

NEW WORLD NEWS

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OUT FROM ORKNEY

by
John Bond



IT IS RECORDED in Adamnan's *Life of Columba* that a disciple of Columba called Cormac visited the Orkney Islands in the late sixth century. He is the first person known to have taken Christianity to these stormy yet fertile islands off the north coast of Scotland. That his ideas took root can be seen in the names of the islands, such as

Papa Westray, Papa Sanday, Egilsay, and Eenhallow. The struggle between Christian and pagan ideas has lain at the heart of Orkney's history ever since. The cathedral, towering over the capital, Kirkwall, was founded in 1137 by Earl Rognvald II in memory of the martyred Christian ruler of Orkney, St Magnus.

Last month a group of 20 arrived in Orkney to present a play about the life and impact of Columba. It was part of a tour of northern and western Scotland which included a performance at the Gaelic festival, the Mod, in Stornoway. They had just arrived from performances in Wick and Thurso.

The day after their arrival, one of the group, former rugby international Brian Boobbyer, was invited to speak to the congregation of 300 in St Magnus Cathedral. Mr Boobbyer pointed out Columba's relevance to today. 'In a world where people feel increasingly powerless and even hopeless, he shows what one man can do when he decides to face the truth about himself and put no limit on what God can do.'

The play was presented first at the Orkney Arts Theatre in Kirkwall. Orkney Radio and *The Orcadian* carried news of the cast's arrival to the islands. After the performance, the reviewer in *The Orcadian* wrote, 'It had a

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CAUX 1979-80

From the Christmas invitation

THERE WILL BE a 'Winter Session' at the Moral Re-Armament conference centre, Mountain House, Caux, Switzerland, from 22 December 1979 to 6 January 1980. The invitation recalls the theme of the summer session, 'Bridging the Gaps', and states, 'Christmas is the promise of reconciliation between man and his Creator. This is indeed the most important gap to be bridged.' It continues, 'As 1980 dawns we shall also reflect upon the quality of thought and commitment needed to face the challenges ahead of us.'





Bond

Songs from 'Columba' echoed through the narrow streets of Stromness when the cast used their lunch hour to tell the town about the play.

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captivating and penetrating effect on me and has aroused much reflection since.

Then followed a shortened presentation of the play for Kirkwall Grammar School, after which the full play was presented in Stromness, Orkney's second town. Among the enthusiastic audience were the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Professor Robin Barbour, and his wife. They were visiting Orkney, and were brought by their host, Col R A A S Macrae, the Lord Lieutenant of Orkney, and his wife.

Also present was George Mackay Brown, the author and playwright. In his weekly column in *The Orcadian* he remarked on the size of the audience, comparing it with the 'handful' who had come to see a play presented by the 7:84 group.

'It was good also to see a play that compelled us to use our imagination,' he wrote, '...to see Columba and his monks rowing to Iona with no boat visible under them; but the surge and exhilaration of the sea were splendidly suggested by the rhythm of the bodies in unison and the chorus in their mouths. One could almost taste the spindrift.'

'It is performed in a series of swift fragments; in the end the imagination delights to put them together in a harmonious whole.

'For a few men, then as now, there are

more precious things in life than gold or power.'

After leaving Orkney the cast returned to the Black Isle area of North East Scotland where the *North Star* had described a performance they had done on their way north as 'an unforgettable experience', and local residents had urged them to return. At Cromarty the fishmonger paid for the hall where they performed, the postmistress organised food for the cast and the bank manager handled the front of house arrangements.

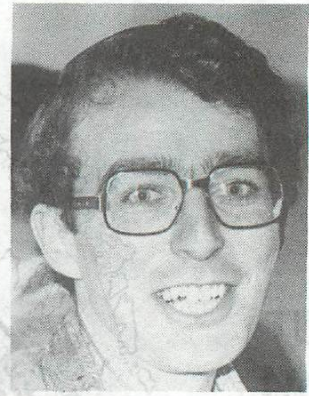
They went on to Blairs College near Aberdeen. This junior seminary takes boys of secondary school age from all parts of Scotland who may enter the priesthood. 'What a challenge to us,' said the Rector, Canon B Donachie, to the audience of 160 boys and priests at the end of the performance. 'We have seen a play acted with conviction.' He went on to emphasise the lessons the play drew from St Columba's life, particularly his stress on listening to know 'God's will for his life, not his own will'.

From Ireland and Scotland, in Columba's time, went forth a spirit which transformed Europe. In these northern reaches the group experienced a spirit of hospitality and of rugged independence that suggests that this area has yet a spirit to contribute to the rest of the continent.



Corcoran

Another way of letting people know. After the tour of the north of Scotland, 'Columba' was presented in Edinburgh, St Andrews and Glasgow. 'The Scotsman', the 'Edinburgh Evening News' and the 'Glasgow Herald' all carried pictures of Columba's monks rowing ashore at Cramond, near Edinburgh. Four hundred and fifty people attended the performance at the University Theatre, Edinburgh. We will carry a report of this part of their tour in a forthcoming issue.



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WITH LITTLE EXPERIENCE ourselves of industrial life, it was a revelation to be observers from the kitchen and the wash-up of the varied 50 men and women at the Tirley Garth MRA conference centre in Cheshire, last weekend.

The discussion was on the theme, 'There must be a better way for the 1980s'.

Men came from the 'highly charged atmosphere' of British Leyland in Birmingham and tool-room shop stewards from there described the split-second pressures of shop-floor decision-making.

Ron Peacock from Manchester, Central Division Convenor for Greater Manchester Transport, AUEW, described a scheme he and his colleagues have been pioneering in the industry. 'We realised six years ago we had to anticipate the coming problems of jobs, wages and conditions. We sat down with management and devised a plan of savings on things like materials, man-power and overtime. If we did not deposit anything in the bank, we could not expect to draw anything out in years to come,' he said.

'Don't thump the desk'

'At the end of a six month period we had saved quite a bit. Management and ourselves shared the savings equally.' They went into wages, into teaching new apprentices, into better public services on the buses. 'If a man stands there at a bus-stop in the cold, we are to blame,' he said, 'I believe we have to give the public something back.'

'Don't thump the desk with management,' he went on. 'If someone does that to me, my immediate reaction is to defend myself. We have learnt to discuss the problems before they arrive on the shop-floor. Last week we sat down for wage negotiations on Monday morning, and by 6.20 that same evening we had reached agreement. Management came up with the goods because they knew we were not greedy.'

One present from management was John Craig, Secretary of Colville's when it was Scotland's biggest steel company, and later a financial director of the British Steel Corporation. His grandfather had been a steelheater and his great-grandfather a blast furnaceman. In response to the question on the invitation, 'What kind of society do we want to build anyway?', he described his recent experience of meeting frustration in people when they were not listened to by management. He had met the same frustration in his wife, he said!

THE JAPANESE national daily *Sankei Shimbun* headlined a recent story, 'Sixty people meet for honest talk'. They were reporting on an MRA conference initiated by company director Yoshitero Sumitomo and his family in their home city, Kobe.

Mr Sumitomo is a director of Sumitomo Electrical Company, employing 11,000 men.

Management and labour representatives from Toshiba and Hitachi, and from the large supermarket chain Tusco were among those who participated in the weekend conference, held at a newly-built training centre belonging to two Sumitomo companies.

Naval architect Koji Okita of Hitachi Shipbuilding led the first session on the theme 'Bridging the gaps'. Five round-table discussions followed for two hours. Experiences were pooled at a main session on the Sunday morning led by Mr Ikuo, who, until three weeks ago, was President of a Japanese-Danish firm. He had lost his job when he felt he could not comply with an order to cut down his staff by 1000, as the tradition in Japan is life-time employment for permanent staff.

Happening here

One person commented, 'I used to think that people only changed while abroad with MRA, but now I see it happening here at a weekend like this.' Mr Sumitomo himself said, 'I have felt the power of God at work in these days.'

In spite of the typhoon which slashed through the country leaving 25 dead on the previous day, one hundred people came from all parts of Japan to take part in a national gathering for MRA in the Seinden building in Tokyo in October. Senator Renzo Yanagisawa of the Democratic Socialist Party reported on the work of MRA in the past year. Then Kiyoshi Nagano, an economics graduate recently returned from abroad, led the session. Six of those who were among the sixty at the MRA Assembly at Caux, Switzerland, this summer, told of their experience of applying the ideas they had learnt. One had submitted a 35-page report to the union who sent him.

Mrs Yukika Sohma, together with a Laotian living in Tokyo, spoke of the plight of the refugees from Indo-China. Mrs Sohma has brought together in a national committee all those aiding the refugees, and is working to arouse the government and the people to take action relevant to the cries for help.

INTRODUCE A FRIEND TO A CHRISTMAS BARGAIN

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BETTER WAY FOR THE 1980s'
and conference at Tirley Garth

by Peter and Alison Shambrook
thers, are responsible for running the MRA centre.



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'Self-concern and self-righteousness seem to me the two most destructive forces in the world today. One sees them in the Communist Manifesto. One sees them in the Conservative Party. I would like to see them obliterated from the new society.'

'Then differences become not a source of division, but the inspired way of getting a complete picture of the truth. A different point of view only becomes divisive when I decide that, come hell or high water, you will see things the way I see them. I know the answer. That has to go from society.'

'I hated industry'

Everyone took part in the running of the conference, many husbands helping in the kitchen before meetings. A car assembly-line worker, stirring blackcurrants, enjoyed seeing an 'assembly-line' of potato peelers.

Mrs Ingles from Stafford spoke of her home and relationships. 'I was a nurse and I married a man on the shopfloor in industry. I spent many lonely hours while Bill went off to trade union meetings. One day I realised that as we'd put idealism before making money we were increasingly hard up, and I was fed-up with all this trade union business. I hated industry. I prayed about it. God led me into a part-time job in industry. Now for 9½ years I have been a factory medical sister and I love it. That was the miracle. My husband and I now talk and think together in a new way.'

'I also feel strongly about our homes. Recently I have felt God wants me to give up this job, so we can use our home more.' She suggested to other wives present that they could invite people to their homes—including management.

'I wanted that job'

Peter Starkie, a local government officer, told how when a vacancy occurred in his department, immediately above his present appointment, he had been convinced that, with his qualifications and experience, he would be given the job. 'I was stunned to be informed that a new man from outside had been appointed,' he said. 'I went home with a blinding bitterness in my heart.'

In the following weeks he could not rid himself of this bitterness though he prayed about it and tried 'surrendering it to God'. 'I knew that I should apologise to the person I felt had wronged me, a senior engineer in

my group, but I resisted this thought and was not prepared to. I had not got on with him for some years and he had been on the panel that interviewed me for the post.'

'In desperation I put the question to God, "How can I be rid of this bitterness which is an affront to You and a betrayal of the people about me?" He replied, "There is only one way. You have got to love this man." When I accepted this thought the bitterness left me instantly. My next thought was, "Now you can go and apologise to him!"'

'We looked each other straight in the eye for the first time in four years. I told him my resentment went back to the time when I realised that his approach was different from mine and I thought I was right. A new relationship was formed.'

Mr Starkie concluded, 'I then saw that the root cause of my anger and bitterness was a



Weeks

Peter Starkie

lust for success and security. I had always thought that I was not ambitious, but I wanted that job with a fierce desire. God had other plans, however, which I am now beginning to discern. And this experience, though painful, was the only way He could make me see the truth about myself and change.'

Tirley Garth, given to the work of Moral Re-Armament by Irene Prestwich, daughter of an industrialist in 1949, is a natural place for weekend conferences like this.

Last month, an association of 'Friends of Tirley Garth' was launched at a meeting of 70 people from around Britain, to support the work of the MRA conference and training centre. Anyone who is interested in becoming a 'Friend' should write to the Secretary, Mrs T W Imeson, 3 Roseway, Rossett, Wrexham, Clwyd LL 12 0LF, for an enrolment form and further information.

HOLLAND Families radiate

MANY DUTCH FAMILIES with children and grandparents met at Wassenaar a fortnight ago for a full day's programme on the theme, 'How can a family radiate a new spirit?' Skits, games, a charade on the day's theme and a dialogue between two of the boys about the family conference last summer at Caux (See *New World News* Vol 27 No 39), all had a part. The dialogue ended on the note, 'We all felt we had something to contribute.'

No refugees

One doctor said he had decided to buy a smaller car to economise and then had become jealous as he drove behind someone with a larger car. This led to a discussion on jealousy and how to answer it, putting two questions: 1) Do I have enough or not? 2) How can I help others to have what they need? The children said their aim was a world where there is no more hunger, no more refugees, no more wars, no more strikes.

Book now for Christmas

MY LIFE was changed because I read a Christmas present intended for somebody else.

It was 1932. For reasons never fully explained, my parents decided to give a copy of *For Sinners Only*, the first major book on the Oxford Group, newly published, to my aunt for Christmas. While it was waiting to be wrapped up it caught my eye. I picked it up—and was riveted. I also crumpled the jacket a bit. Mother was very annoyed and made father get a new one. But for me it had opened a window on a new world. I went back to Oxford a few weeks later inwardly decided to find out more at first hand. The chance soon came...

So giving books at Christmas seems to me a worthwhile occupation—even if you do aim at one target and hit another!

K D Belden

whose book 'Meeting Moral Re-Armament' has just been published by Grosvenor Books.

Topical dawn

UNDER the headline, 'Rhodesian victims', the magazine *Commonwealth* reviews Hugh Elliott's topical *Darkness and Dawn in Zimbabwe*. After noting that the author spent 33 years in administration in Nigeria, before and after independence, the reviewer con-

INDIA Cheating and chawls

RECENTLY 35 students and young workers who have participated in MRA training courses at Asia Plateau, Panchgani, met in Bombay. 'It was fascinating,' writes a correspondent, 'to hear the results of carrying out decisions made at Panchgani—to cut out smoking or cheating, to deal with feelings of jealousy or get honest with their parents.'

'Cheating is a major issue in the schools and honesty takes courage. One student is writing a play on the subject. A Madras student, Ashish Khaneja, after returning to his university to be honest about cheating in his finals, is now spending a year doing full-time work with MRA. He summed up the course, "We came to enjoy ourselves and found a new purpose for our lives".'

The centre, opened in July, is in constant use. At the opening a group from the Worli Chawls (industrial workers' quarters) asked to meet there every Friday evening to continue the work started in the chawls and 'to do something about the moral values that are fast disappearing.' Their leader contributes regularly to the centre's expenses.

He looks at a number of examples of individuals in Zimbabwe Rhodesia who have tried, in some cases through the influence of MRA, to bridge cultural, racial and political gaps, and to work for multi-racial understanding.' The reviewer notes the example of Rev Arthur Kanodereka and others who have 'fallen victims to the violence of the present tense situation in the country whose future hangs in the balance'.

Integrated story

JOAN Porter Buxton's book *You've got to take a chance!* was reviewed by the *Methodist Recorder* last month. The author 'tells the story of her own adoption,' it writes. The story continues 'to the experience which enabled her to integrate with the world, and solve her own alienations'.

Industry aims

'HOW CAN INDUSTRY meet the needs of people?' the report of the international conference held at the MRA centre in Caux, Switzerland, is now available. There are sections on the four themes taken up in the panel discussions during the industrial session: 'How can people find the right motivation in their work?', 'How can we help each other to develop and participate responsibly?', 'What are the preconditions for creating the millions of jobs which are needed?', and 'What changes are required if

Meanwhile industrial conferences draw men of labour and management to Asia Plateau from all over the country. Forty-seven such conferences have now been held, and many men are returning for 'refresher courses'. A trade union leader described how the decisions he had taken at Panchgani had brought about a solution to a strike in his company, and had bridged a split in his family. A young Marxist at this conference started by preaching armed revolt against the bosses, but was on his feet on the last day to say, 'I have been a very selfish man. I killed two men in the political fighting in Calcutta. This has been on my conscience. But now I believe I can be forgiven.'

The Managing Director of an instrument company has sent 47 men to these industrial courses. One of them told him that when they stopped blaming others and chatting on the job, they could do 300 operations in the time previously taken for one hundred. The Managing Director came with his wife. On his return he made two apologies to staff members whom he had wronged. He told his men of these apologies, and of the settlement of a bitter dispute with another company. He is also starting to build houses for slum-dwellers in the area.

we are to meet the needs of mankind?'

The report announces the dates for next year's industrial conference: 26—31 August 1980.

Northern neighbour

THE 'AUSTRALASIAN EXPRESS' carried a review of Berkeley Vaughan's book, *Doctor in Papua*. It 'traces the author's career from his days as an intern at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London through to his work as a missionary-type doctor in Papua.'

'For those of us who know shamefully little about Australia's closest northern neighbour,' says Tim Hartnell, 'this book is an eye-opener.'

All available from Grosvenor Books,
54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ.

Doctor in Papua
by Berkeley Vaughan
Price £1.45, post paid £1.80

You've got to take a chance!
by Joan Porter Buxton
Price £1.50, post paid £1.35

How can industry meet the needs of people?
Caux conference report
Price 70p, post paid 80p

Darkness and Dawn in Zimbabwe
by Hugh Elliott
Price 65p, post paid 80p

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