

# NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

● A HANDSOME MEMORIAL PLAQUE to John and Charles Wesley stands in Westminster Abbey. Beneath it are John's words, 'I look upon all the world as my parish.'

But never in all their life-time were John or Charles asked to preach in the Abbey, and of many of the churches where John did preach he would write in his journal: 'Preached for the first, and, I suppose, the last time in...' or 'I do not imagine I shall be asked again.'

Yet John Wesley in his day was probably the best-known, best-loved man in England. Historians claim that it was his work that helped to turn the nation from the bloody violence of the French Revolution to a more constructive and far-reaching revolution of the spirit. To hundreds of thousands of ordinary men and women he gave a sense that they mattered, that they had an identity in heaven and on earth, that they were needed and loved by God and by man.

## Little Wesleys

The new life in Christ that he proclaimed unceasingly for more than fifty years spilled out into social reform, new institutions and legislation. It helped to create schools, colleges, trade unions, and it brought a new sense of order and compassion to private and public life.

No wonder people say today, 'What we need is another Wesley.' It was Frank Buchman who, in reply to this, said: 'Maybe what we need is a lot of little Wesleys.' A John Wesley or a Winston Churchill may appear once in a century. Lesser Wesleys or lesser Churchills, with the same conviction, and working together for similar ends, may do as much to save a civilisation or usher in a new age.

This is the conviction behind the new musical *Ride! Ride!*. When Dr Maldwyn Edwards, the notable Methodist preacher and Wesley scholar, died suddenly last month, saw the play *Mr Wilberforce MP*, he said, 'Now you must write a play about Wesley.'

## Into Bedlam

It seemed impossible to crowd onto a small stage in two or three hours a tumultuous life of ninety years full of endless journeys and vast crowds. 'Will you give me,' I said, 'a true story of one of Wesley's innumerable adventures with people? I might possibly find the way to turn it into a play.'

Within a week he sent me the extraordinary tale of Martha Thompson, a young Lancashire girl who ran away from home to seek adventure in London, where she fell in with Wesley and his followers, became converted, and as a result was thrust into Bedlam by an unscrupulous master. How John Wesley rescued her from Bedlam, and personally escorted her riding pillion behind him

# 'Where's the horse?'

by  
Alan Thornhill  
co-author  
of  
*RIDE!  
RIDE!*



back to her family in Preston, is as exciting and moving a story as you can find.

The play has been brilliantly set to music by Penelope Thwaites and directed by Nancy Ruthven, with a Methodist minister, Leslie Marsh, giving an unforgettable portrayal of John Wesley. It has for the last two years been presented at the annual Methodist conference. Now, inspired and organised by an indomitable and imaginative spiritual impresario, Dr John Gibbs, it has played for a week in the University theatre in Cardiff, with a cast of seventy drawn from choral and drama groups in South Wales. The production includes several children and a bulldog. This week they give two further performances at the Westminster

Theatre in London.

There is one other veteran fighter and true disciple of Wesley who has played a special part in the whole venture. The Reverend Dr Benson Perkins, like Wesley, lived to be over ninety. Like Wesley, he never let up in his passion for souls and his fight for the life of Britain, to the day of his death only last month. He, like Wesley, had his occasional difficulties with the Church of England.

## Writer badgered

In 1955, when he was Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, the Industrial Council of the Anglican Church Assembly came out with a report on Moral Re-Armament, which he regarded as 'tendentious and unbalanced'. 'The tragedy would be,' he said, 'if the Church of England, misled by this report, repeated the disaster of the eighteenth century in condemning an evangelistic movement which in its essential nature is born of the spirit of God.' He not only answered the report point by point in the press. He went personally to Lambeth to plead and fight that the report be put where it belonged.

Not long after that, and every year since, he urged, and at times badgered this writer for the play about Wesley. His kindness, his immense knowledge and his encouragement knew no bounds.

When he was over ninety he travelled to London from Birmingham and back the same night to see the first unveiling of *Ride! Ride!*. I can see him bending forward in the first row intent on every word. Half way through, he called me over to say, 'It's very good, but where's the horse?' At the end he added, 'Some of my older colleagues may be a little surprised, but this is of God. It is a dream come true.'

It was his vision that the spirit of Wesley should ride again. There is a growing army who share that determination with him.



## THINK ABOUT IT

*'Any state which puts its welfare before that of humanity, contributes to misery'*

RECENTLY a well-known British political figure, Sir Keith Joseph, called for the 'remoralisation' of Britain. He said that politicians should approach the public, who know that economics are not everything, 'as whole men, rather than economic men'.

He went on, 'Should we not deal with matters which concern the nation: respect for other people, for law, the welfare of young people, the state of family life, the moral welfare of all the people, cultural values, public-spiritedness or its lack, national defence, and the tone of national life?'

He pointed out that such words as good and evil, such stress on self-discipline and standards, have been out of favour since the war, with the 'new establishment'. 'They have preferred the permissive society and at the same time, the collectivised society.'

### REWARDING

Whether or not one agrees with Sir Keith politically—and many would disagree with one of the more class-conscious conclusions raised by his speech—a study of his diagnosis and a search for cure along the lines of the remoralisation of the country would be rewarding.

When Karl Marx and Frederick Engels produced their 'Communist Manifesto' in 1848, there was a response from those who were disenchanted with society as it was. Capitalism in its laissez-faire form had produced many anomalies during the industrial revolution. The 'proletariat' described by Marx in *Das Kapital* were indeed downtrodden. The rich were getting richer. The poor poorer. Already it seemed that capitalism had been tried and found wanting.

Today, despite many modifications, capitalism does not enthuse those who want to see a just society. It seems to have lost its thrust and dynamism, even

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'I THINK we should do something about it.'

The words were from Ali, a twelve-year-old member of my Social Studies class. We were discussing the problems involved in the world-wide pollution of the environment.

'What would you suggest?' I asked.

'Clean up the playing field after classes today,' was his reply.

I was somewhat surprised by this practical assumption of responsibility, but, on asking if others would like to help, a half-dozen held up their hands. That afternoon on the field Ali and I were the only volunteers who appeared. He obviously felt let down by his classmates, but we went ahead with the task and at the end deposited the rubbish in largely unused bins placed at the gates. The contrast, however, between our puny action and the world-wide need was still evident.

### Menial work

The next day at the start of class the usual excuses were offered: 'I forgot': 'My mother told me to come home': 'I had to catch the bus'. A plan was made, nevertheless, for a clean-up in a week's time. Several more boys appeared on this occasion, but a new hindrance developed: bystanders began chanting, 'Garbage pickers, garbage pickers'. The boys were not prepared for this kind of assault. The cultural abhorrence by many educated people in this part of the world of so-called 'menial work' is very real. When it came time in our class to plan our next step, we were in a dilemma.

Before taking up my work in this school in 1970 I had long believed that God could direct us in the minor as well as the major decisions of life. It became my practice to start each class with one minute of quiet. I told the pupils that I hoped each would use this time to think of anything he wanted to tell the class.

At first most of the boys were mystified by the idea, or thought it a joke. I usually had several thoughts which I wrote down. These often illustrated some points in the lesson. Occasionally I thought of something wrong I had done, and, when it applied to the boys, I told them about it. Shyness and disbelief had in the beginning inhibited any responses from the class. Ali's had been one of the first creative ideas from their side.

On the morning after our group clean-up I shared my thought that we should not be discouraged by others' misunderstanding of our aim. Ali's contribution was: 'Let's start a club, open to the whole school, where we not only clean up the campus but also plant some trees and flowers.'

'What shall we call it?' someone asked.

'Protect Our Planet,' was the inspired reply. 'P O P Club.'

# Protect Our Planet

by Charles D Brodhead  
an instructor at International  
Beirut, Lebanon

Having selected a site on unused barren ground near the school cafeteria for our first garden bed and borrowed some tools, I soon found that the boys did not know how to use them. Furthermore, having lived most of my life in a moist, cool climate I also was baffled by what to do with the hard-baked soil of an eastern Mediterranean country. I knew that the wife of the president of the neighbouring university was an accomplished landscape gardener, so a delegation of boys called on her with an invitation to give us some advice. She was immediately interested and came to inspect the area.

'You need to excavate it a foot deep, sieve out the stones from the soil and put it back mixed with compost,' was her diagnosis.

'But we don't have any compost,' I said. (The boys did not even know the meaning of the word.)

'Get the college sweepers to give you the leaves they clean up under the trees and burn,' she explained. 'Mix and cover them with earth, wet them, and in several months you will have compost.'

### Practical level

The boys' initiative had attracted the interest of our Middle School Director and he gave us an hour for our activity in the school programme; he also advanced some money to buy some cement and trowels to be used in laying a masonry kerb between a car drive-way and the proposed flower-bed. It began to dawn on me that we had at our finger tips the opportunity to demonstrate some important dimensions in education:

1. We had already brought a world problem, 'environmental pollution', down from the level of academic discussion and of frustration at its overwhelming size and complexity, to the level where ordinary people could start combating it by cleaning up their own yards and streets.
2. If we could help the boys overcome the indifference, diffidence, selfishness and jealousies, which often prevent the best plans from working on a national or world scale, perhaps the faith acquired on our projects could be used in their later adult affairs.



# r Planet

onal College,



I explained this second point to the boys in class with a statement that I believed that the power which created the world, which I called God, could give us thoughts, if we listened quietly, which would tell us the right thing to do on any part of our projects: Was it selfish or unselfish? Was it helpful to others or not? These standards would help us decide rightly.

## Ostentatious act

We therefore began each activity with a *minute of quiet*. Instead of quarrelling over who was to do what, the boys began to say, 'I think I should use the pick'; another would say, 'I think I should shovel', or 'I will bring water for the cement', or 'I will rake leaves' or 'I will sieve out the stones from the soil.' One of my first thoughts which proved helpful was: 'In this Club no person should give orders, each member is to get his own direction.' The unusual experience of an efficient division of labour, of individually inspired motivation, was my reward.

It is true that occasionally two boys would have conflicting ideas and I would call for another minute for reflection, which on nearly every occasion resolved difficulty. Sometimes one or more boys professed having no ideas about what they should do. My response would be: 'Just sit down over there until you see something that needs to be done.' It would happen that some drifted away as a result, but new boys kept on joining us, so we never lacked a team to do the necessary work.

The reader may be wondering what had become of our original concern with 'environmental pollution'. It was not forgotten. My thought at the beginning of class one day was: 'We shall only get the world cleaned up if each one of us is willing to do what we want others to do.' For me this meant picking up trash dropped along corridors and on pathways between buildings. I began to do it ostentatiously, to the amusement of the pupils and amazement of other teachers. Some of my boys began to join me. Now, instead of being called 'garbage pickers', we began to be greeted with the cry, 'Pop Club! Pop Club!'

Ridicule turned to imitation, and this year the school is noticeably cleaner.

The Club members asked for and secured films on ecology, conservation of natural resources, and re-cycling of waste materials. Posters began to appear and articles to be written for the school magazine. The outreach toward the big world problems was, however, limited to our school body, but one boy kept bringing up the proposal: 'I think that we should prepare a petition.'

Being somewhat sceptical of the efficacy of petitions, no one had responded to his thought, but he persisted. After a lengthy discussion one day the following document was composed:

**'We, the undersigned young and older citizens and residents of Mid-Eastern countries, pledge ourselves to protect our natural environment, air, water, land, trees, flowers, birds and wild animals against destruction, pollution and waste. This we do for our own enjoyment and for the benefit of all other countries and of generations to come.'**

**'We petition all youth in our countries, and adults in politics, labour, business and the professions to join with us in protecting the future of our planet.'**

## Displayed at conference

Two teachers were enlisted to translate the petition into Arabic and French. The school Director authorised a thousand copies to be mimeographed. Over eight hundred signatures were obtained among our pupils and teachers. A neighbouring school caught the idea and joined in. One of our office secretaries took home a copy to her husband who was a graduate student at the university. He showed it to his professor.

It happened that the professor was a national delegate to the Conference of Mediterranean Cities, meeting at the UNESCO Palace to study the problems of and possible cures for the threat to the life of the sea. He had the petition enlarged and displayed as the main exhibit in the lobby. The Chairman of the Conference invited Ali to address briefly the thousand representatives at the closing session.

In thanking him the Chairman said:

'We have not sufficiently considered the contribution which youth can make.'

The Women's League of our capital city heard about the P O P Club and invited six members to speak at their final meeting of the year. As a result the League announced that its programme for the following year would be based on the principles of the petition and practices of the Club.

## Without compulsion

One day near the end of term I invited the President of the College of which our school is a part to be present at our activity period. In a hurry to get things going as quickly as possible I had not changed into my work clothes. The President appeared during our minute of quiet and heard each boy say what he thought he should do. My thought was to go and change. The President watched the boys for a while and then hurried off to address a public meeting commemorating a former head of the College.

Next day he told me the main point of his speech, which was: 'I have just witnessed something in which our founders deeply believed.' Having briefly described the scene, he concluded: 'It was seeing students putting theory into practice, not under compulsion, but as a result of their own convictions.'

On the last day of school the guests, parents, teachers and pupils were walking from the closing assembly beside the completed flower bed, bright with geraniums. Not all of them yet appreciated its significance, but Ali and his club-mates had learned that any one of us can be an agent to whom God gives an idea, that, if we are obedient, a chain of constructive actions can begin whose outcome can be far beyond our imagination. They may begin at our finger tips.

## AT A GLANCE

● *CROSS ROAD*, the multi-media show, was given on Remembrance Day in Blyth, near Newcastle.

Introducing the performance the Hon Mina Tedder, daughter of the late Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder, said, 'The sacrifice in two world wars - in the air, on the sea, on the land and down the mines - has made it possible for us to be here tonight. And the faith that brought people through the bitter times. Where is that faith today? The heart power, courage and honesty that I have met here in the North-East is meant to go out to the whole world. With God's help we can together build the new world we all long to see. It will take guts, faith and a selfless giving but, as we decide, it will happen.'



in its most developed form, in the United States.

Since the Russian Revolution in 1917, Marxism has had its innings in a number of countries. The full might of the state was thrown behind the Communist concept. At first, there seemed to be the promise of the new Jerusalem, according to Karl. But soon the Communist powers fell out. Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union differed. The Sino-Soviet schism, the split between Russia and China, developed. This disillusioned millions, as did the invasion of Hungary, the Berlin Wall, and the Russian tanks in Czechoslovakia.

In the Communist countries, egalitarian concepts were eroded and replaced by the new governing élite on the one hand, equipped with limousines and dachas (country cottages), and the toiling masses on the other, patiently waiting in food queues. Liberty was exchanged for security.

### ALTERNATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Another materialist solution, Fascism, had its short-lived appeal, with a disastrous end, despite the fact that the power of the German and Italian states, backed with armed might, gave this race-conscious philosophy every chance to succeed.

In between these extremes of Left and Right, and to their Left, have been all manner of shadings. No one political solution has taken the world by storm—certainly not by consent—and few materialist régimes have survived many successive free elections.

If we can agree that something more than a material solution is required for the remoralisation of Britain, then what should be some of the essential ingredients of an alternative philosophy?

One cannot assume that all want the remoralisation of Britain. The vehement protagonists of what has been labelled 'the permissive society' have done their best to downgrade the moral conviction in the nation so that they can feel more comfortable, or can pursue some ideological aim. But as the materialist concepts have been tried at government level and remoralisation has not, let us make a bold experiment with the moral and spiritual.

It would be necessary to establish a concept of absolute values, a yardstick which most people could accept. Such values, or standards, would need to be absolute rather than relative, so that the argument is lifted above differing opinions to the highest conclusions of conscience.

Standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love are rooted in all the great faiths, and this simple summary

of morality would be a good basis for the great experiment. For the Christian, these standards sum up succinctly the Sermon on the Mount. They are the granite of the Old Testament. Moslems say they are contained in the Holy Koran. The Buddhist is at home with them. The enlightened humanist who has a concern for his fellow man may well accept the need for some measurement of one's own (and one's neighbour's) moral worth and growth.

### FAIR CHALLENGE

When it comes to finding a new motivation, we must discover and tap a new source of power. For man's mind, however able and sincere, has not been able to master the human passions of hate, fear, greed and lust.

The materialist may not accept the concept of Spirit, of seeking the help and direction of the super force which men of faith choose to call God. No matter. The humanist and the materialist can make an honest experiment, of hearing and obeying what Mahatma Gandhi called his 'inner voice'. To apply the experimental method is a fair challenge to any child of this scientific age.

The experiment could be to consult conscience or the inner voice, over a reasonable period, and carry out the ideas which come.

Man is ready for the truth that a power exists in the world greater than man's mind and emotions. For the old sources of authority have been called into question. Youth under all régimes no longer agree with what has gone before, simply because it has gone before. They question the right of a man or a group of men to lay down the law, and of assuming the authority they do.

### UNDILUTED CONCERN

So in our search for some new authority we could experiment with a force greater than man's mind: the Holy Spirit.

The significant fact about making such an experiment, at first by a few, then by millions, is that government by God-governed men and women has never been tried in history. There have been God-guided individuals in governments and great developments have ensued. But no government yet has had a majority of men in it who have been prepared to acknowledge the yardstick of the moral absolute and the sovereignty of God in the affairs of men—starting and continuing with themselves.

Such an experiment is not likely to start with a majority decision. It is much more likely to be sparked off by a creative minority. There will be opposition,

for throughout history militant good has been opposed by militant evil. It is the eternal struggle between good and evil, defeat in which leads to slavery; and even ignorance of it can mean liberty is lost.

All our current world ills would be affected for the better by a government whose concern is for all humanity, a reflection of God's greater, undiluted concern.

A feature article in *The Observer* recently said that although economists have conflicting views about how to tackle inflation, many of them now look for a solution in the attitudes of men rather than in the laws of economics. Too many want too much in exchange for too little, and those who have little end up getting even less. This is true of the poorer nations as well as the poor within nations. We are seeing in the 'third world' the increasing misery of the proletariat predicted by Marx, and ironically, contributed to by states which govern in his name, as well as those whom he would have called capitalist.

Any state which puts its own welfare before that of all humanity, no matter what its system, contributes to misery.

### NOT FULLY TRIED

These far-reaching changes in men and attitudes will have to be voluntary. Lasting change does not come about by the imposition of one will upon another. Solzhenitsyn, reared in a completely Communist environment, found its concept inadequate. The might and will of the state did nothing to change his mind. This same unyielding element in human nature can be found in prisons for the IRA and under Right-wing dictatorships. Throughout history, any ruling few have failed to make up people's minds for them over the longer haul.

The oft-quoted claim by G K Chesterton is a splendid summary. 'Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and not tried.'

It is not enough to say that Christianity has had two thousand years to succeed. True, it has been in existence for two thousand years. But who is bold enough to say that it has been tried in its full measure, in the measure required, to change root and branch of human society in any one country?

This is really the significance of Frank Buchman's last words, his challenge to Britain and to all nations: 'I want to see Britain governed by men governed by God. I want to see the world governed by men governed by God.'

This, then, would be the remoralisation of Britain: the moral re-arming of Britain and all the earth.

Gordon Wise