

Vol 4 No 5

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FREEWAY

Why not let God run the world?

SMALL PRICE TO PAY

There are times when you can begin to wonder whether living the 'MRA life' is really worthwhile; when everyone else seems perfectly happy enjoying all the things that you have denied yourself; when the thought of putting one's dearest hopes on the altar, with the possibility that the Almighty might not give them back in the same form, is more than one can bear; when the difficulties loom large, and the prize seems too far off. Then you ask yourself what is the real purpose of staying faithful.

You need a powerful motivation to impose on yourself such a life of self-discipline - a vision that lives with you. But when you see people's lives saved, marriages remade, jobs created, conflicts and even wars ended or avoided, by people being obedient to God's guidance, then you feel that it would be but a small price to pay, and God might even have a part for you.

Frank Buchman coined the phrase 'remaking the world' to describe this motivation. Another way of putting it would be, 'building the kingdom of God'. It is obviously something that God does, that is never completed, but a process in which we can participate. We will only ever see the smallest portion of it, and can only ask Him to show us what part he wants us to play, and carry that out in the faith that He who sees the whole picture is working out his purposes.

The task of 'remaking the world' binds everything together, so that the smallest temptation resisted, or a Prime Minister choosing to forgive instead of taking revenge, is all part of creating God's kingdom here on earth.

The Editors

NUDGED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

by Moira Mackay

"YOU MUST BE DEDICATED to be a nurse" is one of the most common phrases said to a nurse; and all too often I shrug it off, saying that I am not really dedicated but that I simply love the job.

"You must have a vocation", someone also said to me when I first started nursing and I think in a sense that is true. Nursing is not something to be entered into lightly.

I first decided to become a nurse when I was sixteen. I think it must have been a God-guided decision, as at that time I was possibly the most squeamish person I had ever met! But I really felt that it was right, and that my squeamishness was something that could be overcome.

For me this was a very important step, and I remember only too vividly my first day on the ward, having to stifle my feeling of disgust at having to look after a man who had been severely disabled due to a car accident.

For the first year of my training I found it very hard to stop myself feeling either faint or sick especially if I saw blood being taken, or needles inserted into veins, and I kept asking God to help me overcome this problem. Eventually all my praying paid off, and I remember saying a very large thank you to Him, after helping a doctor insert a needle into a vein and feeling fine afterwards.

I am glad to say now that nothing makes me feel ill, and that recently I helped in theatre to

amputate a patient's leg - God's help goes from strength to strength!!

Another thing that I have found very hard to deal with is dying patients and their relatives. On many occasions I have found myself asking why a 20-year-old has to die of cancer. How can an independent and proud person deteriorate to a dependent, helpless patient due to Multiple Sclerosis? How can this be justified?

Well there is obviously no answer to these questions, but it takes an awful lot of faith and back-up from God to try and help these people and their families, and to remember my own mortality.

Looking back on the decision I made when I was 16 to start nursing, it is probably the most important one I have ever made, and I feel very grateful to God that He nudged me in the right direction.

I get very tired of people (especially journalists) calling us nurses "Angels". We are not and never will be; however, most

of us love our jobs and the contact they bring with other people. I find it very rewarding to see ill patients going home once they are better, and enjoy looking after people when they are sick, and knowing that you are doing the most that you can for them.

It is a very enjoyable job, never dull, never routine and bringing immense satisfaction. It can also be a lot of fun!



Studies in Effective Living Course, 1990 - participants and faculty with 'Armagh' family



EXPERIMENTS IN EFFECTIVE LIVING

Studies in Effective Living, 1990

"G'DAY", "BONJOUR", "NAMASTE"..... Here we are, 17 participants from 15 different countries gathered in Armagh, the Australia-Pacific centre for Moral Re-Armament in Melbourne, to take part in the sixteenth *Studies in Effective Living* Course.

We started on 18 February. We hardly knew each other! Since then we have shared most of our time and learned to live in a community, a multicultural one.

In Phase 1 (the first six weeks), serious themes such as "Attitudes and values in the workplace", "Meeting the needs of the world", "Shaping the future", "Understanding the other community, race and culture", and "Foundations of effective living", were interspersed with creative workshops, sport and practical tasks.

Each day began with a session on current affairs to keep in touch with the outside world, to get to know each of the countries represent-

ed and to appreciate them.

Being part of the family in Armagh and sharing in the work of the home - cooking, serving meals, housekeeping and ground maintenance - helped us to learn to work in teams.

We learned to take responsibility, to think and care for the other person, to give our best without feeling the stress of competition, to develop our convictions within us and to stand up for them, to face ourselves and to have wide horizons for the future.

Phase 2 was an opportunity to share with the people we met - in Numurkah, Newcastle, Sydney, Wilcannia, Portland, Adelaide and Canberra - what we had learned and at the same time to listen to them and to learn from their experiences. The care and the generosity of all our 'host families' helped us to feel at home everywhere we went.

We can be one family in the world.

TAROS, SWEET POTATOES AND CORRUPTION

by John Bosei, 40
Village leader, Papua New Guinea

Doing this Course is nothing like working in the garden with a digging stick, planting taros and sweet potatoes.

In my country corruption is the number one problem. It affects so much of our national life and helps create mistrust and conflict like we have on the island of Bougainville at the moment.

I have realised I was part of the corruption myself. When I was a village leader I was responsible for the finances of various projects. Instead of using all the money for what it was intended for, I kept some and used it myself, especially for buying drinks.

Now I've decided to return that money and ask the forgiveness of those I cheated and stole from.

Honesty will only become normal in our way of life if each of us takes the steps we can to straighten out our own lives.

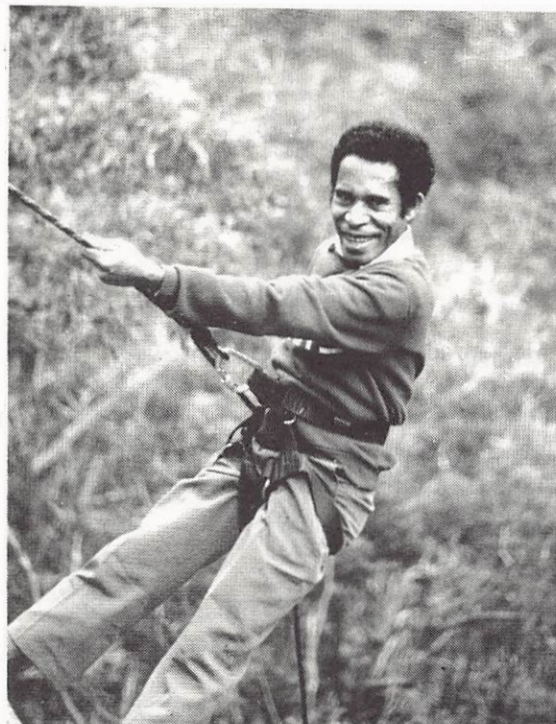
LESSON FOR A TEACHER

by Raymonda Maalouf
Maths teacher, Lebanon

Coming from a country with big problems, I thought I had nothing more to learn.

The subjects we discussed, the people we met, pushed me to think more deeply and clearly about the situation back home. I realised how much my approach to it is based on emotion and how much I need to face it without fears and without losing hope. The course assignment about Zimbabwe's independence, and especially what Rev Arthur Kanodereka did, challenged me the most. I was struck by how he felt free and found strength to approach the opposition once he had put things right in his own life.

Through MRA I learnt not to stand without hope in front of any situation, but to try to change it - a big step which should begin with a bigger one: changing myself. I join my voice with a friend who said, "We do not need new ideas but we need new men."



Rob Wood

"Learning total trust"

NEW LOVE IN MY HEART

by Chou Su-Ming, 23
Secretary, Taiwan

I hate money! It restricted the happiness of my family for 20 years.

When I was nine years old, I was asked to cook, wash clothes and do housekeeping for my family. My parents didn't have time to look after my two brothers and me. They were always too busy with their work.

As a college student I had to work in summer and winter vacations for my education fees. I hated these circumstances and I began to resent my parents. I felt they never loved us. The only thing they cared about was, "Did the money balance this month, or not?" I cried in my heart, "We don't need money but we do need courage, confidence and love."

One day I encouraged myself to ask my father, "Why don't we feel your love for us?" My father replied, "I didn't think you needed it and we don't know how to show our love to you." I was so disappointed.

When I left home I missed my family. I thought about my parents' life. Suddenly I realised why they acted like this. They had had a rough life and difficult times. And yet they suffered quietly rather than asking for help from other people. I knew that before, but I cared about myself too much to forgive my parents. Now I have decided to love them first.

So I wrote a letter of apology to them and asked for forgiveness. After this I felt free to write to my mother, "Happy Mothers' Day!"

FREE TO BE ME

by Ray Kirk, UK

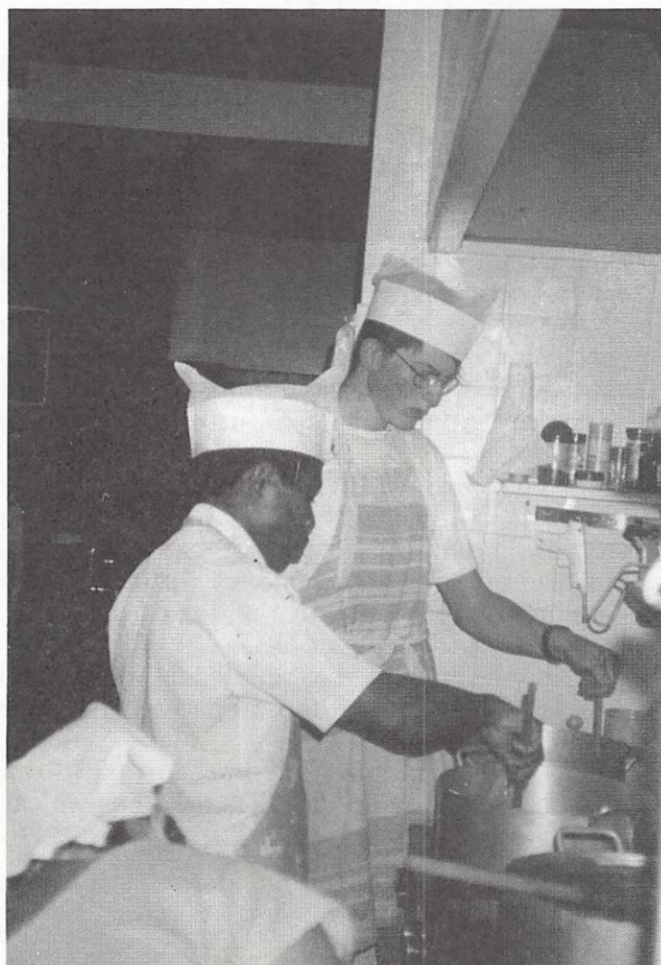
I want to be free, free to be myself,
Not tied and labelled by somebody else.
Sometimes my family, or perhaps my school,
Or my accent they'll use as a label;
A label of what I'm assumed to be,
Misconceptions not facts,
A stereotype not me.

"His dad's a doctor, he must be posh;
He won't know a thing of what our life's
about.
He's from that school, the one up the road;
We can't have his sort seen mixing with us."
All these labels keeping us apart,
Why do we always judge standing from afar?
All these labels keeping us apart,
Why can't each be known as they really are?

"He's got black skin, or maybe it's brown;
I'm not wasting my time on the likes of him.
He's one of them, he goes to church,
We don't want those freaks spoiling our fun."
All these labels keeping us apart,
Why do we always judge standing from afar?
All these labels keeping us apart,
Why can't each be known as they really are?

We keep at a distance to criticise and scorn,
Not through hate, but envy, of things they have
we lack.
If we'd just ignore the labels, set each other
free,
With our own strengths and weaknesses, equal
and complete.
We keep at a distance, afraid of what we'll
find,
Afraid of something different from our own
way of life.
If we'd just ignore the labels, keep an open
mind,
We'd soon see the obvious: we're all the same
inside.

Instead of all these labels keeping us apart,
What we need is real love coming from the
heart.
No longer bound by envy, or restricted by our
fear,
We'd give each other a proper chance to show
what's deep inside.
Set free from expectations of what we're
judged to be,
A priceless gift emerges: the real you and me.



HC Pick

"We're not experts in these matters yet!"

HEALING BY COOKING

by Hideo Asanuma, 24
Proofreader, Japan

Before I came to Australia I had only known this country from TV, magazines, maps and so on. Of course, reality and imagination are different so I have been surprised by many things every day.

It has been very interesting to meet people from many different countries. We have deepened our relationships by being sensitive to how our countries have affected other countries. I was touched by the unexpected apology of a Chinese girl towards Japan. Building relationships involves an open heart. In Portland, my friend and I offered to cook a Japanese meal for our host family. Afterwards, the mother told us how it helped her find healing from bad feelings towards my countrymen.

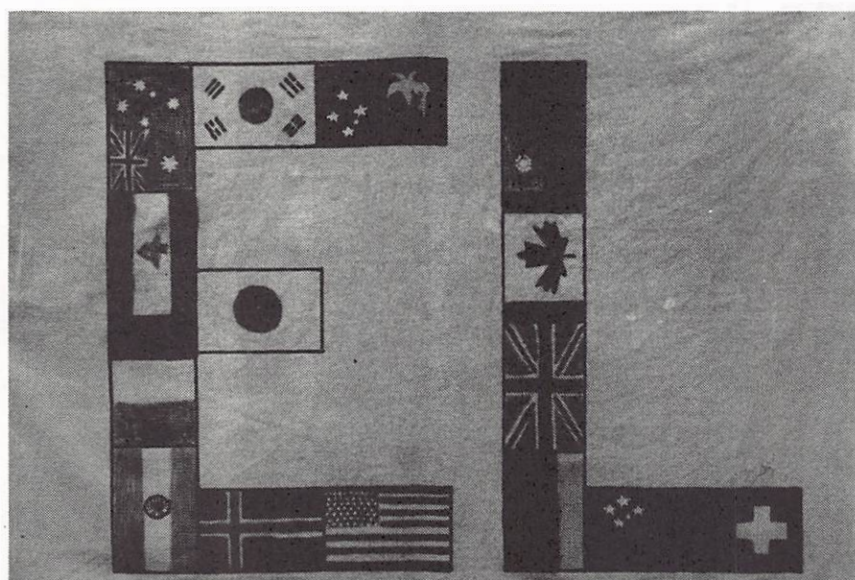
BRIDGE TO THE PACIFIC

by Didier Jaulmes
Veterinary surgeon, France

When I came to Australia I was full of prejudices against the white Australians. In France we had plenty of data about the colonisation and mistreatment of the Aboriginal people and the fact that they were only given the vote in 1967. These facts have been published in our newspapers as a result of the critical approach of Australia toward France's policies in the Pacific.

I then met several Aboriginal people who told me the sad histories of their tribes, victims of the racism of white people. I realised I should not so easily judge the white Australians for being racist, when we had and still have a lot of racism in France too. And was I not also racist with all my prejudices? Once I got rid of these, I discovered that a lot of Aussies are good "blokes"!

Although the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps helped us twice to preserve our freedom in Europe, our two countries have never become real friends. I hope to help to build bridges of friendships between France and the Pacific nations.



Emblem of the current course made from the flags of the 15 countries represented

LIFTING THE FOG

by Theres Steiner
Kindergarten teacher, Switzerland

For many years I have known about the ideas of Moral Re-Armament, but somehow my faith in God didn't become real. Most of the time I prayed, I couldn't feel His presence. So I decided to go my own way and accept only the part of the Bible that corresponded with my ideas. Still I didn't give up searching for God because somehow I knew I needed Him. I asked Him to show me who He is, and how He wants me to live.

One night during the Study Course I felt His presence not just in my mind but in my heart. I was full of joy! I realised then I had never really accepted and applied the absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love because I felt they would interfere with my freedom. This had led me to do many wrong things. I decided to ask for forgiveness of those people I knew I had hurt through my actions.

For example, our family Christmas was always a very tense time. My mother tried with all her heart to create a good atmosphere and to make a meaningful celebration of

Christ's birth. But how could I celebrate something which was not real for me? I didn't want to hurt her, so I put on an act and a smiling happy face.

As soon as our family celebration and the church service were over, I would jump on my bicycle and go to visit a friend. I felt so empty inside that I had to do something! For many hours I had a long discussion with him and early in the morning before my parents got up, I went home, even more confused than before.

This was one thing which I had hidden from my parents. I wrote them and apologised for what had happened.

With each step I take in this way to put things right, the fog between me and God is lifting, my faith is becoming really real and I'm finding the freedom to care for others.

These four pages were produced by participants in the course.

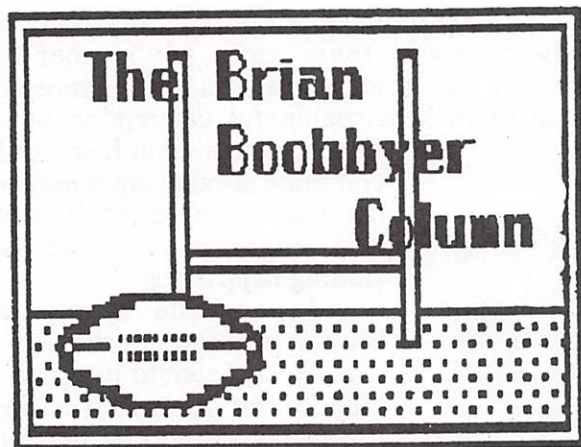
For further information about the courses, write to:
The Secretary, Studies in Effective Living, 226 Kooyong Road, Toorak, Vic 3142, Australia

MARRIAGE IS SACRED, SINGLENESSTOO

I'M 62, MY WIFE A BIT YOUNGER. We have been married nearly 33 years. I remember how well it started; and it's got better ever since.

I had a fairly ascetic approach to life, with my feelings strongly under control. Falling in love was not for me. It seemed like a sign of weakness. But somehow it happened!

Greatly helped, I would say, by a decision I made when I was 22, to put my life in God's hands. It seemed the most courageous thing to do and the only sensible way out of my self-absorbed world. And that has simplified life for me ever since: and spurred me to do things I was not expecting to do.



Such a decision covers, I suggest, four areas of our lives:

- 1) The pursuit of power, including the use of money.
- 2) Thought-life.
- 3) The person we might marry.
- 4) Our particular road or calling in life.

I say 'might marry' because singleness is also sacred.

John Buchan, in his autobiography *Memory Hold The Door*, wrote: "I have been happy in many things but all my good fortune has been as dust compared with the blessing of an incomparable wife." I would echo that. It has always been a great blessing to me to know for certain that I had married the right person!

Far better not to marry than to marry the wrong person.

Charles Dickens wrote in *David Copperfield*: "There can be no disparity in marriage like the unsuitability of mind and purpose."

The discipline of the heart is the theme of the book.

One of his characters says: "It will be your duty to estimate your wife by qualities she has, not by the qualities she may not have. The latter you must develop in her if you can. But, if you can't, you must accustom yourself to do without them."

St Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "God's plan is to make you holy. Control your body, make it pure. Never allow it to fall victim to lust. You cannot break this rule without cheating and exploiting your fellow-men. The calling of God is not to impurity but to the most thorough purity, to consecration."

These are good words, I think, to apply to marriage, expressing some of its sacredness. Cherishing another person is a sacred task.

Honesty is an essential ingredient of marriage. Because your partner is inevitably totally different from yourself, as we are. My wife surprisingly looks at everything from a woman's point of view. St John wrote: "If you live in the light as He is in the light you have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin." If you live in the light in marriage, love is all the time renewed. A sense of romance need never be lost.

Gandhi in his autobiography wrote: "Anyone who aspires to serve humanity with his whole soul cannot do without purity. Purity protects the mind, body and soul." There is surely a close connection between the purity of his personal and married life, as he writes it in some detail, and the total absence of bitterness in his leadership of the freedom struggle in India.

He refers to "the indescribable lustre of truth - a million times more intense than the sun."

Stevenson wrote: "Marriage is a field of battle not a bed of roses." It is an obvious point but easily missed that marriage always has to be worked out. I would suggest that wooing is a lifelong part of it and not just the beginning!

Agatha Christie, in her fascinating autobiography, wrote: "My parents achieved a happy marriage. Up-to-date I have seen four completely successful marriages."

Paul Tournier, Swiss psychologist and



writer, wrote in his last book, *The Listening Ear*: "I was always lecturing my wife but I never actually listened to her. I began listening to her when we meditated together. I practise written meditations because I used to have a tendency to daydream." Elsewhere he wrote, "A marriage that is a real union is always a miracle." And further, "Men without women live in monasteries, barracks or slums."

Nicholas Zernov, Russian Orthodox priest and author, dedicated his classic, *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the 20th Century*, to 'my wife, supporter, critic and inspirer,' and added in the text, "I'm grateful to my wife for the joy of shared convictions which shaped this book."

The joy of shared convictions. Marriage without it easily dries up. Sex seems the only point of unity.

Tolstoy, despite his own turbulent marriage, wrote this: "The goal of our life should not be to find joy in marriage but to bring more life and truth into the world. We marry to assist each other in this task. The highest challenge is that of the man who has dedicated his life to serving God and doing good and unites with a woman to further that purpose."

BORN AGAIN

by Michelle Smith

PICK YOURSELF UP, put yourself down. You think that your worth's less than half a crown. Your value to me is as deep as the sea, so what does God think compared to me.

Who are parents? What are they worth? They're here to misguide you from your day of birth. Jesus's love was so hard to see, yet He saved me from death and insanity.

He took me off drugs and told me the truth, He saved me from walking off a roof. He clothed me and fed me right from the start. He gave me a meaning, a body with a heart.

He lifted me up in my hour of need. He cancelled my sins and humbled my greed. He knew I was seeking that special love, which is only obtained from the father above.

The Holy Spirit untangled me, no more will I suffer unknown to Him. I loved and cared but the devil despaired. Now I know that heavenly glow, that lifts me up and doesn't let go.

But most of all He died for me, He went to hell to set me free, so I'll give Him back all that I've got, my ugly self and that's the lot. Yet He is so pleased with that broken soul, He'll make it clean, fresh and whole.

I've seen the evil in the best of men but now I'm holy and born again. Trust to admit He's more worthy of me, makes angels rejoice and demons angry. But God is near, so never fear. He hears the silent prayer and the falling tear!

FAITH IN PRISON

by Philippe Odier

In March a group of students from the chaplaincy of the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Lyon went to a prison to meet prisoners who participate in a Bible study group.

The heavy door opened before us. Identity-card check. Then another door, and another. A yard, 15 metres by 3 - exercise area for 50 prisoners. Finally the meeting room. A little dutifully and hesitantly we spread out round the circle of chairs before they arrived, so as to mix the two groups. And in they came, shyly shaking hands with us.

At first they began to speak about their Sunday Mass. How they value that Mass! A Gabonais in his own way quotes Christ's phrase, "If one or two or even three of you meet in my name, I will be among you". 80-100 out of 750 go each Sunday. "Our services are long, not just because I talk a lot", said the chaplain, "but also because the prisoners participate so eagerly. If there is one thing you have a lot of in prison, it's time!"

You even get a diploma

Some speak of the Bible study group which meets every other Saturday; others, of courses of religious instruction that they take by correspondence. "You even get a diploma", said one, proudly showing his.

Quickly we came to the question that we all had in mind: how do they live out their religious beliefs with their fellow prisoners? Do they speak of their faith?

"Yes", said one of them..., "yes", he repeated, searching deep-down for the words to describe an experience which his eyes already told us was both painful and joyful, like a birth. "Once a fellow who was absolutely desperate came to see me in my cell. I advised him to go and see the chaplain or to go to mass, to pray sometimes. But it's difficult...it's difficult." For a moment he was lost in thought, before catching the strong and reassuring glance of the chaplain who smiled at him and said, "Thank you, René".

He added: "I have found a religious meaning in prison that I haven't found anywhere else. Even those who don't believe are quiet when fellow prisoners speak about the Mass. They listen. One day a newcomer came to confession. His three cell-mates, non-believers, simply said, 'It's time for a walk, we'll leave you...'"

But it's not easy to pray, with radios and televisions blaring continually, men shouting

from one room to another above the yard, glued to the bars on the windows. "I get on my bed, I close my eyes, I block my ears and I try to pray, at least ten minutes each morning and evening."

René speaks again, and begins to recount his spiritual journey: jailed for the first time in his life at the age of 54, he refound a faith through the "Hello friend", as he puts it, of the chaplain. "I lost my faith when I was 15. If I had prayed these 40 years, I wouldn't be here. When you have the chance to pray, pray...pray."

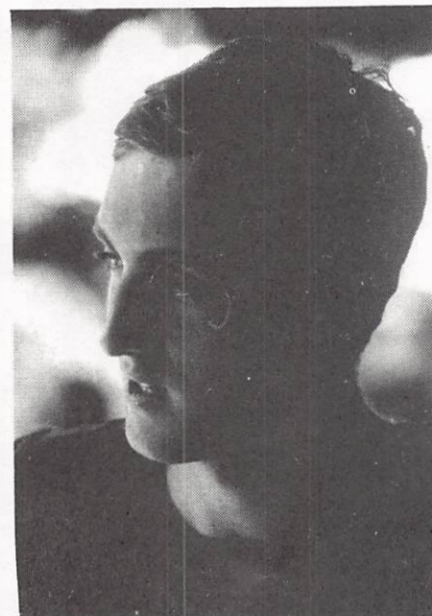
What a weight of issues, questions about the future, these men carry!

Already it is time to part. A last hymn together, the 'Our Father' and we get up to go. We shake hands again, but our regards are different, on our side as well as theirs. And René's look.... How can a look express distress and joy so intensely? Distress at seeing us go, at his own return to 'hell'; joy at having met us, and having shared his greatest treasure.

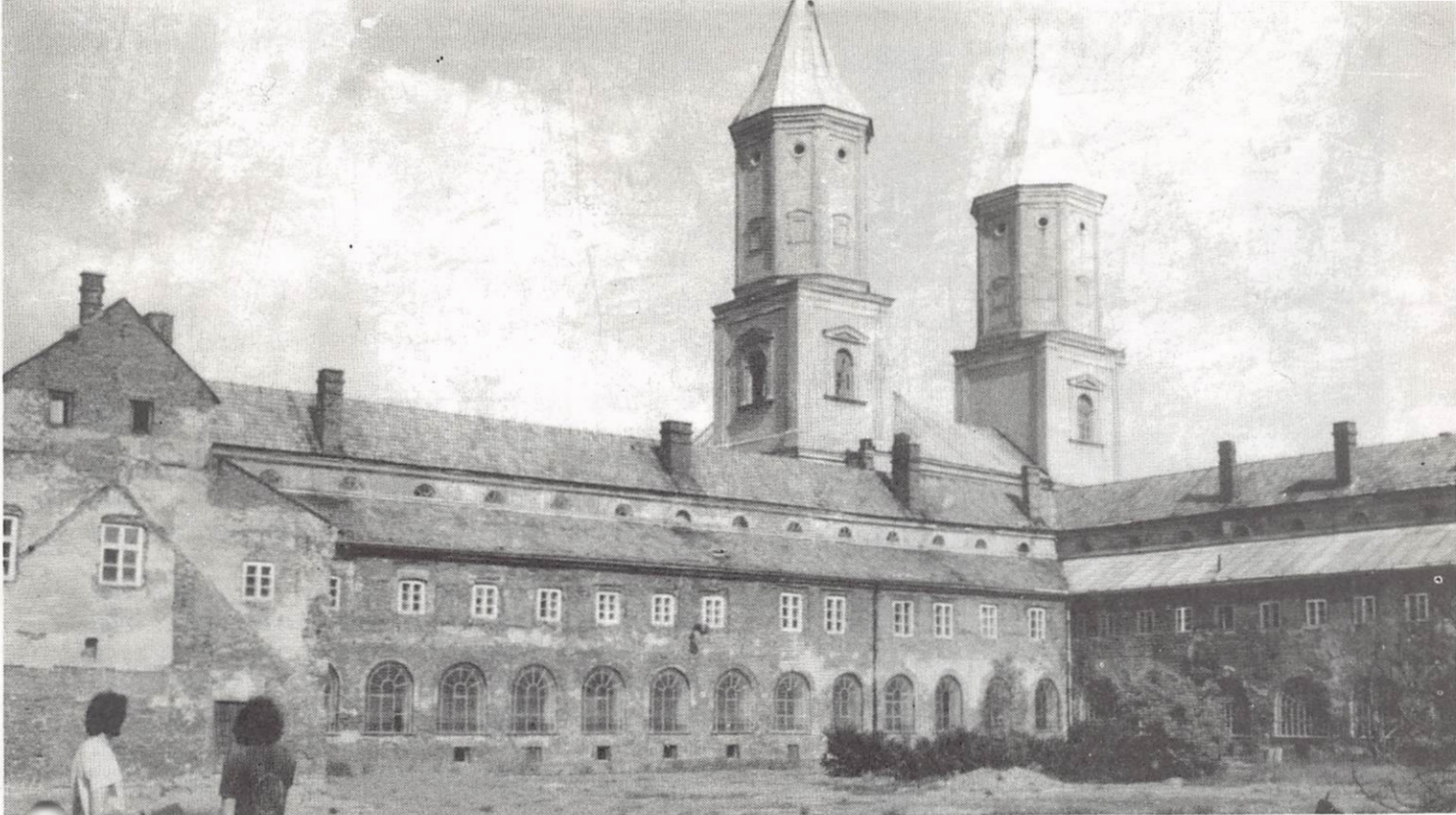
Thank God some out there think of us

One door, two doors, three doors. We remember the parting words of the little Portuguese prisoner: "You students, when you get out, you'll say, 'that was great'; we prisoners, when we get back to our cells, will say to ourselves, 'thank God, there are some out there who think of us.'"

Dazzled by the sun, we stay by the door, not quite knowing what to say. Our petty problems, our great philosophical discussions in the cafeteria, seem very futile. What use do we make of our freedom? You feel emptied, but you know, too, that in future our prayers will mean much more. Our commitment has been rocked, but new roots will also have strengthened it. We have found a love for those men whom we left behind those doors. May the words of one of them always remain in our hearts: "Faith in prison is the supreme act of freedom."



Edward Peters



Polish Centre for Reconciliation

text and photos: Edward Peters

Poland has, for centuries, been the crossroads of Europe. Literally. The powerful armies of Europe have trampled Polish soil for eight centuries.

In the early 13th century, the legendary Genghis Khan and his Tartar hordes overran Poland. Nearly 200 years later it was the Teutonic Knights from the West.

In 1655, the Swedish forces of King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden came within an ace of conquering the whole of Poland. They were turned back at the town of Czestochowa, and the Poles believed they had been saved by the direct intervention of the Virgin Mary ('The Black Madonna').

At the end of the 18th century, Poland was partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria - a state of affairs lasting until the end of World War I. For a few brief years she enjoyed sovereignty over her affairs, until her occupation by German and Soviet forces during World War II.

The story of her struggle for freedom since then is well known.

Ugo Bassi once wrote: "Whoso suffers the most hath most to give." By this measure, we can be sure we have much to receive from the Poles. And one gift to the world is coming into being in the shape of a Benedictine convent in Poland's south-eastern corner, being prepared as a Centre for Reconciliation.

This convent and church were built in the 17th century on a hill in the town of Jaroslaw, some 30 kms from the present Soviet border. In 1782, the Austrian army took over the facilities as a

military base, and the site has not been used by the Benedictines since. The church became a stable for army horses. In the 1940's the occupying German forces used the place, and for many of the post-War years some out-buildings have been used as a school.

With its circular garden surrounded by a wall with eight towers, this tranquil spot has been witness to intense suffering. In front of one part of the wall is a simple altar and cross erected in memory of the many Jews shot on this spot during World War II. On an outside wall of the convent is engraved a map of the region, with marks showing where atrocities were committed in the 1940's.

This is a place where one smells the breath of history.

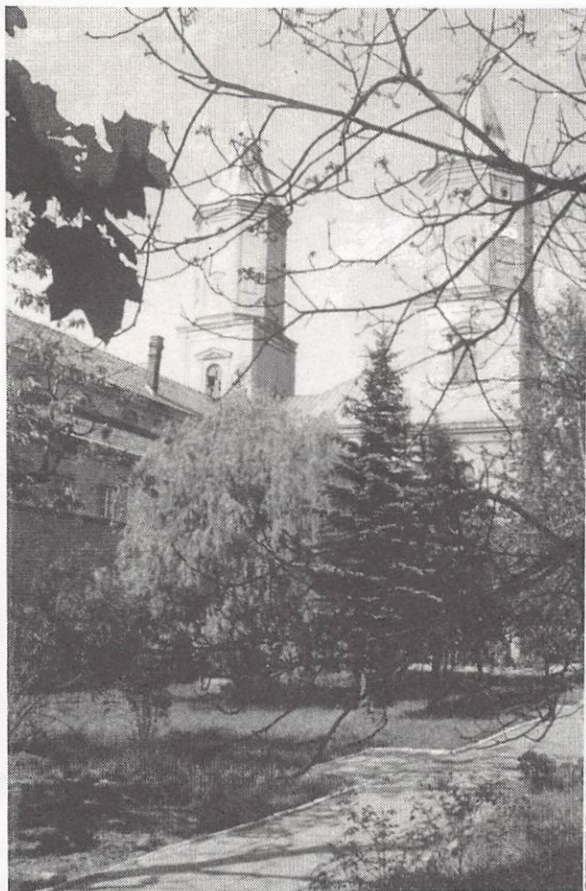
So where did the vision of a 'Centre for Reconciliation' come from?

Bishop Tokarczuk, bishop of Przemyśl, the local diocese, sent six members of his diocesan cultural council to Caux (the Moral Re-Armament centre in Switzerland). They brought back reports of how Caux had been used by God in the rebuilding of war-torn relationships in Western Europe after the Second World War.

Some months later, the Bishop made his offer: would a Polish group of Moral Re-Armament be willing to take on this disused convent and use it in the task of healing the hurts of Central and Eastern Europe? He spoke of the need to meet the outcry of bottled-up hatred that could be expected when the pressure of the Communist regime was removed.

The area around Jaroslaw, indeed, was densely populated before 1939. Its original population

continued on page 14



We take the train from Krakow: 210 kms of towns, villages and rolling countryside. A fine black dust covers everything. It gets in everywhere - under finger nails, in your nose, in your hair. It is May, but already hot and very beautiful.

Jaroslaw. Where is the convent? We follow our instinct and when that fades an elderly gentleman with broken German shows us the way. Very soon we recognise the towers of the church and then the wall. We've found it! The 250-year-old Benedictine convent only served as such for some 25 years, and has since been used and misused during tragic years of war.

A cross on a rather derelict altar reminds us of the executions which took place here during the Second World War. We climb a tower (one of

Below: Wieslaw and Marzena Kecik

Below right: A cross marks part of the convent wall where executions were carried out in the second world war



IMPRESSIONS

eight) in the wall to find a lovely circular room - fit for star-gazing - and look out over the city, fields of growing vegetables and the grounds of the convent itself. Nettles and dandelions and buttercups, and nearly-flowering elder, bejewel the place, and it is rich in green foliage: birches, apples trees, cherry trees. It is easy to imagine the place alive with people finding peace and a place to reflect or meet each other and God. Our hearts are captured and we almost have to hold back the ideas that come - of



what it could become - of what could be possible here.

The convent itself and the church speak of years of neglect and are in terrific need of repair. Yet our hearts respond to this place and we long to help, to pick up a brush and broom, to paint, to clear the garden, to make it a LIVING place where people can come and find God and heal the past. For the past is strongly present here and must be talked about, forgiven, learnt from - and from it can a new future begin.

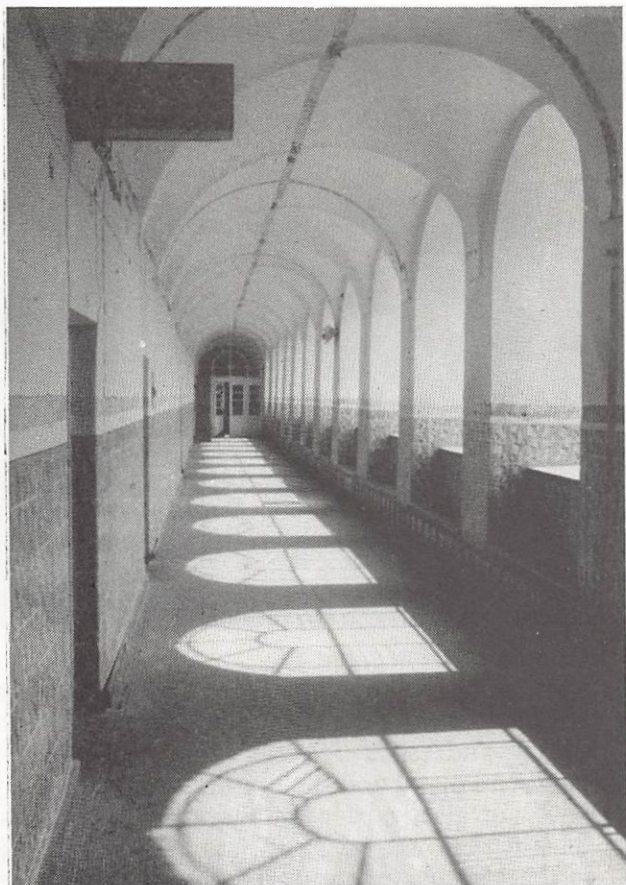
Corridors of rooms, vaulted ceilings, and our minds immediately start working. What could they be? Bedrooms, library, sitting rooms, meeting rooms, a quiet room, a sports room. Hundreds of people could come here and use the place. But first hundreds of people need to come and rebuild it and

OF JAROSLAW

create it. Clearly it needs to be a place where from the start we also build a community of people who have the same values, who can work together, who trust each other, who love each other.

It is an impossible task and quite clearly beyond human control.

Elisabeth Peters, May 1990

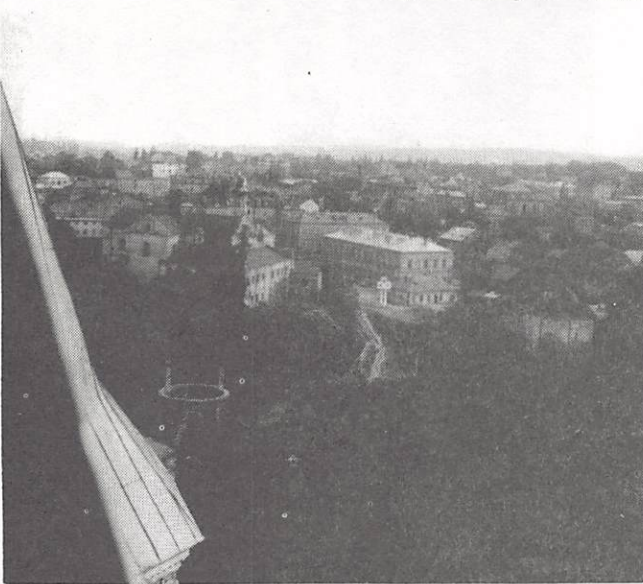


Above: One of the convent cloisters

Below left: The kitchens

Below: The washrooms





continued from page 11

were either slaughtered or deported in the aftermath of Polish-Ukrainian guerrilla warfare during and especially after World War II. Ties between Poland and the Ukraine go far back, and have not always been antagonistic. Ukraine was once part of the Polish-Lithuanian Union which in the 15th century spread from the Baltic to the Black Sea. In 1920 Poland and Ukraine fought arm in arm against Soviet aggression. But as the shadows of half-forgotten wrongdoings still loom large there is much need to heal old wounds.

Two of the people behind the moves leading up to the Bishop's offer are Wieslaw and Marzena Kecik. They helped to found Rural Solidarity in Poland.

"The West," says Wieslaw, "easily talks about the East in terms of markets. It is not in the economic field that the biggest change has taken place. The main change is linked with fear. Earlier the fear was to lose ones job...or anything else the State could take away. Now we fear to face ourselves and to ask: 'Was I true to myself then? What did I do or not dare to do?' It is easy to start despising oneself and it is difficult to accept that we carry the responsibility for what went wrong. Wishing to take revenge and putting the blame on others is often born there. The main question we in the East must face is: 'What was God's purpose in allowing our history?' Through this question we will find our destiny. After years of passive resistance we need to re-learn responsibility."

Speaking of the convent, Marzena says: "My longing is that this will be a place for each broken heart, each heart full of problems - a place in which such people can feel

they can come and share, pray, think, look at nature, just to be."

In February, a legal body of Moral Re-Armament in Poland was constituted, capable of taking on and stewarding the convent. A member of the new council of management says: "Listening to the Lord will be the basis of our common commitment in this place, to help people find what God wants for them, now and for ever."

The convent is in need of enormous renovation. The Poles view this task with equanimity. They see the job of restoring it as part of the process of healing.

Some have already moved in and started work, cleaning up the gardens, planting flowers and vegetables, and putting the second largest building (an accommodation block) into working order. A caretaker is installed and sees it as his lifework. A Warsaw architect has offered her services. The Keciks themselves will move to Jaroslaw in August.

The needs are of course enormous. The electrical, heating and drainage systems need overhauling or replacement. There is hardly a single item of furniture, few mattresses, sheets or blankets, little crockery or cooking utensils. The scope for help from inside and outside Poland is extensive. Some necessary equipment is not available inside the country.

It will cost an estimated £30-40,000 to complete the first phase of the building alterations.

Voluntary help will also make a major contribution to the whole project. "This place," says Wieslaw Kecik, "must stay in keeping with the surrounding area, and that means poor materially, but rich spiritually."

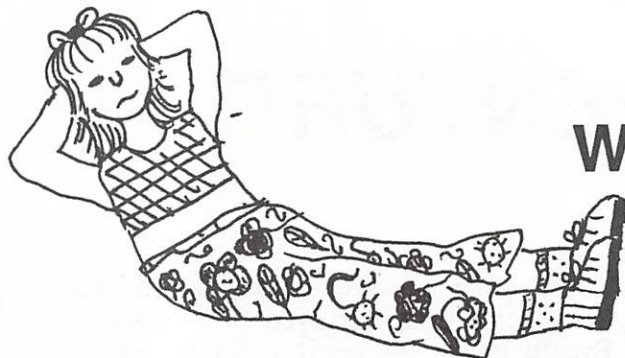
In Poland there is a saying: 'There are two ways of dealing with a crisis - the normal way and the miraculous way. The normal is when the Virgin Mary arranges it. The miraculous is when the Poles themselves solve the problem.'

The Poles' sense of humour is going to stand them in good stead. They have it in abundance, together with a great deal of courage. "Poland," said one of those involved in the Jaroslaw venture, "is as destroyed as these convent buildings.... We have a sense of urgency for these buildings, for we sense that as we restore them our nation and people will be restored too."

(Any financial contributions to the Jaroslaw convent can be sent to the MRA Association's bank, BDK o. Jaroslaw for the credit of account Dozbrojenie Moralne-MRA, account number 336415-635-132.)



The inside of the church



WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT FASHION?

WE ASKED YOU to write in with your thoughts on what you wear, and why you wear it. Here is a taster of what some wrote. We'll print more in the autumn issue. Many thanks to all who have already written: don't worry we'll print what you sent later. There's still plenty of opportunity for others to write. And what about some pictures?

What clothes do you feel happiest wearing?

"I have very simple tastes and feel happiest wearing the same clothes for years and years until the time comes for them to be discarded." (Ian, GB)

"Traditional costume, Chinese dress or suits. Because they're a little special and inspiring." (Dinger, Taiwan)

"Sometimes I feel the dramatic style of dress is a reflection of how I see myself in the great adventure of life!! Back to earth again and layers are practical because you can put them on, off, depending how hot or cold you are and also it makes changing for different occasions easier." (Melissa, GB)

"Expensive clothes... because they're nicer and they last longer.

I think it is good that people should take good care of their appearance, but not obsessively. I like expensive clothes because they last and are unobtrusive. To be honest my taste is very conservative.

Although my taste is expensive I wouldn't pay a lot of money for clothes, but try to go to sales or pick them up second-hand." (Mark, GB)

What do you actually wear?

"I wear what I want to unless someone says it looks awful!" (Wendy, GB)

Ever worn any total disasters?"

"Lots of times. My worst disasters were worn during some years when I did not know who I was. I dressed in a way which made me look like 45 when I was only 20! Mainly because I was insecure!" (Elisabeth, Sweden)

"That is for others to judge!" (Ian, GB)

What do you think of the fashion industry?"

"It's a sign of material ideology. People who live in a modern and fashion city seem much more self-centred and very keen in a competitive society." (Dinger, Taiwan)

"I think it is too big and influential. It invades the media and the high street to such an extent the poor shopper has no choice but to buy the latest 'look' which is being plugged. Many clothes shops look the same inside. This seems to have caused a general split in the type of shops available. For those who rebel against the fashions or just want something different they have to go to shops hidden away down streets off the high street, markets, Oxfam, etc. This in itself became to some degree a trend, the 'look' of the person who avoids high fashion. I would like to see more of a range of different styles in shops. More choice for the consumer!" (Melissa, GB)

"I think it plays a lot on people's insecurity... but I think it is good that people should wear different things each year... but fashion should never become a way of life." (Mark, GB)

"I think buying new clothes each time there's a new fashion is a complete waste of money." (Wendy, GB)

"I get furious by the control which is behind fashion, e.g. in swimsuits. If one does not want to show 'everything' then there is almost no alternative at all!! Personally I think fashion is quite fun, but I react to the economics of it all." (Elisabeth, Sweden)



Drawings by Karen Grace

What do you think of what other people wear?"

"I can't stand clothes which say: 'I'm here, come and get me.'" (Ian, GB)

"Nice sometimes. At other times I wonder how it can be fashionable because it looks so stupid." (Wendy, GB)

"People are influenced by different cultures, media representations, money, music and the fashion industry and often a mixture of these factors together. If I have to generalise I would say people have let things slip a bit and are more scruffy and have a relaxed attitude shown in what they wear." (Melissa, GB)

SCHOOLS VENTURE

by Howard Grace

"THEY ARE a pretty dead bunch, especially at this time in the morning", said the head of a Sixth Form near Worthing when Patrick Santa Maria and I arrived to take the assembly for about 100 students. He was clearly worried that we might be discouraged by the reception we were about to get.

So we started with the song "Oswald The Ostrich" from Patrick. This began to wake them up. I then said, "I wonder what has been going through your minds about Patrick - someone who obviously comes from a different background to ourselves. Where do you think he comes from? What about his family? How old is he?" Several of them are then asked to answer these questions. Laughter at some of the answers, but by this time they are involved.

Then Patrick speaks about his identity crisis as a Malaysian with a Portuguese father and Filipino mother and how his attitude and relationships had to change. When we arrived back at base a few days later a letter was waiting from one girl thanking us for the assembly.

In a school one hundred miles away, where we had sessions on two successive days, a girl I just happened to talk to, said, "Yesterday really make me think. All sorts of things go round inside me but I never know how to express them. But last night, after that General Studies session, my boyfriend and I talked for three hours about our purpose in life. It was really good." Most sixth formers we never see again after the bell goes for the end of the lesson, but we suspect that what that girl said is just the tip of the iceberg.

Bright idea

During the year we have done programmes in about 45 Sixth Forms. It has been a great adventure in faith. How did it start?

I had been teaching maths at a large comprehensive school in Berkshire for some years and had also been responsible for Sixth Form current affairs. I felt it a very worthwhile job. But then came a 'bright idea' that I might take a year off teaching to be free to move around Britain going to Sixth Forms with a play I'd written to provoke sixth formers to think about deeper issues. It is set in a comprehensive 6th form, so is called 'Beyond Comprehension'. I wrestled with this idea for a couple years but it kept bugging me until I just had a sense of God saying, "Go and do it."

How do you know if a major step like this is inspired by God? It can't be taken lightly. After all I have my wife and two daughters aged 11 and 12, with such things as their schooling, mortgage payments, launching out with no salary and 101 other things to consider. The minister of our

church (who has been very supportive) said to me. "Don't do it unless you have no alternative." Eventually, in my spirit I did indeed have no alternative. We decided as a family to take the plunge.

God has certainly honoured that step in faith. Not that everything has gone smoothly. For instance, we rented out our house and three days after the new people moved in the roof water tank burst. So we had a full tank plus 24 hours of running water through our house. What a mess! It was four months before the damage was rectified and new tenants moved in.

But what of the venture itself? I had hoped to have 9 young people to move with me to be the cast of the play. We would do it as a dramatic reading, to be as mobile and flexible as possible. As it turned out only two volunteers stepped forward to join the move, Angela Willoughby and Melissa Field, with the occasional help of Ian Healey. So we had a change of tactic and enlisted sixth formers as cast members in every school we went to. That was good because it meant a couple of rehearsals in each school which gave us preliminary contacts. It also meant that there was very good rapport between performers and audience, as the sixth formers enjoyed having their friends up front. On the debit side, although we did our best in rehearsals, some of the 'performances' were dramatically rather poor.

For the first few months we operated on that basis. It meant that visits to an area had to be fairly lengthy to enable us time to do rehearsals as well as the plays. For instance in Norwich we had to stay for two and a half weeks and did the play four times. We did other things as well of course. A major spin off was the opportunity to spend time with people all round the country. We gradually began to feel that occasions where there was more emphasis on discussion, such as an evening with a church young peoples group, gave more scope for getting to grips with realities.

In schools, if we had a session of one and half hours or more, doing the play for an hour followed by discussion was well worthwhile. But if we only had an hour, the play took up the whole time. Hopefully, valuable ideas went in but we felt somewhat constrained, especially when the bell went just after the play finished and everyone disappeared as if by magic to go to geography or French or maths or biology or whatever was next on the timetable.

As we became more experienced in being able to lead discussions we felt that if the General Studies slot was fairly short we should do something different to the play. So the emphasis shifted to a couple of 15 minute dialogues. One I had written in South Africa some years earlier and the other focussed the challenge to us of

developments in Eastern Europe. A 45 min. or 1 hr. session which consisted of an introduction, a 15 min. dialogue followed by a discussion we found is a very useful package.

So we learnt as we went along and our versatility was greatly increased when Patrick plus guitar arrived during October. He has written several songs as we've gone along including one sparked off by the assembly mentioned at the beginning. It starts off, "What goes through your mind when you meet a person for the very first time?..." Then in February we were joined by Dinger Chen from Taiwan. The perspective she gave to discussions, coming from an island off the coast of the Chinese monolith was very helpful.

Another important development came from our need to have something written available for those who wanted to read further after our sessions. So we produced a special edition of FREEWAY with some of the best articles from former issues. On average about half the sixth formers took a magazine and average contributions were about 25 pence. This covered our costs but it was also a great plus in all that we were able to leave people with.

As important as the contact with the students has been that with the teachers. In one school we had a stimulating hour with 90 sixth formers. Afterwards the teacher in charge said to us, "I've got a good job here, I'm happily married with children, but do you know, I've never really thought about my purpose in life." He hid his face

in mock shame. As we left he said, "Never mind the pupils, you've given me something to worry about."

On arriving home from this date we found a letter from the head of a Sixth Form in Newcastle where we had done a play reading and discussion two months earlier. This was his first contact with us since then. He wrote, "You can never tell, I suppose, what effect you are having on people's lives or attitudes but at least you know you are engaged in the task, which must encourage you in moments of quietness." He enclosed a personal cheque of £40. Another Sixth Form head from the South coast said to us enthusiastically at the end of our session, "I've got so many ideas from what you've done. Our students get a good academic training, and we try to broaden their perspectives with General Studies but we hardly touch the deeper issues of life you have raised. I only wish that all the other staff could have heard the sort of things the sixth formers were saying in those discussions today."

What next? I have been offered a job teaching back in my old school and have accepted this. We feel God's leading in that step just as we did in taking this year in the first place. But we are very conscious of the great potential in the sort of venture we've been involved in. The surface has barely been scratched. Did God mean it to be a one off initiative or will He stir the hearts of others to take it forward? Time will tell. In any case we have learnt a lot by stepping out in faith. We are grateful to have obeyed.

Making them talk

by Angela Willoughby

'WHAT IF NO-ONE says anything?' - the ultimate fear when leading a discussion group. After being thrown into the deep end for the first time in front of forty students in a Sixth Form in Sheffield, I've gradually learnt how to deal with these panic-stricken moments.

To avoid this 'no immediate response' situation, we usually begin by asking very simple questions like asking students where they think Patrick or Dinger come from followed by further questions about the location, population etc. of Malaysia or Taiwan. Then moving back to the central themes you can ask them what struck them about the dialogue or presentation depending on what you have used as a basis to stimulate discussion. Often we ask them what they would like to discuss or what they feel is important. If all goes quiet again, picking out individuals to answer questions usually provokes a response.

As the students become more relaxed and confident, you can throw in questions which may lead to a slightly deeper level of discussion. I usually have a few in mind which I use when there is a lull or a natural break in the flow of the discussion.

When I first began to lead discussion groups, I used to feel that I had to answer the questions myself or contribute my own thoughts and experiences but after a while I learnt that it is more valuable for the students if you bounce the questions around the group. For example if one student asks a question or gives his/her view, instead of commenting yourself it is better to ask someone else 'What do you think?' or 'Do you agree?' This takes the emphasis off you leading the group and makes it more like a spontaneous discussion. Then at the end or when you feel it would be particularly relevant one or two of your own experiences can be related. It is also helpful to bear in mind the taciturn students hiding at the back and to try to draw them into the discussion rather than letting the more vocal students take over the debate.

These are merely pointers whereas the best way to learn how to lead a discussion group is to take the plunge and try it out. Each session is unique and the experience of one always helps in some way to prepare you for the next even if it is only in terms of confidence-building. Although at the beginning I paled at the thought of standing up in front of rows of Sixth Formers to try to encourage them to discuss their purpose in life. I have thoroughly enjoyed this aspect of the schools venture and I have learnt a great deal about myself and about what goes on in the minds of sixth formers in Britain.

Book Review

THE COLOUR OF HOPE

In 1982, Irina Ratushinskaya was sentenced under Soviet law to seven years of strict regime camp followed by five years of internal exile. She faced this sentence on her twenty-ninth birthday, guilty of writing poetry which was considered by the KGB to be anti-Soviet propaganda. Irina was then separated from her husband, family and the rest of the outside world and incarcerated in the notorious Small Zone of Barashevo prison, the area reserved for especially dangerous political criminals.

Grey Is The Colour of Hope is her own detailed and moving account of four years' imprisonment before being released in 1986 under Gorbachev's reforms. She reveals the intense psychological pressures applied by the KGB to

break the spirit of the 'politicals' and at the same time records the harsh reality of everyday life in the Small Zone as she and her companions fight, even when facing death, to retain their dignity and basic rights as human beings.

The dynamic effect of this book lies in the quality of the narrative. Despite its serious and often shocking content, Irina's account is full of humour, poems, lively conversation and comments to the reader. The style is familiar and down to earth, cleverly interlaced with the biting irony which gives a vivid insight into the atrocities the women suffer. The reader enters into Irina's imaginations as she shares her dilemmas, questions, frustrations and mistakes. She also describes in detail her friends, their daily routine and struggles to maintain freedom from fear. The simplicity of events like their meagre but joyful celebrations at Christmas are deeply moving.

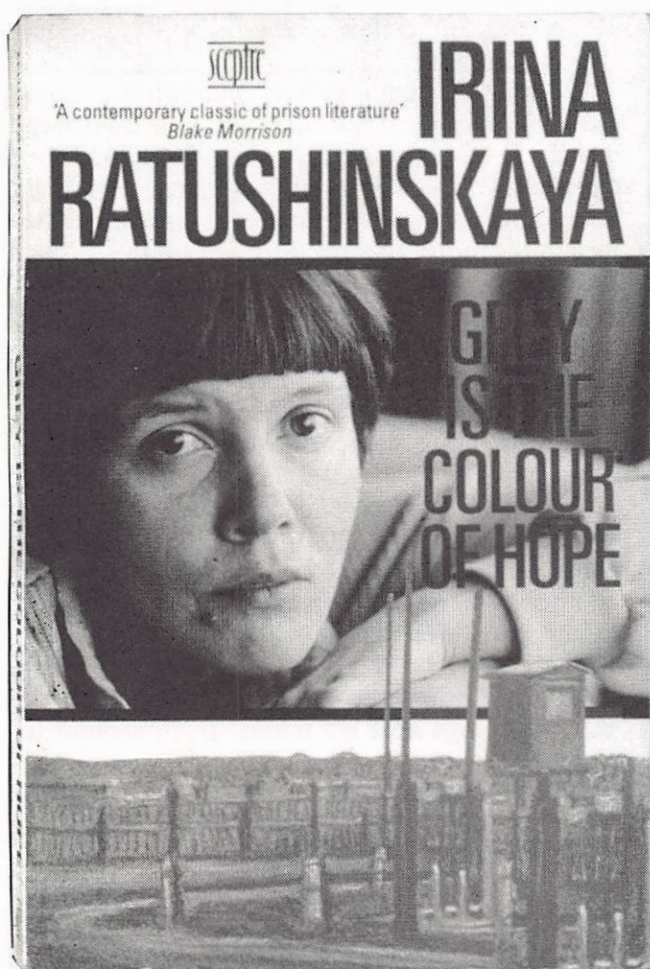
Irina also addresses the KGB as if they too are reading her novel. This creates for the reader the sense of being watched, and enriches the description of the tactics of the KGB. The corruption, lies and hatred engendered by such a system are powerfully exposed. The battle which lies at the crux of this novel is when this kind of evil clashes with a human spirit like Irina Ratushinskaya who is indomitably rooted in God's strength which enables her to fight for truth and to resist the temptation to compromise. The delight of this novel is that she is able to relate this battle in a very human way with which we can all identify.

"Only an act done in accordance with inner conviction will enable one to defend it in the face of pressure."

"You make one small concession, and then you may well find yourself with no choice but to agree to anything."

"Strange things happen when you have nothing to depend on except God's help."

Angela Willoughby



Grey Is The Colour Of Hope is published by Spectre Books, UK price £4.99.

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

by Bjørn Ole Austad

'How to Make Democracy Work' was the theme of a two-week seminar for young Polish leaders at the Moral Re-Armament centre in Oslo, Norway, at the end of March.

Four of the participants were Members of the Polish Parliament (Sejm), having worked underground with Solidarity earlier. Three have their farms to look after, on top of their political work. Other participants were Solidarity activists from the industrial cities of Lodz and Gdansk. One was secretary to Lech Walesa.

The idea of the seminar came from Allan Griffith, a former advisor to several Australian Prime Ministers. A group of Norwegians of different ages and political persuasions quickly caught onto the idea.

We were excited by the thought that Norwegian democracy had something to offer. So often our vision was darkened by all that is wrong in our society. At the same time we felt that our country needed to rediscover the true value of freedom and be shaken up from the worship of money. Who could help us better than people who for years had stood up against dictatorship and lived without many of the material things we have?

Politics and Conscience

A wide variety of Norwegian leaders and experts came to give talks and exchange ideas with our Polish guests. They were able to give their best thinking and support to another country in need, and at the same time spotlight our own society's problems. Some of the topics were: 'Politics and conscience'; 'The role of political parties in a democracy - how to avoid the misuse of power'; 'The welfare state - the balance between personal and public responsibility'. We discussed local democracy and environmental issues, visited factories and farms. The Polish guests were received in Parliament and at the Oslo Town Hall.

The economist Arne Jon Isachsen spoke about the challenges of going from a state-controlled economy to a free-market one - "not a good system, but the best we have". Erik Damann, founder of the movement *The Future in Our Hands*, described the long-term goals of survival on earth. Neither communism nor capitalism, he pointed out, are good systems in that perspective.

A meeting on the theme, 'Media - a tool for truth or for manipulation', brought about a very

constructive interplay between journalists from different newspapers.

In the evenings we talked about the quality of life needed in democracy, honesty in private and public life, family life, and how to make the right decisions when under pressure. After the film about Irène Laure and Franco-German reconciliation after the War, nearly all the Poles told of relatives who were killed or died in concentration camps. Under the state of emergency in Poland in the 1980's, one of the MP's had himself been tortured in prison. He ended up in hospital for two months. But in him and the others there was hardly any desire for revenge. However they did express a fear of once more being crushed by big neighbouring countries.

Our Polish guests asked about how to create a mentality of responsibility after so many years of dictatorship. Slack discipline at work had been a way of defiance. One of them said: "We are four million farmers in Poland. Now we can still blame the communists for the lack of food, but in two years' time we won't be able to any longer."

The Poles showed great endurance in discussions. Late in the evenings, when we Norwegians looked at our watches, the Poles wanted to continue until they had reached a clear conclusion - whatever the hour.

One of the Poles said: "I came here with a good deal of bitterness and disappointment in my heart. Now I start to believe in people again." Another said that it had been the best preparation for Easter he had ever had. "Poland suffers from an injured conscience," he said. "There has been one kind of morality in the family and another one in public life. That is a dangerous twisting of values which are eternal and absolute."

This seminar was possible because of the enthusiastic work of many Poles living in Norway. They gave their services free as translators. The finances were provided through the generous giving of many, and some support from the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. The seminar was an experiment we would like to repeat.



Dinner party in Heaven

by Patrick Turner

(continued)

Fyodor Mikhail Dostoyevsky (1821-1881)

It is not unreasonable to say that Dostoyevsky is the greatest novelist there has ever been, in any language, and the novel he wrote just before his death - 'The Brothers Karamazov' - has a good claim to be the greatest novel. Yet it was some time before his genius became fully apparent. Not long after writing a very fine first novel, 'Poor Folk', he became involved in a radical group, the Petrashevsky circle. This was in 1848, the year of revolutions in Europe, and Tsar Nicholas I had Dostoyevsky and the whole of the Petrashevsky circle arrested. Dostoyevsky was sentenced to death but reprieved at (almost literally) the last moment and sentenced to penal servitude.

This led to perhaps the key period in his life, during which he spent several years in a Siberian convict camp and then served in the Russian army. His experiences among the convicts in the camp provided him with profound insights into human nature and with a life-long interest in the philosophy and consequences of punishment. In the prison, he also saw how, in the most hopeless and forsaken circumstances, basic (and often largely unthinking) Christian faith sustained many of the peasant convicts and enabled them to retain their humanity. But, although his time in prison regenerated his own faith, belief was never to come easily to him. He wrote in a letter shortly after being released that:

"I am a child of the century, a child of disbelief and doubt, I am that today and will remain so until the grave. . . And yet, God sends me sometimes instants when I am completely calm; at these instants I love and feel loved by others, and it is at these instants that I have shaped for myself a Credo where everything is clear and sacred for me. This Credo is very simple, here it is: to believe that nothing is more beautiful, profound, sympathetic, reasonable, manly, and more perfect than Christ."

The theme of one of his greatest novels, written in 1865-66, 'Crime and Punishment', was one which had occupied him consistently. 'Crime and Punishment' concerns the murder of an old woman money-lender by a young man, Raskolnikov, who commits the murder for a variety of motives. Raskolnikov explains to Sonia, a prostitute with whom he falls in love, that 'I wanted to become a Napoleon', and suggests that there are 'ordinary' people who have to obey the laws and 'extraordinary' people who can disobey them with impunity (a prophetic idea in terms of the history of this century). Dostoyevsky wrote about the book that "divine truth and justice and the law are triumphant in the end, and the young man finishes up by giving himself up against his own will. . . The feeling of separation and

dissociation from humanity which he experiences at once after he has committed the crime, is something he cannot bear. The murderer himself decides to accept his punishment in order to expiate his crime."

Sonia stays faithfully by Raskolnikov as he serves a sentence in a prison in Siberia, where she is able to visit him, but Raskolnikov rejects her love. Right at the end of the book, he repents. It is a marvellous passage:

"How it happened he did not know, but suddenly something seemed to seize him and throw him at her feet. He embraced her knees and wept. At first she was terribly frightened. . . but at once and at the same moment she understood everything. Her eyes shone with human happiness; she understood, and she had no doubts at all about it, that he loved her, loved her infinitely and that the moment she had waited for so long had come at last. They wanted to speak, but could not; tears stood in their eyes. They were both pale and thin; but in those sick and pale faces the dawn of a new future, of a full resurrection to a new life, was already shining. It was love that brought them back to life: the heart of one held inexhaustible sources of life for the heart of the other."



Fyodor Dostoyevsky

If you only read one passage in Dostoyevsky, read the chapter on 'The Grand Inquisitor' in 'The Brothers Karamazov'. This tells the story of an imaginary meeting between the 'Grand Inquisitor', an old Cardinal who is the 'guardian of the faith' of the Catholic Church, and a prisoner, whom he recognises as Christ. Christ says nothing throughout the encounter, during which the Grand Inquisitor rebukes Him at length for the response which He gave to the temptations which the Devil offered Him during the forty days which He spent in the wilderness. At the end of all this the Grand Inquisitor "waited for some time for

the prisoner's reply. His silence distressed him. He saw that the Prisoner had been listening intently to him all the time, looking gently into his face and evidently not wishing to say anything in reply. The old man would have liked him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But he suddenly approached the old man and kissed him gently on his bloodless, aged lips. That was all his answer."

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963)

CS Lewis is widely accepted as the best religious writer in English this century. During the Second World War, he also became very well known as a religious broadcaster, and the three series of radio talks which he gave were subsequently published as the bestselling 'Mere Christianity'. Apart from explicitly religious writings, he also wrote some of the best children's books ever written - the Narnia Chronicles, which (along with a 'science fiction' trilogy which is also magnificent) are in fact Christian allegories.

Probably more than anyone else this century (in English, at least), when the general trend of philosophy and thought had been to seek to discredit or discount faith, Lewis gave faith intellectual respectability (he was an English don at Oxford and subsequently a Professor at Cambridge), as well as bringing it alive and explaining it in understandable (and fascinating) terms for millions of readers. One of his best books is 'The Great Divorce', which tells of a journey to Heaven by souls from Hell and shows how some accept what Heaven offers and reject what has kept them from it, while others - for a variety of reasons, some of them seemingly noble or self-sacrificing - cannot accept. Lewis argues, convincingly, that Hell is, essentially, man-made:

"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done', and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done'. All that are in Hell choose it. Without that self-choice, there could be no Hell.

Also written during the Second World War were 'The Screwtape Letters', marvelously witty imaginary letters from a senior devil to a junior devil which are designed to illustrate the sort of dangers which the Devil aims to put in our way. But the senior devil, Screwtape, also recognises what the Enemy (ie God) is about:

"One must face the fact that all the talk about



CS Lewis

the love for man, and His service being perfect freedom is not (as one would gladly believe) mere propaganda, but an appalling truth. He really does want to fill the universe with a lot of loathsome little replicas of Himself - creatures whose life, on its miniature scale, will be qualitatively like His own, not because He has absorbed them but because their wills freely conform to His. We want cattle who can finally become food; He wants servants who can finally become sons. We want to suck in, He wants to give out."

'The Screwtape Letters' also contains the superb biting humour which features in many of Lewis' books - as, for example:

"She's the sort of woman who lives for others - you can always tell the others by their hunted expression."

Lewis combined, in a way in which no other author I know did, an extraordinary, fertile imagination which gave him the ability to bring into being whole new worlds - as in the 'Narnia' books and the science fiction trilogy - with a straightforward, down-to-earth reality about human nature, how human beings work and the means by which we can come nearer to God. Thus, in 'Mere Christianity' he writes:

"People often think of Christian morality as a kind of bargain in which God says, 'if you keep a lot of rules I'll reward you, and if you don't I'll do the other thing.' I do not think that is the best way of looking at it. I would much rather say that every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And taking life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life you are slowly turning this central thing into either a heavenly creature or a hellish creature."

Continued on page 23

HOME FOR THE WORLD

The Story of MRA - 19

By Rex Dilly

WHAT WAS IT that made a person born into wealth and privilege decide to give her money and 40-roomed home to bring Moral Re-Armament to her nation and the world?

Irene Prestwich was part of Manchester's social life with musical and artistic interests. Her father was a prosperous mill-owner. In 1912 he decided to move to a larger country house and took over Tirley Garth, 12 miles from Chester.

Now the family - father and mother and two daughters - found themselves among people absorbed in hunting, bridge parties, race meetings and beautiful gardens, with little time for anything else. Life took on a new brightness.

These halcyon days were soon disturbed by World War I and Irene flung herself into working in a YMCA canteen for soldiers.

After the war, life at Tirley "seemed to have lost something of its freshness and flavour". "Perhaps", Irene wrote, "the sacrifices of the war had awakened a hunger for a purpose in life that was worth giving anything for."

In spite of a Christian upbringing Irene had no real faith. She had tried to help a woman whose problem was drink and had failed. She was

confused by many of the prevailing ideas and trends. Life was without direction and meaning - and aggravated by the fact that she did not get on with her sister. The situation became so bad that she consulted a psychiatrist, who, unaware that the two sisters lived in Tirley Garth, suggested that they move to a larger house!

"Then came an event" she says, "which led to a change in my whole life". Her sister went to a conference which the Oxford Group (forerunner of MRA) was holding. She came back "radiant" and gave such a description of the people she met that Irene decided she would go to the very next meeting.

She was greatly struck to meet young men and women giving leadership. "They had decided", she wrote, "to live by absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, and obey the guidance that God gives to people wholly given to Him. They were effective

where I had not been. So upstairs in a rather depressing bedroom in the hotel, I committed myself to this way of life."

She saw that a resentment in her life, "like a bad tooth", was poisoning everything. So she immediately wrote a letter "admitting my own blame and saying I was sorry".

"The result," she said, "was an extraordinary new freedom and a desire to pass on this experience to others." There followed an entirely new relationship with her sister.

Irene was now on a new and exciting road. She began to see things with new eyes.

One day she was thinking of the 2,000 people who came each year to see the gardens on the 'open days'. A thought occurred to her as clearly as a voice speaking. "Why not these 2,000 coming with their problems - and going out with God?" As she pondered this, she had another thought. "This is what I am meant to do with my life and my home: to bring change to thousands."

Her mother died just before World War II

and her father not long after it started.

It dawned on her that with many offices moving out of London away from the enemy target area, she might

offer Tirley to accommodate the H.Q. of MRA.

Within a week desks, beds and furniture began to arrive and 40 people moved in. Tirley Garth was being transformed into a conference and training centre.

Irene Prestwich died at the age of 90 in 1974 but her vision has come true.

This year Tirley Garth celebrates 50 years of service to people of many nations. It has been a meeting place for young people who want to understand the forces that run the world and have a part in changing them; for men and women from both sides of industry eager to find a sound basis for teamwork; for national and civic leaders searching for the way to build unity. People from education, the Health Service, different ethnic groups and families have come to confer. A visiting Australian Cabinet Minister called it "a centre of statesmanship for the ordinary man and woman".



Pelham Grenville Wodehouse (1881-1975)

PG Wodehouse has a good claim to be the most amusing writer ever in the English language. Both his stories, and innumerable phrases in his stories, are wonderfully funny (thus, he says of one character that, "though he had celebrated. . . by rising late and breakfasting later, he had become aware by now of that not unpleasant emptiness which is the silent luncheon-gong of the soul). Also, like CS Lewis (but with no serious purpose), he created imaginary worlds which have given huge pleasure to very large numbers of readers, and in so doing made the real one that much more bearable. His books are so enjoyable and refreshing in part because they have no 'purpose' or 'message' (except perhaps that the good guys generally beat the bad ones in the end; that aunts can sometimes be a good thing and sometimes a bad, but are invariably very noisy; and that golf is a pretty well essential element in any normal and contented life) but are designed to entertain and to transport us temporarily to an imagined (and utterly delightful) world.

Wodehouse is largely remembered as an author, and in particular as the creator of Bertie Wooster and his valet, Jeeves, but it is worth noting that, at the beginning of his career, he had a very successful period as a musical comedy writer on Broadway. He worked with Jerome Kern and George Gershwin, among others, on a string of hit musicals, with titles like 'Oh Boy', 'Oh, Lady! Lady!' and 'Show Boat'.

I can do no better than quote from two of the books (altogether he wrote not far short of a hundred). One of the best is 'Heart of a Goof', a series of short stories about golf. The book has the best dedication I have read: "To my daughter Leonora, without whose never-failing sympathy and encouragement this book would have been finished in half the time." The message of the stories is that a proper devotion to golf and true love are inextricably linked. Thus, in one of the stories, Jane has foolishly become engaged to (the loathsome) Rodney, who reveals his true colours by refusing to retrieve Jane's bag of clubs from the bottom of a stream. Jane's eyes are opened to her folly, and she turns to William (who does retrieve the clubs):

"I was mad, mad, ever to get engaged to that brute!"

'Now there,' said William Bates, removing an eel from his left breast-pocket, 'I'm absolutely with you. Thought so all along, but didn't like to say so. What I mean is, a girl like you - keen on golf and all that sort of thing - ought to marry a chap like me - keen on golf and everything of that description.'

'William,' cried Jane, passionately, detaching a newt from her right ear, 'I will!'

'Silly nonsense, when you come right down to it, your marrying a fellow who doesn't play golf.

Nothing in it.'"

One of the best moments in his books comes in 'Right Ho, Jeeves', when Bertie Wooster's friend, Gussie Fink-Nottle (who has just got engaged but - although a confirmed teetotaler - has got completely drunk in order to work up the courage to propose) presides over a prize giving at Market Snodsbury Grammar School. There is not space to quote the passage in full, so some extracts will have to suffice:

" 'Gentlemen,' said Gussie, 'I mean ladies and gentlemen and, of course, boys, what a beautiful world this is. A beautiful world, full of happiness on every side. . . This is the end of the summer term and many of you, no doubt, are leaving the school. And I don't blame you, because there's a froust in here you can cut with a knife. And what I want to impress upon you is that, however much you may suffer from adenoids, you must all use every effort to prevent yourself becoming pessimists and talking rot like old Tom Travers [Bertie's uncle]. There in the second row. The fellow with a face rather like a walnut.'

[Eventually, he is persuaded to move to the prize-giving itself].

'Spelling and dictation - P. K. Purvis,' said Gussie. 'Forward, P. K. Purvis.'

The spelling and dictation champ was about three foot six in his squeaking shoes, with a pink face and sandy hair.

'You P. K. Purvis?'

'Sir, yes, sir.'

'It's a beautiful world, P. K. Purvis.'

'Sir, yes, sir.'

'Ah, you've noticed it, have you? Good. You married, by any chance?'

'Sir, no, sir.'

'Get married, P. K. Purvis. It is the only life. . . Well, here's your book. Looks rather bilge to me from a glance at the title page, but, such as it is, here you are.'

[G. G. Simmons, the winner of the Scripture-knowledge prize, then stepped forward].

'Well, G. G. Simmons.'

'Sir, yes, sir.'

'What do you mean - sir, yes, sir? Dashed silly thing to say. So you've won

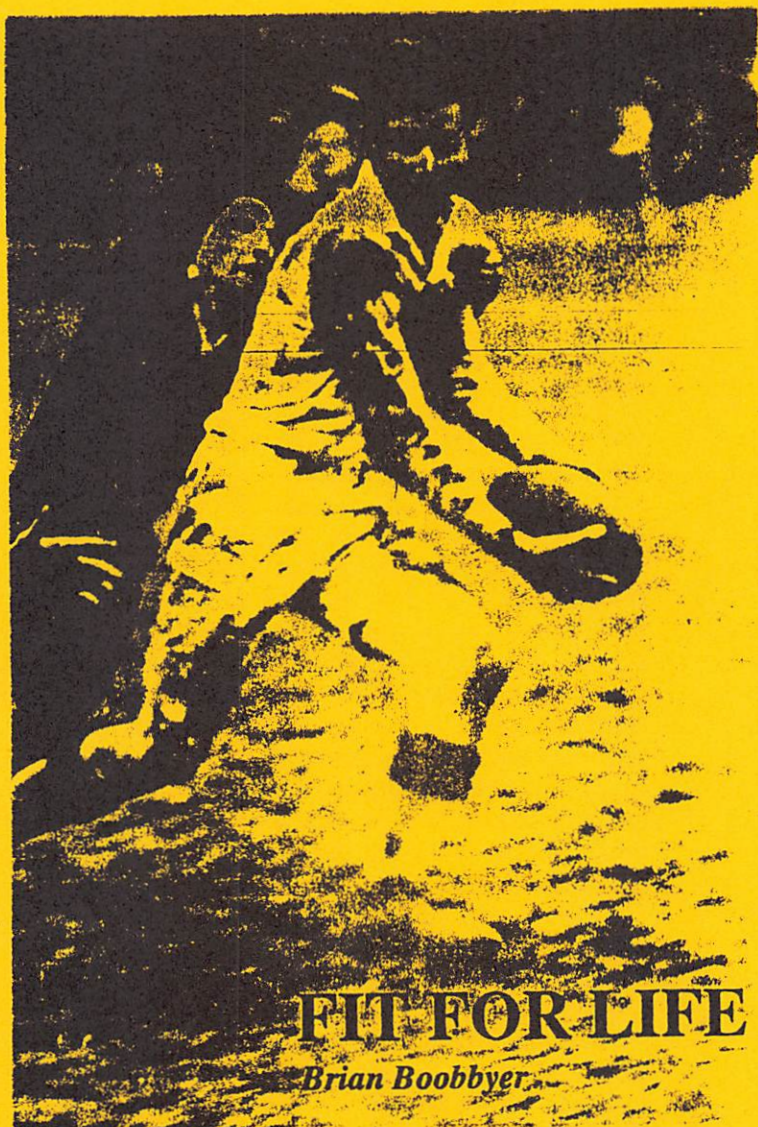
the Scripture-knowledge prize, have you?'

'Sir, yes, sir.'

'Yes,' said Gussie, 'you look just the sort of little tick who would. And yet,' he said, pausing and eyeing the child keenly, 'how are we to know that this has all been open and above board? Let me test you, G. G. Simmons. Who was What's-His-Name - the chap who begat Thingummy? Can you answer me that, Simmons?'

'Sir, no., sir.'

'Fishy,' Gussie said, 'very fishy. This boy appears to be totally lacking in Scripture knowledge.'"



*We are happy to announce the publication of **Fit For Life**, a collection of the articles Brian Boobbyer has written for Freeway during the last four years.*

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