

# NEW WORLD NEWS

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A group of 46 MRA workers from 19 countries recently met for two weeks' reflection and decision in a Catholic missionary house at Nemi, near Rome. During their deliberations they took part in an audience with Pope John Paul II in St Peter's Square. Cardinal Koenig of Vienna flew to Rome earlier to be with the MRA party and to present them to the Holy Father. The photograph shows His Holiness meeting R D Mathur of India (left), Sam Pono of South Africa (centre) and Michel Sentis of France (behind Mr Pono).

## LIFE FOR THE CORRIDOR AND THE CABINET

Gordon Wise was one of those at the Nemi conference. He writes:

A FRENCH FRIEND OF MINE was asked recently to describe Moral Re-Armament to a group of experienced missionary priests on a 'refresher course' from their mission fields. The Frenchman said various things and then told them, 'But I find it difficult to describe MRA, because it is an experience rather than an activity. Why, even a Cardinal who wrote a foreword to a book I have just published, called MRA "a phenomenon"!'

Later, the Father Rector at the conference centre said to him, 'I understand your difficulty. Moral Re-Armament is a life. How does one describe a life? The life must precede the words, or the words count for little.'

What does this life mean for those of us who have accepted God's call to build the world He means for us? We work in a world where crises cascade. We brace ourselves for the next one before switching on the TV news. The faults and misjudgements of our leaders are revealed on the screen to viewers the world over. We are far better informed than our grandfathers were. Has this made us more ready to make the agonising choices in our own sphere that we expect our leaders to make in theirs?

Urgent considerations face the world force

of Moral Re-Armament as much as they do those in government.

Just as they do, we need discernment in giving our thoughts and energies to the things which matter most. We need good briefing, honest debate, wisdom and judgement in assessing priorities.

### High-octane

We need to work that God reigns in our own countries. But do we also think of other countries? India's massive experiment in how millions of people can live together in freedom of choice? North America's need of true friends who care enough to speak the truth? Zimbabwe's consolidation of its new-found democracy? Brazil's need of a 'moral infrastructure' adequate to the task of lifting the quality of life in that hemisphere? What should the West's response be to the Islamic resurgence? What is the outward-looking purpose of the EEC?

It is difficult to put any one need before another. But in any particular year, God may mean us to give particular attention to one, two or three of them.

Can our lives and work be streamlined so that we can respond more quickly to the

urgent need of the moment? For myself, I have decided that I must jettison anything that does not contribute decisively to the task to which I am called. Friends—and my wife—have helped me see the things that need to disappear.

What about our motivation? How people can be motivated is the preoccupation of cabinets and managers. Their usual answer is material benefits—more pay, better conditions, a stake in the company. And these do motivate people. I appreciate material consideration—it shows that someone cares about me.

Then there are other things that motivate people — loyalty, inclusion in decision-making, serving one's fellow-man, thrift. But if we are to come through the crises that confront us and construct a new civilisation, we need a more compelling motivation yet. Our propulsion unit needs high-octane spirit.

I have not been satisfied with my performance. This has led me to check the quality of the spirit in me. I discerned new truth about myself. Although it is right to appreciate people's care, and to care deeply about individuals, I saw I was sometimes doing the right thing for the wrong reason—and not always the right thing either.

### Strain and bustle

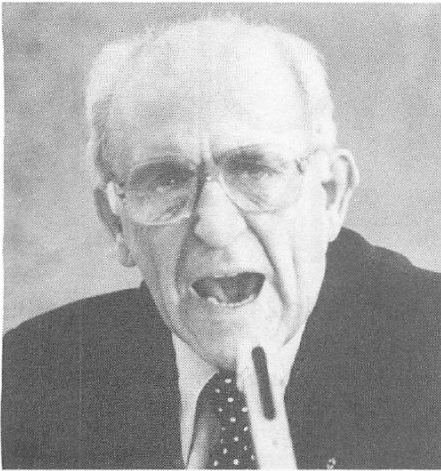
I hate to be disliked. But if I take a stand on some issue, I cannot please everyone involved. I saw that I worry too much about the effect of my honesty on certain individuals, while caring less about others' reactions. Sometimes my real motive for asking a particular person's opinion is to guard against causing offence.

I realise that there will always be reactions to my actions. I make mistakes every day. People get left out and feel hurt. Thank God, they often tell me their reactions. How do I respond? Up to now, there has sometimes been damage to my relationship with a person. I have wanted to serve God, and please only Jesus. But there has been a cancerous growth attached, a stubborn desire to please people.

I am by nature a striver, often more concerned with getting things done than with treating people right. I worry about all that I have to get through, then react sharply

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## HUMAN FACTOR DOESN'T ADD UP



Gérard Dion, professor of industrial relations at Laval University

A GROUP of Montreal employers, trade unionists, and civil servants were so concerned about the effect of conflict in the public sector that they arranged a one-day conference last month on the theme of "Collective Bargaining and the Common Good".

'Long strikes during the past years have given the impression that Quebec society could collapse,' said Angelo Forte, a former Vice-President of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, opening the meeting. 'We may not find the whole answer here but it will be a step in the right direction.'

Mr Forte was chairing the meeting with Andrew Webster, President of the building supply firm, Webster and Sons. People working in education, health, transport, police and the fire services also attended.

'Labour relations are always influenced by

the values in society,' said Gérard Dion, professor in the Department of Industrial Relations of Laval University. 'Individuals in a group often do things they would never dare to do, if alone. So there is often a conflict between the values in which we believe and way in which we behave. We must change people, but we must also change the institutions which sometimes invite people to behave badly.'

Summing up the morning session, Father Bouvier, professor at Sherbrooke University said, 'The force of the Spirit is stronger than Marxism. This force can build new bridges between management and trade unions, but we too often put the accent on materialism. Everything is based on profit, but the human factor cannot always be described and evaluated in figures. This spiritual factor should be considered by our economists.'

'The first time I went on strike, it took two years for my wife and I to find unity again,' said Georges Barrier, a trade unionist from France. 'We should thank God for the free-



Irène Laure, France



Jean Cournoyer, former Quebec Minister of Labour

dom to strike, but it should be the last resort. Strikes are a sign that we have democracy but can be a sign that the body is ill.

'Over the years we have become richer but there is less solidarity and generosity in the population at large. A new society can only spring from the depth of the heart.'

'Two or three times a year in Paris we organise a meeting of management and labour with their wives,' he went on. 'We create a climate of openness where problems can be talked over and people learn to respect each other. We have seen results in steel, textiles and railways. The common root in each of these solutions has been people being true to their innermost convictions and to absolute moral standards.'

## Columba at Pastoral congress

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH of England and Wales has taken an important step towards realising Vatican II's intention that the laity should play a greater part in shaping the Church's mission. Its first-ever National Pastoral Congress was held in Liverpool last week.

The 2,100 delegates saw a filmed message from Pope John Paul, in which he congratulated them on their 'initiative in shared responsibility'. 'The Holy Spirit is active in enlightening the minds of the faithful with His truth and inflaming their hearts with love,' he said.

The play *Columba* was invited as part of the Fringe Events of the Congress. It was performed three times to audiences of Congress delegates and Liverpool's public. The play tells the story of the sixth century saint who brought Christianity to Scotland, showing what an individual, totally given to

God, can do. It is presented by the Adamnan Players in association with Moral Re-Armament. The play will be presented at the Irish Centre, London, next week.

## Book brief

'AN INTELLIGENT BOOK by an intelligent woman, who is not afraid of grasping the hottest iron,' wrote *Die Gemeinde* of the German edition of Claire Evans' book *Freewoman*. The paper described the chapter on suffering, in which the author wrote of her discovery that she was dying of cancer, as 'deeply impressive' and 'authentic'.

'*Freewoman*' by Claire Evans, available from Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, £1.95, with postage £2.30.

THE SWISS regional newspaper *Berner Oberlander* carried a warning about Frida Nef's autobiography, *Un Sens à la vie* (a purpose for living). 'Reading this simple life-

story can lead to complications,' it said. 'For it is full of sharp hooks, that stay sticking into you.'

'So striking that you cannot deny the least word of it, nor smile at it,' was the comment of *Réveil*, a newspaper of the Rhone area of France. The writer, Daniel Sagnol, quoted Miss Nef's central experience: 'If you truly accept to die to yourself, God imperceptibly takes the place you make for Him, becoming the giver of hope and power.'

## Close to the bone in Bern

ALAN THORNHILL'S and Hugh Williams' play on drug addiction and family life, *Return Trip*, is being staged in German by a young amateur cast in Switzerland. It was performed during the Easter festival '80 of the Evangelical Alliance of Bern, and on two other evenings in the city. Last night it was presented in Spiez, on the Lake of Thun.

*Return Trip* follows a young man as he returns home from the Christian centre

# BLACK AND WHITE MAGIC

'Our new mind must have a new vision and our new hearts a new love that spurns hate, and a new spirit that must unite and not divide...'

Robert Mugabe

AS THE RISING SUN painted the outline of the earth a fiery red we looked down from our aeroplane over Africa and saw the camp fires flickering on the dark desert land beneath us.

What is it about Africa that lifts and warms the heart? My husband, Pat, and I have been there many times yet its magic always surprises us.

After spending seven weeks in Kenya, a happy, bustling multi-racial country, now 16 years independent, we had the privilege of being in Zimbabwe as she became independent on 18 April.

We arrived there as peace burst upon a country that has suffered a violent, bitter war. Hardly a family has been untouched and for tens of thousands it has meant the loss of their homes, their villages and their livelihood. Saddest of all, perhaps, were the thousands of children who welcomed Independence without parents or home. There was a blend of joy and sadness in most hearts and houses.

On the eve of Independence, the new Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe spoke to his people on television. 'Our new nation requires every one of us to be a new man, with a new mind, a new heart and a new spirit,' he said. 'Our new mind must have a new vision and our new hearts a new love that spurns hate, and a new spirit that must unite and not divide... If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today I have become a friend and ally... The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten.'

His words are being matched by a generous spirit in many Zimbabweans, black, white and brown.

One of our friends is a supervisor in a factory in Salisbury. When the election results were declared he and the other African workers celebrated. But the white management were shocked and frightened and retreated into their offices.

The whites did not usually isolate themselves like this, so our friend became aware of their absence. He talked to his colleagues and then went to see the management to assure them they had nothing to fear. 'We are the same people we always were,' he said. The tension was broken.

## Brave acts

Our host, a senior white economist, had been appalled at the mutilation of children by landmines in the area where he was on war duty. He decided he must take some practical action to help.

So, with the parents' permission, he brought a 14-year-old boy who had lost half a leg to his home in Salisbury and arranged, at his own expense, for surgery to be done and an artificial leg to be made. When we last saw the boy, he was cycling ingeniously around the garden while he waited to go into hospital.

Then there was the senior African whose white colleague refused to shake hands after the election results. The African persisted and the two did shake hands. A bridge, rather than another barrier, was built.

Anne, a young Englishwoman with three children who lives in Zimbabwe, told us about an experience she had had in hospital after a motor accident. She was very ill with a severe head injury and was put in a four bed

ward with two other white women.

Then a Coloured woman was brought into the fourth bed. She was closed up with bitterness. As Anne lay there, very weak, she remembered what she had heard about Arthur Kanodereka, a Zimbabwean Methodist minister who had lost his bitter hatred and had given his life in bringing reconciliation and understanding where there was none.

Anne greeted the newcomer, who turned on her and poured out abuse and hatred of all white people. All Anne could do for half an hour was weep. Then she felt God tell her what to do. In spite of the other patients' discouragement, she asked the nurse to put her in a chair beside the Coloured woman's bed. She spoke from her heart about how the white people had hurt the Coloured people. 'I seem to have added to that hurt,' she said. 'Will you forgive me?'

At first there was no response. But as Anne talked the other woman began to listen and to relax. Each day from then on Anne sat beside her bed and they talked about their lives and hopes and became friends.

There are endless stories like these of people who are making brave acts of faith to bring reconciliation and healing.

As we listened to Prime Minister Mugabe's words we were reminded of what President Kenyatta had said to the white farmers just before Kenya's Independence—'Where I have wronged you, I ask your forgiveness. Where you have wronged me, I forgive you.'

Is this miracle of forgiveness and reconciliation the truth and the challenge that Africa can give to the world? We believe it is.

Margaret Foss

where he has been cured of his drug addiction. The play contrasts the two brothers, black sheep and conformist, and the reactions of their mother who wants to keep her son's problem and healing a secret, and their father who tries not to get involved.

'The play... goes to the roots of our social problems—relationships,' wrote *Der Bund*, Bern's leading daily newspaper. 'There is no "happy ending" but the suggestion that the characters are really opening up towards each other. This keeps the play real and convincing.'

'Return Trip offers an alternative to rebellion, drugs, fear, isolation, emptiness and the status quo,' wrote *Berner Oberlander*. 'The cast, mostly young people, were convinced that destructive addiction and habits could be overcome. But *Return Trip* does not just offer a way back, it opens a way forward to a new beginning and true freedom. Close-to-the-bone realism, sharp dialogue, exciting twists, dramatic scene changes, dry Anglo-Saxon humour and the dedicated acting of the cast—all these give the play a prickly tension and impact.'

## Privileged few

by Michael Hutchinson

'DIFFICULTIES are not obstacles between God and ourselves—they are the way to Him.' Cardinal Hume expresses this thought in different ways in his book, *Searching for God*. I have decided to take it seriously.

Tiredness or limited strength, pressure of work, a difficult person, a difficult decision—all these, I have found, can be ways to God. They are means of learning that the work I do belongs to God and not to me, of discovering what love is all about. A difficult decision obliges me to think more deeply about what I am called to be and do.

The one requirement for this is to be willing to learn—to greet difficulties in the spirit which seeks what God has to teach, instead of the self-pity which asks, 'Why should this happen to me?' It is better still to be eager to learn. 'Discipline' is a word that has fallen out of favour. But it comes from

the same root as 'disciple', and basically it means being teachable, a disposition needed throughout life.

I have had a foretaste of how this applies to greater difficulties. After an accident I was in pain which seemed to continue night and day, week after week. When I complained to God, I was told, 'Do not ask for the pain to be taken from you. Ask that it may bring you nearer to Christ.' I became aware that Christ carried my pain too and I began to appreciate what others go through. It gave me a new understanding of what Christ's love means. I became grateful for the whole experience.

Human nature was the same 500 years ago when Thomas à Kempis wrote: 'Jesus now has many who love His heavenly kingdom, but few who bear His cross. He has many who want His comfort, but few who want His trials. Many are eager to rejoice with Him, but few want to carry any load for Him.' If we ask to be among those few, the privilege will be ours.

'*Searching for God*' by Cardinal Basil Hume, Hodder and Stoughton, £3.95.

# PENETRATING THE INTERIOR

**PETER HANNON** from Northern Ireland now works in South Africa. When a group of young people of different races from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Swaziland spent Easter together near Johannesburg (see *NWN Vol28 No20*) they asked him to speak to them. This article is taken from his talk:

WHEN A FRIEND of mine visited China, he found that the young people laughed in mockery when he quoted Mao to them. Russia's leaders dare not put Marxist-Leninism to the test in an election. President Carter does not know how to get the American people to accept sacrifices in the realm of energy consumption. Western Europe, with the EEC divided by selfish squabbles, has little to offer.

And what about Africa? Kaunda and African humanism? Nyrere's African socialism? Senghor's negritude? P W Botha's white Christian civilisation?

We Christians may think that these are problems for the politicians that need not concern us, because we have the answer. But our track record is not so good. The Christians were on the ground in China long before Communism. The same is true of Africa. Our Christian countries in Europe have fathered two world wars. And Ireland, where I come from, is probably the most church-going country in Europe.

Many of us in South Africa would say we are a Christian country. Are we impressive in our claim? Our faith may be very real. But when our privilege, comfort or self-interest is challenged, we whites often scream—and blame it on Communism. Anti-Communists who hang onto their privileges thrust the underprivileged into the arms of Communism.

What I am talking of is revolution, radicalism. It is the toughest, most demanding, most costly job there is—to bring an adequate level of change in people's motives and in society. Anything less is a betrayal of a God who cared enough to give everything for our sake on the Cross and is powerful enough to turn accepted ways upside down. Dare we pay the price of this kind of revolution?

1. Most revolutions have been betrayed by revolutionaries whose commitment is limited.

The first modern revolution was the French Revolution. Its banners proclaimed, 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité!' 'We will do away with all the old structures,' they said, 'man will be free to build anew.' But they ended up with a ruthless dictatorship, leading to the new imperialism of Napoleon—back where they started, only with someone new on top.

Such revolutionaries have not accepted the price of what they are trying to build. They concern themselves with the first battle, that of overturning what is wrong, but ignore the second, more demanding, task of building what is right.

In the heat of reaction to injustice that weighs desperately on you, you can be so stirred that you are prepared to do anything, to die. That is a high price. But it may be even more costly to live the discipline and selflessness which will produce a society where man's exploitation of man ends. I do not say that lightly. It means a lifetime of total dedication.

Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King each fought a courageous battle for justice, paying with their lives. Shining through their political battle, however, was a deeper battle for a concept of man's dignity and spiritual quality. This decided everything they did.

Jesus and his followers not only overturned the thinking of their imperialist, exploiting, discriminating, unjust world. They set a new standard for man's treatment of man which has been the undercurrent of the fight for justice and freedom ever since.

Their challenge has often been rejected, exploited or twisted by those who have only accepted the parts of it that suited them. But this condemns the debasers, it does not invalidate the real thing.

2. Each of us obeys somebody—even if it is only ourselves. Some choose to obey an individual, because it seems easier to hand responsibility over to them. Some obey their party or group.

We have all decided we are not going to be bossed around by other groups. The blacks, I hope, have decided they are not going to be bossed by whites, and as a white, I am not going to be bossed by blacks. But where does that leave us? Is there an authority beyond myself, beyond my own group?

If we choose to obey God it cuts across every control of our own, or of any other individual or community.

A black man has no reason to trust me unless he knows that when it comes to the crunch I will obey God and do what is right, rather than following my own self-interest as a white. For trust to be there we must each know we have chosen a common point of ultimate authority, which we will each obey.

3. If I accept the discipline of obeying God, and of his absolute standards, then I must be prepared to accept correction from others and to keep on learning. Sometimes those of us who have given our lives to God and

had an experience of Christ's grace and redemption feel we have made it spiritually. But that is just the first class of primary school.

A further level of commitment comes when I decide to build a force of people which God can use to shift history. This task means that I have to give up for ever the right to put myself first. What I do is no longer all important.

Jesus gave most of His time to this work. The difficulty of the job is illustrated by what happened. Even after three years with Him, when the crisis came, His disciples deserted Him. But when He gave them a second chance, they paid the price.

St Paul had the same aim. In his letters he deals with the lust, ambition, jealousy, division and control which so often prevent a group of well-meaning individuals from having any effect. For any limitation in commitment cuts off the basis of trust immediately, and makes it impossible for people whose deepest interests pull them in different directions to work together under pressure.

Violence brings a certain level of change. But it does not answer any final question. It just provides a fresh context for the same question—how do we penetrate the motives of men?

How do we go beneath the surface to the individual selfishness, ambition, control or the other motives which often decide political action? The prerequisite of course is to accept that level of penetration ourselves.

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## CORRIDORS contd from p1

to some quite small thing which crosses me. I now see that strain and bustle and oversensitivity to criticism are all an impertinence. They point to an attitude of asking God's help in my work, rather than knowing myself an instrument in His. And who would want to emulate such a life-style?

The answer, I see, is to let God's spirit get in, deep down—like deep-ray treatment. We will not help people put their lives under God's control, nor help them bring this experience to their nations, if we see this as a part-time activity outside working hours. Nor does it mean putting on a special performance for a top person. It has to be how I do everything. It must be normal to give my best thought to everyone I meet in the day—the sensitive word in the corridor can be as helpful as the long talk in the library.

This is meant to be my work. It is a quality of life, valid for all I meet, as well as for the way nations are run.