

Archbishops matter

IN OCTOBER last year the Archbishops of Canterbury and York launched a Call in which the nation was asked to consider two questions:

- What sort of society do we want?
- What sort of people do we need to be in order to achieve it?

The Call drew enthusiastic support as well as considerable opposition, particularly from some clergy. Organs of Left and Right disapproved for conflicting reasons. Some thought the Call an interference in politics — some maintained that it was not political enough. But more than 27,000 people took the trouble to write to the Archbishop of Canterbury; thousands also to the Archbishop of York — and almost every letter reflected a positive reaction.

In his Call the Archbishop of Canterbury stressed the importance of the individual, of the family, of work and of attitudes.

'I am not offering a detailed plan or any kind of blueprint as a way out of her troubles for Britain,' he said. 'There are no easy answers to our problems. But unless there is a concerted effort to lift our whole national debate up into the moral sphere we shall never find the answers.'

Now a book *Dear Archbishop* has been published this week as the next stage in the official 'follow up'. Written by John Poulton, Secretary of the Archbishops' Council on Evangelism, the book analyses the letters which arrived at Lambeth Palace after the Call. It has a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Donald Coggan.

Issues of moment

Dr Coggan ends his foreword with these words, 'Now that England is talking about issues of moment in a way that it has not done for a very long time; now that men are beginning to glimpse the truth that Jesus was right when he said that man cannot live on bread, on mere material things, alone, it is time for them to be challenged with the prophetic challenge: "If the Lord be God, then serve him; if Baal, then serve him." Make up your mind, one way or another.'

'Let us not be fearful that such a challenge is divisive. It needs to be. The Prince of Peace came to bring a sword — such is the paradox at the heart of our faith, and we must not shrink from it. It is a great moment when a man, in the desperation of his own sinfulness and hopelessness, cries out: "Lord, to whom else can I go? You have the words of eternal life." That desperation is the way to a new birth.'

Next week another book may take the debate a stage further. It is *Rebirth of a Nation?* by Garth Lean. We print an extract

from Lean's concluding chapter — an open letter to the two Archbishops (see inside).

At a press conference this week to launch *Dear Archbishop*, the Archbishop of Canterbury said, 'Reactions to the Call have clearly shown that there is concern over divisiveness in the nation. They show a longing not for uniformity but for a willingness to work together; not for consensus for the sake of peace and quiet or to bolster up the status quo. Change must be welcomed. We cannot be sure, nor should we wish, that all our ways of doing things should survive. It is the way we face changes that decides the fate of the whole family of the nation.'

The author of *Dear Archbishop*, the Rev John Poulton, said, 'The Archbishop in his way and Solzhenitsyn in his way caught a moment and brought the concern of ordinary people into focus.'

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**NEW
WORLD
NEWS**
FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

the family matters



THE FAMILY MATTERS — a theme suggested by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his Call and illustrated by Janet Bouch. This is one of a set of three posters (15" x 20"): A — 'The family matters' (green), B — 'There's enough in the world for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed' (brown), C — 'A change in society starts with a change in me' (orange). They are available from Grosvenor Books. Price 25p each (p+p 15p) or 3 sets for £1.80 (p+p 20p).

Welcome truth?

6The Archbishops of Canterbury and York and Alexander Solzhenitsyn have done Britain a great service. They have reminded us of facts about ourselves which we try to ignore by pretending they do not exist. The churlish — and sometimes even near-hysterical — reaction of many to their diagnosis is a sign of our sickness rather than of their inaccuracy.

"Are we now a society that welcomes truth," asks *The Times*, "or one that prefers the comfortable lie?" The basic lie is that our troubles are due to someone else — the gnomes of Zurich or the oil sheikhs, the capitalists or the Labour Government. The truth is that our difficulties are caused by the thinking and living of all of us.

Here too lies the opportunity. What we have all caused, we can each start to remedy. There are many signs that this is at last being recognised. The mature reaction of most trade unionists to the Chancellor's demands for restraint is one such sign. Another is the 27,000 letters, almost all positive, sent to the Archbishops in response to their conviction that every individual counts — a response which the Archbishop of York estimates (on normal BBC standards) as indicating the concurrence of at least three million people.

It may be that the Holy Spirit of God is working in many ways — seen and unseen — to bring a new realism into millions of lives. Yet many of the millions who have been so stirred are finding it hard to see what they individually can do to influence events.

We believe that everyone has an inbuilt capacity to determine the difference between right and wrong and that if we exercise it, in the light of Christ's absolute moral standards, we will each be shown what to do. 'If any lack wisdom,' wrote St James, 'let him ask of God who gives to all without question, and the gift is his.' That wisdom is still available to those who listen and obey.

Many who have done so in this past year have as a result launched fresh initiatives.9

From the Annual Report of The Oxford Group (1975), which was published this week. Available from the Treasurer, The Oxford Group, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF (20p p+p).

DEAR ARCHBISHOP

by John Poulton
(Hodder and Stoughton)
60p plus 20p p+p

REBIRTH OF A NATION?

by Garth Lean
(Blandford)
90p (£1.95 hardback) plus 20p p+p

Available from your bookseller,
or from MRA Books.

Dear Archbishops,*

You asked us all for suggestions how your initiative could best be carried forward. Here are mine, which are addressed as much to myself and all other Christians as to you. For we are all on trial together. When the balance sheet of this initiative is made, the test will not be what anyone has said, but how deeply each of us has allowed himself to be changed and how effectively or otherwise we have all worked together to change society.

The change that is needed is something more than personal, something which takes us beyond exhortation, protest or church attendances. It will only affect the nation if it reaches down to our inner motives and spreads out into public policy.

First, we must live our full faith — but keep our vision national, as you did in your original Call. We must put forward our aims in terms which everyone can understand and anyone can immediately apply, however little, much or even lack of faith he may have. We can trust the Holy Spirit to lead not just churchmen, but everyone, into all truth. He is not our monopoly. Our danger now, as through the centuries is that we fight so strenuously to cut Him down to fit our convenience and narrow understanding.

Second, we must expect the most from each other. People will not respond to less than the fullest challenge, and if they did, it would be ineffective. The present crisis — and still more the hidden crises which loom ahead — demand nothing less than our aiming, in His strength, to be 'perfect'. And that is true whether we believe in God or not.

Of course, we will not manage it — or get anywhere near it. But unless we aim for the best we know, we shall do a lot worse. Hence the value of absolute standards. 'It is a mark of the shallowness of Western life,' wrote Professor William Hocking, 'that it should be thought to be a conceit to recognise an absolute and a humility to consider all standards relative, when it is precisely the opposite. It is only the absolute that rebukes our pride.'

Why is it that Mother Teresa of Calcutta has such a flood of young people wanting to work with her — far more than she can use? It would seem that holiness is more appealing than trendiness, that chastity is more joyful than what-we-can-get-away-with with a fairly good conscience, that a challenge to the limit brings more hope and satisfaction than being asked to approve of something.

Third, we need to be willing to be seen as we really are. The Bishop of Liverpool and Mrs Sheppard recently told a television audience about themselves — their weak-

nesses and sorrows as well as their joys and beliefs. At the end of it, thousands upon thousands felt that they had made new friends. How refreshing it would be if every politician, industrialist, trade union leader and churchman was prepared, as occasion arises, to be equally honest. To admit where we have been wrong instead of spotlighting where the other fellow has erred. To acknowledge our fears instead of whistling in the dark. Would not that bridge the gap between politicians and people — and between the Church and the ordinary man?

Fourth, we Christians should heed the wisdom of that great Swedish Archbishop, Nathan Söderblöm, who once said: 'One changed life is more eloquent than many sermons.' The time for exhortation is past. But if hundreds upon hundreds of Christians could come forward now, in the factory and the shop, on television and in the Press, and show that a definite change has come into their lives, that would encourage others.

The battle for national rebirth will not be won by any one church, group, class or party. It will be everyone's victory — or everyone's defeat. Or rather if victory there be, it will be that of God's larger plan working out, through or in spite of us all.

This initiative will provoke opposition. You have experienced a little of this in recent months and you will experience much more if you press your message home. You could receive the modern equivalent of the treatment which your church and mine accorded to John Wesley when he fought his long battle for Britain two centuries ago.

When you were translated to Canterbury, Dr Coggan, a distinguished bishop is said to have written that you were capable of bringing about within the Church of England a revolution as great as that achieved by Pope John in Rome. But the revolution required is, as you have seen, something far greater than a revolution in the Church. It needs to be the revolution whereby the Churches of Christ transforms not only all the Churches, but the nation and the world.

The Church of England, with its vast resources of property and manpower, obviously has a key part to play. What we need to seek together is a strategy adequate for the task.

The result must be in the hand of God, for as Wilberforce said at a difficult moment: 'God has given the very small increase there has been and must give all if there is to be more.' But experience shows that if people are united on what God wants them to do and on how they should do it, great things come to pass.

Yours sincerely,

Garth Lean.

*An extract from the last chapter of Garth Lean's new book 'Rebirth of a Nation?', which takes the form of an open letter to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

AMERICAN CONFERENCES:

The Richmond way

by Randy Ruffin

A SOCIAL WORKER and his librarian wife, a portrait artist, an administrator in the state health department, a ballroom dancing teacher, a recent college graduate and a businessman were among the initiators of an MRA conference in Richmond, Virginia at the end of May. Richmond, a city of about 300,000, was the capital of the Confederacy and is today the state capital.

The conference theme was 'A new way of doing things' and the invitation stated: 'We are ordinary people who believe we need to find a new way of doing things ...in our homes, schools, communities, work and our nation. Many of our friends are discouraged or disillusioned. Some are cynical. Most feel powerless. We feel there is a way that gives hope.'

The conference was one of a series of regional gatherings that have been called by people in New Jersey, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota and California, as well as Virginia.

A highlight of the weekend was the reading of the musical *Sam*, a play by Anne Wolrige Gordon based on an allegory by Peter Howard, produced with the help of Muriel Smith.

This gave a new thinking for America, as *Sam*, a circus strong man, realises that his strength, wealth and bravado create hostility all around him and that honesty, humility

and a readiness to serve, open people's hearts and make genuine friendships and teamwork possible.

The lead parts were taken by Neil Cline, a Lutheran minister, Winston Jones, a mail carrier, Muriel Smith, the well known mezzo soprano, Susan Lecky, a lobbyist for the Farm Bureau, David Harrison, a British immigrant now working with Allied Chemical Corporation, and Catherine Brincefield, a college student.

Dick Ruffin, a former Rhodes Scholar now living in Richmond, stressed the need for a repentant America. 'We have heard so little of the native Americans in the Bicentennial and it is their country,' he said. 'Time and distance do not separate us from the wrongs of the past. Only repentance can cure these. I need to repent and restore to the Indian people.'

Robbed of dignity

'For the black Americans, too, the Bicentennial is not all celebration. For centuries we wronged the bonded Americans and robbed them of their dignity. One of my ancestors campaigned across the country for slavery. How wrong that was and I have fully been part of it and ask forgiveness of the blacks here. I need to change and I have changed, and we must go forward together in a new spirit.'

Several of the invitation committee spoke at the opening session. Virginia Sanders, who is active in civic affairs and whose ancestors were in the House of Burgesses, the first elected assembly in the country, said that many white people had left Richmond because of racial problems. 'I hope,' she went on, 'that I can see more clearly how I can be instrumental in changing the direction in which the city is going, because if our forefathers could change the direction in which the country went, and we boast about it, we can do it too. But it takes a lot of courage to take a stand.'

New England healing

PEOPLE from all parts of New England and neighbouring states met together in Boston for a Bicentennial planning day in mid-May. They were concerned at the growing radicalisation of Boston through racism, hate and greed.

The initiative was launched by Mr and Mrs Jack Hill from Boston. They had recently visited Ireland, they said, and had found fresh perspective on the issues facing their own area. There was a need to bring healing and change to the hearts of those most deeply divided over the issues of integration and bussing in the city.

Another young couple talked of their commitment to the city. Mr and Mrs Link Murray have recently returned to the USA from Rhodesia where they met MRA a year ago at a conference in Salisbury. Their

decision, on returning to Boston, was to give up their comfortable life in the suburbs and move to the largely Irish Catholic area of South Boston. There they have witnessed the increasing tension and violence over the last months.

Their own story of finding a revolutionary faith, which led to their decision to become involved in the urban issues, so impressed their minister, Father Sibert, that he decided to attend the conference with them.

Colonel Tran Doun Thuong and Dr Kim Nu Doh, both recently arrived with their families as refugees from Vietnam, helped bring an awareness of the ideological struggle in the world, and they pleaded with Americans to accept God's guidance and absolute moral standards as the only answer to violence. ■



John Morrison, a university administrator, speaks with his wife of their initiative which saved 1,000 redundancies. Photo: Rip Thomsen

Attending the conference along with Virginians were people from other states and from Canada, Britain, Australia, Nigeria and South Africa.

The retired Anglican Bishop of Lagos, Nigeria, the Rt Rev S I Kale, who was at the conference with his wife, said, 'MRA is a force doing things and forcing people to take action.' He spoke of his country's search for 'a new way of doing things' that would bring stability and unselfish living.

June Chabaku, social worker, drama teacher and Chairperson of the International Woman's Year Committee for South Africa, said, 'I have come from South Africa to see what Richmond has to offer the world. I see your big cars and your sprawling university campus. Where are your big hearts? Where is your big faith?' She spoke movingly of the pain she felt when she saw people who did not have enough, or who were unjustly treated, and challenged us to work 'to restore the dignity of mankind under God'.

Miss Chabaku, who is in the country on an information gathering tour sponsored by the Institute of International Education in co-operation with the State Department, had requested that this conference be included in her programme.

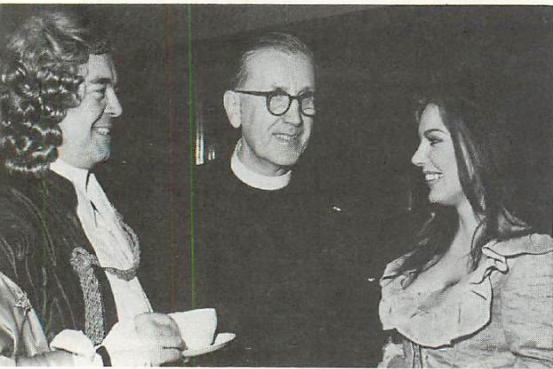
Something different

Illustrating the conference theme, John Morrison, an administrator in the Department of Adult and Continuing Education at Glasboro State University in New Jersey, told how he had decided to 'take a stand and do something totally different' in a crisis situation involving approximately 1,000 redundancies and consequent hostility in the State higher education system. Although his own position was affected, he decided to give up any bitterness and fear and to open doors between the students, the teachers' union and a high administration official.

Through his commitment to find a way other than confrontation, and through the teamwork he helped to create, a solution was found, involving union acceptance of no cost of living pay hikes and retention of all who were to be laid off.

This story so interested one man attending the conference that he brought in a member of the state House of Delegates, a university professor who was in a similar situation of conflict, to meet Morrison.

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The President of the Methodist Conference, A Raymond George, who attended 'Ride! Ride!' last week, with Brendan Barry and Caroline Villiers.

RICHMOND WAY contd from p3

Jim Houck, a retired businessman from Baltimore, Maryland, told of his decision some years ago to make friends of long-shoremen (dockers) in that city's port. Recounting the story of one dockworker who had been indicted for bribery and sentenced to prison and who had recently experienced a dramatic change of heart, Houck said, 'We are beginning to think in terms of exporting the idea from the port that people can be different.' He was planning to go shortly to Washington with that docker to share their convictions and experiences.

A newspaper printer, Howard Murray, told of his meeting with Frank Buchman thirty years ago and his subsequent fight in the Virginia State Legislature, of which he was a member, to remove from the statute books segregation laws which had been there since 1902. They are all gone today. Referring to Buchman's vision that labour led by God could lead the world, Murray said, 'I want to commit myself to that for the rest of the time I have.'

His wife Josie said, 'God has had to deal drastically with my nature — to cut out the roots of self-righteousness and piosity and get at the motives.'

'I've shirked'

On the Saturday afternoon the conference broke up into workshops on the themes: 'Character-building in home and school — how can we do it better?'; 'What to do with difficult people — like me?'; 'Can we show that honesty and unselfishness can be the bases of relationships between nations?'; 'How can we make our faith relevant in our communities, industries and nation?'

Acceptance of responsibility, regardless of one's sense of inadequacy, was a keynote of the weekend. Winston Jones, postal worker, father of eight and school Parent Teacher Association President, said at the close of the conference, 'I've shirked responsibility — not by saying no, but by being out of the way when responsibility came along. I have decided to give my life to God. I have the conviction that I have a part to play.'

Ride out of the night

ACTOR BRENDAN BARRY said last week that Britain was going through a time of testing. 'It has forgotten where it is going,' he told a meeting in London.

Barry, who plays the part of the Rev Henry Hobart in *Ride! Ride!*, said that this new musical based on an episode in the life of John Wesley was relevant to a country and a world which was being taken over 'by the feeling of lethargy, couldn't care less and I'm owed a living'.

'I don't think our rights are terribly important to anybody else except ourselves,' he said. 'But our duties are. What we do for other people and how we do our jobs is the most important thing. If one does one's duty one's rights automatically happen. We've got things reversed.'

The distinguished actor said that he, like the country, had been 'going through the dark night of the soul.' 'I am now coming out the other side,' he said. 'And one of the things that has helped me is my association with this play.'

As an actor, he went on, he had over the years accepted parts he didn't want to play merely to keep the wolf from the door. 'I am thrilled by *Ride! Ride!* because I love the theatre and I try to bring to my job my feeling about religion and the state of the world.'

'I am a Catholic and what has helped me through my life is my religion, although it ceased to mean anything other than going through the motions. *Ride! Ride!* has helped me re-find my religion.'

Barry, a Catholic playing the part of an Anglican in a Methodist show, said, 'I am glad to see the Methodists are the first in this field. And I'm going to have a word with my own Archbishop. I don't want to be beaten by the Methodists!'

Striking features

AN HOUR-LONG FEATURE on John Wesley, seen largely through the musical *Ride! Ride!*, was broadcast on LBC, the London radio station.

With music from the show, and interviews with the author, composer, producer and two principal actors, the programme looked at John Wesley's life and work, its relevance today, and the use of the theatre to reach 20th century audiences with his message.

Commenting on *Ride! Ride!*, the LBC presenter said: As a show it grabs the mind and the enthusiasm of those on Wesley's side.... However, the worldly-wise press are a little more cynical and rough about it.

'The crowd scenes are well-staged, the backcloth of 18th Century Hogarth prints is impressive, and I found the Bedlam scene moving.'

Canadian understanding

THE MINISTER of Indian Affairs, Judd Buchanan, ten Senators, 26 MPs and members of the *Song of Asia* force rose to welcome the Chiefs, Councillors and Representatives of Treaty Number 7 at a dinner in their honour in the Canadian Federal Parliament buildings in Ottawa last week. Also present were American Indian Movement (AIM) leaders Ed Burnstick and Roy Littlechief.

A joint-party committee, consisting of Senator Chesley Carter, Senator Paul Yuzyk, Walter Dinsdale MP and William Andres MP, sponsored the occasion.

Yesterday has gone

After the dinner and a brief presentation by *Song of Asia*, Stoney Indian Chief Bill McLean said, 'I feel if the Canadian Government could only understand us at grassroots level, both sides could find a solution.'

Nelson Small Legs Senior sat next to Indian Affairs Minister Buchanan. Referring to his son's recent suicide in the Indian cause, the Piegan Councillor said, 'I was bitter in the first place, but today I am not.

What happened yesterday has gone, but we will learn from it.'

Senator Yuzyk concluded the evening saying, 'The fact that Indian Chiefs are with us helps us understand their problems.' He assured the Chiefs that the parliamentarians present would co-operate in solving their problems through 'consultation rather than confrontation'.

Earlier the Chiefs of Treaty Number 7 in Southern Alberta led the cast of *Song of Asia* through the audience onto the stage of the Ottawa Commerce High School at the start of their presentation. The Treaty Chiefs were joined by Ed Burnstick, the Canadian Chairman of AIM, and Nelson Small Legs Senior.

Blackfoot Chief Leo Pretty Young Man introduced the evening on behalf of the Chiefs who had initiated *Song of Asia's* visit to the Federal Capital.

Arnold Crowchild, Chairman of the Sarcee Development Corporation, spoke at the end of the performance. 'It may be the last chance we Indians have to give Canada something to live for,' he said. He concluded, 'I give all my time and energy, and challenge you to the same battle. The next century may be too late.'