller leads a 'tale trail', and there is usually some craft activity in which visitors can join. 'Next year someone is coming in from the peace movement to show people how to make origami cranes,' says Pat. 'People will put a wish inside the crane they make and hang it on a tree.'

The profits raised from tickets, refreshments and commission on the sale of the sculptures goes to the church, the village hall and other village needs, including the regular arts and crafts workshops and the new play area.

Outside charities have benefited too, including a babies' home in Uganda, and a



refuge for battered wives in Norwich, chosen by vote by visitors to the Trail.

Some 200 of the villagers are involved in the Trail, some for months before the event, others on the day. Groups which in other communities might tend their own patches find themselves working together. 'We all get something different from it,' says Pat. 'I don't look at it as a money-raising thing. If the spirit isn't fed, it withers. Then you get drugs, drink, loud music....'

'The Sculpture Trail is more than works of art in a garden,' says Kevin Parfitt, who admits he thought Pat and Maria 'bonkers' when they first floated the idea. His farm includes a field which is the site of the old church at Apton and its graveyard. 'There is nothing to suggest anyone lived there, but because they lived they influence us.'

Before the first Sculpture Trail, he came upon RS Thomas's poem, *The Bright Field*, which speaks of a field lit by the sun, and continues: 'Life is not hurrying/ on to a receding future, nor hankering after/ an imagined past. It is the turning/ aside like

Moses to the miracle/ of the lit bush....' At a workshop, the villagers made white figures, which they displayed in the field for the Sculpture Trail. 'It brought to us all a new dimension on what we see now,' says Kevin. The field is now known as the Bright Field.

With the collapse of pig farming, Kevin Parfitt has been forced to sell most of the land which his grandfather and father farmed before him. He takes a philosophical view: 'I can still enjoy my surroundings, whether I own the land or not.' A Methodist lay preacher, he now sees his role as 'pastoral care', although he earns his living as a handyman and gardener. He's part of a small group which meets regularly to pray about the village and seems to be one of those men to whom people tell their problems. 'If I see a need, I can't walk by,' he says.

Bergh Apton's other major project of recent years, the pageant, was the idea of Christopher Meynell, who runs

a financial consultancy, one of some 40 enterprises based in homes, farms and workshops in the village. He and his wife, Liz, a painter who shows her work in the village exhibition, offered their field as a venue.

Meynell's spark was fanned into a flame by Phyllis Ride, a former deputy head of Social Services for Norfolk, and Lorie Lain-Rogers. With Derek Blake, now a District

Councillor, and other interested people, the two women set up an archive committee to research the village's history from 8000 BC to the present day and to write the pageant. This led later to the formation of a Local History Group, to collect and archive photographs, oral memories, farm and other records. Another project is tracking down and visiting the graves of all the men named on the village war memorial.

Where possible, those acting in the pageant took the parts of people linked to the houses in which they now live. Linda Davy, the Chairman of the Local History Group, describes it as 'one of the most amazing things I have done in my life'. 'When we rehearsed, we never got to the end, and we never had the same cast twice,' she says. On the night, after a torrential storm in the afternoon, the sun shone and everything came together.

The theme running through the pageant was 'they loved this place'. For Phyllis Ride, born in London but rootless until she moved into the village in 1955, the thought of what unknown generations have contributed is a powerful one. 'What is it about the countryside of Bergh Apton which has had me in its grip since I came here to live some 40 years ago and which robbed me of all ambition to climb the professional ladder elsewhere?' she writes. 'The landscape is no grand statement. The beauty is in the detail.... And I suppose this could be said of its people and its history.' She ends by quoting George Eliot: 'That things are not so bad with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs.'

CREATIVE ENERGY

For Lorie Lain-Rogers, whose working life has included boat-building, teaching and furniture making, one of the motivating factors is what Bergh Apton can model to the modern world. 'People have lost their rootedness in creation and their rootedness in community,' she says. One of her projects is to set up a 'Green Gym', in connection with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the three local medical centres and the village's Conservation Trust, to offer people access to the healing power of creation and of working outdoors.

Bergh Apton is not a particularly comfortable place to live, she points out. Several of the villagers have experienced appalling personal tragedies and 'there's not one aspect of modern life that doesn't at some point touch us'. With the changes in agriculture, several village men have had to find new jobs: one local farmer who once employed 18 people now employs only one.

The village's creative energy does not always make for harmony. Its newsletter, edited by a British Airways purser who tweaks it on her laptop during stopover breaks, is full of robust correspondence. Villagers differ, passionately, on the siting of the village sign and the merits of wind farms, on fox hunting and the control of rabbits in the churchyard. Many are concerned about the lack of affordable housing for young people, while others are opposed to building of any sort.

Somehow, however, people manage to work together. For instance, Pat Mlejnecky and Chris Johnson disagree fiercely and publicly over shooting and hunting, but Chris still pitches in with the Sculpture Trails. 'Civilization is a great thing,' says Pat Mlejnecky wryly. 'I might want to thump someone, but nine times out of ten I keep my mouth shut. I'm aware that I do upset people occasionally, and I get upset too. But I seldom harbour grudges.'

Part of Bergh Apton's secret is that its inhabitants are unwilling to take short-cuts. Where other villages might try to by-pass trouble, Bergh Apton is committed to inclusiveness. So, in the debate over the village sign, everyone has been allowed

their say—a process which is finally coming to completion after over seven years.

The village is now working on its Parish Plan, an exercise in local democracy promoted by the Countryside Agency. Over 95 per cent of the village's households filled in the questionnaire, as against the national average of less than 50 per cent.

If people are the building blocks of community, and communities the building blocks of society, Bergh Apton has something to say to the world—about getting different groups to work together for a common purpose, about taking the risks of inclusiveness and of encouraging initiative, about tolerance, forgiveness and quiet diplomacy. Its message is not that these things are easy, but that they're worth it.

The theme for 2005's Sculpture Trail will be 'Cairn'. Cairns are waymarks made out of stones of all sizes, points out Pat Mlejnecky. Cairns—and communities—need both big stones and little ones. 'The idea is that our village is a marker to show what communities can do when they get going.'

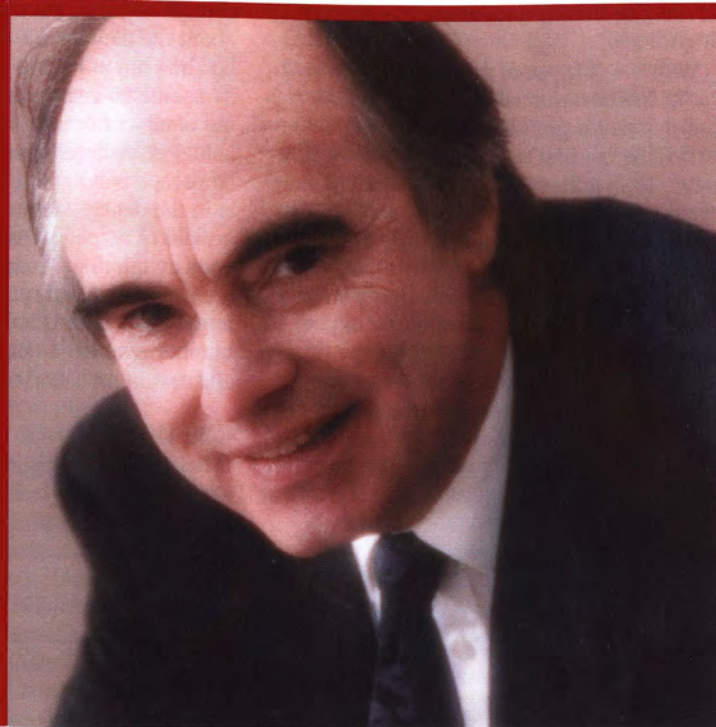


On the Sculpture Trail: (top) Hugh Lupton leads the tale trail

A (DAVY) (2); ALSCOTT (HEMANN) (2); PAT MLEJNECKY; SCULPTURE BY VERENA MURTAGH

CARL CLOWES

## A PASSION FOR WALES & THE WORLD



When **Carl Clowes** applied for a job as a doctor in North Wales, he could not have foreseen that it would lead him to launching the UK's first cooperative village—or becoming Honorary Consul for Lesotho. He talks to Paul Williams.

**A**s a young family doctor in the small Welsh village of Llanaelhaearn, Carl Iwan Clowes discovered early that health entails more than medicine. 'People came in with a history—of poor housing, low incomes and job insecurity. These all have an impact on people's well-being, both physical and mental.' This realization began his lifelong concern for social medicine—his last post before taking early retirement was as Director of Medical Services for the Powys Health Trust. It also propelled him into the fight for social justice, both within Wales and abroad.

Clowes has also played a key role in campaigning for the Welsh language (spoken by about half of Wales' population in 1911, and a fifth today). 'Wales would be a poorer place without it,' he says. 'There is no guarantee of its survival, living as it does next door to the most powerful language in the world.' Clowes was the founder of the Nant Gwrtheyrn National Language Centre in North Wales and, in 1988, convened and

chaired *Fforwm Iaith* (the Welsh Language Forum), which lobbied for the Welsh Language Act of 1993.

The son of an English father and a Welsh-speaking mother, Clowes grew up in Manchester with very little idea of the Welsh language. It was only when his parents moved back to live in North Wales, that he decided to take up learning it in earnest.

### SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

It was while he was Senior House Officer at the Christie Institute in Manchester, specializing in radiotherapy (oncology), that he saw an advertisement for the post of General Practitioner in Llanaelhaearn, on the picturesque Llyn Peninsula. It seemed a strange career move, especially as he had had virtually no experience of general practice. But he and his Irish wife Dorothei (they had met at an anatomy lecture in their first year at Manchester Medical School) had decided that they wanted to bring up their family as Welsh speakers in Wales.

'I had begun, in my later years at

Medical School, to think a lot about Wales and Welshness,' he explains. 'It was a time, in the late Sixties, when a lot of people were asking, "Who am I?" I began to feel hurt that some people were very dismissive about Wales.'

Only a few weeks after he started in the new job, news came that the County Education Authority were planning to close the local school. Clowes threw himself into the battle to save it. 'The campaign was successful and in fact changed the Authority's policy to other small schools threatened with closure,' he says. 'But then we were forced to acknowledge that the closure plan was just one symptom of a general fall in population across the area which was threatening the viability of the village itself.' Pressure on the County Council had saved the school, but it became obvious that further help from that quarter would be limited—particularly as 200 other villages were in a similar plight.

With the campaign's success fresh in everyone's minds, Clowes proposed forming a Village Association to explore ways of regenerating the

community. In 1974 this became *Antur Aelhaearn* (Aelhaearn Venture)—the first cooperative village in the UK. The majority of the inhabitants took up their right to buy a £1 share in the cooperative. 'We also issued loan stock and eventually raised £11,000 as starting capital.' Clowes became the cooperative's first Chairman.

The village's fight-back began with the modest purchase of a pottery kiln, which was housed in the doctor's garage. A professional potter was taken on to train local talent. Dorothei and a colleague trained local women in producing knitwear, using machines housed in the cooperative's caravan.

### DESERTED VILLAGE

The next step was to buy land in the centre of the village for a small factory. This led to media publicity, including an editorial in the *Birmingham Post*, which stimulated a phone call from an industrialist who was looking for a workforce to produce enamelled badges for his firm. Agreement was reached, on the condition that Antur's factory employed local labour.

'Unfortunately the company pulled out after six months, which was a blow. So we moved in the pottery business and the knitting machines.' The knitwear business took off. Some 50 women were trained and their products were sold as far afield as Japan and New York. Later the factory was doubled in size and leased out to the County Council which now uses it to train people in woodwork, metalwork and computers.

While in Llanaelhaearn, Clowes came across the deserted quarrying village of Porth y Nant, which nestles between the sea and a steep mountain face. He had the vision of bringing the ghost village back to life as a teaching centre for the Welsh language and, with a group of friends, started negotiations to buy it.

During the Seventies the village had been the home of the New Atlantis Commune of hippies and was now derelict. 'There was no water supply, no electricity, no sewage system and no access road down the mountain—as the quarry's produce used to be taken away by sea,' recalls Clowes. 'It seemed an impossible task.'

They got different groups and organizations to sponsor the renovation of each house. For instance, one of the houses clustered around the central green was sponsored by the Church in Wales, another by a BBC Wales Welsh learners' programme, and a third by Welsh Water. The first house was

opened in 1982, when the first language course took place, using a generator for electricity. Other renovations followed, and in 1991 the Nant Gwrtheyrn National Language Centre was officially opened.

Today a proper tarmac road brings the cars of course participants safely down the steep slope. The former manager's house is now the teaching centre and the ruined chapel has been transformed into a multi-purpose meeting hall. It also houses a



## SOME 25,000 PEOPLE HAVE LEARNT WELSH AT NANT GWRTHEYRN

permanent exhibition depicting the history and characteristics of the area.

To date some 25,000 people have learnt Welsh at Nant Gwrtheyrn. They have included a Nobel Peace Prize winner, a chief constable and senior police officers, bishops and clergy, politicians, television and film stars and employees of privatized corporations. 'We feel we are contributing to a more bi-lingual Wales by giving those who have professional skills the additional skill of fluency in Welsh,' says Clowes. In 1992 the rejuvenated village won the Award for the Environment, given by *The Times*, The Royal Institute of British Architects and Shell.

### TWIN COUNTRY

Clowes says his vision for Wales, with its three million inhabitants, is for it 'to be equitable within and play its part in striving for a more equitable world outside'. He is proud of the emphasis within Wales on social

conscience and community values—reflected in the Welsh National Assembly's special policies for children, students and the elderly, which are unique in the UK.

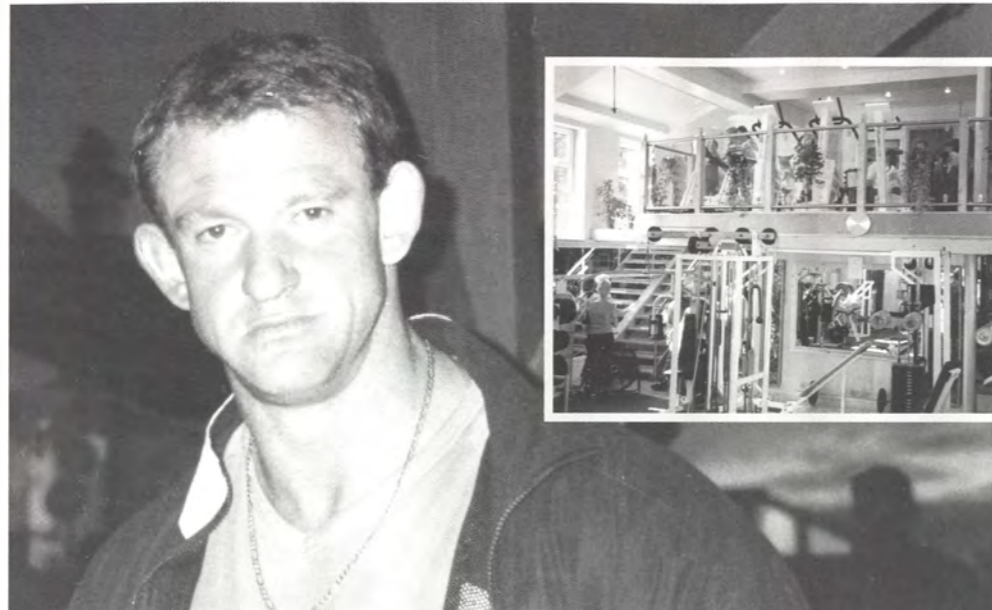
But what of equity abroad? It was Clowes who, at an all-Wales dialogue convened in 1982 by Initiatives of Change, first suggested the idea of Wales finding a 'twin' in the developing world. The resulting link with Lesotho, Dolen Cymru, was the first ever country-to-country twinning.

'The idea of Wales developing its own special link with a small country in the Third World grew out of a desire to see if we could make a direct contribution to bridging the "North-South" divide,' he says. Lesotho, a mountainous country similar in size to Wales but completely surrounded by South Africa, enthusiastically agreed to the experiment.

Nearly 20 years after its launch in 1985, there are extensive links between schools, including an active programme of teacher exchanges, and churches, as well as a range of health-related projects. A former Lesotho High Commissioner to London called it 'a new dimension in international relations'. Clowes, who is President of Dolen Cymru, was recently appointed as Honorary Consul of Lesotho in Wales.

Fittingly, when Clowes was honoured by the National Eisteddfod of Wales, the citation recorded that it was for services 'locally, nationally and internationally'. ■

# PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE



## Do or die in Wythenshawe

WHEN GREG DAVIS heard that the Methodist Chapel in Manchester he had attended since childhood was facing closure he had no hesitation in taking it on. 'It was a do or die situation,' he says, and do he certainly did. It was deemed unsustainable to renovate the building as a place of worship, but Davis had a vision of creating something else that would bring the community together. And so the United Estates of Wythenshawe (UEW) was born, a unique social centre at the heart of Benchill, the most deprived council estate in England.

Wythenshawe, a poor area on the outskirts of Manchester, became infamous in the 1990s as the home of the UK's first 12-year-old mother and, amongst other disturbing figures, also boasts the highest male suicide rate in the country and almost a third unemployment.

Davis grew up in Wythenshawe himself and after finishing at the local college began working as a bouncer in pubs and clubs in Greater Manchester before setting up his own security company, Diplomat, in 1989. Diplomat developed into one of the biggest and most successful providers of door staff in Manchester, before he sold it in 1996 with plans for a quiet family life in the country. So what tempted him out his early retirement? 'There was an empty building needed filling,' he says with characteristic straightforwardness, before admitting that he was craving a new challenge.

When the project began Davis had no idea of what it was going to become. He began by talking to the local leaders and getting them involved, aiming to use their influence over the rest of the area. Davis is keen to stress when he talks about local leaders that he is referring not to the Council-paid community leaders but to the 'people who live in the only house on the street that has not been vandalized or broken into. The people with real influence on the estate, who are usually neglected by Council-run regeneration projects.'

Davis feels passionately that change and regeneration should come from within the area and involve the local people. The UEW building was

**'I FEEL WE'VE  
CREATED A  
PLACE WHERE  
PEOPLE CAN  
BRING THEIR  
DREAMS'**

**Above main picture:  
Greg Davis  
Inset: The UEW gym**

renovated entirely by the local community without the help of contractors or consultants, and in 1998 they managed to replace the dilapidated roof for less than a quarter of the £80,000 professional quote they received. The hard work and community spirit demonstrated by all those involved makes this one of Davis' proudest achievements—that and the fact that the roof is still holding up!

Today the United Estates of Wythenshawe houses a gymnasium, a crèche, a community shop, a hairdressing salon, a complementary therapy centre, a local newspaper and a small café, to name but a few of the initiatives up and running. A dance studio and theatre workshop are in the pipeline and they are currently looking for funding to start a boxing club. Any profits are put back into the community and, most significantly, all the business ventures are managed by local people.

UEW is also home to FareShare; a business that collects unsold food from supermarkets then redistributes it amongst local charities. The business provides much-needed employment for ten local young people and they have used the scheme to encourage the development of a work ethic. 'You have to understand,' Greg explains, 'that if your parents have never worked you don't expect to have to get up at half past seven every morning, five days a week, and go to work. It's not your culture.'

Davis is committed to providing opportunities that would not normally be open to the people of the area, in terms of employment and skills, and most importantly to fostering self-belief. 'I feel we've created a place where people can bring their dreams,' says Davis, 'I think we've pulled off something big... but I see it as unfinished business, there's still so much to do.'  
*Sarah Calkin*

## Keeping kids company

'WHAT'S UNIQUE about Kids Company,' founder Camila Batmanghelidjh tells me, 'is that it recognizes the reality of lone children. You can be a child living with a family member and still be completely alone.' This conviction is what drove her to set up the charity's therapy centre under a pair of derelict railway arches on a deprived south London estate near Brixton eight years ago. They have since moved premises, but a dedicated staff continues to provide a 'comprehensive package of care' to over 500 children a year, including helping with homework, providing meals, taking the children to doctors' appointments and above all offering the love, understanding, and support that these children lack at home. Kids Company also works in 15 inner-city schools offering therapeutic support to some 4,000 children.

Crucially, the centre works on a self-referral basis, allowing the children to access the help they need directly, without relying on their parents to take them to appointments. There are a staggering 1,500 children in the area registered as youth offenders and a further 200 are registered by Social Services as 'at risk'. Kids Company believes these figures should be the other way around and focuses on preventing children turning to crime. 'These children are brutalized from an early age,' explains Batmanghelidjh, 'They're exposed to extreme amounts of violence and neglect and over a prolonged period they lose their capacity to feel.'

Batmanghelidjh's dedication to the neglected children of south London is even more remarkable considering her background. Born in Iran to a very wealthy family, she received round the clock protection by police drivers before coming to England as a 12-year-old to attend a boarding school in Dorset. 'It would be very easy for them to dismiss me or see me as completely out of their orbit,' she admits, 'but if you meet people on a genuinely emotional level then the economic barriers get removed.'

One experience that gave her more insight into the children's lives was her father's disappearance during the Iranian revolution, leaving her alone in England

with no money, family, or any of her former status. This experience has been invaluable in her work at Kids Company.

After being granted political asylum in the UK Batmanghelidjh went on to university to study psychology, and qualified as a psychotherapist 15 years ago. Once on the inside of the profession she soon became concerned about the availability and accessibility of psychological services. The cost of training is prohibitive so there are few

or even themselves. The charity was commended for its work by the Department of Health and now operates in 74 schools all over England.

Batmanghelidjh knew she wanted to work with children from a very early age and strongly believes that she is following her vocation in her work at Kids Company. But surely she must wonder what it would have been like to have a private practice commanding hundreds of pounds an hour? She

### THESE CHILDREN ARE BRUTALIZED FROM AN EARLY AGE'

practising professionals, which in turn keeps the cost of treatment high.

Figures released by the UK government claiming that at least a quarter of children fail to fulfil their potential 'due to clinically identifiable behavioural problems' make it clear there is a need for better services.

Batmanghelidjh set up her first charity, The Place to Be (now known as P2B), in her early twenties, re-mortgaging her house to raise funds. The primary aim of this charity is the same as that of Kids Company—to provide children with services in their own environment that they can access themselves. P2B sets up teams of volunteers trained in counselling young people and led by a qualified psychotherapist, and places them in inner-city schools where the children can be referred for appointments by teachers, parents,

thinks before answering, 'It was predetermined. I didn't have a choice. But there's not one day I woke up and didn't want to go to work.' This is more than most people can say and Batmanghelidjh's reward is her relationships with the children, 'I feel spiritually very rich,' she says, and again, this is more than most can say.  
*Sarah Calkin*

For more information visit [www.kidsco.org.uk](http://www.kidsco.org.uk)



**Kids Company founder,  
Camila Batmanghelidjh**

SARAH CALKIN

# AUSTRALIA CONTINUES HER JOURNEY OF HEALING

**John Bond** describes the struggle that lies behind a new memorial in Canberra to Australia's indigenous 'stolen' generations.

It is hard for a country to admit its mistakes. It is harder to proclaim those mistakes in a place visited by hundreds of thousands of people each year.

The Australian Government has done both these things. It has created a national memorial which recognizes as 'cruel and misguided' the policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families in an attempt to assimilate them into Western culture. The memorial is situated between the National Library and the High Court in Canberra.

Many have been astonished that the government would take this step. When an inquiry into the removal policies reported in 1997, the Prime Minister, John Howard, was reluctant to accept its revelations, or to do anything substantial towards healing the wounds. Several of his Ministers attempted to discredit the report. When two of the 'stolen generations'—as they have become known—went to court, the government spent over \$10 million to defeat them, and won on a technicality.

The response of the Australian community was very different. Community organizations came together and organized a Sorry Day in 1998. A million people wrote messages in specially-created 'Sorry Books'. Two years later, a million people took part in walks calling for reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, and many carried placards calling for a national apology to the stolen generations.

The Government could not ignore so many voices. The Prime Minister, John Howard, announced that a central area in Canberra would be set aside 'to perpetuate in the minds of the Australian public the importance of the reconciliation process, and will include a memorial and depiction of the removal of children from their families'.

But the government's ambivalence was apparent when they refused to include those who had been removed in developing the memorial's design. This provoked

demonstrations, and criticism even from former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, under whom John Howard had served as Treasurer. The project was at an impasse.

Meanwhile, the National Sorry Day Committee—which had been set up to organize the 1998 Sorry Day, and of which I am Secretary—was still at work, enlisting the Australian community in initiatives to help stolen generations people under the banner, 'Journey of Healing'. We went to see the then Minister for Indigenous Affairs.



CANBERRA TIMES

'This memorial could be immensely healing if it comes out of genuine consultation,' we told him. 'We are prepared to consult the stolen generations, former staff of the institutions, and those who fostered or adopted children, with the aim of reaching consensus on the design of the memorial.'

Some months later the Minister accepted our proposal. Quickly we organized consultation teams in every state and territory, who met with several hundred people, bursting with ideas. These ideas were brought together in three days of passionate meetings in Sydney. But through the heartache, people listened to each other, and shifted from hard-held points of view. By the end, we had a provisional text. Further consultation refined the text, and

we presented it to the Government.

For five months the Government did nothing. So we let them know that Malcolm Fraser had accepted our invitation to give the 2003 Sorry Day address in the Great Hall of Parliament. Immediately we were invited to discuss the text of the memorial. These discussions enhanced the wording. But since we had reached consensus, we were able to resist attempts to remove words which the Government found awkward.

Eventually, a proposal went to the Prime Minister. His response reached us just two hours before Malcolm Fraser gave his address. Our wording had been accepted.

Then the memorial had to be approved by a Parliamentary Committee and both Houses of Parliament. Parliamentary Committees can work slowly. When the last official day of Parliamentary sitting for 2003 finished, the Committee had still not approved the memorial.

Fortunately the Parliament extended the sitting by one day to deal with urgent legislation. Some people in the bureaucracy, who felt deeply the importance of this memorial, urged the Committee to call an emergency meeting. A quorum was gathered, which approved the memorial. It was quickly submitted to both Houses of Parliament. Three hours before Parliament broke up for the year, the process was complete. The builders could get to work.

By May this year the memorial was ready. Stolen generations people came from across the country for the dedication ceremony. Though grateful for the memorial, many felt deeply hurt by the Government's hostility. Would the dedication ceremony increase the bitterness, or help towards healing it?

The Government invited our committee to develop the ceremony. We proposed that a stolen generations woman speak first, and that the churches and the Government respond.

When the moment came, Audrey Ngingali Kinnear told of the pain of the stolen generations, and of their longing for healing.

IAN BUCHANAN



(left) Some of the stolen generations in front of the memorial

(facing page) Senator Vanstone with some of the stolen generations after the ceremony

**'IN MANY CASES THESE WRONGS HAVE STILL TO BE DEALT WITH'**

## THE OPENING STATEMENT ON THE MEMORIAL:

*For 150 years until the 1970s, many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were removed from their families, with the authorization of Australian governments, to be raised in institutions, or fostered or adopted by non-indigenous families.*

*Some were given up by parents seeking a better life for their children. Many were forcibly removed and see themselves as 'the stolen generations'.*

*Many of these children experienced overwhelming grief, and the loss of childhood and innocence, family and family relationships, identity, language and culture, country and spirituality.*

*Their elders, parents and communities have experienced fear and trauma, emptiness, disempowerment, endless grieving, shame and failure.*

*Most who looked after the removed children believed they were offering them a better future, and did all they could to provide loving care. Some abused and exploited the children.*

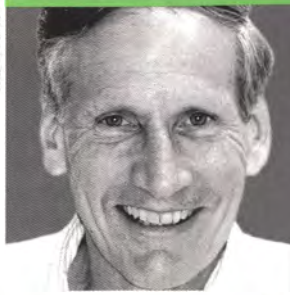
*This place honours the people who have suffered under these policies and practices. It also honours those indigenous and non-indigenous people whose genuine care softened the tragic impact of what are now recognized as cruel and misguided policies.*

Then James Haire, President of the National Council of Churches, spoke of 'the profound hurt experienced by many of the children removed from their families into the care of church-run homes'. He honoured those who worked in these homes. 'Many people, indigenous and non-indigenous, gave their lives to the care of Aboriginal children.' But, he concluded, 'some of the stolen generations were abused by those who should have protected them. In many cases, these wrongs have still to be dealt with.'

Finally the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator Amanda Vanstone, spoke. She acknowledged the depth of sadness and hurt in indigenous communities, and described the memorial as 'an honest interpretation of a tragic part of our history. That story needs to be told and needs to be understood.'

It was enough. Wiping away tears, a number of stolen generations people went and greeted the Minister. A fragile bridge had been built.

Our committee released a media statement: 'As South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has shown, a public acknowledgement of shameful past practices is a crucial first step in healing the wounds caused by those practices. This memorial will inform Australians from all over the country and, we hope, will inspire a new determination to overcome the continuing harmful effects of the removal policies.' ■



## THE US: FREEDOM BEGINS AT HOME

*If America is to advance the cause of democracy worldwide, she will have to work harder at applying democratic values universally, argues Richard Ruffin.*

**T**he American public's farewell to Ronald Reagan, who died on 5 June, was surprisingly emotional and prolonged. This reflected more than nostalgia for an era of good feeling; more than affection for our most popular president in 50 years; and more than appreciation for his record of accomplishments, about which there are different perceptions. At a deeper level, it reflected a need for a return to civility in America's public life and for a renewed sense of community and common purpose.

That sense of community and common purpose was rekindled for a time after 11 September, 2001—as poignantly expressed the next day in the *Le Monde* headline, 'We are all Americans'. But stark disagreements about how to respond to the terrorist challenge have rapidly dissipated feelings of global solidarity. And questions about the rightness, cost and conduct of the Iraq War have fuelled growing polarization at home.

The American people are by nature and history optimistic and forward-looking. We respond to positive visions. While fear and insecurity may temporarily unite us behind a 'war on terrorism', it takes a great positive purpose to hold us together above partisan differences, and create a sense of national and even global solidarity.

President Bush offered such a vision in a speech at the National Endowment for Democracy on 6 November, 2003. He described the advance of freedom as 'the calling of our time'. The march of democracy, he said, had been advanced at great cost in the 20th century but was at another major turning point. After citing challenges ranging from Cuba and Zimbabwe to China and North Korea, he turned to the Middle East. Anticipating the now controversial Democracy Initiative for the Middle East and North Africa, he quoted a remarkably candid 2003 report by Arab scholars in support of a bid to expand

democracy in the region.

To date, neither the Arab states nor the leaders of the Group of Eight most powerful nations who met in June in Sea Island, Georgia, have evinced great enthusiasm for the plan. If Bush's potentially compelling vision is to become a shared vision that engages the creative energies of freedom-loving peoples the world over, America must take three important steps.

First, we must turn from our 'go it alone' ways. We must acknowledge that only a joint, collaborative effort can be effective. Democracy cannot be imposed on any nation. The creativity, resources and commitment of freedom-loving people everywhere will be required to advance freedom's cause.

Europe should be in the forefront of this effort. After centuries of wars between its

### 'RESPECT FOR ONE'S POLITICAL OPPONENT IS REGARDED AS WEAKNESS'

tribes and nations, the European Union has brought together 25 nations in a bold experiment to expand freedom and the rule of law and to make war unthinkable on that continent. India, the world's largest democracy and home to the world's second largest Muslim population, is also an important partner, as are the many nations that have recently begun their democratic journeys. Most importantly, the American people must insist that our government and civil institutions stay the course and give consistent support to those in any country who genuinely seek to

expand freedom and democracy.

Secondly, America must acknowledge that its own democracy is a work in progress. Efforts are needed to raise the alarmingly low voter turnout in our elections; to reduce the role of money at every stage in the democratic process; to make our institutions more open to the full diversity of the American people; to reconfirm our commitment to the equal protection of the laws for all detainees and prisoners of war. This must include an unequivocal commitment to right the outrageous wrongs committed in Abu Ghraib prison, and to express heartfelt sorrow for those abuses, as is beginning to be done through an ad recently placed by Americans of different faiths on Al-Jazeera TV station.

A few weeks ago, America marked the 50th anniversary of *Brown versus Board of Education*, the landmark ruling of the Supreme Court that formally ended racial segregation in our schools, and laid the foundation for the civil rights legislation of the 1960s. America is a healthier, more integrated nation because of this ruling, but much of its promise remains unfulfilled. As described by Ellie Cose in *Beyond Brown v Board: the final battle for excellence in American education*, far too many minorities go to schools that 'might have been plucked out of some impoverished country that sees education as a luxury it can barely afford'. The public (state) schools of many cities, such as Cleveland, Detroit and Richmond, Virginia, remain overwhelmingly non-white.

Nor is 'de facto' segregation restricted to our schools. Sunday morning in this church-going nation remains one of the most segregated hours of the week. And despite civil rights legislation, informal barriers to full inclusion of minorities remain in housing and job markets, and within many private institutions. It is the responsibility of

every citizen to bring down these barriers.

Finally, America must take urgent steps to restore civility to public discourse. Polarization has not been so extreme since the era of Vietnam and Watergate. ABC correspondent Cokie Roberts contrasted the present incivility with the Reagan era when people disagreed vehemently but still broke bread together. Today, she said, we have 'a nest of vipers'. The airwaves are filled with vitriol and few seem willing to acknowledge either the good points in the other's arguments or the weaknesses in their own.

Respect for one's political opponent, a hallmark of civility, is regarded as weakness. With few exceptions, the media

will see three important results. First, we will discover eager allies in this cause among America's six million Muslims, too many of whom feel afraid and unwelcome in the current climate. Many of these are new Americans from predominantly Muslim countries where freedom languishes. If these new Americans feel fully included in the American democracy; if they observe that we acknowledge its shortcomings and are working to deal with them; if they sense we wish to work in partnership to realize hopes shared by all humanity—then they will become powerful advocates for democratic reform in their countries of origin.

Secondly, we will begin to win again the



promote this polarization and engage in a war of sound bites.

In this atmosphere, what can ordinary citizens do? Some dream that the outspoken Vietnam War hero, Republican Senator John McCain, will join a national unity ticket with Democrat John Kerry. Others applaud the civility of those like Republican Senator Richard Lugar and Democratic Senator Joseph Biden, who quietly work towards bipartisan approaches to important foreign policy issues. But much more is needed. Each of us needs to help break the cycle of blame and recriminations by simple decisions to listen truly to those with different viewpoints from our own.

If the American people take these three steps to advance the cause of freedom, we

trust and respect of those around the world who in the past have looked to America for inspiration and leadership.

Thirdly, we will re-find a sense of common purpose and community that will lift the heaviness and divisiveness of the current political climate. Then, in partnership with many others, we could help realize the longing of people everywhere to shape their own destinies in free and open societies.

*Richard Ruffin is Executive Vice-President of the International Association of Initiatives of Change. He lives in the Washington DC area.*



## Dental fire sparks new approach

Paul Williams tells the story of an Indian dentist who saw his surgery razed to the ground.

MODERN DENTISTRY is virtually painless, claims Bangalore dentist Ravindra Rao. 'So long as the dentist is the kind to whom the patient matters,' he adds. Eyes twinkling with his characteristic humour, he cites a colleague who displayed a board in his surgery for all his patients to see: 'Pain is a question of mind over matter—I don't mind and you don't matter!'

Rao says that his approach to his patients underwent a fundamental shift after he met people whose lives had been transformed through their contacts with Initiatives of Change (IC). 'I perceived that my role should primarily be as a "care-giver"—to relieve pain and meet a patient's need. I came to see them as people rather than as patients.' Many are now numbered among his, and his wife Jayashree's, closest friends.

A catastrophe at work marked a turning point in his own journey of faith. In 1993 a major fire broke out in the laboratory attached to his surgery. It swept through the premises, destroying every piece of equipment. 'Jayashree and I were shattered,' he recalls. 'As I surveyed the clinic I had nurtured and painstakingly built up over 15 years reduced to ashes, I felt all the strength draining out of me and I nearly collapsed.'

### ENERGY RUSH

The next moment, he says, he felt a surge of energy rush through him. 'My faith, asleep for years, seemed suddenly to come very strongly alive. I knew in that instant that God would give all we needed to come through.'

A succession of unexpected things followed. First a builder friend offered him a high-profile shop in a fashionable shopping complex to use as a temporary clinic. 'He said I could stay there till I was able to return to my own premises.' Then a dental dealer offered to equip the temporary clinic. He told



Rao, 'Use the equipment as long as you need it. Once you are back in your own place you can decide whether to return or buy it.' Institutions granted him loans at a time when loans were not easily or quickly sanctioned. Some friends got together and gave an expensive piece of equipment. 'One day my driver handed me an envelope, saying, "Keep it sir, and return it when you can." It was his savings—over two months' salary.'

### STATE OF THE ART

Rao says the rebuilding took just three months. 'I returned to a clinic that was state of the art. We were overwhelmed with the good will that had been shown to us. After that, I could never doubt God's love. Even though I had forgotten him—and often even doubted his existence—he never ceased in his care for us.'

The experience redoubled Rao's resolve to give his best to those who

come to him for treatment. They trust that I care. My profession also gives me the chance to give more than just dentistry.

'Some time ago I decided to make "remaking the world" my aim,' he says. 'It is a humbling thought and I have often come short. But it has given me a wholly different attitude to whatever practical task I am called to do. In my case this has principally been dentistry—but in fact it has been a lot

more, including involvement in the work of IC in India and internationally. This gives a larger perspective and setting to my work with people.'

In a climate where medical colleagues are notorious for being on the make—Rao says they would regard it as securing a 'return' on their considerable investment in training—he sees an urgent need to create transparency and trust between doctor (or dentist) and patient. The onus is largely on the doctors who, with a new outlook and motivated by a cause higher than their "return", can make a difference. I believe that a doctor or dentist is well placed to care for the whole person. The patient comes seeking physical healing. A caring doctor will also seek to heal his spirit. ■

**'I DECIDED TO MAKE REMAKING THE WORLD MY AIM'**

## Do talk to strangers

Will Jenkins looks at an initiative designed to break down barriers between ordinary Americans and bring communities together.

Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa once told members of the US Congress that the most effective way to heal the divisions and wounds of history is to provide opportunities for people of all backgrounds to tell their stories. This process is beginning in homes around the US as individuals share their stories with each other during the Open Homes, Listening Hearts (OHLH) weekend each June.

### MISUNDERSTOOD

In Arizona, at the home of William and Lee Storey, about 15 people gathered for dinner and conversation. The guests

she produced good work because they expected her to be lazy. A Christian man spoke of how people of faith are often viewed as narrow-minded or intolerant of others.

After more than an hour of interaction, the group expressed appreciation for the honesty and openness of the conversation. A number said they had learned new things about others. William Storey thought that the beauty of the concept was how simple it was and how the questions got people talking. Lee Storey later said, 'It was a unique opportunity to speak freely, find commonality and express differences without being combative in these otherwise difficult times. The evening provided a new



about cultural misunderstandings, as well as favourite holidays and the meanings of names, filled the summer night. One guest shared how the celebration of Ramadan gave her a special connection with her grandmother. A Nigerian told of his first experience of celebrating Thanksgiving as a guest of an American family. Now Thanksgiving represents a special time to welcome all kinds of people to his home.

'Hearing others' answers made me really think about my own background and culture,' one guest reflected afterwards. 'I discovered aspects of other cultures that I want to adapt into my own.'

### HEARTFELT SHARING

A similar event in Minneapolis drew 27 guests including a local politician, a leader of an Islamic centre, and a professional singer. Small group discussions focused on when people felt excluded as well as aspects of themselves or their cultures they wanted others to understand. This produced a time of heartfelt sharing.

A number of the guests decided to continue meeting in the future to build on these initial conversations.

Lee Storey expressed the feelings of many of those who took part in the 2004 celebrations when she said, 'If only all people everywhere created an evening of opportunity to express love for humanity through Open Homes, Listening Hearts'. Then perhaps we could begin healing the divisions and wounds of history.

For more information, visit [www.ohlh.org](http://www.ohlh.org).

Open homes in (left) Phoenix, Arizona, and (above) Washington DC



responded to the question: 'What about your race or faith do you feel is misunderstood by others?'

A Muslim woman shared her experience of dealing with hostile publicity in the media. She said that her response to negative people is to invite them to have lunch with her, 'It's hard to hate somebody you know'. A World War II veteran said he felt his generation shouldn't be seen as extraordinary. He wanted younger generations to believe that they can accomplish great things too.

### INTOLERANT OF OTHERS

An African-American woman described how her co-workers did not expect her to have good ideas and even ignored her comments. An African-American university student told of her classmates' surprise when

understanding and appreciation of each others' hopes, fears, cultures and faiths in a heartfelt spirit of love for one another'.

This is the goal of OHLH—to encourage individuals around the world to reach out to people, with whom they wouldn't normally interact, by inviting them to occasions in their home or community. In the last few years Open Homes events have brought together hosts and guests from all over the world. From Afghanistan to Australia, Congo to Canada, Pakistan to Poland, people of many faiths, or of no faith in particular, have joined together to break down some of the confusion and misunderstanding through hospitality and storytelling.

In Washington DC almost 50 people came to the home of an American couple, with many guests bringing meals from their respective countries. Animated discussions

FOR A CHANGE

'YOUR WONDERFUL MAGAZINE HAS PROVED EXTREMELY USEFUL AND INTERESTING IN MY WORK.'

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CAPITALIZING ON VALUES



Is it possible for a successful business to remain truly ethical? Stephen Greisdorf finds some practical advice in a recent book that promotes an alternative capitalism.

THERE IS NO QUESTION that today's corporate environment is challenging. Managing the expectations of stakeholders—from customers to suppliers, from the community to the investor—is a juggling act. Pleasing all of the people all of the time is impossible. Even pleasing some of the people some of the time is difficult. In the midst of these managerial challenges come the legal and regulatory dictates that burst upon the scene following recent high profile corporate scandals and ethical lapses. Add to that the plethora of corporate social responsibility guidelines and non-governmental watchdog organizations—not to mention protestors and activists—and it is a wonder that any business gets done at all.

In his book, *Moral Capitalism: reconciling private interest with the public good*, Stephen Young presents a workable model for practising ethical business that he believes 'can restore popular confidence' and 'create wealth for all'. A scholarly piece of writing, the book is part academic textbook, part philosophical treatise, and part game plan. Young has successfully woven together ancient religious texts, economic theory, and the practicalities associated with doing business in today's environment to produce a comprehensive framework for principle-based corporate behaviour.

Currently serving as Global Executive Director of the Caux Round Table (CRT) Young is well qualified in his subject matter. The CRT is an international group of senior business people who are committed to improving relationships not just within businesses, but between businesses, and in particular those operating across borders.

The group has been meeting since 1986 to discuss ways in which relationships between labour and management might be improved. Honest conversations between presidents, chief executives, and board chairmen from America, Europe, and Japan helped ease tensions between these industrial superpowers, then on the brink of trade wars. Conversations continued into the 1990s during which time several key

concepts regarding the interrelationship between business and the global community began to crystallize.

This on-going dialogue led to the release in 1994 of the Caux Round Table's *Principles for Business*. They offer a framework for organizations seeking to operate with integrity in a climate fraught with distrust. Over the last ten years they have found their way into board rooms and business schools across the globe, and now claim to be the most widely disseminated document of their kind.

While the *Principles* themselves are rather intuitive, the intellectual and philosophical underpinnings have been missing. Young has stepped into this gap, moving meticulously through each section of the CRT's *Principles*, explaining and defending their inclusion in the document. Where important, he backs up his explanations with practical examples.

His diverse range of experiences, including time spent as a development worker, an academic, and a lawyer, are all in evidence as the CRT's *Principles for Business* come alive, not just as a thoughtful piece of writing, but as a real-world, practical tool.

Of particular value to the reader and to the practitioner is the section at the end of each chapter that provides for a company self-assessment. By moving chapter by chapter through the book, it is possible to develop a clear sense of how closely one's business is conforming to the CRT *Principles*.

The final chapter of the book—*Principled Business Leadership: stepping up to the challenge of moral capitalism*—is perhaps the most valuable. Young places the emphasis for implementing a system based on moral capitalism squarely on the principled business leader. In the absence of people committed to acting with integrity, all of the laws and guidelines that have exploded onto the corporate scene are meaningless. As Young notes, 'laws and market mechanisms can always be outmanoeuvred by more clever competitors playing on the innate greed and fear of others'.

Young has done the business world a great service by providing us with both the philosophical and practical underpinnings of the Caux Round Table's *Principles for Business*. The implementation is now in the hands of the business person who commits him or herself to the awesome task of bringing about a moral capitalism.

*Moral Capitalism: reconciling private interest with the public good* by Stephen Young, Berret-Koehler Publishers, ISBN: 1576752577

How—or why—do you make space for God?

MY FRIENDS smother a chuckle when I tell them I'm sure God is a golfer. Otherwise I would not feel he is with me on the golf course so often: even when I miss a simple putt!

My mother was a professional actress who established her own theatre in Sydney. Seventy years ago, she met the Oxford Group (now Initiatives of Change) in Australia. She learnt that if you listened sincerely God would speak in your heart and show you your part in helping 'Thy kingdom come'. It led to a remade marriage. Mother made sure that we were all baptized—brother, sister and me. Slowly, she taught us to take time in quiet to 'listen'.

In my early teens I had rheumatic fever. The specialist said I would be handicapped for life with a weak heart. One day I read the words from Ezekiel 36: 'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you... and move you to follow my decrees.' There and then, without weighing what it really meant, I made a contract with God to follow him.

Over 60 years later I feel fit and fulfilled. My wife Janet and I take time each morning on waking to pray and listen for direction from the God who has led us so wonderfully all these years in fair weather and foul.

I also commune with him as I trudge the fairways—in fair weather and foul.

Christopher Mayor, Australia

I AM A BUSY woman—even though I retired from medicine nine years ago. I joined committees and charities—didn't want to be idle, You know.

I'm a mother of three! Well OK, they are all in their thirties, but I still have to phone and

email them to make sure they are alright.

I'm a grandmother of two tiny girls, and so proud! Does that take time? Well, not much now that they are living in Japan.

I'm a busy housewife—doing things for You! And a gardener! I'm proud of the Latin names I can remember, and appalled at all those I forget.

I'm so busy—but I would like to have time for You, God.

Are You asking something more of me? What about my neighbours? But if I don't agree with what they are doing, why should I spend love on them?

Haven't You changed the subject, God? I was talking about 'time' and now You are talking about 'love'?

Something deep inside me craves that Still Small Voice, that Love that casts out fear, the Counsellor that will be with me for ever.

Dear God—tonight, after everyone else has gone to bed, I give You myself. This is my private time with You. Nothing can replace my private times with You!

Monica Spooner, Edinburgh

I BORROWED a book by the Rev Cecil Rose from a caring doctor at the cancer hospital where I worked. I read, 'When man listens, God speaks; when man obeys, God acts; when men change, nations change.' I believed that, so tried listening—with great effect.

One day I was looking through case notes of patients with leukaemia (in the days when none was cured). I thought, 'What's the use?' There was a Bible in the research lab. I opened it and saw the story of Mary washing Jesus's feet with precious ointment. Turning the pages, the Bible opened at the

same story elsewhere. Jesus commended Mary just because she loved. I saw that was all that I had to do, love my patients. God heals.

Listening to God shows me how to love people. When I was in hospital on night duty it was at 5.30 am. When the children were small it was while feeding the baby before work, while my husband gave the others their breakfast. Otherwise, we listened together. Now, aged 89, each day is an adventure to fill with worthwhile things.

Ruth Knox, Edinburgh

IN 1950, as an impressionable 15-year-old, I got to know a visiting Gilbert and Sullivan star. God might be trying to tell me something, he said with a cheeky grin. I replied politely, but such subjects, I felt, belonged with higher philosophy. I seldom darkened a church door, and the very idea of 'making space for God' made me run a mile.

Yet the idea of searching deeper soon became a natural part of life; I still don't quite know why. But in several decades working among people of a wide range of cultures, I've realized a simple fact: when we are alert to what might be happening in God's space, differences dissolve and perspectives become creative.

Last year I was told I had Alzheimer's disease, which so far is incurable and destroys your individuality. A very scary experience. Despite this, God's space—when I seek it—seems exactly the same as ever: a place of crystal clarity.

John Williams, Melbourne, Australia

NEWS OF PAIN, tragedy and heartbreak reaches us every day. For millions, life is a struggle. Every

day, in matters large and small, it becomes clearer that human wisdom has failed.

Believing that our Creator who made the world has the wisdom and power to make that world work, I long to understand how we can access his wisdom and power. Many years of experimenting and observation of other people have shown me that when we make space for God, he does reach into our hearts with those blessings, and with the consequent gift of a transformation in human nature which can make our longings come true.

The space we make can be used for praying, for reading and learning from the wisdom of the centuries, and for listening to the Voice which speaks in the silence. One far-seer had the vision of 100,000,000 listening—making space for God. I believe this could lead to fresh hope for the world. Exploration in the realm of the spiritual may be the next hurdle for those of every faith tradition and those of no faith.

Janet Mace, London

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WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF FORGIVENESS?

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# Winds of change blow in the Solomons

FEW CONFERENCES hear from a businessman who has paid back £290,000 in cheated taxes, or see victims of brutal ethnic conflict forgive each other. Perhaps this is why an Initiatives of Change conference in the Solomon Islands in June made headlines in the country's media.

The Solomon Islands is a South Pacific archipelago of half a million people and 70 languages. In 1998, tensions over land and economic opportunity exploded into ethnic-based violence as rival militias took up arms, and rogue police joined them. More than 100 people were killed, and more than 10,000 left homeless.

Last year, military-backed intervention from Australia and other Pacific



Judith Fangalasu, conference chair

countries restored stability. But many Solomon Islanders fear the departure of the military forces. How can the underlying grievances be resolved so that violence does not break out again? This question lay at the heart of the conference, 'Winds of Change, from tension to transformation'. Among its initiators were Joses Tuhonuku MP, Leader of the Labor Party, and Matthew Wale, a prominent accountant.

During the violence, Wale was one of the few to condemn the militias publicly, and became a target, narrowly escaping death. He also became a rallying point, and the Civil Society Network which he launched offers Solomon Islanders a chance to work for national reconciliation, good governance and integrity. The conference was called to advance these objectives, which are closely linked. As Tuhonuku put it: 'Terrorism is a product of corruption. Corruption is present in all walks of life in the Solomons, and we must declare war on it.'

The conference, attended by 300 people, focused national attention on these issues. When a manager from the Solomon Islands Electricity Authority (SIEA), Jan Sanga, exposed corruption in the authority, the *Solomon Star* carried her revelations on its front page, and followed up with an editorial. When Kenyan anti-corruption campaigner Joseph

Karanja spoke on the bold moves of his country's new President, Mwai Kibaki, to stamp out corruption, much of his speech was broadcast on national radio. When 30 of the country's 50 members of parliament met with conference participants, their questions were mainly directed to Karanja, and most wanted to know about the Clean Election Campaign which he initiated in Kenya.

The logging industry is a major driver of political corruption, environmental destruction and social instability in many Pacific countries. So there was plenty of interest when Joseph Wong, a Malaysian managing director of logging companies in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Solomon

Islands, spoke. Until 1999, he told participants, 'I carried five firearms and got my way with money or force.'

That year, at an IC conference in Australia, he was deeply moved by 'the love and care shown to me... for the first time I spoke freely about my pain, and the wrongs in which I was involved'. Back in PNG, he repaid over 1.5 million Kina (£290,000) to the tax authorities, threw away his guns, and refused to be involved in destructive logging practices. Now he has moved to the Solomon Islands to take charge of a new logging and oil palm operation, which he intends to develop on sound social and environmental principles. 'It is pointless to go on making a few people rich and many poor,' he said.

Two participants came from South Africa. University lecturer Ginn Fourie lost her only daughter in 1993 when freedom fighters burst into a Cape Town restaurant and gunned down

## 'AND YET SHE IS WILLING TO FORGIVE US'

four young people. The attack was ordered by Letlapa Mphahlele, at the time operations commander of the Azanian People's Liberation Army. At the conference, Ginn Fourie and Letlapa Mphahlele stood shoulder to shoulder as they told their story of forgiveness and reconciliation.

The next morning a woman from the island of Guadalcanal, rose to her feet, to tell of her years of pain since her brother was beheaded by militia from the rival island of Malaita. His body was dumped in Honiara's Central Market in an act of contempt that rocked the nation. Susan Kukuti told participants that, having heard Ginn Fourie's story, she had found it in her heart to forgive her brother's killers.

Matthew Wale then invited any Malaitans who wished to accept Susan's forgiveness to come forward. A dozen did so, breaking down in tears as they surrounded her. Among them was the conference chair, Judith Fangalasu. 'I did not know what my people had done to her family,' Judith said later, 'and yet she is willing to forgive us.'

By the end of the conference, plans were being made to work for reconciliation and to challenge corruption throughout the Solomon Islands. As the Speaker of the Parliament, Sir Peter Kenilorea, told the participants in his closing address: 'At a time when the overwhelming tragedies of the recent ethnic cleansing seem to have stunned our leaders, you are a light in the darkness.'

John Bond

(Main picture) Father John Ini Lapli, Governor-General of the Solomon Islands (second from right), talks with speakers after opening the conference.

(Top right) Gabriel Suri, President of the Bar Association, the Solomon Islands

(Lower right) Brother Harry Gerenui tells the conference about the work of the Melanesian Brothers, seven of whom were murdered while undertaking peace missions during the conflict.

# YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE TOMORROW THEIR BUSINESS

LAST JUNE'S Youth Forum on Ethical Leadership saw more than 40 students from across the UK and beyond gather together at the University of London. The focus of the conference was corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the business environment, and in the wider world. 'There is a theory in economics,' Phil Hammond, a delegate from Leeds, told me, 'that if someone gets rich someone else has to get poor. It will be interesting to see if there is an alternative.'

The event was coordinated by AIESEC, a non-profit organization that aims to help young people develop into responsible and socially conscious business leaders through arranging international internships and exchange programmes. It has branches in over 80 countries and more than 30,000 student members who are responsible for their own local committees, managing exchange programmes and promoting the organization to other students. In the process they gain valuable business and leadership experience.

## IF SOMEONE GETS RICH, DOES SOMEONE ELSE HAVE TO GET POOR?

The first day opened with thought-provoking lectures from David Grayson, a well-respected commentator on responsible business practice, and Sir David King, the British Government's Chief Scientific Adviser. Dr Arthur Dahl, President of the International Environment Forum, chaired a

workshop on sustainability on day two, while day three welcomed back an AIESEC alumnus, Charlotte Wolff, who is now working as Corporate Responsibility Manager for the mobile phone company mm02.

The conference is the first of its kind for a number of years but organizers Lynsey Abernethy and Paul Vivash hope it will become an annual event. During the 1990s AIESEC used to run a two-week summer academy on CSR but closed it in 1998 in order to focus on the exchange programme. With the latter initiative now running well Abernethy and Vivash saw the opportunity to expand AIESEC's activity in the UK and make the delegates 'aware of some of the broader issues of business', says Vivash. 'If they stick to the principles learned here then AIESEC will have had an impact.'

Sarah Calkin

# THE SOUND OF SILENCE

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## The park the bus-stand built

**W**hat is love? The question was greeted with a stunned silence from our group sitting on the floor of a large wooden house in the mountains of Taiwan. M Scott Peck defines love in his book, *The Road Less Travelled*, as 'the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth'. By this definition love becomes hard work, not the romantic feeling that we all dream of. Love is the drive that makes us take action for personal and social change.

When I arrived in Taiwan, I stayed with a community of five French Catholic monks. As we sat and ate dinner together on the first evening I felt amongst old friends even though we had just met. I felt their love and open acceptance and wondered what it was they had that seemed to slip through my fingers.

The brothers related how years of soul-searching and prayer led them to this spiritual life of community. They dedicate three-and-a-half hours every day to prayer and adoration of God. Their head, Father François Verny, says that adoration lies at the heart of their community and described this as making oneself free to be attracted by God so that one's plans grow to be God's

plans. Their inner peace stems from the confidence that they are loved by something greater than themselves.

In the Taiwanese city of Kaohsiung an artist called Shi Chung Lim was asked by the local government to design a new bus stand. He agreed but insisted that instead of paying him the government give 10 million Taiwanese dollars to a project aimed at developing a run-down city centre area into a beautiful park.

He wanted this place to be peaceful, clean and respected as a sign of moral change in the heart of the city. He visited the finished park day and night because he cared so much for it. He supervised the environment and noise levels, stopping people from riding their scooters there and even preventing local politicians (some with connections to the local mafia) from hanging their signs in the park. The park was voted the best civic project under the current mayor. Now Shi Chung has taken a 50 per cent pay cut to become Kaohsiung's minister for tourism, aiming to use his art to bring yet more change to a city that is materially rich but spiritually poor. He has found inspiration from his faith to put his own needs aside and follow his vision for the city he loves.

The well-known Korean Buddhist nun, Mother Park, is another person who has changed thousands of lives with her selfless work. She has raised US\$8 million to help refugees relocate, set up schools and orphanages and remove landmines from former battlefields in Cambodia, amongst other projects.

She says that upon seeing the suffering of others she feels physical pain and if she does not do something then her life and health suffer. When I asked her how she stays calm and peaceful and maintains her commitment to so many others, she replied simply, 'I love myself very much'.

I observed in these people that there is no limit to where love will lead you. Love is action, hard work and courage. We all have people in our communities who are striving for the spiritual growth and welfare of others as if it were the greatest love in their life. What they have to teach us is at the very heart of our communities' survival.

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



KARIN PETERS

## REFLECTIONS

LAURA J NIGRO

# The path to heroism

TWO YEARS AGO I walked my very first labyrinth at an Episcopal church in Portland, Oregon. Found across religious traditions worldwide, the labyrinth typically takes the form of a large circular pattern on the ground for tracing on foot. It invites seekers into meditative wandering within a self-contained and compact space.

Unlike a maze, which can mislead wanderers into dead ends, the labyrinth's winding, undivided path is free of deception. While it curves back and forth on itself, it always leads to a single centre and back out again, ensuring that the trip will have a true beginning, return and end.

Tracing its convolutions becomes a metaphor for anyone who has ventured out into the wide world, straying from the familiar, accepting loneliness and questing for the heart's desire—all while attempting to stay true to oneself. It symbolizes and mirrors back to each of us our personal voyage through life.

I was fortunate to be mentored in my first labyrinth walk by an erudite and engaging guide who helped us understand its significance. Across the ages, people from all civilizations have encountered universal rites of passage such as separation from their native community; wandering foreign lands; ordeals and tests of character; traumatic loss; recovery and renewal; and return to home as a changed person. By adulthood, all of us come to experience these cyclical life phases, regardless of our native language, culture or religion. Traversing the labyrinth is a meditation on this whole process.

Several years before I first walked the labyrinth, I had gone through a traumatic cross-country relocation, unhealthy marriage and subsequent divorce. Turning a bend in the pattern I was filled with the pain and sadness of those experiences. At a bend further

in, the fullness became joyful affirmation that those same experiences had also been gifts. They had opened my eyes to the tremendous suffering we cause each other, and ourselves. They had motivated me to understand human conflict, and learn how to transform it. They had awakened a commitment to serve my family. And they had brought me into restorative community with Initiatives of Change, whose inspirational 'waters' helped renew and enlarge my sense of purpose.

At the labyrinth's centre I let a peaceful, cleansing stillness wash over me. Returning outward I grew vigorous and practical again and began to consider fresh ways that I could apply all I'd learned and gained over the last few years into meaningful, life-affirming effort.

Back at home, flipping across TV channels past one reality show after another, it was easy to see how these same rites of passage often lead to fame and fortune as well. Today's 'celebrity industrial complex' pushes willing glory hounds through a series of very public challenges, and pops out instant 'personalities' at the other end.

Our absorption with this superficial phenomenon is so pervasive, I often wonder to what extent it compromises our development as a society. And yet the path to celebrity and the path to transformational heroism can actually converge for quite a stretch before reaching their distinct ends.

So in the end, what distinguishes celebrity from heroism? As my labyrinth guide had helped us to see, the celebrity hoards his treasure, while the true hero returns home to bestow it upon his community. It is this latter act of grace that makes a public star into a real exemplar, and uplifts humanity in the process.



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