

umbrella of MRA, is on a crusade to educate the masses about the four absolute standards and how to put them into practice. They are very appropriate here. Honesty refers to bribes and the refusal to give or accept them. Purity is the lesson to stay with one partner, thus exterminating AIDS now heading for epidemic proportions. Unselfishness is the desire to care about all in your society and help the poor escape the slums. Love is to treat your wife and family with the respect they deserve in a very male-orientated nation.

We have visited many groups: from church organisations to bee keepers, school children to the elderly, disabled to dress makers. I speak of my experiences in Europe and Joseph tells them of MRA and fills them with pride and hope. We drive to the meetings thanks to the loan of a car. Joseph informs me that he used to walk to these meetings which can take over three hours. There is commitment in Kenya to make this nation successful at the grass roots but it is the men of power who need also to listen. That is what the All Africa Conference will try to address at the end of May. It is going to be a long battle but in Joseph and his team there is a desire to succeed.

John Leggat

NIGHTWATCH OPPORTUNITIES

Each summer a nightwatch team operates at the Caux conference. There is a need for responsible, able-bodied persons over 18, either already going to Caux or who might plan to come for a

spell to do this specific job. For more details, please contact **Brian Thirlaway** at email: thirlaway@aol.com or tel: +44 1978 364 499.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tirley Garth, Tarporley

- Saturday, June 8, 10am-6pm
'Tirley Garth – What Next?' How do we respond to the need in the country?

REASONS FOR HOPE

- Friday, May 24, 7.45pm
Archie Mackenzie will talk about his new book *Faith in Diplomacy*.

FRIENDS OF TIRLEY GARTH

- Garden Open Days: Sundays May 12, 19, 26. Thursday May 23, Sunday June 2

24 Greencoat Place, London

FRIENDS OF WESTMINSTER PRODUCTIONS

- Saturday, May 18, 3pm
Rhubarb, Rhubarb – Play reading of a new comedy by Hugh Steadman Williams, directed by Elisabeth Tooms.
Please apply early to the Events Secretary at Greencoat Place, as seats will be allocated on a strictly first-come-first-served basis.

GROSVENOR BOOKS

- Thursday, May 30:
Luncheon to celebrate publication of *Faith in Diplomacy* by Archie Mackenzie.
Details from tel: 020 7798 6062

This issue was edited by Mary Jones and Janet Paine, with layout by Blair Cummock. Please send material for the next issue by May 27 to Ann Carpenter, Bourne Cottage, Mill Lane, Mere, Warminster, Wilts. BA12 6DA. Tel: 01747 861365 Email: russell.ann@tiscali.co.uk

AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION

IN LIVERPOOL

A wide range of different cultures and backgrounds gathered in a Liverpool home to hear from a delegation of four Lebanese, Muslim and Christian, who had fought on opposite sides in the civil war.

The former militia leaders gave moving and honest accounts of their involvement in atrocities, not just against the other community, but also between rival groups of the same faith. They told how they had experienced a change of heart and are working together, especially since September 11, to bring reconciliation to their country and to take their experiences to other nations. For each there had been a defining moment when they came to the realisation that violence was not the way forward. They had, at risk to themselves, reached out to meet someone from the other side, discovering 'they were a human being just like me'.

Two women from Northern Ireland, one Catholic and one Protestant, had come over from Belfast to meet with them and shared their stories. Both had lost sons, killed by the other side during the troubles. Rather than turning to bitterness and revenge, they had chosen to work for reconciliation in Northern Ireland as part of the movement HOPE (Healing Our Past Experiences – formerly Women Together for Peace). They

were introduced by the Rev Stephen Kingsnorth, Chair of The Bridge, a partner in the Warrington Ireland Reconciliation Enterprise (WIRE). Warrington Councillor Mike Hannon was also present.

Towards the end of the evening one of the Muslim former militia leaders said, 'We come together as a team... and find it important to take time to pray together, Christian and Muslim.' He then asked Bishop Rupert Hoare, Dean of Liverpool and Chair of the Merseyside Council of Faiths, if he would say a prayer. He invited a Pakistani Muslim, a Hindu woman and a Baha'i doctor each to pray. As was said in summing up the evening, the challenge is that we all commit ourselves to be 'ambassadors of reconciliation, so that reconciliation and justice prevail'.

Also taking part were the Chair of Merseyside Peace Council, the Rector of Liverpool, the Chair of the Yemeni Community and the Director of Church Action for Racial Equality. Present too were representatives of The Reconciliation Triangle, which seeks to heal the historic legacy of race relations – an initiative born out of Liverpool City Council's apology, at the close of the last millennium, for the city's leading role in the Atlantic Slave Trade.

Gerald Henderson

IN BRADFORD

The timing of the Lebanese visit to Bradford could not have been more fortuitous. On the day Lord Ousley issued a statement that no progress had been made in Bradford's race relations since the riots of June last year, the visitors met with school children, university post-graduates and the city's Muslim leadership at the Pakistan Community Centre, to share their stories of profound reconciliation after war. It was proof that Bradford, the city with the largest percentage Muslim population in Britain, is determined to affect change.

The Lebanese were invited to Bradford by church and Muslim leaders.

11am: To **Immanuel Church of England Community School**, welcomed by the Chairman of Governors, Archdeacon Guy Wilkinson. Twenty 15-year-olds sat in rapt attention, as former Muslim militiaman Hisham Shihab told how, as a 16-year-old, he had trained his rifle on an elderly woman running for cover during the war in Beirut. The magnification of the sites showed the lines on her face, he said. His commander urged him to shoot her dead. He could not. 'She looked just like my grandmother. I handed back my gun and left the militia. I was lucky that I was not punished.'

The group emphasised throughout their visit that they had needed to rediscover 'true religion' based on love, rather than 'ideological religion', which demonised the other side. Shihab, a journalist, has since learnt much of the Koran by heart, but he said that he had

been profoundly struck by Jesus' phrase 'love your enemy' when he read the Sermon on the Mount. Assaad Shaftari, a Greek Orthodox Christian, reminded the children that Immanuel means 'God lives with us. But it doesn't mean that he is not with the others.' School chaplain Rev Stuart Hacking said it was like 'a living history lesson. Our visitors have shown how you can change history and how we can affect our communities.'

2 pm: To **Bradford University's School of Peace Studies** (regarded as the world's premiere institute of its kind). Forty students, mostly post-graduates from around the world, packed into a lecture room, invited by Lebanese lecturer Karen Abi-Ezzi, to hear the visitors and ask them far-reaching questions.

Such as: 'Leaders can reconcile, but what about the rank-and-file street fighters?'

Answer: 'Most repent for what they did. There is a great feeling that what happened was wrong.'

'Were the fighters motivated by religion or by politics?'

Answer: 'Religion was used like wood on the fire. It was political use of religion.'

'Are you hopeful that what you are saying [about reconciliation] could happen in Palestine?'

Answer: 'It is like living with your wife. It depends on your intentions.'

At the end of the two-hour session, Dr Philip Lewis, lecturer at the School and advisor to the Bishop of Bradford on inter-faith issues, said: 'Our guests have shown us an adequate response to September 11 and have reminded us

minute link-up on the book's theme with Michael, Rajmohan Gandhi and Nico Ferreira of South Africa. Michael also did seven other radio interviews, including BBC Radio Scotland and BBC Radio Ulster.

The *Scottish Catholic Observer* wrote, 'He inspires the reader with hope that forgiveness can work miracles, minor and major, at the level of individuals and families and of national and international politics.' Life and Work wrote, 'It is a deeply touching collection of stories...a book to sober anyone who secretly enjoys nursing a grudge.'

From bookshops or from Grosvenor Books, 24 Greencoat Place, price £11.50 plus £1p&p (overseas £2p&p)

FAITH IN DIPLOMACY

Seventy people from many sectors of Scottish life attended the public launching of Archie Mackenzie's book *Faith in Diplomacy* at the Roxburghe Hotel, Edinburgh, on April 11. Brisk sales took place as they had also at a book-signing in Glasgow, two days earlier. The audience included senior figures from many sectors of Scottish life. Presiding at the occasion, R.D. Kernohan, author and broadcaster, called it 'a notable book' and commented on the author's ability to 'recover immediacy' of past events. The Duke of Montrose, coming straight from London, felt there was a link of faith between the Queen Mother's life and the story in the book and suggested that it could be of help to many in the younger generation.

Archie has received many enthusi-

astic letters from readers. A senior UN official has said, 'The book is very well written, has a clear message and is an impressive creation.' A correspondent from Nagaland has called the book 'a vital weapon' in the struggles going on in his country. A Danish journalist cited other spiritual histories which ended with misgivings about past experiences and contrasted them with the 'note of gratitude for the gifts of Providence' evident throughout *Faith in Diplomacy*. **DSL**

From bookshops or from Grosvenor Books, 24 Greencoat Place (£9.95 + £1p&p in Britain). Overseas orders should be placed with Caux Books CH1824, Switzerland (price CHF 24).

GREENCOAT FORUM

'My motto is that we should leave the world in a better shape than we found it,' said Lord Plumb, addressing a Forum on April 16 on 'Where should our food come from?'. The former President of the National Farmers' Union and MEP gave a wide-ranging talk to around 60 in Greencoat Place, many not of a farming background.

'In our development policies,' he said, 'we must either spend to good effect or not at all. The real question is how we make best use of our resources. It is not so much the value, but the way it is used.' **Jim Wigan**

KENYAN EXPERIENCE

This is one of the world's most beautiful nations, both in appearance and people, but it is rife with corruption and poverty. It's a country of contrasts.

Joseph Wainaina, under the

is planning the business input to the forthcoming UN Earth Summit in Johannesburg, to a former Greenham Common anti-nuclear protester turned business consultant, who campaigns for the elimination of child poverty. Others taking part included Lord Jordan, former Secretary General of the world's largest trade union confederation, the head of the UK chapter of Transparency International, the Managing Director of British America Business Inc, and a director of the Schumacher College for intermediate technology and sustainable development.

Several referred to the need for a 'spiritual dynamic' in personal motivation. Future occasions will aim to bring together those who see globalisation as benign and those who see it as a threat, around focussed issues such as corruption, regulation and good governance.

For a full report please write to us at Caux Initiatives for Business, 24 Greencoat Place, SW1P 1RD.

Chris Evans, Mike Smith

DR WILL REED

*In its 'Lives Remembered' column on April 22, **The Times** wrote in a four-column article with a fine picture:*

William Reed was one of the musicians most closely associated with Moral Re-Armament (MRA), the movement which believes that far-reaching change, both locally and globally, starts by change within individuals' own lives. He composed several musicals for MRA, one of which, *The Vanishing*

Island, toured the world for three years between 1955 and 1957. Reed was also the musical director of the MRA-owned Westminster Theatre for more than 20 years, where he engaged many international musicians to play for the benefit of the organisation....

Much of his music was written for MRA, a movement founded by an American, Frank Buchman, who in 1908 underwent a spiritual experience while visiting a church in Keswick, in the Lake District. Twenty years later a group of university students, inspired by Buchman, took their own message of personal change to South Africa. The press labelled them the 'Oxford Group', and the name stuck. It was reborn as MRA on the eve of the Second World War, with the essential philosophy that personal change could lead to social change. With its emphasis on experience rather than doctrine, MRA's intention was to provide a focus where people of different religious and political persuasions could meet without compromising their beliefs. Earlier this month MRA announced that it was changing its name to Initiatives of Change.

FORGIVENESS: BREAKING THE CHAIN OF HATE

The British edition of Michael Henderson's book was launched at an occasion in Politicos Bookshop in Westminster on March 27. Amongst the speakers were John Nunneley, chairman of the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group, and Imam Sajid of the Brighton Islamic Mission. The BBC World Service's *Outlook* carried a 15-

to think of our own prejudices from our religious traditions.'

6pm: To the Pakistan Community Centre, where leaders of the **Bradford Council of Mosques** welcomed the group for a round-table discussion and dinner reception. Sher Azam, head of the Council, spoke of the progress that had been made towards Muslim sensitivities, in schools, hospitals and elsewhere. 'We are proud of our interfaith relations,' he said. Mohammed Ajeeb, a former city councillor who had been Bradford's and the nation's first Muslim mayor, emphasised that there was no room for complacency. 'It is not a question of reconciliation. We are still at the stage of getting to know each other. Many Muslims are fearful of Christians. Our option is peaceful coexistence and acceptance of one another.'

Mohammed Mushtaq from the **Interfaith Education Centre** wanted to know how the Lebanese work for reconciliation was regarded by scholars and heard it had received much encouragement, including from Lebanon's Christian-Muslim Council for Dialogue. Beirut lawyer Ramez Salame told how he had joined a Christian militia. But he had read, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' He had had the thought to give away his gun and to meet his Muslim friends. 'This was extremely dangerous, crossing the line dividing the two sectors.' He had known people who had crossed the line and never returned. 'We decided to sit down and talk together, live together, have a dialogue, take whole weekends together. We grew together in love. We grew together in knowl-

edge of truth. At the centre of our conviction is our desire to please God.' They all stressed, 'We have to look in the face and see the person.'

Mike Smith

MY IMPRESSIONS

Kamran Naqvi, London, who attended the Westminster Cathedral Hall event for the Lebanese on April 23, writes:

Since September last year, as a Muslim, I have been very much in a state of flux as to what I should be doing in private and public. I am wrestling with the question of how I can use my knowledge and experience to help create common ground between faiths. About four years ago I met Mohammad Murtada, a Lebanese Muslim, who aroused in me an interest for the well-being of my friend and his nation.

So, I came to see and hear Assaad Shaftari, Muhieddine Shihab, Ramez Salame and Hisham Shihab speak of their journey from hatred to reconciliation, their changing of attitudes and what it takes to live with others of differing religions and cultures in their homeland. As I had not come to hear about abstract notions of peace and love, I was relieved to hear these men recount specific events that shook them enough to feel that God, as Ramez put it, wanted them to join a higher battle.

I was reminded of my closeness to my brother when Hisham described his relationship with his late brother. He had been killed by neighbours, to whom Hisham had subsequently extended a hand of forgiveness. I felt refreshed hearing Assaad say it was praying in a mosque, such a fundamental

DISCOVERING THE OTHER

'Discovering the *other* will be the great task of the 21st Century,' said Rabbi Marc Gopin in Caux last summer. This immediately rang bells with me. Globalisation, ease of travel and the ever-increasing flow of refugees is throwing us against *others* more and more, with tremendous potential for conflict.

Globalisation is in danger of becoming an over-used word. Yet there is no doubt that seismic changes are rocking the world and that old attitudes and paradigms are frequently found inadequate to deal with the new situations. In particular, it has left a lot of people unable to cope with others.

In Europe and North America, our paradigm for dealing with people who are different was shaped by the religious wars of the Reformation. This has led to widespread acceptance of a secular framework: everybody has a right to their own beliefs and opinions, so long as they don't impose them on anyone else. In this paradigm tolerance becomes the watchword. Religion is tolerated, so long

as it is kept private and away from the public arena.

Although it wasn't intentional, the effect was to relativise truth. There was an underlying assumption that public agreement on religious questions was impossible – that these things were a matter of private opinion rather than objective truth. The world was divided into two spheres: the secular (objective and public) and the sacred (subjective and private).

Throughout the 19th Century, perhaps in response to the declining influence of religion, there was a rise of nationalism in Europe. Looking back at the influence of nationalism on the bloody wars and ethnic cleansings of the 20th Century, it is easy to understand why many liberals feel that one's national identity should not be a cause for public celebration. In order to be tolerant, it seems, we have to give up believing in anything specific or belonging to any specific culture – at least in public. The Enlightenment ideal is a person who is a citizen of the world, and who holds each person's individual beliefs to be equally valid.

continued from page 3

part of my life, which broke down his final stereotypes of Muslims. Muhiedinne brought to life the real horrors of war, after going into areas with majority Christian populations; he spoke of having to grapple with 'existential questions'. Once after seeing an old man, tied to a chair, his body riddled with bullets, he was left thinking, 'It was the first time I cared for a dead body.' I may never see such a thing in my life, but could I react in this way to a dead person? I was not sure. That is what

made this address so compelling; I was made to think, to question myself.

Their personal accounts also gave me clues as to how they let go of one mindset for another. Ramez put it poignantly as having faith that God has a plan, and our job is to find our part in that. Where once they had fought over what they were taught were differences between Islam and Christianity, they now pursued the common ground. They had made a decision not to be dictated to by culture, but by what brings them closer. I

Inevitably this has produced a backlash in the form of fundamentalism and renewed nationalism. People are simply not made in such a way that they can easily become the Enlightenment ideal. They seem to need to belong, and to have a public framework of morality. Without it they become rootless and discontented, seeking satisfaction in the shallow pursuits of materialism and hedonism.

So a new paradigm is called for. Perhaps 'new' is not the right word, since this has always existed and has particularly been expressed through the tradition of the Oxford Group/MRA/Initiatives of Change. Put simply, it is that when we respond deeply enough to our own faith and calling, the world walks into our hearts. Community is built when we become more, not less, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc. And a deep love of one's own culture does not mean blindness to its faults but fighting for what is best, so that we define ourselves by the positive values we aspire to rather than defining ourselves simply as

being different to the *others*.

In his seminal book *I and Thou*, the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber revealed that at a deep level, discovering the *other* lies at the heart of the spiritual journey. In our blind and selfish state, much of what we perceive to be other is really just a projection of ourselves, an illusion we create. And since we see ourselves in the mirror of our relationships, if we don't truly see *others* then we can't really know ourselves either. We see examples of this all the time in the mass media with the current obsession for portraying people's flaws. Every saint or hero has to have feet of clay, so in the end we think 'he/she is no better than I am'. Rather than seeing the image of God in another, we see our own muddy reflection. By struggling to see through this illusion we can begin to overcome what separates us from others, from ourselves and from God. I suspect that Marc Gopin had this in mind when he said that 'discovering the *other* will be the great task of the 21st Century'.

Mike Lowe

was also encouraged to hear that these ideas were not unrealistic, but had been successfully translated into a real attempt to come to terms with a complex and painful past.

Despite the fragile nature of their task, the humility, conviction and courage of these men inspires me as a Muslim attempting to address issues in my own community. They not only made me think about what it is that recharges the human spirit, but what it means to transform these thoughts and feelings into concrete solutions.

GLOBALISATION ISSUES

'Strengthening the motivation of care to address the root causes of poverty' was the basis for discussion at the first Dialogue on Globalisation dinner organised by *Caux Initiatives for Business* in London on April 17. It was hosted by Labour MP and former businessman Tony Colman in the House of Commons. It brought together an extraordinary range of participants, from the former chairman of one of the world's largest oil companies, who