

## A year after the day that changed America forever

**A** year after 11 September, Americans have a persistent sense of foreboding that other outrageous terrorist attacks are coming. The directors of the FBI, the CIA, the Attorney General and the Secretary of Defense seem to compete in the issuance of dire warnings.

The administration no doubt wants to compensate for the dramatic lack of warning before the attacks against the World Trade Center and Pentagon. But we also feel that the enmity of Islamic extremists for the United States and the West is unabated, and that all our defenses, both existing and in the making, will not be proof against their determination to hurt us again. Finally, there is a mostly unarticulated fear that our leaders do not really understand the nature of the threat and may not be philosophically up to the task of eliminating it.

### Unease

The summer in America has been taken up with the business of establishing a new Cabinet Department of Homeland Security. Hailed by President Bush as the most important reorganization of the federal government since the Department of Defense and the National Security Council were established in 1947, the new department aims to unite 170,000 employees in 22 separate federal agencies under one authority.

The Coast Guard, Secret Service and Immigration and Naturalization Service will be pulled out of the Departments of Transportation, Treasury and Justice respectively and joined with Customs, animal and plant inspection, nuclear incident response and visa processing, among other functions. The new Secretary for Homeland Security will assess intelligence reports for threats to the peace and coordinate the government's response to these.

This reorganization makes sense on the face of it, considering the unprecedented audacity and traumatic impact of the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Defense Department last September. We have to get our act together after the scandalous revelations of bureaucratic incompetence within and between the FBI and CIA, and especially their unwillingness to share information with each other.

Ironically, one of the biggest obstacles to this rationalization has been the challenge to the legislative branch to reorganize itself as well. There are 88 chairmen heading committees and subcommittees with legislative authority over the executive agencies being consolidated. Pride and power among men (and some women) in Congress are as formidable barriers to wise governance as they



by Joseph V Montville

are in the White House and government departments.

These human foibles probably contribute to the American public's continuing unease about its safety. We know that political manoeuvring and the compromise of integrity are constants in government. But when President Bush's Republican Party strate-

**It takes wise leaders to be able to protect our hard-won freedoms while assuring national security.**

gists pitch the war on terrorism as the key campaign issue for the November Congressional elections, they raise suspicions that the national effort at collective self-defence is being used for partisan advantage.

There is another area of concern: the government's perceived indifference to openness in policy-making and the defence of civil liberties in the current tense environment. An example has been the confinement of American terrorism suspects to military imprisonment without legal counsel or trial, conceivably for the duration of the war on terror which could last years or even decades in its current rhetorical conception.

Every nation has the right to self-defence against 'ticking-bomb' terrorism or assault by hostile states with weapons of mass destruction without having to get clearance

from lawyers. But the human instinct toward abuse of power is historically endemic in government, which is why America's founding fathers insisted on powerful checks and balances in our Constitution. One of the most precious things we are defending against our enemies is our democracy, civil liberties, and the rule of law. It takes very strong and wise leaders to be able to protect our hard-won freedoms while assuring national security.

### Wise leadership

One indication of wisdom would be to engage creatively with the context in the Muslim world that has generated attackers and their silent supporters in the first place. There has been bad governance and leadership in many Muslim countries that only their citizens can change. But ordinary Muslims have been appalled at the apparent lack of caring in the outside world as their civilian brethren have been attacked and repressed in Chechnya, Bosnia and the West Bank and Gaza, for example.

The United States could lead Europe and Russia in advancing the dialogue of civilizations by more vigorously communicating basic respect for the world's 1.2 billion Muslims. We could help Muslim moderates fight extremists by acknowledging the universal human values in the Koran. These include freedom of conscience, the dignity of the individual and God's embrace of all nations—Jewish and Christian People of the Book and even those without a Book.

Abdulaziz Sachedina's *The Islamic roots of democratic pluralism* (Oxford/CSIS 2001) elaborates these themes and should be required reading in the White House, foreign ministries, editorial offices, and universities and in every Muslim home. Right beside it we should find Rabbi Dr Marc Gopin's *Holy war, holy peace: how religion can bring peace to the Middle East* (OUP 2002), a practical plan for reconciliation among Jews, Christians and Muslims that would do more for international security and the defeat of terrorism than a ten million man army. That would be wise leadership.

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**Profile:** Erwin Zimmermann, a Swiss businessman in Brazil

# FOR A CHANGE

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August/September 2002

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by John Leggat in Nairobi



**Active rest duty**

Kenya is due to go to the polls in presidential elections in the coming year. Plans were put in place, last May, to televise all parliamentary sessions and President's Question Time. The wheels came off the idea when KBC, the national broadcaster, refused to screen the sessions as they would not make good viewing. As in other countries, many MPs doze during the debates. An indignant government spokesman responded that 'Kenyan MPs do not sleep or doze in parliament, they do however take part in active rest'. The idea has since been moth-balled.

**Elephant charge**

Kenya has Africa's largest concentration of elephants, which are experiencing resurgence. Trekking with a local guide in an area known as Elephant Valley, we witnessed a herd of 50 crossing the valley wall. Our guide led us on the trail of six of them to get a closer look.

They disappeared into thick bush, so we followed the path higher to relocate them. As we scanned the forest below an almighty rumbling and crashing of undergrowth came from behind us. You know you may be in trouble when you hear your guide shriek and see him hot-foot it down the valley without a second glance. I didn't hesitate in following. Reaching the valley floor he turned and laughed, 'The elephants were just playing with the white man!' If so, why did he run so fast?

Although elephants can decimate acres of crops in a night and cause dozens of fatalities each year, the Kenyan authorities have been at the forefront of eradicating poaching. No time more so than in 1998 when President Moi lit a bonfire of over a million dollars worth of ivory.

**Tree planting**

Kenya's worst flooding in 20 years left 50 dead and thousands homeless. Most of the deaths were caused by mudslides, due to the deforestation of vast swathes of native bush. Illegal logging not only threatens hill-dwelling farmers but also the once abundant wildlife. In a delicate ecosystem, the clearance of as little as 300 hectares can turn fertile soil into arid dust, halve the rainfall in two years and add 20 species to the critically endangered list.

The need for replanting has been taken seriously by various action groups. One has planted over 100,000 trees in the last year alone and hopes to double that number this year. These self-funded groups are essential for keeping Kenya's fragile environment on an even keel.

**Mechanics' ingenuity**

With no car fitness tests, entering a vehicle is a leap of faith. Kenyan mechanics are ingenious, as I have discovered driving an elderly Japanese import over 3,000 kilometres during my time here. During one unscheduled stop, a passing mechanic checked under the bonnet and asked me to fetch him a pen cartridge, a foot of garden hose, a milk carton and some insulation tape. Within an hour we were back on the pot-hole-ridden highway. One month on and the problem has not reappeared.

**Inequality**

More than a third of Kenyans live below the \$1 a day poverty line, according to *The Kenyan Human Development Report*. Its findings also suggest that 10 per cent of the population control over 40 per cent of the nation's income. The report cites corruption and HIV/AIDS as the biggest contributors to this inequality. Life expectancy (55 in rural areas) has dropped to its lowest in 50 years.

But there are positives in the report, such as the fall of AIDS deaths from 900 to 700 per day and the government's Poverty Eradication Scheme which after four years is having some effect. For significant change, though, incomes should not be determined by international coffee, tea and sugar markets. Long-term industry needs to be installed for job growth and export income.

**Kenya's gift**

Whether it's in the smiles of the children or the generosity of the poor, Kenya has an air of hope which enriches the heart and intoxicates the mind. I doubt that many other people can dance and sing with the gusto and verve I have witnessed here. At first I asked myself what they had to celebrate. After a time I realized that they are simply happy to have the gift of life—something worth remembering in our ever more complicated lives. Thank you, Kenya, for opening my eyes, mind and soul. That is something money can't buy. ■



Cover: Lighting candles in the Church of the Annunciation, Tirana, Albania

Photo: WCC/Peter Williams

IN MY VIEW

**Following the steps of history**

Today people criticize or, at best, take for granted the existence of the European Union. It has somehow slipped out of our memory that it was an unprecedented, phenomenal event when, so soon after World War II, enemies became friends.

For many nations in Eastern and Central Europe joining the EU is seen as the cure for their wounds. But before this can happen there are many issues to consider and criteria to meet. One essential element is good relations with neighbouring countries and between the different ethnic communities inside their own borders. This brings the issue down to a personal level—if we don't work it out as individuals, who will?

I have recently seen this process at first hand. On a visit to the Baltic States—Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia—which will soon join the EU, I witnessed work in progress on integration between people and countries. Later that month, I was lucky to see an existing example of this integration in France, Germany and Luxembourg, where people remember history but live in the present (see p 20).

Some Europeans are afraid that if Eastern and Central European countries join the EU, their young people will flood into Western Europe, leaving their motherlands behind. From what I heard from those I met in the Baltic States, this is unlikely. Patriotism is really strong among the youth. Those who wanted to emigrate have already done so without waiting for an EU passport.

For me as a Russian, it was a moving experience to visit the Baltic countries, which used to be under the Soviet regime. What struck me was that, in spite of the stereotypes, it is not primarily language that divides Russian-Latvians and Latvian-Latvians. History, culture, national pride and attitudes still create tensions. The experience of post-war Europe offers hope that these communities will reconcile in their hearts as well as in their new European policies.

Anastasia Stepanova

www.forachange.co.uk

FOR A CHANGE

- closes the circle between faith and action, action and faith. It is for anyone, anywhere, who wants to make a difference to the world.

FOR A CHANGE believes

- that in a world torn by ancient hatreds, the wounds of history can be healed.
- that in the family and the workplace, relationships can be transformed.
- that in urban jungle or rural backwater, community can be built.
- that peace, justice and the survival of the planet depend on changes in attitudes as well as structures.

FOR A CHANGE

- draws its material from many sources and was born out of the experience of MRA, now Initiatives of Change.

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**A NOTE ON INITIATIVES OF CHANGE**

Initiatives of Change (formerly Moral Re-Armament) works for moral and spiritual renewal in all areas of life. It was born out of the work of Frank Buchman, an American who believed that change in the world must start with the individual.

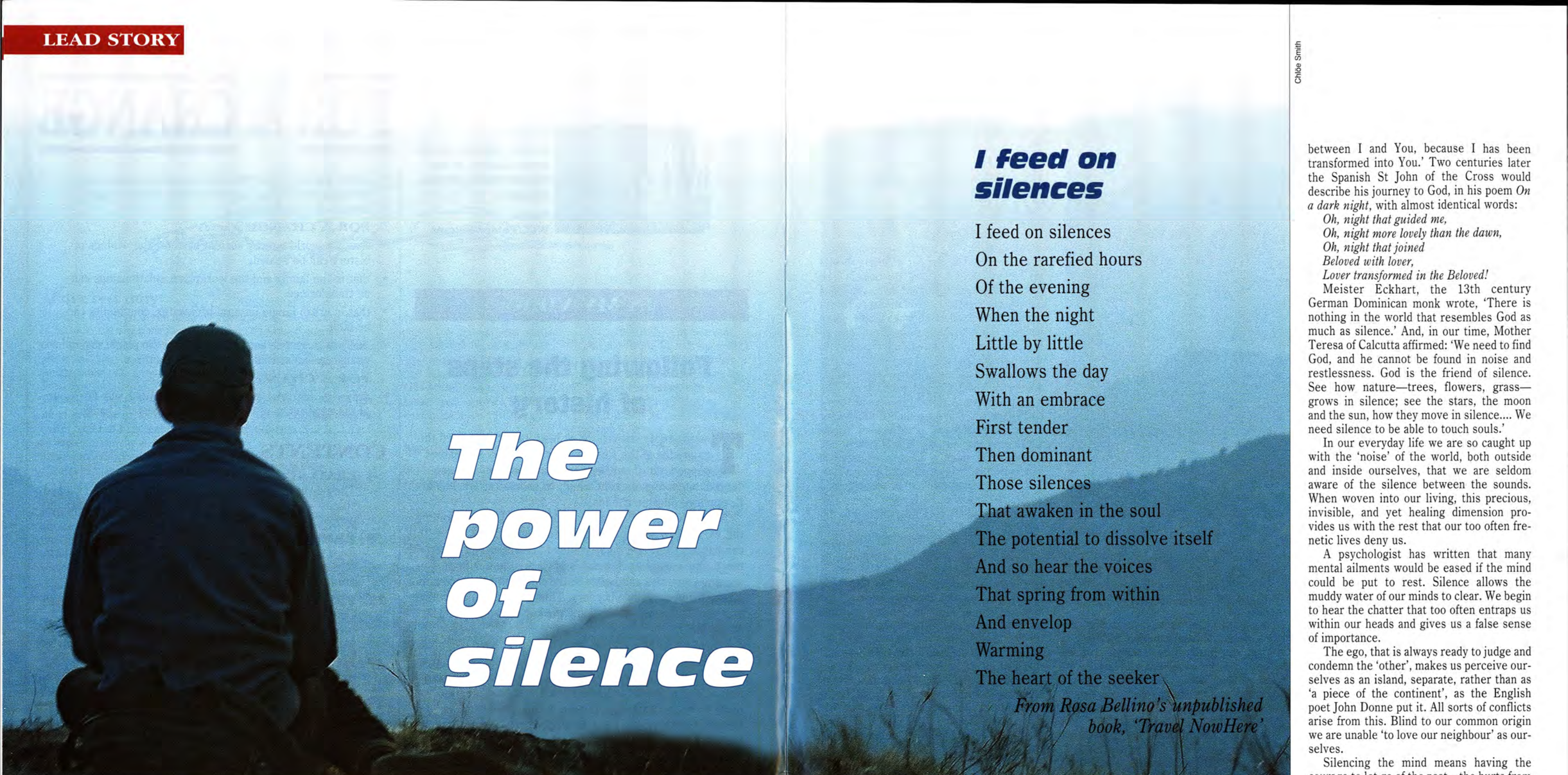
Initiatives of Change is open to all. Its starting point is the readiness of each person to make what they know of God and eternal moral values central in their lives. This personal commitment to search for God's will forms the basis for

creative initiative and common action: standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love help to focus the challenge of personal and global change.

These ideas have given rise to an international community of people at work in more than 70 countries in programmes which include reconciliation; tackling the root causes of corruption, poverty and social exclusion; and strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations for democracy.

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# The power of silence

## *I feed on silences*

I feed on silences  
 On the rarefied hours  
 Of the evening  
 When the night  
 Little by little  
 Swallows the day  
 With an embrace  
 First tender  
 Then dominant  
 Those silences  
 That awaken in the soul  
 The potential to dissolve itself  
 And so hear the voices  
 That spring from within  
 And envelop  
 Warming  
 The heart of the seeker

*From Rosa Bellino's unpublished book, 'Travel NowHere'*

between I and You, because I has been transformed into You.' Two centuries later the Spanish St John of the Cross would describe his journey to God, in his poem *On a dark night*, with almost identical words:

*Oh, night that guided me,  
 Oh, night more lovely than the dawn,  
 Oh, night that joined  
 Beloved with lover,  
 Lover transformed in the Beloved!*

Meister Eckhart, the 13th century German Dominican monk wrote, 'There is nothing in the world that resembles God as much as silence.' And, in our time, Mother Teresa of Calcutta affirmed: 'We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature—trees, flowers, grass—grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence.... We need silence to be able to touch souls.'

In our everyday life we are so caught up with the 'noise' of the world, both outside and inside ourselves, that we are seldom aware of the silence between the sounds. When woven into our living, this precious, invisible, and yet healing dimension provides us with the rest that our too often frenetic lives deny us.

A psychologist has written that many mental ailments would be eased if the mind could be put to rest. Silence allows the muddy water of our minds to clear. We begin to hear the chatter that too often entraps us within our heads and gives us a false sense of importance.

The ego, that is always ready to judge and condemn the 'other', makes us perceive ourselves as an island, separate, rather than as 'a piece of the continent', as the English poet John Donne put it. All sorts of conflicts arise from this. Blind to our common origin we are unable 'to love our neighbour' as ourselves.

Silencing the mind means having the courage to let go of the past—the hurts from which we derive a sense of identity and that all too often trap us in old, conditioned behaviour. And it means letting go of the future—our fears and expectations—to live in the present, the only time in which we can live. By living in the now we are able to give up all attachments to the result of our actions (known in India as karma yoga). Failure and success no longer give us an identity upon which we depend. By connecting to the silence underneath the mental noise we find peace within. It is only from 'here' that we can both forgive and build bridges towards our 'enemy'.

I wrote a poem (see box over) about this process some years ago, after walking out of a conference at the Initiatives of Change centre in Caux, Switzerland, because I did not agree with what was being said. As I walked up the mountain in the rain and

my poems, *I feed on silences* (see above); the only thing left to do is simply to put it down.

When I say that my poetry and art come from silence, some find this a puzzling reply, perhaps even an attempt to avoid the question. Yet for people who have 'experienced', even for a single moment, the gift, the mystery, of creation, this is a reality, a simple fact.


Foscolo, an Italian poet, wrote 'Sacred is silence to the *vate*', a Latin word that means both 'prophet' and 'poet', highlighting the intimate relationship that exists between art and spirituality. To create one needs to be 'inspired', literally to breathe in the 'Spirit'. Plato, writing in ancient Greece, reminds us: 'The poet is an airy, winged, sacred being, who cannot compose unless he is inspired by the divinity, and before he loses his mind,

he is no longer him.' Only then can the poet catch 'a harmony and a rhythm'. Good poets, for Plato, are the gods' interpreters.

**S**ilence is the womb, the space that allows one to hear 'a harmony and a rhythm'. Silence is the inner shaft that lets us go deep within ourselves to the place of stillness where, having forgotten ourselves, we become 'like children' and enter the kingdom of God. As the Bible says, 'Be still and know that I am God.'

People from all centuries and traditions, East and the West, have left us precious traces of their journeys into stillness, footsteps, echoes, that, when heeded, can guide us in our inner voyage today.

'In love,' wrote the 13th century Persian Sufi poet Attar, 'there is no more difference



In a restless world, silence can be the source of healing and creativity, believes **Rosa Bellino**.

**'Y**our poetry is very deep, where does it come from?' a lady asked me at the end of an international conference, where I had been invited to present my work. 'From silence,' I replied before pausing to think.

Later on, while reflecting on my answer,

I realized that it embodied my theory of art. 'I would like my work to be the poetry of silence and to move to stillness,' I had written in my diary some time before.

Each work, whatever form it takes, is a 'trace' of a journey within, of an inner alchemy, a quest for identity, a drawing, a calligraphy, that reveals who we are at that particular moment, like a mark on the canvas

called life. The brush dances on the paper, the words sing in the ear, each movement, unrepeatable, captures and is captive to a rhythm—a ballet in time and space of an odyssey which, at its best, is outside time and space.

In this journey there are special moments when the work is finished before starting it. It springs from within, as I wrote in one of



## The power of silence

began to let go of my frustration, I came across a burnt-out house which was slowly being demolished. I felt sorry for both myself and the house. I thought that once it was gone there would be nothing left.

Then I realized that unless one lets go of the past—the painful memories, the burning pain—one can never build a new house, a new present. I also realized that I was attached to my pain, it was part of my identity. What or who would I be without my pain and resentment?

At the time we were expecting two delegations from East Europe who were coming to Caux in the hope that, in the more relaxed atmosphere in the mountains, they could find a way to reconciliation. I thought of them as I looked at the burnt house and realized that unless they were willing to 'let go',

## The woodcarver's story

A woodcarver called Ching had just finished work on a bell frame. Everyone who saw it marvelled, for it seemed to be the work of spirits. When the Duke of Lu saw it, he asked, 'What sort of genius are you that you could make such a thing?'

The woodcarver replied, 'Sire, I am only a simple workman, I am no genius. But there is one thing. When I'm going to make a bell frame, I meditate for three days to calm my mind. When I have meditated for three days, I think no more about rewards or emoluments. When I have meditated for five days, I no longer think of praise or blame, skilfulness or awkwardness. When I have meditated for seven days, I suddenly forget my limbs, my body; no, I forget my very self. I lose consciousness of the course of my surroundings. Only my skill remains.'

'In that state I walk into the forest and examine each tree until I find one in which I see the bell frame in all its perfection. Then my hands go to the task. Having set myself aside, nature meets nature in the work that is performed through me. This, no doubt, is the reason why everyone says that the finished product is the work of spirits.'



Mother Teresa: 'God is the friend of silence'

to finally bury their dead, their past, they could never hope to build a bridge between themselves. (Eventually only one delegation came and the chance was lost, at least on that occasion.)

In English, as in my language, Italian, the word 'present' means both 'now' and 'gift'. It is when we finally bury the past that we become free and receive the present. As I wrote in a poem:

*Know  
that the present  
IS  
the Present.*

**T**he silent path requires courage and perseverance but its rewards are many, as people throughout the centuries have witnessed—and as prisoners across the UK are now discovering through the work of the Prison Phoenix Trust, which holds meditation and yoga workshops in jails. It is interesting to note that the word 'cell' is used in both monasteries and prisons.

'All you need for meditation is your body, your mind and your breath,' writes the founder of the Trust, Ann Wetherall. 'Being shut in your cell for much of the day provides you with an excellent opportunity for change.' According to an appendix to *Light sitting in Light* (Harper Collins 1996) by Sister Elaine MacInnes, the Trust encourages prisoners 'to look beyond just "doing time", to discover their true inner nature and to take responsibility for their own actions. Basic to this approach is the belief

that there is a spiritual being inside all of us, however fearful or lost, and whether we are of any faith or none.'

When a prisoner makes contact, the Trust sends them two books, *We're all doing time* by Bo Lozoff and *Becoming Free through Meditation and Yoga* by Sr Elaine and Sandy Chubb (the Prison Phoenix Trust, 1995). The Trust promotes simple meditation techniques, to help prisoners find support on their personal journeys.

'Meditation is hard for everybody, because we've allowed our mind to run wild for several years,' writes Bo Lozoff. 'The mind can be a great servant, but a cruel and exhausting master... Meditation practice is simply about making enough quiet space inside to allow all the Wisdom of the ages, all the peace that surpasses understanding to flow through freely.'

MacInnes is a Catholic nun who studied meditation under a Zen Master in Japan. She retired as the director of the Trust two and a half years ago. She sees silence as a means of melting the blocks in our consciousness which stop the flow of which Lozoff writes. 'Because the mind is kept in one-pointed concentration through breath counting, it will cease during meditation to be a wild horse, as Teresa of Avila used to describe her active mind,' she writes. 'But this will take time.... Eventually our resistance melts, and our demons follow its course.'

The effect on prisoners is confirmed by teachers, governors and prison chaplains — and by prisoners themselves. 'I can only say that what I saw as a hopeless situation has now become a blessing for my spiritual growth,' writes one. 'I have begun to enjoy life.'

'As long as I can remember, I have had this hurt inside,' writes another. 'I can't get away from it, and sometimes I cut or burn myself so that the pain will be in a different



Sculpture of a meditating prisoner by Ron Farquhar who teaches meditation in Wandsworth Prison.



Sister Elaine MacInnes, right, with British actor and Phoenix Trust patron Jeremy Irons

place and on the outside. Then I saw the Prison Phoenix Trust Newsletter last month, and something spoke to me about meditation and although I didn't really know what it is, I wrote for the book. I just want you to know that after four days of meditation, a half hour in the morning and at night, for the first time in my life, I see a tiny spark of something within myself that I can like.'

In another of her books, *Light sitting in light*, Sister Elaine quotes a prisoner in Canterbury Prison, who wrote to tell her that he could feel his life was changing. The first thing people notice after beginning to practise meditation regularly is that they feel refreshed, she says. 'Later, that seems to deepen into a kind of attitude change, which brightens up the world for us. We start to feel really good about ourselves and our life. Then we get happier as we notice change in the way we perceive people and things and happenings, that they are all part of something special and sacred.'

Finally, she says, a flash of intuition awakens the meditator to a 'way of knowing' who they really are. 'This is a moment of great joy. And no matter what your past was, what you have done or what you haven't done... you are ecstatic and humbled about who you really are. In the East this is called the time when you "see your own Nature".'

During a stay in the Philippines, Sister Elaine taught meditation to several political prisoners, one of whom had been arrested five times under the Marcos regime, blindfolded and 'harassed almost beyond human endurance'. He wrote to her later, 'I am perfectly free, I am perfectly happy and deeply at peace. I have tasted of the true oneness you led me to in meditation. I know that where I am and where I want to be are no different at all. The bars and stone walls do not really separate me from my loved ones, from my friends, from my people... In reality, I and the universe are one.'

Silencing the mind is not the preserve of the selected few, but a practice available to everyone everywhere. Aren't we all captives after all? We all need to travel within. As I say in one of my poems:

*There are people  
Who travel  
Everywhere and get nowhere  
And there are people  
Who travel NowHere  
Who get EVERYwHERE.*

But enough of words. As Rumi, a 13th century Sufi and poet from Persia wrote, 'Enough with such questions, let silence take you to the core of life. All your talk is worthless when compared to one whisper of God.'

## I went out into the rain

I felt only with the rain  
I could share my pain, so...  
I went out into the rain  
And cried with pain  
Water in the skies  
Water in my eyes

Half way up the mountain  
A burnt house stood  
Blackened by fire  
Barbed with wire  
It was beyond repair  
It echoed my despair

There up the mountain  
Searching for an answer  
I lost all restraint  
And once more  
I cried into the rain

I found myself staring  
At the house again  
Scarred by fire  
Scarred by wire  
With stairs  
Leading nowhere

Then I saw someone  
Who with great pain  
Was pulling it down  
Untroubled by the rain  
With tender care  
As if in prayer he was  
Surrendering yesterdays

On top of the mountain  
I found myself staring  
At my life again  
Scarred by pain  
With despair  
Leading nowhere

It was time to come down  
And make way  
For a new day

In Caux  
I went out into the rain  
And let go of my pain

© Rosa Bellino



What can a play about a reclusive American poet tell us about ourselves? Quite a lot, if the experience of its creators is anything to go by.

**Edie Campbell and Jack Lynch** talk to **Mary Lean.**

**P**eople who talk to Edie Campbell after watching her one-woman show about Emily Dickinson, the 19th century American poet, often comment on how brave her portrayal is. They don't know the half of it.

The play tells the story of Campbell's 14-year struggle to portray Dickinson on stage 'without getting in her way'. This is a risky undertaking in itself—and one that Campbell rejected outright when her husband, collaborator and director, Jack Lynch, put it to her as an alternative to a straight dramatic biography of Dickinson.

'Edie wanted to make this play about Emily Dickinson, using only Emily's words,' says Lynch. 'She was getting frustrated because it wasn't working. I kept saying, "What I would like to put on stage is your passion about her." And she said, "No!"'

'I thought it would be boring and self-indulgent,' says Campbell.

She was wrong—though the apprehension has occurred to others. 'Yes, a one-woman show about creating a one-woman show does sound as if it might be inclined towards the navel,' wrote *Time Out*. 'But that's before you've witnessed Campbell's subtly charismatic performance, or taken into the account the fact that Emily Dickinson... is no ordinary subject matter.'

By telling the story of the reclusive Emily through her own eyes, and in the light of her own experiences, Campbell makes



## What's Emily to us?

her more approachable. Which is no mean achievement given the elusiveness of her subject, many of whose poems are on the inaccessible side. And because this is so obviously 'her take' on Emily, there is no pretence that this is the only, definitive view of the poet.

The audience watches as Campbell's understanding of her own life grows alongside her understanding of Emily. En route, they learn not only about Emily's life, but

also about Campbell's upbringing, divorce and second marriage, panic attacks and family crises, including her father's death from the Alzheimer-like Binswanger's Disease.

As a result, it's not only Dickinson enthusiasts who get something out of the play. People tell Campbell and Lynch about their own literary passions, or their relief in discovering they are not the only people to have spent years struggling to complete a project. Others confide in Campbell about

Edie Campbell (left as Emily Dickinson) and Jack Lynch (right), creators of *Emily Dickinson and I*

their panic attacks—some saying they have never told anyone else before—or about their experiences caring for a relative with Alzheimers.

At one point in the play Campbell describes getting the phone call from her mother to say that her father has died. She goes straight from that into reading Emily Dickinson's letter about her own father's death. It is always an electric moment, says Lynch.

'It takes a very personal thing of Edie's father dying and Emily's father dying and it becomes universal, because the 19th century poet and this actress have a common experience with all of us,' continues Lynch. 'That's the trick—finding the way to make a personal statement that opens up others.'

Another such moment is when Campbell speaks about her fears, after her father's death, that she is letting him down. He had been one of the pioneers of MRA/Initiatives of Change and for some time she wondered if she should follow him into full-time work for the organization. 'I had this dream—which I tell about in the play—of visiting him in the nursing home, and him floating in and out of lucidity and asking me, "What do you want to do with your life?" When I replied "acting", he said, "Then do it with your whole heart."' People respond, because, as Lynch says, whatever our experience with our parents, we all, in some way, crave their blessing.

It must take courage to expose such moments to the public? 'I think what makes it possible is that I'm not using the stage to say anything that I haven't said to the people concerned,' Campbell says. 'I'm not using it as a platform to vent, accuse, point fingers....'

But it's not only her performance that's brave. The story of how the play finally saw the light of day also has its scary side.

Campbell and Lynch met on stage in Iowa in 1994 when they were both acting in *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Lynch, who had been married before, was just coming to the end of 10 years as a mature student; Campbell was going through a divorce and travelling back and forth to England, where her father was dying and her mother had breast cancer. As she lived on Lynch's route home, he started giving her a lift after rehearsals.

By 1997, when they moved to Britain, they had decided that they wanted out of the rat race of agents and auditions, constantly looking for parts that might get them noticed. For Campbell it was a practical issue: her panic attacks made travelling to London for auditions an almost insuperable problem. And she was discouraged by the number of people looking for parts—and the fact that while some who succeeded were brilliant, a 'dispiriting number' were not.



They were left with two options—give up theatre altogether, or find a new way of doing it. Perhaps this was the moment to write the Emily play? If so, they would need somewhere to put it on. Campbell found a slot—six months away—at the Mill Studio connected to the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in their home town of Guildford. 'They said they'd need the title of the show and the description in three weeks time. Jack went straight to the computer and designed the flyer.'

Campbell spent the summer re-reading everything she could find on Emily. Lynch gave her some exercises to start her writing—but they all came out sounding awfully academic'. Finally they cleared the furniture off their little raised dining area and Lynch told her to stand up there and tell him the story. 'It was absolutely terrifying,' she says. 'I hate improvisation.'

By then they had decided that the play had to be about Edie as well as Emily. 'Where Edie knew Emily, I knew Edie,' says Lynch. 'So I'd say, "What about that time when this happened?" And she'd tell this very awkward story. So I would throw in something else and she would try that and it kept getting harder and harder and suddenly she would burst out, "That isn't the way it happened!" And she'd blurt out the story and then run off to the computer and write it down.'

It sounds like a slow process, but they had the play finished in time. 'She was very nervous, she didn't trust we had anything,' says Lynch. The first 'outsider' to see the play was the photographer they had asked to take pictures at the dress rehearsal. When he stopped snapping and sat down, Lynch realized he was enjoying the play. Afterwards he said, 'What are you going to do with this? This is really good.'

Lynch's unconventional approach to play-writing stems from his years at the Buddhist-inspired Naropa Institute (now University) in Boulder, Colorado. 'The whole concept there was that once you had conceived the idea, you had to learn to listen to the entity that was starting to appear and let it guide you, rather than having any agenda.' If they had arguments while working on the play, they were usually around trusting this process.

It's an argument they have in daily life as well. 'Because of the panic, Edie needs to feel in control,' says Lynch. 'But a lot of the Buddhist training at Naropa was about letting go.'

This was put to the test in their first four years in Britain, when Lynch was searching for a steady job. 'I was desperate after a while for him to get any job, so we could pay the bills,' says Campbell. 'And he was determined—though he got quite depressed about it—to be free when the right job came along. It was very difficult for us to support each other—we could understand what the other felt, but we both felt the other should be more ready to give way or to be more supportive.' To their relief and delight, Lynch is now teaching at the Guildford School of Acting, where Campbell trained as an actress.

The play has clearly been a success, both from its reviews—'electric', *Time Out*; 'absolutely compelling', *The List*; 'a production of rare integrity', *The Scotsman*; 'captivating', Margaret Drabble in *Hot tickets*—and from the response of its audience. Campbell and Lynch are astonished by the conversations they have had after the shows. 'If we had tried to create a play that had this type of effect we would have got in a terrible mess,' she says.

And now they are starting again, this time with Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein* and subject of Campbell's Masters' dissertation. Once again they are up against a deadline: after last year's successful performance the Cheltenham Festival of Literature has invited them back. The only snag is that they want a new play.

Can they do it? Is it possible to repeat the process, to draw on the personal journey approach without being formulaic or repetitive? They don't know, but they're going to try.

'It's something every artist faces when they start their second project, particularly if the first one has been successful,' says Campbell. 'But at least I trust the process more this time. I feel more relaxed about the understanding that it may not work.' She is already deep into the research process when I interview them in June: the Festival, alarmingly, is in October. Brave? Yes, definitely! ■

For details of performances of *Emily Dickinson and I: the journey of a portrayal* visit [www.lyncpin.itgo.com](http://www.lyncpin.itgo.com)





# PEOPLE

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Edited by Anastasia Stepanova

Richard Pearce



Young Brazilians who benefit from the PVNC education programme. Inset: Lucimar Da Silva Santos

### Out of the poverty trap

In the last 10 years there has been mounting action in Brazil to lift young people out of the poverty trap and enable them to receive a university education.

As in many countries, people of colour in Brazil are disproportionately represented among the poor. The lower quality of secondary education available to them makes it difficult for students to pass the university entrance exam. This is coupled with the impossibility, for most of them, of covering the fees and other expenses of university education.

The action, conceived by a Catholic brother, Father David, is called *Pre Vestibular para Negros e Carentes*. (PVNC—literally 'preparing black and poor students for the pre-university exam'.) The programme takes place during the nine-month period between the end of the high school year and the university entrance exam.

Lucimar Da Silva Santos, a

competent and vigorous young woman, is one of the programme's coordinators in Rio de Janeiro. She organizes over 20 teachers who work voluntarily at weekends with about 100 students, based in classrooms lent by a local school. As a student Lucimar heard about Fr David's movement and decided she wanted to help. She has a job in the Municipal Health Department to cover her expenses and is still completing the last few exams for her own degree.

Most of the teachers are themselves studying in university and are former participants in PVNC. They also include a qualified oil company engineer, a technologist and a lecturer from the Catholic University.

The programme has agreements with several universities. Some waive tuition fees for students who have come through the PVNC programme. The Catholic University has been the most generous: over the years some 3,000 students have been through without any fees having to be paid. In addition, if required, money for travel and food is provided. The

arrangement is that students are expected to 'repay' the fees afterwards through voluntary work in the community.

During their participation in PVNC, the students are required to pay a monthly fee that is 10 per cent of the minimum wage, about US\$8 per month. That gives them a sense of ownership and enables some of the scheme's running costs and the teachers' travel expenses to be covered. Of course there are exceptions; after all, the whole purpose is to help people and not be an exercise in rigidity. There is additional help given to provide books and other materials. Much of what is needed is photocopied.

390,000 students are taking part in this scheme in Brazil. Of the 7,000 in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, 15–50 per cent pass the test. There is a national shortage of university places, partly due to the fact that in 10 years the National University has not grown.

Lucimar welcomed me to her classes. It was a moving experience to see their attitudes and enthusiasm.

Richard Pearce

### Straight from the streets

Three years ago Danny Leaosavaii and Andy Murnane were living in a garage. Today they are running a business empire. As New Zealand's *60 Minutes* TV programme reported, 'Life started out tough in South Auckland for Danny Leaosavaii and Andy Murnane. The future was a road to nowhere but when these two hooked up they stumbled into something good.'

Their first company was formed in April 1999 and has now grown to include a retail clothing store, a hairdressing salon, a graphic design business, a recording studio, and a screen printing business. An internet café is about to open. Alongside the business elements there is the DawnRaid Community Trust, which aims to train young people.

In the late 1980s Danny was a leader of about 100 young Samoans who got into their 'fair share' of trouble. Things went badly wrong in 1990 when Danny and his brother John got into a pub brawl and a man was killed. John was jailed. Danny, as the older brother felt responsible. He decided to change his life and went to business school where he met Andy. The unlikely duo, a Palagi (Samoan for European) and Pacific Islander, became best friends.

They shared a love of music and wanted to give aspiring young musicians a chance to record. Their first idea was to make T-shirts—they now make tens of thousands a year and use this to fund other parts of the business development.

The music part of the business, DawnRaid Entertainment, is going from strength to strength in an environment where independent record labels regularly go under. One hip-hop band, the Deceptikonz, has been second in the New Zealand charts and another is in the charts. DawnRaid Entertainment has signed a deal with Universal

Records for distribution of DawnRaid albums.

The basic aim of the businesses is to give work and self-esteem to the young men and women in the area. This is perhaps best expressed in the establishment of the DawnRaid Community Trust. It plans to give groups of 15 or 20 a three-month Straight from the Streets Music Programme. They will also be taught budgeting, computer and other skills. At the end of the course an album will be produced to commercial quality. Each participant will have one track on it with an insert of their photo. They will be taught how to market it—with a Straight from the Streets Music Programme cap and T-shirt, to help them sell it.

DawnRaid has no overdraft for the simple reason that the bank, seeing their lack of bricks and mortar assets, decided not to give them one—never mind the fact that their turnover in the year just ended was nearly NZ\$1 million. They could see themselves waiting 15 years before they had the money to set up the Community Trust but asked themselves, 'What happens to all those kids during those 15 years?' So they scraped together what was

needed. When I visited DawnRaid they had not been able to pay for the tables the 15 or 20 young people would sit around for the course, then due to start in a few days.

Andy's father Mike, who helps as a business advisor, expressed some of DawnRaid's basic attitudes in terms of respect for all people. He gave the high quality of the T-shirts as an example. They feel that if they do things right then they will eventually win in the market place. That is their experience to date.

Richard Pearce

### Power to the village

The village of Kami high in the Bolivian Andes now has its own power supply once again thanks to the initiative of a local priest and a group of Italian engineers.

The Italian Salesian father Serafino Chiesa was assigned to the village of Kami in the Bolivian district of Kochabamba. All the local men used to find employment in a nearby tungsten mine, abandoning their traditional trades linked to rearing llamas. The mine and its power station were

shut down in the 1940s and since then the village has suffered severe unemployment and electricity shortages.

Serafino noticed that, while the equipment had been lost, the dam, tunnel and pipes feeding the power station from a nearby river were still usable. Why not restart the power station? It could supply the local school and hospital, a sawmill and any new activities, which might arise with the availability of electricity. The Bolivian Electricity Board was prepared to buy the excess production and the Salesian fathers did not rule out the possibility of re-opening the mine. The European Union could give a contribution.

On a visit to his home area near Turin, Serafino found out that the two water turbines and generators of a local power station had recently been replaced and the old ones were lying in pieces in a shed. The plates on the turbines indicated that they had been supplied in 1938 by De Pretto Escher Wyss in Schio near Venice. The generators were even older, but they could be reconditioned fairly easily, and volunteers were prepared to do this.

Serafino went to Schio with Efreem Fumagalli, director of

COOPI in Milan, an NGO which supports projects in developing countries, to get advice about the turbines. By then De Pretto had been sold and the water turbine section, severely reduced in size, belonged to Vatech Hydro. The local management was most helpful. They found the original drawings in their archives and asked Ugo Grotto, a technician who had recently retired, to go and examine the turbines. He discovered that the two turbines were suitable and could be reconditioned at a cost which was decidedly lower than buying new ones. They were also of a kind which could make full use of even a small supply of water in the dry season.

Ugo became so enthusiastic that he offered to supervise the job, to be carried out by small firms which had worked for him when he was at De Pretto's. The turbines were immediately shipped to Schio. 'I am the kind of man who would rather carry out a job by himself than ask for help, but having volunteered myself gave me courage to ask others,' he says.

As his 'courage' built up he found himself asking firms to charge rock-bottom prices and mobilizing his friends to take on more and more of the work free of charge. Over 20 retired workers contributed, working over 5,000 hours, and many local firms supplied material and services free or at a reduced price. The cost was a fraction of the estimate. Last autumn the two turbines were packed in sealed wrapping, fitted into two containers and shipped to Bolivia.

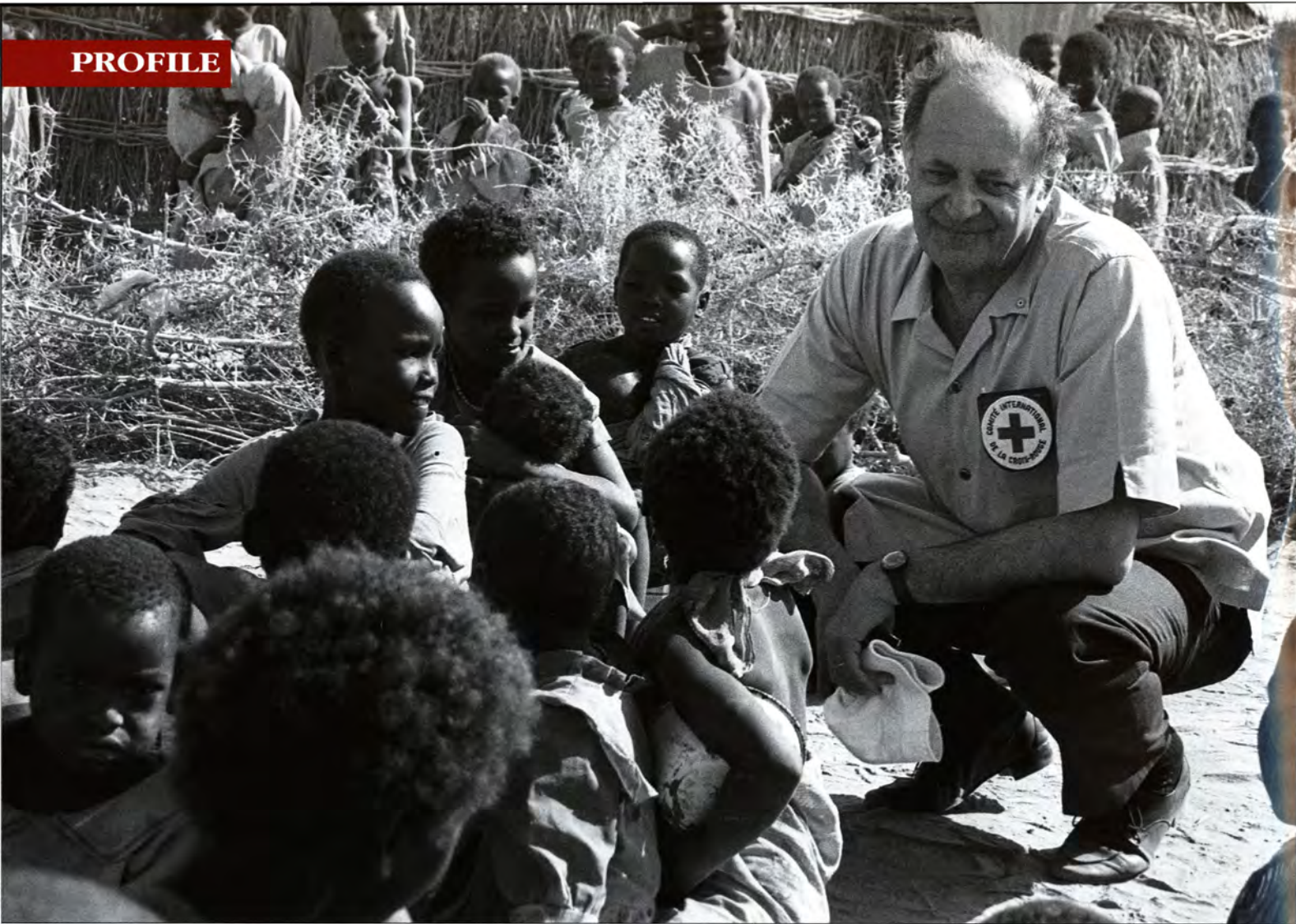
Another story could be written about how the Bolivians and their Italian friends restored the power station and enlarged the tunnel. It is impossible to draw the line between generous human enthusiasm and God's intervention in making the right thing turn up at the right place at the right time and, last but not least, changing hearts.

Adriano Costa



Ugo Grotto, left, with volunteers in front of the turbines they renovated





Cornelio Sommaruga on a visit to Somalia while President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

## A passion for the human family

Retirement hasn't slowed the pace of **Cornelio Sommaruga**, former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, **Andrew Stallybrass** discovers.

'G rüss Gott' is the hearty greeting that you hear as Cornelio Sommaruga, former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), hurries in. Tall and broad, the physical presence is imposing, but what strikes you most is the energy. He has just arrived back in Geneva from a meeting in Budapest, and he hasn't got long. He's got a talk to give in Zürich tonight.

The greeting, typical in Austria, Bavaria and the Eastern part of Switzerland, he explains, invokes the third presence in every encounter. 'We're not alone in this world,' he says.

If this is retirement, then what was working life like? Twice in the last two years he has taken part in commissions set up by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, who is a personal friend. The first focused on improving the UN's effectiveness in conflict prevention, the second on mapping a way through the political minefield of 'humanitarian intervention'—as the journalists wanted to call it. 'The responsibility to protect', the commission insisted, since 'intervention' is only a last resort, and they feared that the word 'humanitarian' might be deformed to serve political or government interests. How many miles of travel and days of meetings? He has lost count.

This warm-hearted Latin—he comes from the Tessin, the Italian-speaking Swiss canton in the sunny south of the Alps—has friends on every continent. His wife complains that in the last year, he's travelled even more than in his days working with the Red Cross: meetings in Maputo, Managua, New Delhi, Cairo, St Petersburg, Ottawa (twice), Paris (twice), Malta, Rome, Richmond, Virginia, Washington, Hong Kong, then three times each to Budapest, New York and London. He knows the world—and the world knows him!

Sommaruga was born in 1932, the first of six children in a Swiss diplomatic family posted to Rome. He feels that the two strongest formative influences on his convictions were his parents' Christian faith, and the Scout movement. His family was Catholic and his first humanitarian commitment was volunteering to help the infirm on pilgrimages to Lourdes.

He held dual Swiss and Italian nationality until he was 20. Growing up in fascist Italy, he only later understood why his father sent him to a private school—so that he did not have to join the fascist youth movement. For two years, the family was separated by the war: Sommaruga senior stayed on in Rome, while his wife and children lived in Lugano, just across the border in Switzerland. Both parents helped Jews to escape persecution—father filling the children's beds in

CICR/P. Doussel

Rome with fugitives, and mother helping refugees to settle in Switzerland. Later Sommaruga was surprised to discover that his future wife, an Italian, had a similar story to tell, of helping refugees across the lake to safety. These experiences gave him 'a special attention' for the Holocaust and the Jewish people.

After studies in Zürich, Paris and Rome, Cornelio Sommaruga graduated as a doctor of law, and followed his father's footsteps into the Swiss Foreign Service. In the 1960s, diplomatic postings took him and his growing family to The Hague, Bonn, Rome and Geneva. A specialist in economic and trade questions, in 1984 he became State Secretary for External Economic Affairs in Bern.

In 1986, out of the blue, he received a phone call that changed the course of his life. An acquaintance rang to say that the ICRC was looking for a new president, and that his name had come up. 'You're mad,' was his first reaction. He insisted on time to reflect, and, stretching the secrecy he was requested to respect, asked his wife to rally their six children from their different universities for a family council. Having grown up partly in Geneva, they seemed to know more about the Red Cross and its work than he did, and they were all in favour of him accepting.

The ICRC—a quintessentially Genevese body, with strong Calvinist roots—had only once before had a Catholic president. Sommaruga held the post for over 12 years, criss-crossing a suffering planet, tirelessly working to help reduce suffering.

As a Geneva resident, the first place where I take visitors is usually the Red Cross Museum. As you walk through the massive handwritten card file index of 13 million prisoners, wounded, killed and missing in the First World War, you realize that this institution is not serving 'humanity' in the abstract, but individuals, with names, families and histories.

The ICRC's brief (see box) is to protect the victims of war and internal conflict. Sommaruga's tenure covered the period of the Bosnian war and the Rwandan genocide, of crises in Afghanistan, Angola, Chechnya, Salvador and Timor, and of the Gulf War. He saw at first hand conflicts on every continent. 'I've come close to discouragement at times,' he confesses, especially in the face of the political blockages that hinder humanitarian efforts. He recalls too the delegates of the ICRC who lost their lives during his mandate—six were murdered in cold blood on one terrible night in Chechnya. He remembers with emotion visiting prisoners in their cells, the victims of landmines in hospitals, the internally displaced people who have no real legal protection.

The weeks before our interview have

been especially hard. In April he accepted yet another appeal from Kofi Annan, to be one of a trio of internationally respected figures to head a fact-finding mission to Jenin in the Palestinian territories. 'I am convinced that we could have worked in an independent and impartial way,' says Sommaruga. 'World public opinion had great expectations of our work.' Finally the team had to be disbanded because of opposition from the Israeli Government.

Sommaruga is particularly saddened by the personal attacks on himself which accompanied the controversy over the UN mission. The attacks—based on a two-year-old *Washington Post* article—related to a complex question which had come to a head during his presidency of the ICRC: the application of the Israeli humanitarian association, the Magen David Adom, to join the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The problem stemmed from the fact that if the Magen David Adom joined, all the states who had signed the Geneva Conventions would need to recognize another symbol along with the Red Cross and the Red Crescent. The symbol of the Magen David Adom was the Star of David.

In 1999 the new head of the American Red Cross demanded the immediate recognition of the Israeli society. In an attempt to explain the complexities of the issue, Sommaruga stressed that because it involved amending

the Geneva Conventions, the decision didn't depend on the Red Cross, but rather on governments. He went on to say, as an example, that the Ceylonese Red Cross had asked for the reversed swastika—a Hindu religious symbol—to be recognized as their symbol. The American Red Cross head stormed out of the meeting.

Negotiations continued, and before the current round of conflict in the Middle East, the way seemed to be clear for an agreement on a new, neutral international symbol—a red diamond, with the red cross, crescent or star in one corner for those who wished it.

Jewish friends who rallied to Sommaruga's defence say that they've not heard an anti-semitic remark from him in 30 years. The ICRC broke new ground during his presidency by releasing a history of the movement through the terrible years of the Second World War. Sommaruga followed this up with public apologies for the failures of the Red Cross during the Holocaust. Among the many honours and signs of recognition that Sommaruga has received for his work, he is proud of the Presidential Award from the University of Tel Aviv.

What rubs salt in the wounds of this most accessible of men is that journalists have repeated this one unfounded attack without once coming back to him to ask for his comments or confirmation. *The Washington Post*



### Red Cross factfile

**History:** Founded, as the International Committee for the Relief of the Wounded, in 1863, on the initiative of Swiss humanitarian Henri Dunant. The Geneva Convention of 1864 committed signatory states to care for the war wounded, whether friend or foe, and fixed the Red Cross as an internationally recognized emblem. Further conventions protected victims of sea battles (1907) prisoners of war (1929) and civilians in time of war (1949). In 1977, two further protocols enhancing the protection of civilian populations were adopted. Some 190 countries have now ratified the conventions.

**Structure:** The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement is made up of three independent components: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and 178 national societies, whose work is focused on disaster relief, health and social programmes in their own countries.

A specifically neutral, impartial and independent institution, the ICRC is governed by a committee of 25 co-opted Swiss citizens. Its mission is to protect and assist the victims of war and internal violence. It directs and co-ordinates the Movement's international activities in conflict areas and works to promote and strengthen humanitarian law. It is fully independent of the Swiss Government.

The Federation co-ordinates the Movement's international assistance to victims of disasters, refugees and in health emergencies. It represents national societies in the international field, promotes cooperation between them and works to strengthen their capacity.

The three components of the Movement meet every two years in the Council of Delegates and every four years in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference with the governments of states who are parties to the Geneva Conventions.

didn't publish his letter of protest until this current round of attacks two years after the original article.

On his retirement from the Red Cross, Sommaruga accepted to become the President of the Foundation for Moral Re-Armament in Switzerland, now known as Caux—Initiatives of Change. He also

*Continued on page 19*





## Children of Gaza working for peace

**O**n a hot summer day of 1997, I was sitting in my office thinking about the daily activities of the youth project in a Palestinian refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, where I worked as a volunteer. Suddenly I received a call from my friend inviting me to participate in a two-day conflict resolution workshop in a school in Gaza City.

Taking part in the workshop convinced me that education in conflict resolution can be a positive force for social change in Palestine, especially when youth are at the

core of this process. They are the ones to build a civil society based on respect of human rights, democracy and freedom.

There were huge challenges in launching the programme. The education system is hierarchical and society is fearful of new initiatives. We also had financial difficulties. However a pilot mediation project for 12-15-year-olds had already taken place in four schools in Gaza, run by UNRWA, (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency). This initiative paved the way for the decision to include the rest of Gaza.

Another challenge we faced was that the teachers, who took part in the project, had never witnessed a democratic process where students could select their peers to represent them in the mediation committee at their school. Part of the programme was to train teachers to supervise their students in resolving conflicts within their schools. Despite the fact that all the teachers had volunteered to take part, at the start of training they couldn't see 'where this sailing ship would lead them'.

This didn't stop the programme from expanding beyond the borders of the Gaza Strip to include 14 schools in the West Bank. By December 2000 the project included over 2,000 children in 66 schools where they have been resolving their own conflicts without the direct engagement of their teachers. A highly satisfactory annual assessment at the end of the first year had overcome the teachers' hesitation.

During my visits to some of the schools, many students informed me that their experience as mediators were not limited to conflicts at schools. They not only intervened in solving problems among their peers on the streets, but also used their skills at home, reconciling their brothers and even parents.

At another time some promising mediators participated in a programme, broadcast on the Palestinian satellite TV, to give support to their peers in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. This involvement of the students in leadership, based on democratic practice, was a main objective of the programme.

Since it was launched six years ago the programme has also stimulated other community education programmes. For instance, women—unexpected and unprecedented mediators in a masculine society—contributed brilliant ideas for community programmes, such as a phone help-line for women. It looked like a dream in the beginning, but now there are seven professional mediators and psychologists giving unique assistance to many marginalized sectors in Gaza and the West Bank.

Since October 2001 the conflict resolution programme has been running in Gaza's universities as well. The main focus is to promote the skills and attitudes of tolerance among young political leaders.

Peer mediation is still the backbone of the other community education programmes, inspired by the initial project, which have been contributing to positive change in Palestinian society. Despite the enormous pressures and human rights violations that Palestinians are currently facing, such programmes are essential for a viable future state to be based on democracy, freedom and justice.

*Ibrahim Natil*

*The Palestinian Centre for Helping Resolve Community Disputes*



## Afghan refugees gain learning for life

by Michael Smith

**A**s Afghan refugees stream back into their homeland, following the overthrow of the Taliban regime last year, a critical issue for the nation's reconstruction is education. 'Afghanistan's education system is in a state of total collapse,' reports the World Bank. Only eight per cent of Afghans complete primary education. The Taliban so marginalized women and girls that education for them went underground and only 13.5 per cent of women can read and write.

An immediate priority, says the Bank, is to 'expand primary education rapidly through all means'—including non-governmental and community based schooling.

A small UK charity, Learning for Life (LFL), (See FAC Dec-Jan 1999), aims to do just this. Over the last decade it has focused on providing basic education, especially for girls, in remote areas of Pakistan and India, some of the world's most illiterate regions.

In recent years LFL has turned its attention to 3,500 Afghan refugee children—girls and boys—living in and around Peshawar. As the two million Afghan refugees in Pakistan begin to return home—a process which is expected to take at least two years—LFL aims to expand into Afghanistan itself.

Cut to London's salubrious Notting Hill, where LFL has its offices in two small first floor rooms above a church—keeping its overheads to a minimum. LFL was founded in 1993 by two British women, merchant banker turned journalist Sophia Swire,

whom FAC profiled, and Charlotte Bannister-Parker, who had previously worked for eight years on women's development issues in south Asia.

Swire had reported from Pakistan for the BBC World Service. On a visit to Chitral, in the foothills of the Hindu Kush mountains, she was urged by a local district commissioner to help him set up schools for illiterate children.

Since then, LFL has helped to fund the education of over 30,000 children in some 200 village schools—paying for teachers' training and salaries, support staff and school equipment—in collaboration with local NGOs (non-governmental organizations). They do this in areas where the state education system fails to function. 'LFL sees itself investing in local skills to achieve longterm benefits,' says LFL's Director, Felicity Hill. This has been so effective that the Pakistan government has now incorporated aspects of LFL's work into its five-year education plan at a provincial level. And the Save the Children Fund has commended LFL as an example of good practice.

In the last seven years LFL has collaborated with a local charity, Afghan Relief and Rehabilitation, in setting up and funding six schools for the 3,500 Afghan refugee children, aged six to 18, in Peshawar. The Pakistan government refuses to take responsibility for their education, so they are utterly dependent on outside aid. 'The government doesn't favour refugees having access to education,' Hill says. 'Fortunately

the children benefit from the brain drain from Afghanistan amongst the adult refugees.' Afghan teachers are paid by LFL, and a little funding goes a long way: £250 covers a teacher's training and salary, while £50 covers a year's schooling for a child. The charity raised £250,000 last year, from the UK's Department for International Development, the national lottery's Community Fund, businesses and fund-raising events.

The Afghan schools are makeshift: in rented buildings, under tarpaulin and even in stairwells. 'We don't support construction costs,' says Hill. The children follow the national curriculum developed for Afghanistan by the University of Nebraska in the mid-1980s.

Pakistan's curriculum and teacher training has to be heavily supplemented, Hill says. Some available course work is repeated several times. So studies are also tailored to local needs, including languages, history, culture and farming skills.

Above all, says Hill, education is 'developing the children's self-respect and self-confidence in the community'. Visiting Pakistan each year, she sees the changes in the children. The parents tell her: 'They are more respectful, neater, they pray, they know what is going on in the houses around them.' In educating young women in particular, Hill says, 'you have direct access to the community. Women give birth, look after the family and its health. A mother who can read the instructions on medicine knows whether it is going to kill or cure her child.'

Trained as a primary school teacher, Hill came to her post as LFL Director in 2000 having worked for two and half years with the UK's Voluntary Services Overseas programme in Pakistan, running urban and shanty town schools. 'Each individual has a different place in the world and a different role to play,' she says. 'In LFL we all have a driving motivation to make it a success for this region that has been deprived of so much.'

'We can make a significant impact on a neglected area of the world,' adds Angus Broadbent, LFL's Chairman of Trustees and owner of Broadbent art gallery in London. The son of a headmaster, he 'bought into the vision' of the founders. 'It isn't a question of a money transaction between rich and poor worlds, he insists, so much as sharing the benefits of a good education. 'It is about enabling communities. The passion and commitment is very special in our organization. The people who get involved in LFL have a tremendous sense of ownership.'

LFL's publicity quotes UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan: 'There is no higher priority, no mission more important than that of education for all'. It breaks the cycle of poverty and Learning for Life is helping to fulfil that mission. ■

www.learningforlifeuk.org





# Africa arises

by Wenceslaus Miheso Musundi

**I**t was billed as a milestone on the road to a new Africa. An all-Africa conference, organized by MRA/Initiatives of Change (IC) in Nairobi, Kenya, drew groups from 16 African countries and eight other nations, from 31 May to 3 June. Opening the conference—against a backdrop of famine, wars, poor leadership and moral malaise—Julius Khakula, MRA/IC Kenya chairman, gave

a ringing call for the continent, 'to begin to be noticed, to happen, to appear'. Efforts taken by African leaders and international organizations to address Africa's problems had failed to bring about regeneration, he said. People had failed to address the moral component. 'Africans have lacked commitment to an ideal that would make the difference.' James Mageria, is founder and CEO of Vision Africa, an

initiative to fight the continent's bad news image and restore hope and confidence. He identified a lack of visionary leadership as the nub of Africa's crisis. The continent had lacked edifying moral leadership in politics. He called for a move from a politics of representation to that of accountability and participation, and referred to each individual's responsibility to God. 'The morass in African leadership is created by leaders who are intellectually and physically empowered but without a spiritual backbone,' he said. 'If African leaders were not educated, they would probably steal just a cow and not bring

whole economies to their knees.' Mageria illustrated how a simple initiative to change might affect nations and whole continents. In 1997, MRA/IC in Kenya had launched the Clean Election Campaign to prepare Kenyans for the multiparty general elections held that year. The MRA team, small in numbers and means, had laboured to reach thousands of Kenyans through the media, churches, schools and public meetings in a campaign whose ripples were still being felt. The Clean Election Campaign had since broadened its scope and given birth to the Clean Kenya Campaign.



Gorretti Mukakalisa, Rwanda



Khadija Hussein, Sudan



Angelina Teny, Sudan



Francisco Kapalu Ngongo, Angola



Rab Guar Gorman, Ghana

The conference now agreed to form the Clean Africa Campaign. This would be coordinated in individual African countries, with the aim of ridding the continent of rot and providing it with much needed leadership.

It was also agreed to form a 'travelling faculty'—a team of experienced moral leaders which would shuttle between African countries.

Mageria told how he had drawn inspiration from the Clean Election Campaign to launch the Ufungamano Initiative, Africa's first faith-based consultative forum on constitutional review in Kenya. His initiative had brought together 54 stakeholders in a process that led to the formation of the Kenya Constitutional Review Commission, and defused a constitutional crisis in the country.

John Bangura, from Sierra Leone and Denmark, said how his MRA/IC team had applied the strategy of clean election campaigns in the first democratic elections in Sierra Leone since the war. The clean elections concept 'sold like hot cakes' in Sierra Leone and has since been exported to Ghana.

In a spirit of openness and trust, honesty and healing, participants shared experiences of change in their lives and what they were doing to initiate change around them.

Francis Kimani spoke about a group of four Kenyan lawyers who fight corruption in the Nairobi central business district. They protect Asian business people who have been

easy game for unscrupulous public officers.

Warning that 'what you can tolerate you cannot change', Amina Dikedi, an MRA/IC worker from Nigeria, asked whether Africans were angry enough to provide answers to the many questions bedeviling the continent. 'You and I can renew the image of Africa by the way we live,' she said. 'We need a sense of personal integrity and national and personal responsibility. My life is a signpost for someone else.'

In a poignant reflection on the civil war in South Sudan, a Southern Sudanese leader asked, 'Will Africa arise if Sudan remains at war with itself?'

Khadija Hussein, founder of the charity, Sudanese Mothers for Peace, had been awarded Community Champion status by the British Government. She said, 'People talk about distribution of ABCD to achieve peace but none mentions the hearts of men, the minds of men and the relationships between people. The heart of reconciliation is truth.' Mrs Hussein narrated how she had overcome a myriad of racial, religious and political barriers to work with southern Sudanese women in the Sudanese Mothers for Peace, including Angelina Teny who was at the conference. Both women have played a prominent role in the Sudan peace process, in the North and South respectively.

Participants from Rwanda, Congo and Burundi urged that peace should not be taken for granted. Gorretti Mukakalisa from Rwanda moved people to

tears when she said that she did not know whether her husband was dead or alive. The spirit of the conference permeated even deeper in story telling groups, where delegates recounted their life stories to each other.

'The spiritual wisdom of African traditional values is something we in Europe need and lack,' said Jim Baynard-Smith from the UK. 'Africa should be the continent of the 21st century.' He urged Africans not to allow their precious gifts of the heart to get lost by competing with Western

materialism. African women—the refugee, war widow, single mother, leader—recounted moving tales that affirmed their faith in life. Two musical groups, Shades Classics, from the massive Kibera shanty town, and Balozi Africa, sang messages of hope.

The conference, dubbed Arise Africa, ended with a melting pot of African culture with phenomenal performances of song, dance, poetry, narratives and skits.

The next MRA/IC All-Africa Conference will be held in Ghana in 2003.



Shades Classics, from Kibera shanty town, Nairobi

All photos: John Leggat



Hugh Nowell has made a vocation of rising to the unexpected.

## Steps in faith

**W**hen Hugh Nowell left Oxford with a chemistry degree in 1949, acting and publishing were the last things on his mind. He planned to spend a gap year in Switzerland, and then take up a career in industry.

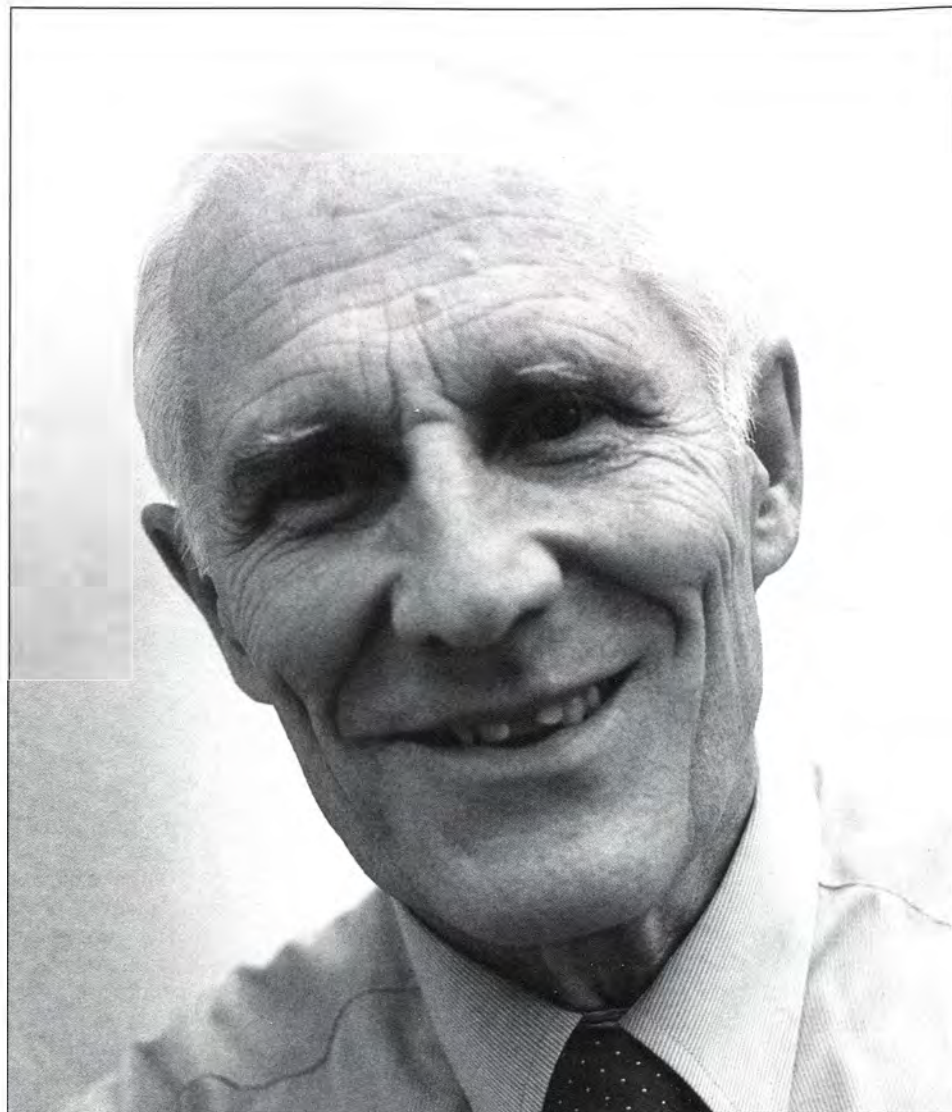
He already had an inkling, however, that things might not turn out quite the way he expected. 'I was standing in the corridor of a train, thinking with anticipation of the summer ahead. The sun was setting in a blaze of glory and the fields and hedgerows were alive with colour. I had the distinct feeling that I would be leaving this pleasant land for a long period.' It would be five years before he returned to Britain.

Industry was a natural choice for Nowell, whose father directed a tannery in Runcorn, England. During World War II, Nowell senior had pioneered a democratic approach to management that was revolutionary in its time. 'He was open with the trade unions about issues affecting the plant,' says Nowell, 'and he set up a works council. That sort of thing simply didn't exist in those days. As a result of this, the atmosphere in the plant changed. He used to write about it to me at school and university.'

These letters stemmed from a new relationship that Hugh built with his father when he was 13. He had taken a decision to live his life as God wanted him to. As a first step, he looked at things that had gone wrong which he was ashamed of and decided to talk to his father about them. There was only one problem: 'My father was not the sort of person one spoke to: he was a very busy businessman.'

When Nowell eventually plucked up the courage to approach his father, their conversation had a 'dramatic effect'. 'I felt free in a way I had never experienced before. From then on I was quite clear that God could be a personal force for me.'

Both his father's experiences at the tannery and Hugh Nowell's sense of rebirth were inspired by contact with MRA (now Initiatives of Change). So it was natural that



Philip Carr

when Nowell took a year off before pursuing his career, he decided to spend it working with MRA in mainland Europe, then rebuilding after the devastation of World War II.

On his way to MRA's international conference centre in Caux in Switzerland, Nowell went on a biking holiday in the West of France with some friends from college. 'We were on bikes of a very vintage variety, this being the post-war period when modern replacements were unavailable.' By the time their exam results came through they had made their way to Paris, where they saw all the shows and spent the last of their money on a bottle of champagne to celebrate their success on the Champs Elysées.

One of his friends took his bike back to Britain, and Nowell set out with no money to hitchhike to Switzerland. Lifts were hard to find—perhaps because of his travelling gear, a bush shirt, shorts and a battered felt hat into which he had stuck a union jack. As evening drew in, he was 'feeling a bit down'. 'Then a Citroen bulging with children and baggage drew up. The driver turned out to have fought with the Resistance.' The family even offered him a bed for the night.

After the summer conference in Caux, Nowell spent the autumn in the north of France, working to build bridges between management and labour under the auspices of the Jeune Patrons, an association of young textile managers. In the New Year he moved

on to the Ruhr, whose heavy industry had become a battleground of the class war. 'Our qualifications were that we had given all that we knew of ourselves to God for the purpose of remaking the world. We felt we were just as dedicated as the revolutionaries of the left whom we met there.'

He was still in the Ruhr when a strange request reached him from Caux. He was asked to return immediately to take part in a play, one of the media used by MRA to spread its message of personal change leading to social and economic change. An early embarrassing appearance on the stage had convinced him that this was not for him. 'I ignored the request. However, following more agitated calls from the director, I packed my bags and went.'

He remembers a terrible night when he lay awake contemplating a life on the stage. 'The director complained I was not putting my heart into it. He was dead right. However my inner workings told me I had better get on with it.'

Meanwhile his year was drawing to an end. As Oxford chemistry graduates were much in demand, he could have found a job in any of the large petrochemical companies in the UK. His father had also offered him a job at his tannery. But the feeling began to grow on him that he should stay where he was. 'God appeared to want me to do what I was doing.'

He went on playing the part for the next 11 years, when required, while doing 'field-work' for MRA in Europe, North America and Asia.

'This was the start to an unpredictable life which often seemed to involve doing things which I felt I had neither the gifts nor the desire to do,' says Nowell.

He felt equally unqualified to enter publishing, when the opportunity arose in 1963, although he had an innate interest in business. 'At the end of my third year in Oxford, I was looking for training in management skills. But no management courses existed in Oxford in 1948—and I couldn't find a psychology course either!' Thwarted, he had done a fourth year of chemistry.

Nowell was instrumental in starting Grosvenor Books, the publishing arm of MRA. They published a broad range of titles from *Cooking around the world* (which combined recipes with anecdotes) to children's books set in different cultures and *The Muslim Mind*, which opened western minds to an understanding of Islam. For 25 years he represented Grosvenor Books at the International Book Fair in Frankfurt. He says that one of his most exciting undertakings was launching a publishing operation in Moscow, before the end of the Cold War.

He retired from Grosvenor Books in 1988, only to find himself led in another unexpected direction. In 1990 he was one of a small group at an MRA conference who heard a senior British publisher, Bill Porter, talk about his concern about values in the media. 'He said that the media needed to find a new sense of responsibility for its impact on society. This echoed the convictions underlying the publishing we had been doing, and I offered to help.' Porter founded the International Communications Forum (ICF), and Nowell became its Joint Secretary. He describes Porter as a 'pied piper of Hamelin', to whose cause hundreds of media professionals all over the world have rallied.

Nowell quotes the response of Carol Goar, editorial page editor on the *Toronto Star*, as typical of many who have taken part: 'My involvement with the Forum has helped give me the courage to live by the values that brought me into this business in the first place.' He also quotes Roger Parkinson, President of the World Association of Newspapers, as saying that the ICF has 'put the issue of media responsibility on the world's agenda'.

'There are two types of people,' says Nowell, as he looks back on his life. 'There's the sort who have visions and ambitions and go for them, and the sort who take things as they come and act when they are clear it's the right track. I belong to the second type. If asked how do you know what course to take, I answer, "It grows on you!" And then you have to take a step in faith. A life of faith is an adventurous life.'

Paul Williams and Mary Lean

Continued from page 13

became the President of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining—the Red Cross, under his presidency, was at the heart of the international treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines. He is also Chairman of the Karl Popper Foundation, Chairman of the Board of a bank (JP Morgan, Switzerland), and a member of the Board of the Open Society Institute set up by financier George Soros.

His latest responsibility is as President of the newly created International Association of Initiatives of Change—a federation of MRA/IC's different national legal bodies. He speaks of 'the wonderful international network of motivated people', but sees the need for more transparency between national groups. It's vital to know where we are coming from as a movement, to build on the best of the past and to deepen personal change, he believes.

With all these activities, it's never easy to find enough time to spend with the family that he loves so dearly. All six children are married, and there are now 13 grandchildren, and a 14th expected any day now. Fortunately, he is an adept user of the telephone and now e-mail, and for 30 years he has posted a card to each of the children from every foreign country he visits. 'They always know where I am,' he insists. It has become a quasi-religious tradition to gather

all the family together over Whitsun, taking over the best part of a small hotel.

'Globalizing responsibility' has been the theme for the last two seasons of conferences in the Initiatives of Change centre in Caux, Switzerland. This year it carries the sub-title 'for human security'. Looking to the future, he worries that too little attention is being given to the root causes of violence: 'the vast economic and social disparities between and within states; the legal and illegal transfers of weapons and particularly small arms'.

Civil society must try to counteract these forces, he believes. It is everyone's responsibility to work for a better future for human society. 'It needs a multilateral, intercultural and inter-religious approach,' he stresses. He fears that the 'only world superpower doesn't seem willing to deep personal change, he believes.'

But 'we are never alone', he repeats. 'The power that gave us free will can inspire those of good will to work for a better future. There are more people than you think inspired by God or conscience working for true and lasting peace.' The challenge is to all of us: each of us has 'an ethical responsibility to work for reconciliation through forgiveness and justice', starting with ourselves. ■

## LETTER

From George Wilson, Kogorah Bay, NSW, Australia

I was intrigued by the opinion that 'India was thought to be the only country in the world which has never persecuted the Jews' (*For A Change*, April-May 2002).

In Australia I am unaware of any ghettos or pogroms involving these gifted people.

Our first Australian-born Governor-

General, appointed in 1933, was Sir Isaac Isaacs, and the most famous and highly regarded World War I General was Sir John Monash, both Jews.

This hardly seems like 'persecution'.

The editors welcome letters for publication but reserve the right to shorten them. Please write to 'For A Change', 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD. E-mail: [fac@mra.org.uk](mailto:fac@mra.org.uk)

## FOR A CHANGE

For A Change is a magazine I had not seen before and it is full of treats!

Sister Maureen Farrell, FCJ, Manchester, UK

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In Luxembourg, the group meets Nicolas Strotz, Mayor of Wellenstein and Member of the European Parliament.

## When the past becomes present

**S**uddenly history has become a real picture,' I heard from my fellow participants in the Lorraine-Europe 2002 conference, which took place in May in the east of France.

Organized by Antenne Lorraine-Trois Frontières, a programme of Initiatives of Change in France, the event united some 25 young people in a journey through the long-disputed borderlands of France and Germany and through the history of Franco-German reconciliation, which led to the creation of the European Union. 'Only 50 years ago we would never even cross the border with Germany,' said my French hostess who spoke fluent German.

We represented 16 countries—Croatia, Serbia, Ukraine, Romania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Malta, Italy, Germany, Tunisia, France, Nagaland, Britain, Lebanon and the US—the whole palette of relations with the EU, including countries who hope to join soon. For me as a Russian, for whom membership in the EU is not even a remote prospect, it was a significant and quite emotional experience to see this living example of integration between people.

Our 'journey' started in Verdun, which has a similar significance for the French as Stalingrad has for Russians—evoking memories of two world wars. Its moving, vast battlefields, now covered with thousands and thousands of white crosses commemorating named soldiers and an enormous memorial vault for unknown fighters make

you shiver in a total silence of respect.

'After experiencing the tragedy of war, Verdun has become a town of peace,' said Jean Laurain, a former French Minister and President of the French-German Entente Foundation. A symbol of this is the International Centre for Peace, Freedom and Human Rights in the former bishop's palace, where a young German recruit serving two years in the civil service showed us around the powerful exhibition.

Our next visit was to the home of Robert Schuman, the 'father of Europe', in Scy-Chazelles, near Metz. There we had a meeting followed by a lively discussion with Doris Pack, European MP for Saar, Germany, and Jean Seitinger, a President of the Robert Schuman Foundation, who as a French MP worked alongside Robert Schuman. 'Before joining the EU you should reconcile with your neighbours, not just simply wait for a miracle to happen,' said Pack, probably referring to our Eastern European mentality of hoping for *avos* (Russian for 'lucky fate') without doing much.

The most fascinating thing about the journey for me was that it was seen through so many different cultural and social lenses. This was particularly obvious during our feedback times. 'There's such a strong willingness to live together,' said Dorra Abida, a Tunisian student in France. 'To us it's been like a Utopia. But we haven't realized how much effort was made by Europeans to reach this stage. We are too far from reaching it in my country.'

'We see Europe as something very far from us and Europeans as people from another planet, who live in prosperity and success,' said Konstantin Ploskiy, Director of the Centre for Political Education in Ukraine. 'But we must not forget how Europeans have established friendships with other European countries based on trust, mutual help and understanding.'

'We need to focus on promotion of our own values and traditions, to show to Europe what we've got to contribute,' one of the participants pointed out. 'To build a larger united Europe let's not focus only on economic development as it doesn't reflect our people's values and beliefs,' said Daniela de Bono, a student from Malta.

In Schengen, Luxembourg, at the 'corner' of three countries (Luxembourg, France and Germany), we had a meeting in the Koch House where the Schengen Treaty was signed with the mayors of the three neighbouring small towns. 'How have you changed people's mentality and attitude so quickly?' asked a participant from Moldova. 'Through the positive impact of mass media and education,' was the reply. At that time it seemed quite an abstract response to me, but when our 'journey' was over it occurred to me that travelling the paths of history and meeting participants in the events had given me much more than boring history lessons.

Knowing and remembering history is the main prerequisite for keeping peace. All the current conflicts only prove the need to introduce such projects into the main curriculum in schools. UNESCO's motto suddenly sounded clearer to me, 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.'

Anastasia Stepanova

**A**s one who tries to take time each day in quiet reflection, I know of few better ways of starting than by reading a chapter of *Celebrating life—finding happiness in unexpected places* by Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and the Commonwealth.

*Celebrating life* consists of 58 chapters, none more than three pages long, each of which is a mini-homily. Chapter themes include: 'Faith, the undiscovered country'; 'Sifting hope from ashes'; 'When civilizations grow old'; 'The art of happiness'; 'Humour and humility'; 'Can we make moral judgements?'; 'The dignity of difference'; and 'Learning to love'. The book is full of anecdotes and there is plenty of humour. He describes humour as the first cousin of hope—'What we can laugh at, we can face. What we cannot laugh at, we often deny.'

In Britain, Jonathan Sacks has won his way into the hearts of many who are not of the Jewish faith by his regular contributions to the *Credo* column in *The Times*. His father came to Britain at the age of five when his family had to flee persecutions in Eastern Europe, leaving school at 14 to help in his father's East London cloth business which did not do very well. Sacks says of his father, 'He gave us, his four boys, something precious. Not money or possessions. He gave us ideals. He gave us pride in what we were. He taught us how to love.'

At the beginning of his book, Sacks tells us of an experience on his honeymoon when he almost drowned. Unable to swim and with apparently no one in sight, he floundered out of his depth and felt himself sinking. A few moments later, someone picked him up and deposited him next to his wife. He was too shocked even to ask his rescuer's name. 'It was then I realized... that faith is not a set of theological propositions. It is something far simpler. It is not how we are, but that we are, that is cause for wonder and faith is the symphony on that theme.'

Exploring the theme of faith further, he tells the story of a Nobel physics prize winner whose mother, when he came home from school, would not ask 'what have you learnt today?' but rather 'what questions did you ask today?' This is what had made that man become a scientist.

'Religious faith,' says Sacks, 'has suffered hugely in the modern world by being cast as naïve, blind, unquestioning.... To me, this is a caricature of faith, not faith itself. What is the asking of a question if not itself a profound expression of faith? To ask is to

## Food for the soul

James Hore-Ruthven discovers that 'Celebrating life' by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks contains far more to engage the heart and mind than its size might suggest.

believe that somewhere there is an answer. The fact that throughout history people have devoted their lives to extending the frontiers of knowledge is a moving demonstration of the restlessness of the human spirit and its constant desire to transcend, to climb. Far from faith excluding questions, questions testify to faith—that the world is not random, the universe is not impervious to our understanding, life is not blind chance.... A God who cared for creativity would not provide the answers. He would prefer a universe in which people asked the questions. When faith suppresses questions, it dies.' He describes the varied religions as 'the memory bank of our great moral traditions'.

In a chapter entitled, 'Having it all', Sacks tells the story of the man who wrote to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, asking his advice about how to become happier. 'I wake up every day sad and apprehensive. I can't con-

centrate. I find it hard to pray. I keep the commandments, but I find no spiritual satisfaction. I begin to wonder what life is all about. I need help'. The Rebbe simply ringed the first word of every sentence and sent the letter back. The disciple understood and began a process of recovery.

Sacks says that he has learnt most about happiness from having to speak at funerals. 'No relative ever asked me to say of

someone that they dressed well, lived extravagantly, drove an expensive car. In my address, I had to paint a portrait, one that is true to life... but one that also summed up what he or she had meant to the people who were closest. I learned from those occasions that happiness is the ability to look back on life and say, "I lived for certain values, I acted on them and was willing to make sacrifices for them. I was part of a family, embracing it and being embraced by it in return.... I was part of a community, honouring its traditions, participating in its life, sharing its obligations. It is these things that make up happiness in this uncertain world."'

This 192-page book stirs the intellect, touches the heart and pricks the conscience. Every chapter is a gem.

*'Celebrating life—finding happiness in unexpected places'* by Jonathan Sacks, Fount (Harper Collins) UK. ISBN 0 00 628172 9







# WEBSITE

by Robert Webb

## One of journalism's finest hours

**G**ail Collins holds no public office or top corporate post, but ranks as one of America's most influential figures. As the first woman editor of the *New York Times* editorial page, she is a trailblazer. It's not surprising, then, that after a full day at the *Times* she works at home on a history of women. 'I'm up to the 1920s now,' says Collins, author of two earlier books—one, *Scorpion Tongues*, on political gossip, the other, *The Millennium Book*, written with her husband, Dan Collins.

Supervising, coordinating and editing the work of 14 writers, Collins has a powerful influence on *New York Times* editorial policy. And because the *Times* is a major voice on US domestic and foreign policy, it is a must-read in chancelleries worldwide. Moreover, the *Times* is said to influence the content of other major media, including television. The newspaper thus shares enormous responsibility for the way the nation, and, to some degree, the world goes.

So I couldn't miss an opportunity to meet and hear Collins on a recent trip to her hometown, Cincinnati, Ohio. She spoke to the annual awards banquet of the Cincinnati chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, of which I was founding president in 1967. Part of her brief was to stress the essential public service print and broad-

cast journalists perform. She did this by driving home the dependency of democracy on a free and unfettered press and reviewing the *Times*' experience after 11 September 2001.

The *Times* won an unprecedented seven Pulitzer prizes (American journalism's highest awards) this year. It modelled the best of journalism with its post-11 September coverage. *Times* management gave its news and

**'Seldom, if ever, has the word "change" been heard in America as much'**

editorial teams *carte blanche* to do whatever it took in manpower and cost to bring readers the most complete, accurate and sensitive report possible. An ad-less section, for example, was cleared for coverage.

It was a decision far beyond the bottom line in one of journalism's finest hours. It came, moreover, at a time when most media organizations were hard hit by the economic recession.

On 10 June the *New Yorker* magazine pro-

filed the *Times*' new executive editor, Howell Raines. 'For its 12 September edition, the *Times* deployed some 300 reporters, 30 staff photographers, and two dozen freelance photographers,' wrote Ken Auletta. 'There were 74 bylines accompanying 67 stories, filling 33 pages of a 96 page paper.'

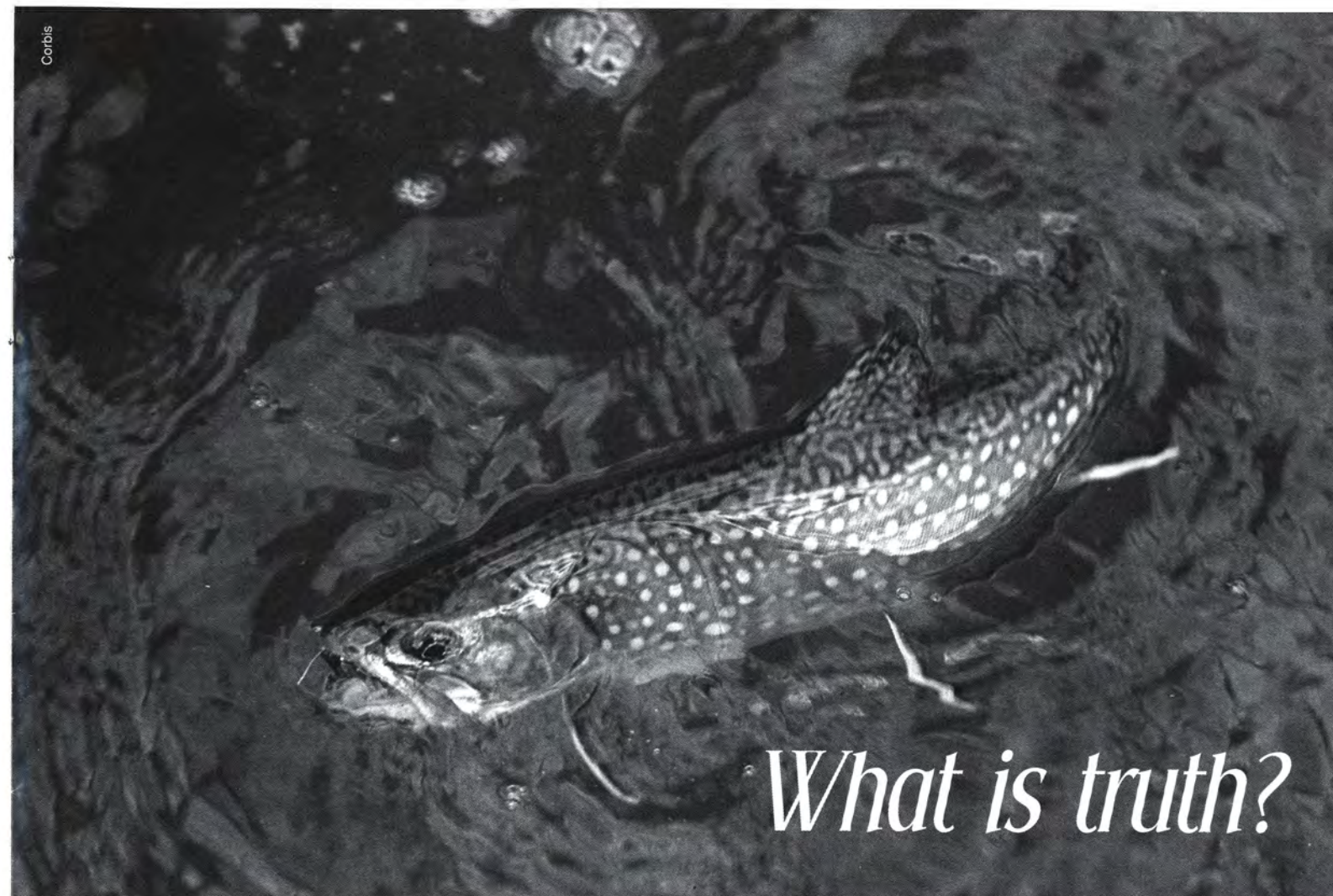
In her Cincinnati talk, Collins said that whereas the paper normally receives 500 letters a day and publishes 20 'we were receiving 500 an hour after 9/11'. Prior to that tragic day, Collins said she and her colleagues had talked about how they might infuse their opinion pages with some lighter fare. '9/11 changed that,' she said.

But while hundreds of *Times* staffers became swiftly engaged in the story in different parts of the world, Collins was confined to her Manhattan office. It was not until Saturday 15 September that she was able to take a walk to get more of a feel for what had happened. For example, she went to Washington Square Park where people had put up posters symbolizing their grief. She also ran into US Senator Hillary Clinton whom she had covered and knew was now gripped by emotions far removed from anything political.

Seldom, if ever, has the word 'change' been heard in America as much as since 11 September. We Americans have examined our lives and paid more attention to our government, religious institutions and, yes, the press than perhaps at any time in history. In her new post, Collins can help Americans and decision-makers worldwide find their way toward a brighter, safer, less-violent future—a path that calls for change in our attitudes, motivations and relations with all our neighbours near or far.

*Robert Webb is a former columnist and editorial writer for the 'Cincinnati Enquirer'. He lives in Alexandria, Va, USA.*

## REFLECTIONS by Rev Daniel C Kanter



*What is truth?*

**I** had one of those moments, on a Sunday morning a few weeks ago, when no answer felt like an adequate response to the question asked of me. Through the receiving line came a church member who asked, 'What is truth?' Taken aback for a moment, I stumbled and then answered, 'Well... you know it when you see it!'

As I mull over my answer, I don't think that it was all that bad. I recognized the query from John 18:38, when Pontius Pilate asked the same question of Jesus. Like the Buddha, who was asked what enlightenment is and responded by lifting a flower and saying nothing, Jesus' response was simply to remain silent. A wise and enlightened leader might let truth speak for itself. I know I am not that wise. So why not a few more words on the truth?

I have used the word 'truth' in prayers or sermons as a way of talking about what really matters, our ultimate concerns, and what lies beneath the surface of our emotional fidgeting or our jockeying for attention or power. Truth comes through the veil of the everyday, sometimes in moments of holy silence, sometimes in unspeakable instants

when we know something has happened deeper in our souls than what we experience most of the time in the rush of the day. And how elusive these momentary luminescent moments can be. Sometimes we think we have firmly grasped the truth and the whole meaning of life and then, like a slippery fish, it swims off into the vast sea only to leave us confounded.

Then there are those who believe the truth is firmly in their grasp. Some claim that truth is exclusively theirs. I believe this approach is foolish if not dangerous for those of us less certain who seek humbly to piece our experience of truth together over a lifetime of hard spiritual work and discipline. The silence of Jesus with Pilate and the Buddha's flower response to his disciples teach us that truth should not be made into a weapon of destruction. To believe we own the truth can lead to violence or intrusion or believing that we ourselves are gods. The point is that the search may lead us to the well and that those who cultivate room in their souls for radical openness and a willingness to be moved will be the ones to know it.

Aniäs Nin wrote this piece of wisdom to

help us with our search for truth:

'There are very few human beings who receive the truth, complete and staggering, by instant illumination. Most of them acquire it fragment by fragment, on a small scale, by successive developments, cellularly, like a laborious mosaic.'

This seems to me an honest depiction of any search for truth. Don't we get it slowly, in bits and pieces, in moments when we see what it means to be alive, when the universe gives us a glimpse of the meaning of life? Don't these continuous revelations of truth shine through the murky days in myriad ways, allowing us a peek at Nin's mosaic, one tile at a time? Maybe one day, by collecting or working on these momentary fragments of illumination, we will know the 'Truth' and it shall set us free.

I guess if I have to have an answer another time for the ancient question about the meaning of truth, I might say the same thing: 'You know it when you see it,' or better, 'It might take a lifetime to know it.' ■

*The Rev Daniel C Kanter is the Minister at the First Unitarian Church in Dallas, Texas.*

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