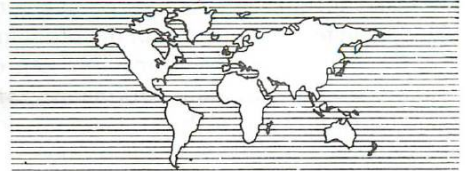


British Aerospace

Artist's impression of the MARECS Maritime Communications Satellite

NEW WORLD NEWS

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INPUT FOR WORLD COMMUNICATIONS YEAR

by Michael Smith

WE ARE ALREADY LIVING in the age of information, the so-called post-industrial society, says Tom Stonier, Professor of Science and Society at Bradford University, in his new book, *The Wealth of Information*. Information has become the decisive input in our modes of production, outweighing the traditional trio—land, labour and capital.

The information industries, along with the service industries, are taking over an increasing number of jobs from traditional manufacturing. Scotland, the 'silicon glen' of Europe, now employs more people in micro-electronics than in steel and shipbuilding together. It is perfectly possible, says Dr Stonier, that by the end of the century Britain's traditional manufacturing could be in the hands of only 10 per cent of the workforce.

Information, in this context, is not just what we read in our daily newspapers. It is the term used for all the 'messages' that are fed into a computer—both instructions on how it should function and data to be stored and recalled for future use. It is all the input required by a computer in order for it to tell us our monthly bank balance, or guide a space-shuttle into orbit.

Another compelling book, *The World Challenge*, by the French politician and journalist Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, paints a picture of how information technologies will transform the mechanics of society. We are, he says, just at the start of an exponential growth in their use worldwide. They have already affected every area of our lives from domestic appliances to communications. We meet them at the autobank and the travel agent; we play with them on the video screen; they alleviate some of our more mind- and soul-destroying jobs, such as those in the car industry. The new technologies are energy-conserving, cheap to produce and, Servan-Schreiber believes, could help to lead the developing world out of poverty.

For many this new world is a source of fascination, paving the way to cheaper, faster and consistently high quality production. For thousands of others it is a source of fear and insecurity; for the new technologies displace more traditional jobs than do Third World imports. They demand of us a radical reappraisal, a willingness to rise above the innate conservatism that resists change at all costs—for even if we don't accept the new technologies,

SPECIAL ISSUE

The United Nations has designated 1983 World Communications Year. The aim is to promote balanced social and economic development by speeding up the establishment of communications infrastructures.

Improved communication technology in greater quantity will not in itself ensure economic and social advance. What is communicated and the motives of the communicators are also crucial. In this issue we look at the human side of communication.

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Group visits South America...page 8

we can be sure that our competitors will.

Our technological inventiveness has done nothing to help us bridge the ancient gaps of fear and mistrust. In two decades newspaper production has leapt from the world of Caxton to the world of full-page facsimile transmission across the continents. But the threat that new technology posed to employment closed *The Times* of London for nearly a year in an industrial dispute. We still conduct our industrial relations with the primitive tactics of sit-ins, lock-outs, and wholesale dismissals.

Computer science is based on numbers—the binary code. Servan-Schreiber writes that, in this context, 'Numbers can translate, express, transmit, restore and diffuse everything—except emotions'. We cannot look to new technology alone to solve the problems caused by our passions of hate, fear and greed. Often it merely provokes them.

Human intelligence fails to master our emotions. How can we make decisions on the basis of faith and care for people, rather than fear, self-interest or the profit motive? For this we too need an input of information from outside—the 'adequate, accurate, definite information' which Frank Buchman, initiator of Moral Re-Armament, said 'can come from the mind of God to the minds of men'.

Could the age of information also be characterised by this spiritual source of information? The voice of God, which we can perceive in the silence of our hearts, is as accurate and instant as any microcomputer. It awakens the conscience and clarifies the mind, helps us to be sensitive to the needs of others, and to anticipate events. It is a source of ideas for individual initiative. The only precondition is purity of heart and motive.

As the potential of our technologies—for good or evil—grows, our willingness to tap this inner source of information could be decisive for our survival. For as Servan-Schreiber says, 'Everything that has been won in the struggle for survival has always been by the species with the richest source of information.' ■

IN A DAY WHEN communications by satellite encompass the world is it not time to ask ourselves what are we communicating? Surely it is not the quantity of communications that always matter, but the quality? Is it not time that we began to consider afresh how we can in the mid-1980s communicate to others in the world community in the least corrosive way possible?

What we surely need is that people in communications set an example in what one could call Unilateral Mental Disarmament—fair, honest communications where communicators at least take the first steps to cure themselves of the derision, cynicism, superiority and scorn with which they often portray other nations, particularly 'direct confrontation' opponents. Otherwise, in world terms we declare ourselves impotent to do anything other than build greater barriers of words and weapons as our sole 'protection'.

Unless we begin such a mission the only change the age of the new media technology will herald will be to speed up the capacity to judge one another, electioneer abroad, meddle in the destiny of others, hate or hurl insults at one another. The alternative challenge is to actually change the way the world thinks, no matter how long the process takes. This challenge belongs to the communicators.

Claud Morris in 'The Voice of the Arab World', July 1983

British journalist, MICHAEL HENDERSON, gives a weekly talk on KBOO Radio in Portland, Oregon, where he now lives. Below we print extracts from two successive talks on press freedom and responsibility:

WHAT'S NEWS?



Michael Henderson

DE TOCQUEVILLE, that shrewd French observer of the American scene in the 19th century, made this comment about the press: 'In order to enjoy the inestimable benefits that the liberty of the press ensures, it is necessary to submit to the inevitable evils that it creates.' Thomas Jefferson made the same point: 'The only security of all is a free press. The agitation it produces must be submitted to. It is necessary to keep the waters pure.'

Most democrats, and certainly most journalists, would subscribe to those views. But freedom of the press will only flourish as long as the benefits are seen by most people to outweigh the evils.

The 'inestimable benefits' to which de Tocqueville referred are sometimes taken too much for granted these days. Not having experienced first hand the loss of our freedom, we do not know what a rare and highly prized commodity it is.

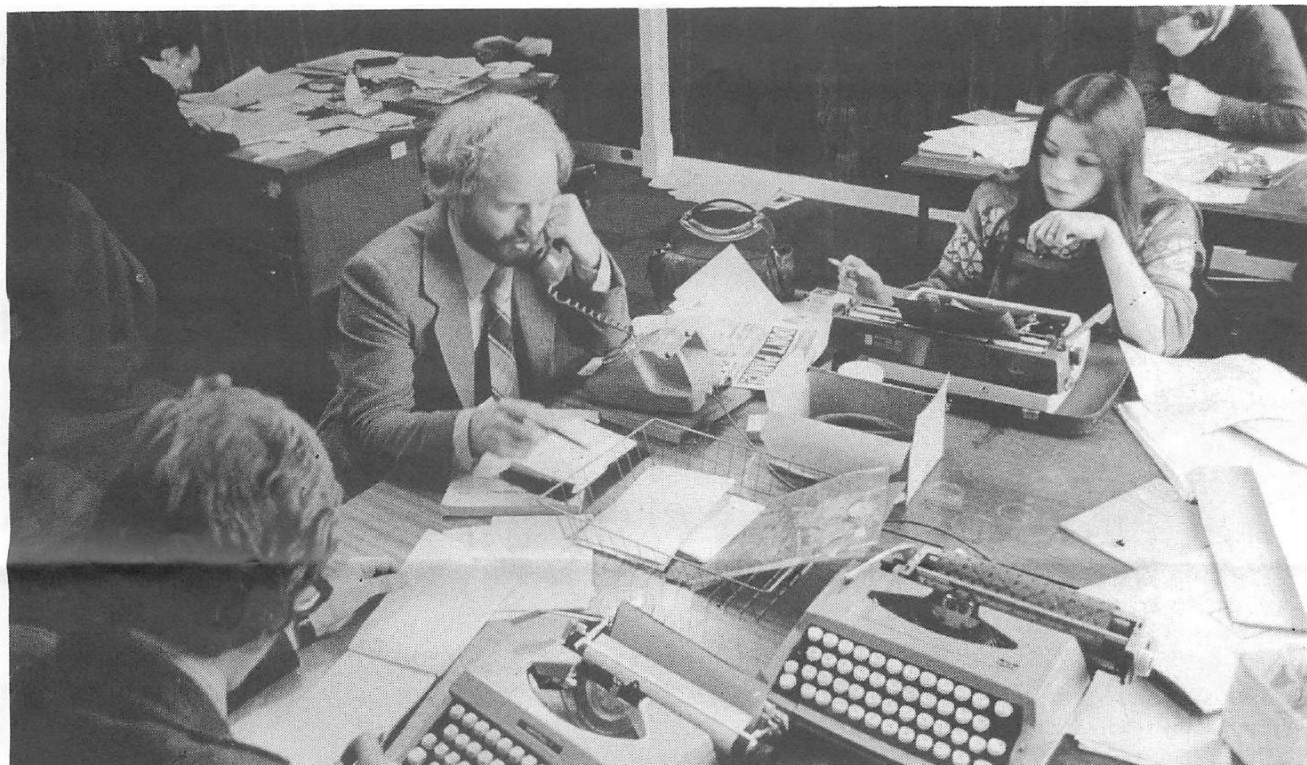
The 'inevitable evils' live with us—sensationalism, the exploitation of sex, revelations of names of CIA agents or how to make your own atom bomb, stories which later turn out to be fiction, inquisitorial TV confrontations, cheque-book journalism where criminals sell their memoirs to the highest bidder, or the publicising of hijacking and drug-tampering that can spread fear and lead to copycat cases.

Media practices

Of course not all the evils are inevitable. A lot of them can be, and are, headed off by newspaper managements, editors and reporters who have courage, imagination and vision.

We take it for granted that industrialists should consider the effect on the environment of their factories, in a way they never used to. Perhaps we journalists need to look at the effect of our present media practices on a disintegrating society. Is the sense of news values which has grown up in this century adequate for today's world?

Sridath Ramphal from Guyana, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, said last year in New York that in issues of peace and war the media were often not at their best. The major media outlets tended to share the prevailing views of



Andrew Wiard (Report, London)

Keeping the waters pure?

the national audiences which were their constituencies and of the governments which ordered the lives of those audiences. A decisive shift in public attitudes towards international security and disarmament could be promoted by media treatment which distanced itself from those prevailing views.

I was once asked to cover an international conference abroad. It seemed to be going well. But the British journalists, either because they had been so briefed or more likely because of an innate sense of what is accepted as news in Britain, were probing for and accentuating any areas of division. Some of this was reflected in their choice of words. 'Mr Heath reacted angrily' when they might have written 'The British Prime Minister spoke firmly'. It was interesting that the German journalists approached the subject less gladiatorially. As a result one of my German colleagues found himself phoned up by his editor and asked why he was not reporting the imminent breakup of the conference as predicted in that morning's British papers. As it happened there was no breakup and, because the conference was successful, not much news either.

Any worthwhile changes that come to the media in a democracy are not going to be imposed from without by legislation. They will come voluntarily from media people who are aware of the needs of the community they serve.

Shaping events

The key to change will be the character of journalists. Over the years I have met many journalists who put their profession ahead of their advancement. I have met journalists, too, who have been vitally involved not only in reporting events but also in shaping them for the better without compromising their journalistic integrity. These include a Dutch TV journalist who in the course of his interviewing met and won the trust of the German- and Italian-speaking leaders in the South Tyrol dispute and was able to bring them together and contribute to a settlement;

a UPI bureau chief in the deep south of the United States who was able to defuse potential racial violence in a southern college town; a young English journalist whose exposure of the medical dangers of working with asbestos led to changes in the law. I think too of a Norwegian journalist, whom I didn't meet, who through his writings became a source of friction between his country and Denmark. Later he faced up to what he was doing and helped bring the two countries together at the time of an international dispute.

Assassin

Ahmet Emin Yalman from Turkey, who died eleven years ago, was awarded the international golden pen of freedom for his service to journalism. At the height of the bitter feelings between Greece and Turkey before Cyprus became independent, he, a Turkish editor, laid aside old prejudices, went to Athens and wrote such conciliatory articles that the London *Times* said later that what he had written about Cyprus and Greek-Turkish relations helped create the atmosphere which made the independence agreements possible. In 1952 Yalman was hit by a hail of bullets. His would-be assassin was a high school student, Huseyin Uzmez, who was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. Yalman kept in touch with Uzmez in prison, arranged for him to pursue legal studies there and even, through his paper, supported an amnesty which would free him. At Yalman's death Uzmez wrote, 'What a sad coincidence that the very day I opened my lawyer's office in Ankara, the radio announced his death. How many of us are able to conquer even the hearts of our enemies as did Yalman?'

Such journalists illustrate a principle in the Oregon Code of Ethics of Journalism: 'It is not true that a newspaper should be only as advanced in its ethical atmosphere as it conceives the average of its readers to be. No man who is not in ethical advance of the average of his community should be in the profession of journalism'. ■



Lean

'So real that the reader feels he is there'

GOLD FOR THE TAKING

by John Williams, Australia

THE CATCHCRY of writers this century has been 'experience', to make something your character is living through so real that the reader feels he is there, on the spot, living through it, his heart full to bursting or in the pit of despair.

In a century of world wars, of disillusionment with established leaders and institutions, writers have demanded that everything be real, true to life, in fact an antidote to platitudes. The existentialist approach has often offered sanity and release to those seeking some sort of meaning in an apparently purposeless world. In this way artists and writers have been able to render our chaotic civilisation a service.

It is fair to ask, what sort of experiences have been written about. Ladles of violence, cauldrons of despair, barrels of sex have been served up to us. Does this represent the whole range of human experience? Or are there further and deeper ones worth exploring?

Recently I read a novel that has won many critical plaudits here in Australia. Its theme was the adventures of an Australian expert in an Asian country. Though at the heart of the establishment in his own country, he is completely lost in the Asian environment. As he travels from one Asian land to another, he gets further and further into difficulties, his marriage collapses and the book ends (rather suddenly) when he is captured by terrorists.

Having travelled widely in Asia myself, I could appreciate how brilliantly the scene was set and the adventures of the characters portrayed. The book is full of sharp nuances and touches of art, but the author obviously believes there is no hope for his central figure. He envelops him in humour that becomes blacker and blacker until all sympathy for

him—and for what the author is trying to say—vanishes. It could have been a superb book, shedding light on one of the great problems of the day. It could have given us some clue, for example, about the dilemmas of Westerners in Asia, about what went wrong in Vietnam. If the main character had begun to face his weaknesses, had tried to measure up to the challenges that confronted him, it would have been twice as absorbing.

Having studied English literature at Oxford, I have kept my eyes on what is being communicated in the mass media, and feeding our imagination and creativity. I am now completing my first novel. It has been an extraordinary experience to feel a range of very different people come to life under the clatter of my typewriter. Whether it will ever find a publisher or whether any critics will think it any good is another matter.

I have been trying to convey an experience that has, perhaps understandably, been too little the subject of creative writing in this century—the struggle of a group of characters to come to terms with God and the world as man has made it. My own 25 years' experience with Moral Re-Armament has convinced me that perhaps our main danger—far worse than missiles and H-bombs, than poverty and exploitation—is our lack of hope and expectancy and of decision to bring change where it is needed.

Far too often people who have written on such subjects have been trying to prove something. They have felt cornered, on the defensive. I find that, whenever I do that, the touches of art which bring a character alive disappear. The search for the eternal can only really be touched upon with great artistic dedication and never with a wish to make propaganda.

Whatever happens to my own writing, I have been convinced that the experience of people searching for the infinite—and for where they need to become totally different in order to find it—is a gold mine for writers. If artists are ready to do this wholeheartedly themselves, they may make possible the advances in attitudes and experience which can save us from destruction. ■

TO RENEW THE SPIRIT OF MANKIND

by Kathleen Johnson

PEOPLE sometimes introduce me as a composer. This inevitably invites the question: 'And what kind of music do you compose?'

In the 18th century the question would have been unnecessary. The professional composer was just as likely to write music for amusement as to write a Mass or a symphony. During the last hundred years, the emergence of jazz on the one hand, and the 12-tone system of composition on the other, have helped to produce a cleavage between 'serious' and 'popular' music. Despite brave attempts at cross-fertilisation, composers tend to stick to one side or the other, and to feel that there is no middle ground worth exploring.

The 'popular' scene presents a confusing tangle of genuine urban folk music and the fevered outpourings of a vast commercial machine, sprinkled with slogans from this or that pressure group. When something of real worth breaks through, it is quickly superseded as the wheel of fashion rolls relentlessly on. Some composers make their golden discs, others sink without trace, but the real losers are the public, who need music for leisure and songs which help them feel what others feel, but do not wish to see themselves and their children manipulated.

Throughout musical history there have always been some composers who were innovators and others whose genius was to build on the foundations of their predecessors. A young 'serious' composer today could easily feel that these foundations have been removed, and everyone is expected to be an innovator. The pursuit of new sounds has led some into a sterile backwater where the listener is of no account. Other composers believe in principle that music is a medium of communication and that without the support and participation of true 'amateurs' it has no future. Given this basic principle a composer then has to nurture within himself a love and respect for people that equals his own urge to create. Questions of idiom and technique then fall into perspective.

In writing music for Christian theatre I have been privileged to explore this 'human' side of composing. I am



Weeks

Kathleen Johnson

unlikely to win accolades for originality, though I hope people will get a few surprises. What they get is more important than what I feel about it. To write 'great' music is every composer's dream. But if I try to be too clever, then what comes out is not great at all—it leaves the audience cold! On the other hand I can't cut corners. To write something simple yet profound is hard; many wastepaper baskets get filled with abortive efforts. It is an amazing experience to hear, perhaps long afterwards, that someone has been touched by a song; they may have seen themselves in a new light, allowed God into their life, or just simply been unable to get the tune out of their head!

Several experiences have led me to believe that it was God who chose this particular path for me, but that does not make it all plain sailing. I have to be sure that the projects I take on remain in His hands and not mine. Often the needs of people near to me force me to lay the task aside just when ideas are beginning to flow. At those moments I have to remember that writing music for people, and caring for them in practical ways, are equally part of my calling.

Music means different things to different people. But whether in a symphony or a song, most musicians have at some time experienced that magical moment when the blend of head, heart and hand is right; when we feel we have touched a power that can renew the spirit of mankind. Musicians of all varieties are needed to help this renewal become a reality. ■

GRASSROOTS COMMUNICATOR

by Irene Massey, Republic of Ireland

I CAN SPEAK only a few words of my own native language, Gaelic, and my English often leaves much to be desired. My pride can stop me attempting to communicate with folk who speak a different language. A while ago I was given generous hospitality by a young French-Canadian couple. My host and hostess graciously spoke English to me. Their six-month-old son gurgled and laughed as I talked English with an Irish accent to him; he had not yet learned any language but he fully understood that of the heart!

Care is the basis of communication and springs from a life which has switched from having self as its centre. God's gift of grace flows freely when we take time to obey and listen to Him, accepting His conditions and measuring our lives against absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.

Being quite talkative, caring for others has enabled me to listen more than I talk. Living with a deaf friend taught me lessons in patience and a new consideration for all deaf people. Incidentally, it was his care for the deaf which led Alexander Bell to his invention of the telephone.

The converse of talking too much for me is to write letters without demanding replies. To obey that feeling to be in touch with a friend means for me an average of a letter a day. It could be to an old colleague looking after her aged mother in a Norwegian village, or to the wife of a trade unionist, or to a fellow secretary on the other side of the world.

Travel can provide one with many opportunities to communicate with others. It, too, springs from being ready to turn

from self-absorption, prejudgement and prejudice to an interest in a fellow human being. I vividly recall an opportunity I had to talk with a family of itinerants in the cafeteria on a boat to Ireland. I nearly avoided this conversation because of my snobbish love for the respectable. On another journey I was determined to sleep, but I felt as if God shook me awake to talk to a fellow passenger who was also determined to sleep, but who found herself pouring out her story to me. It was a critical time for her; she was about to defy the teachings of her church, and God used our journey together to give her a new perspective.

A member of the Indian delegation to the ILO in Geneva last month spent a weekend in Mountain House, the MRA centre in Caux, Switzerland. He commented, 'Communication is very good in this house—it reaches the heart.' ■

SANDRA BELL is a secretary in a South London hospital.

NO MORE WALKING AWAY

AS A CHILD I spent a lot of time on my own and was separated from my family in a school where everyone seemed to have so much material wealth that it was impossible not to feel isolated if you didn't. I despised my family for not being wealthy, and my friends for seeming to have so much.

This led me to travel from town to town, friend to friend and boyfriend to boyfriend, hoping each time that I would find something 'better' with the next town, friend or boyfriend! I never stopped to think that there was anything wrong with me—that the person I was running away from was really myself. I look back at the lack of communication in my life: the jobs where I felt something was wrong, yet didn't have the courage to say so; the relationships I walked away from without a word—not realising that if I had spoken up it might have made the friendship closer rather than destroying it. I am lucky that my parents still care about me, even though I used them as a convenience when I needed money or a bed. I feel that in a lot of ways I should repay the time and money my parents gave me, which I have always taken for granted.

Past

Through Moral Re-Armament and talking with people from countries which don't have a national health service I have begun to see how much time, money and effort those of us in the National Health Service waste in our jobs. Now if I grumble about anything at work, I feel I have to do something about it.

I used to feel as though I didn't have anything to offer. And as I was so involved with myself I felt the world had basically nothing to offer me. Consequently I would get up every morning feeling 'What's the point?' and I found it impossible to care about keeping to my diabetic diet—hence I was permanently in and out of hospital. To actually look at this as part of the past is probably the most positive part of my life at the moment. ■

ANTI-FREEZE

by Viveka and Sturla Johnson, Tromsø, Norway

EVERY DAY, IN OUR WORK as doctors, we meet the results of lack of communication. For, when husband and wife or father and son stop talking with each other, inner tensions develop and this is sure to lead to medical problems. These include headaches, muscular pain, dizziness, indigestion and sleeplessness. Medical scientists are now discussing the possible long-term effects of such tensions. For instance, the body's defences against cancer may be affected by long-standing emotional stress.

We have two teenagers. As we both lead active professional lives, family communications are bound to be demanding. We find we have to set aside time for talking—and this means switching off the TV.

Lack of honesty about our thoughts and feelings can lead to difficulties, as we have often found.

Three years ago, one of us was offered a part in a research project. Because of lack of honesty with a senior colleague doubts about the project did not come out until it was well under way. The project ran into difficulties and time and energy were wasted. This also created strain in our home-life for nearly two years. A completely honest talk with the colleague concerned finally brought things back onto the right track. Apology brought an amazing response. The colleague admitted that he had also had doubts and felt unsure of his own capabilities. This talk led to a completely new relationship.

Huge data banks have made medical knowledge instantly available for today's research workers. You can sit in front of a terminal in the Tromsø university library and be 'on line' with a computer in Los Angeles, tapping the latest data. In the same way we need to help each other and our children be 'on line' with God.

We find that communication can quickly break down in our married life when we are critical or competitive. Criticism kills the spirit and deadens the heart, making us unable to listen to each other. It quickly spreads to our children and before we know it the Arctic frost has crept into the house. As we learn to encourage and appreciate each other, love and warmth return to our home. Our visitors notice the difference. ■

Everest escape

AT THE END OF LAST YEAR the Belgian mountaineer Jean Bourgeois was reported lost on an expedition up Everest. Three weeks later he turned up in Tibet having fallen several hundred metres and found his way alone off the mountain.

'I once heard an extraordinary definition of luck as the ability to listen to a still, small voice inside,' Bourgeois told the Swiss daily *24 Heures*. 'I think that says it. If you listen to your still, small voice, you go in the right direction.'

It had taken him several days to walk to safety. 'I made a complete blank of all my thinking, my imagination. All my energy went into reaching my objective. One step at a time.' ■

'Poor Man, Rich Man', Hugh Steadman Williams' play about the life of St Francis of Assisi, recently completed its three months' tour of North America with performances in Minneapolis-St Paul—the Twin Cities—and Chicago. The play is a one-man show featuring Michel Orphelin, the French mime artist and singer, backed by an international company of musicians and technicians. Kathleen Johnson, who writes on page 5, composed the music for the show's twenty or so songs. ANDREW STALLYBRASS writes from the Twin Cities:

FROM ASSISI TO THE MID-WEST

'THIS IS NOT SOMEONE'S IDEA of St Francis; this is the real man,' commented a priest. He was one of the 200 Franciscans who saw *Poor Man, Rich Man* during its month in Minneapolis-St Paul, Minnesota.

Three 'preview' shows at Bethel College and another at Arleton College, Northfield, led up to performances in the Cricket Theater in central Minneapolis, one of the best-known theatres of the Mid-West. There were also performances in two other theatres as well as shorter presentations, one of them in a Franciscan convent.

After the performances many in the audiences sat silent, unable to speak and reluctant to applaud and so break the magic of a more-than-theatrical experience. One lady had just been through a painful divorce. She had lost the will to live, and having had an alcohol problem some years earlier, was planning a drinking party. She commented, 'This play was exactly for me. The song about possessions spoke directly to me. I lost our house through the divorce case. I was very bitter, but that bitterness has been taken away from me now.' Without that experience she would have set out on a course from which it would have been difficult to pull back, she added.

Bishop Raymond Lucker of New Ulm said, 'The play captured the heart of the Gospel just as the life of St Francis captured it.' Another Catholic bishop said the play was 'an inspiration'.

Marriage

Mary Sue Dobbin, who runs a Montessori infants school, had one of the company to stay with her and cooked two meals for them all. She is blind, and with her guide dog Taurus 'saw' the show twice. She told the cast, 'You have helped the marriage within myself between the spiritual sources of sustenance and the world with its needs for social change.' She spoke of her commitment to the fight for justice in the Sixties, and how she had been led to become part of a lay community because of the spiritual poverty she herself felt. 'I didn't give my life to God to lead a comfortable middle-class life,' she said. 'I feel I have been in training, and now the vision is starting to unfold.' She thanked those who had brought the play to the Twin Cities and the cast for 'that thought, that world vision'.

'Thank you for a great theatrical experience,' said Don Stolz, who runs the nationally known Old Log Theater. From the stage of his own show he had recommended his audiences to go and see *Poor Man, Rich Man*. Another



Office of the Mayor of Chicago

HAROLD WASHINGTON, the first black Mayor of Chicago, receives Hugh Steadman Williams and the company of 'Poor Man, Rich Man' in his office in June. Replying to his welcome, Margaret Palmer said why she and her husband had invited the play to Chicago, 'This city has given a great deal to me, through this play I want to give something back in gratitude.' Mrs Palmer had worked for Mr Washington as a researcher when he was in the Illinois State Legislature.

Michel Orphelin performed an extract from the show where St Francis visits the Middle East at a time of conflict and crisis.

Mayor Washington, who recently took office after one of the bitterest election campaigns in Chicago's turbulent history and who is now faced with a hostile majority on the City Council, responded by referring to the largely white area where opposition to him is centred. 'I may not be able to go to the Middle East,' he said, thanking Michel Orphelin and his team, 'but perhaps I should go to North West Chicago!'

theatre-goer said, 'It is the best portrayal of a soul's relationship with God I've seen in the American theatre.'

The press, too, gave the show some favourable comments. The *St Paul Pioneer Press* said it was 'technically first rate'. It went on, 'Orphelin is a stage personality of considerable appeal...there is a wonderful, fluid dexterity to his movements, the sign of a highly trained, highly disciplined classical mime actor.' The *Skyway News* liked Kathleen Johnson's music, 'As rich in tones as lyrics, her music ranges from jazzy stylings to upbeat production numbers.' TV and radio carried songs and extracts from the show and there were radio interviews with the author.

For the cast, the visit to the Twin Cities was an introduction to the American Indians' heritage. At an Indian feast in a white family home, Bill Pensoneau and Renee Senogles talked about some of the deepest spiritual traditions of their people. Peter Riddell, the British musical director of the play, commented, 'At first I didn't want to listen. I felt deeply all they told us of the sufferings of their people, and I knew I could not dissociate myself from it. We British have treated so many people just this way.'

Grosvenor Books have published the script of 'Poor Man, Rich Man'. It can be ordered from 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, price 95p, with postage £1.25.

Nine young people from Europe, the USA and South Africa recently spent three months in Brazil and other South American countries working with Brazilians who wanted 'to forward a move for moral and spiritual re-armament' in their country. ROBERT and LYRIA NORMINGTON from Britain write:

LEAVING THE HEMISPHERE OF SELFISHNESS

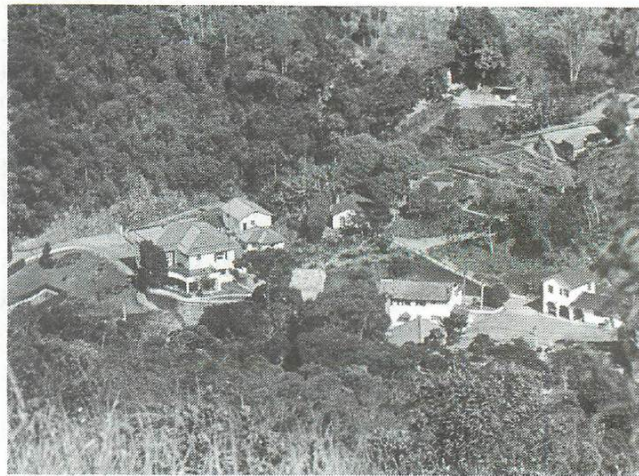
'EXPERIENCIA' AND 'ESPERANÇA'—experience and hope. In Portuguese the two words are only a few letters different. Many Brazilians' experiences of life are tough—students who work all day to pay for studies at night; high unemployment with no state aid; crushingly high inflation and low wages for many. Yet our lasting impression of our time in Brazil is that her people know how to enjoy life and have hope for the future. It was a challenge to the cynicism and fear of the future with which we arrived from countries where material needs are taken care of. Some students, a cardinal, a businessman and a trade-union leader were among those who gave us cause to rethink.

Erwin Zimmerman is a businessman whose aim, in an environment where bribes are considered normal, is to practise absolute honesty. To resist the pressures to corruption in an economy with an annual inflation rate of 110 per cent, and to keep his business viable, is an achievement. Sr Zimmerman told us that he could not have done this if he had not taken time each morning to seek God's guidance.

With him we met Dr Jones Santos Neves, Vice-President of the National Confederation of Industry. He took time to explain to us Brazil's economic position, and how the countries of the South view the North-South Dialogue. 'But there is a North-South gap inside each one of us,' he went on. 'We must leave the hemisphere of selfishness for the hemisphere of the common good.' This was a difficult step to take, whether you lived in the North or the South, he said. 'We cannot do it without God's presence.'

On Easter Monday we went to São Paulo, a city of 12 million which is one of the fastest growing in the world. It is estimated that 300,000 swell its favelas (shanty towns) each year as they arrive looking for work. Unemployment is said to be 50 per cent in some suburbs and on the day we arrived peaceful demonstrations against rising unemployment turned to violence and looting.

The Archbishop of São Paulo, Cardinal Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns, received us next morning between two television appearances he was making. He is the leader of a nationwide campaign to answer Brazil's poverty and economic crisis, whose slogan is 'violence no, brotherhood yes'. While we were with the Cardinal, six employers who had come to consult him were in another room drafting a manifesto for the thousand employers they represented.



The Brazilian centre for MRA in Petropolis

Their aim was to seek ways of helping the unemployed.

A statistic which becomes real as you walk the streets of Brazil is that 60 per cent of the population are under the age of 20. So we were glad that 15-year-old Carlos Puig invited us to his school where we took one period with his class. We were asked some direct questions. When the bell rang there was uproar and the headmaster gave in to demands for extra time. Whether this was motivated by interest in us or lack of it in the next lesson, we didn't ask. But it was a glimpse of the vitality of Brazil which is so compelling.

In a favela in Rio de Janeiro we got to know a recently married couple. After only two weeks together they had decided to adopt a 7-year-old boy, one of Brazil's millions of abandoned children. This typified for us the spirit of care which we found in the favelas. Ernani, a student of philosophy who lives there, and who is one of a group who meet weekly to share their experiences of living by Christ's standards and leading, said as we parted, 'I used to think that the only needs were the material needs of the poor countries. I am beginning to see that Europe has deep spiritual emptiness and that we need to help each other across the world as brothers.'

During our months in Brazil we met people who were giving everything to answer corruption, violence and poverty in whatever ways they saw. Their wholeheartedness, in spite of the size of the problems, gave us hope.

By contrast, each of our group realised that we had some reservation to our desire to be used by God to answer the needs of the world. For each one it was something different, something to which we felt we had a 'right'—to choose our own career, spend our money as we liked, keep a nest-egg in the bank against a rainy day, conserve our strength, be selective about whom we cared for, do God's work, but in our own way.

The needs we saw in Brazil forced us each to the point of decision. Either we would give God control of everything we had, so that He could use us, or we would turn away. As we decided to let go of our reservations, we began to experience the wholeheartedness we had admired—and to enjoy life more than ever before. ■

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