



White Fathers - White Sisters

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Photograph Credits and Captions

White Sisters - pages 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26 & 27.
 White Fathers - page 29 & 32.
 Denis Starkey WF - pages 7, 11, 13 & 17.
 Bill Turnbull WF - pages 1, 5, 15, 16, 17 & 22.

Front Cover - 'Jubilee 2000' chain on St. Vincent Street.
 Centre Picture - Photographs taken during the G8 Summit held in Birmingham (details on page 17).
 Back Cover - A well attended outstation

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EDITORIAL

The main article in this issue is 'The Group of Eight and Debt - part 1' - part two will be in the next issue. As the title suggests the article deals with background to the debt situation and the influence which the G8 countries can have upon it. The inspiration, information and photographs come from the various events which took place around the G8 Summit when it was held in Birmingham last May. On page 22 Fr. Patrick Fitzgerald WF. tells us of his experience when he took part in forming the 'human chain' in Birmingham on the 16th. May.

The centre spread is a collage of pictures of events which took place around Birmingham on the Summit week end. For these and other photographs included in this issue I would like to thank Fr. Denis Starkey WF. for his help, and also to thank him for all the behind the scenes work - such as proof reading each issue - which he does for the magazine.

In the article 'That there may be peace in Ghana' Sr. Prosperine Samba W.S. tells us about the Eucharistic Congress which was held in Ghana in January of this year. The prayer on everyone's lips at that time, as well as at the present moment, is that the country may find peace - especially in the areas where there is ethnic division.

'Home and Away' as usual keeps us up to date with events both here and abroad. We also remember the passing of Br. John Mennie and Sr. Patricia and the work which they did for Africa. May they both rest in peace.

As we come to the close of another year everyone involved with the magazine would like to wish you a happy and a holy festive season and blessings and peace for 1999.

**To Help Our Missionary Work
 Please Remember Us In Your Will**
Where there's a will, there's a way

White Fathers

"I give to the **Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)** the sum of free of duty, and I declare that the receipt of the Father Provincial of the Society in Great Britain, who now resides at 42 Stormont Road, Highgate, London, N6 4NP, shall be a good discharge."

White Fathers' Registered Charity No. 233302

White Sisters

"I give to the **Missionary Sisters of our Lady of Africa (White Sisters)** the sum of free of duty, and I declare that the receipt of the Sister Provincial of the Congregation in Great Britain, who now resides at 25 Waldemar Avenue, Ealing, London, W13 9PZ, shall be a good discharge."

White Sisters' Registered Charity No. 228983

The Group of Eight and Debt - part 1

By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

‘ “You have already been told what is right and what Yahweh wants of you, Only this, to do what is right, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with your God.” ’ (Micah 6:8)

The text above was one of the readings used by Bishop Mark Santer (Anglican Bishop of Birmingham) at an ecumenical service held on 15th. May, 1998, in St. Chad’s Catholic Cathedral, Birmingham. The occasion was to pray for the G8 Leaders as they began their Summit. The focus of the sermon, and of many activities around the city, was to remind the Leaders of the debt situation and to form a bridge with the poorer countries of the world.

In a pastoral letter, ‘Pastoral Message for the G8 Summit’ (23rd. April, 1998), Archbishop Maurice Couve de Murville, of Birmingham, reminded those in the Archdiocese of the quotation from Leviticus 25:10 and how Pope John Paul II ‘has asked us to combine concerns for world debt with the preparation for the Millennium Year 2000. In the Old Testament, the Year of Jubilee was a time for cancelling debts, freeing slaves and releasing prisoners. The Holy Father has said: “Christians will have to raise their voices on behalf of all the poor of the world, proposing the Jubilee as an appropriate time to give thought, among other things, to reducing substantially, if not cancelling outright, the international debt which seriously threatens the future of many nations”. (‘Tertio Millennio Adveniente’, §51)’

The theme of looking forward to a ‘jubilee beginning’ to the third Christian millennium is echoed by people of different faiths in the work they are doing to help developing countries. This is especially so for those who have joined together in the ‘Jubilee 2000 Coalition’ (see the next issue) and was obvious in Birmingham between 15th. and 17th. May, 1998.

The preparation for the Millennium Jubilee has been going on for some time and organisations such as Cafod, Sciaf, Christian Aid and Oxfam are very involved. The centre of this concern is that the poor countries of the world should have a ‘fair deal’ in matters concerning debt repayment, aid and trade. Cardinal Basil Hume has also added his weight to the campaign: ‘As a churchman, I have become involved because this is a moral issue. Unpayable debt has become directly linked with terrible suffering. Church leaders in Africa hear the cry of the desperately poor, and appeal to us in the developed world to be advocates for the voiceless. For Christians there is an added dimension. We regard the millennium as a jubilee, and the prospect of reducing the burden of debt has a profound theological resonance.’ (1)

THE DEBT STORY

The debt issues are very complex and there is no simple solution. The present situation has developed over the last thirty years or so. The 1950s and 1960s saw the price of commodities, the mainstay of African countries’ exports, rise on the world market. In general this meant that there was finance for development at the time of independence. In the 1960s the United States went into debt so they produced more Dollars, lowering their value. Oil from the OPEC countries has always been priced in Dollars, so with the fall in value they began to lose money. This led to them increasing the price of oil in 1973 and 1979. The subsequent profits, ‘petrodollars’, were then invested in Western banks.

In the 1970s and 1980s commodity prices fell drastically. This was partially due to the

fact that developing countries had been encouraged to grow cash crops - such as coffee, tea, cotton and cocoa. The glut of similar products caused the prices to fall and the crops to be sold cheaply or even to remain unsold. At the same time oil prices and interest rates rose drastically and the debts that were run up to pay for the imports, such as oil and machinery, began to grow.

In an attempt to get out of this situation developing countries borrowed heavily from Western Banks. The West encouraged them to borrow the recycled ‘petro-dollars’, often for inappropriate projects and to pay off the debts already incurred. No doubt some aid money and loans were misused at this time through corruption and dictators did amass money outside of their countries (‘capital flight’). The donors were often aware of this and also that only a small benefit reached the poor of the debtor countries, but little was done to change the situation.

DEBT SOLVING INITIATIVES

There has been a willingness in government and financial circles to solve the debt problem for some time and many initiatives have been considered. When agreed upon these are very often carried out through the ‘Paris Club’ (see page 15). The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) is probably the best known initiative, and the most widely implemented in conjunction with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), two of the major creditors, also known as the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI). They are one of the most stringent methods and are usually imposed on a debtor country. This initiative was supposed to be a way of helping indebted countries repay their debt, to stabilise their economies and to regain a position in the global economic market. It was also supposed to be

‘short and sharp’, but has ended up as a long-term enforcement of cutbacks in government spending and a wholesale restructuring of a country’s economy.

The basic theory behind SAPs is that a country can repay its debts by earning foreign currency, increasing exports, and decreasing imports. The result of implementing SAPs, in almost every country, has been a reduction in public spending (health, education, social services); a change from small-holdings subsistence farming to large-scale farms to produce export crops; the privatisation of state owned companies; trade liberalisation and devaluation. The knock on effects of SAPs have been horrendous on the poorer parts of society leading to deeper poverty, lowering of wages, unemployment and an almost complete collapse of public services. The subsequent devaluation



Above (1) ‘Basil Hume throws down a challenge to G8 summit - Forgive the poorest their debts - now’ [Opinion], ‘The Times’, 14th. May, 1998.

Bishop Mark Santer (left) and Cardinal Basil Hume greeting people after the service at St. Chad’s Cathedral



of the local currency has made the price of vital imports rise far beyond the reach of the ordinary person - especially when subsidies, such as on food, are forced to be withdrawn. Since then there have also been Enhanced Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP) and various loans and facilities in an attempt to 'soften' the impact of SAPs. Most debt initiatives after this have the SAP as their basic foundation.

THE HIGHLY INDEBTED POOR COUNTRY INITIATIVE

In October, 1996, there was a major shift by the IMF and the World Bank when they produced a debt relief initiative that, for the first time, contemplated the cancellation of debts owed to them. It is known as Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative and is at the centre of the debt situation at present. The idea arose from a British suggestion at a meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers the previous month. Britain's Chancellor also proposed that the Initiative should be financed through the sale of the IMF's gold reserves.

The IMF and World Bank have agreed to give up to a possible 90% of debt, though the 'Paris Club' and the creditor countries involved agreed to reduce the debt burdens of the worst affected countries. HIPC, it is hoped, will deal with both bilateral debt (mainly owed to the old G7 countries) and multilateral debt. Forty-one countries are eligible for debt relief under the HIPC terms. Uganda was the first to qualify, in April, 1998, and Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Guyana are due to follow suite. It is estimated that the total cost of HIPC will be about \$5bn. In order to finance the Initiative a HIPC Trust Fund is being set up by the creditor countries, the World Bank and the IMF.

HIPC is designed to help countries to arrive at a sustainable debt level within six years. The HIPC process is divided into two phases each of three years. In the first three years a country can receive up to 67% reduction of debt servicing

if it follows the World Bank-IMF adjustment programme. At the end of this time the 'Paris Club' can grant the 67% reduction of 'debt stock' (under 'Naples Terms') and there may be some relief from commercial debts. If the targets have been reached then the country goes on to the second phase - if not the latter may be delayed. In the second phase there is the possibility for 90% of the debt servicing to be relieved, and similar reductions in any bilateral and commercial debts. At the end the reduction of the 'debt stock' and possibly other multilateral considerations and forgiveness may come into play.

The plan is limited in its effect. Sadly, yet again, official considerations on poverty are not within the initiative's framework, though the BWI do pay more attention to it and human development than previously. In the post-relief stage the debtor countries are supposed to put the resources freed by HIPC into 'social programmes'. This is recognised by the BWI, but it has no place in the first two stages of HIPC.

Only three countries are likely to see any benefit before the year 2000 and they will have to maintain strict SAPs. According to Christian Aid, only 6.4% of the total debt of the forty-one poorest countries will be tackled, while at the same time debt service is expected to rise and commodity prices to fall. Whether the economic priorities that are enforced in the HIPC are correct and any better than SAPs still has to be seen. What is happening in Russia at present, a country which follows the BWI dictates, may give an inkling of what the future holds for poor developing countries which are no longer of any strategic interest to the West. Political will, on behalf of G8 countries, is needed for the HIPC to succeed but this is not present among all - as the Summit showed.

An added complication is that some HIPC countries owe substantial debts to Russia.

The 'Former Soviet Union' defaulted on its foreign debts in 1991 and they were taken over by the new Russian Federation. Russia is trying to pay off its own debts to the West, but it is still owed an estimated \$120bn (2) by developing countries. The USSR extended credit to developing countries, as part of its old foreign policy, during the Cold War. These debts have now fallen on the present Russia. In Africa alone the amount owed - by countries such as Angola, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mozambique and Tanzania - amounts to about 10% of Sub-Saharan Africa's total debt (1996). According to the World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa's debt to Russia grew from \$90m. (1980) to \$1.8bn. (1990), and to date no country is repaying the debt. This gives rise to an interesting and complex situation as regards Russia and its position in the 'Paris Club' and the G8 as well as regards the HIPC initiative.

THE UK GOVERNMENT AND DEBT

For a long time British Governments have had quite a good record on trying to resolve the debt crisis. This has borne fruit especially when carried out in collaboration with the Commonwealth and when the different initiatives have then been brought from there into the international economic arena. The UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, set out the 'Mauritius Mandate' at the Commonwealth Finance Ministers conference, on the 16th. September, 1997. The mandate is a plan to help speed up the 'Naples terms' and the HIPC debt relief for eligible countries by the year 2000. It also is a way to assist the HIPC countries to begin the process, so that by the Millennium their debts should be at a sustainable level. It is possible that, by these means, fourteen of the countries which are

eligible for HIPC would be cleared of debt by then.

The response of the creditor countries has not been too enthusiastic and Germany was the most opposed. A major problem would appear to be the possible sale of the IMF's gold reserves. Despite this the UK Government took the 'Mandate' to the G8 Summit in Birmingham as a new initiative to speed up the debt resolution process. As part of Britain's commitment to the 'Mauritius Mandate' the Government said it would cancel up to £132m. in aid loans it is owed if "the countries concerned are committed to pro-poor policies, transparent and accountable development and sound economic policies." (3)

The UK Government believes that: the debt problem should be resolved by the whole



Opposite (2) In the article \$ = US\$; m. after a figure = million or millions and bn. = billion or billions.
(3) 'International Debt Issue', H.M. Treasury, 16th. September, 1997.

Picture above: Prime Minister Tony Blair, the G8 Host, outside the Council House, Birmingham



international community; it should be possible to give a higher rate of relief than the present HIPC; the 'Mauritius Mandate' should be put into action; a way needs to be found to prevent the debt problem appearing again and for benefits to reach the poor of debtor countries should be found; growth and development should be sustained in these countries and they should be brought into the global economy. (3) 'Since 1977 the UK has written off \$2bn. of aid loans to the poorest countries. UK aid to all such countries is now in the form of grants; money is given outright not lent.' (3) The majority of the money owed to the UK is 'government-guaranteed export credits issued by the Export Credit Guarantees Department (ECGD).' (3) This sort of debt incurred through ECGD facilities complicates matters when its forgiveness is involved.

Tony Blair wanted the 'G8 summit not to be a "talking shop" but to focus on a debt reform programme which encourages African economic growth and performance rather than military spending.' (4) Just before the meeting began the Prime Minister summed up his hopes for progress on debt issues as follows: "This is part of trying to give Africa a future, and provided that we are combining it with a strong insistence on reform and change, then I think it's worthwhile to do," ... Tony Blair had hope for progress that would have to be based on a "consensus" among the Leaders. He admitted that "their hesitation is to do with the fact that they want to make sure that any assistance that we're directing towards these countries is going to pay off in terms of dividends and in respect of those countries' growth and performance. ... This is part of trying to give Africa a future, and provided that we're combining it with a strong insistence on reform and change then I think it's worthwhile to do." (5)

EFFECT OF DEBT ON AFRICA

The debt situation now means that many developing countries owe more money to foreign creditors than they have themselves and are even unable to pay the interest on the loans. If these countries were companies they would be declared bankrupt and the debt would be written off. In theory, and in international law, a country cannot become bankrupt and so, at present, its debts cannot be 'forgiven' nor be ended legally!

For a long time the USA has had the largest debt, but the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa suffer most. Thirty-three of the forty-two low-income highly indebted countries are in Africa. Of all the African indebted countries Nigeria (\$31bn.) and Ivory Coast (\$20bn.) owe the most. Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) set out ideas concerning 'The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa' (16th. April, 1998). He highlighted key areas and made suggestions to improve Africa's situation. He pointed out that many Africa countries do not have enough money for the basic needs and expectations of their people. The main cause of this is external debt and the outcome is often social tension and even conflict. This is a threat to the whole of Africa which needs an answer from the international community. 'In 1995, Africa's external debt totalled \$328.9bn. - of which approximately 45% was owed to official bilateral sources, 30% to official multilateral sources, and 25% to commercial lenders. To service this debt fully, African countries would have had to pay to donors and external commercial lenders more than 60% (\$86.3bn.) of the \$142.3bn. in revenues generated from their exports. In fact, African countries as a whole actually paid more than 17% (\$25.4bn.) ... leaving a total of \$60.9bn. in unpaid accumulated arrears.' (Para. 93)

Africa: Per Capita Debt (US\$)

Country	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	As % of Exports	Total debt
Algeria	68	289	1,037	835	1,115	1,166	-	-
Angola	0	0	21	374	915	1,066	260	10.6
Benin	16	28	122	202	263	301	324	1.5
Botswana	28	196	163	327	441	482	-	-
Burkina Faso	4	10	47	65	93	122	456	1.3
Burundi	4	5	40	96	165	185	1,131	1.1
Cameroon	22	59	297	318	582	704	465	9.5
Cape Verde	0	2	72	314	396	569	-	-
C. African Rep.	13	39	84	132	238	288	439	0.9
Chad	10	36	64	43	93	141	359	1.0
Comoros	-	-	131	354	427	407	-	-
Congo	94	247	914	1,574	2,176	2,291	406	5.2
Congo (DRC)	17	87	177	195	275	300	764	12.8
Djibouti	18	60	113	368	415	411	-	-
Egypt	55	133	468	776	637	590	-	-
Equat. Guinea	17	112	348	424	685	733	249	0.3
Eritrea(Ethiopia)	6	10	22	47	74	93	1,377	10.0
Gabon	206	1,488	2,191	1,502	4,261	4,171	-	-
Gambia, The	11	24	213	329	400	382	-	-
Ghana	66	73	130	179	260	344	397	6.2
Guinea	85	187	254	294	430	492	449	3.2
Guinea-Bissau	0	13	179	397	738	836	3,509	0.9
Ivory Coast	68	217	911	972	1,441	1,356	400	19.7
Kenya	42	94	204	209	302	277	238	6.8
Lesotho	8	12	53	112	221	333	-	-
Liberia	117	111	365	565	759	778	414	2.1
Madagascar	72	119	142	252	319	315	557	4.1
Malawi	27	50	134	142	186	219	-	-
Mali	46	60	111	199	296	313	624	3.0
Mauritania	22	137	544	841	1,069	1,085	473	2.3
Mauritius	38	59	484	619	941	1,596	-	-
Morocco	64	136	477	728	979	834	-	-
Mozambique	0	0	4	210	329	358	1,411	5.8
Niger	8	24	156	184	234	181	548	1.5
Nigeria	16	28	125	224	348	315	256	31.4
Rwanda	1	5	37	61	102	157	1,374	1.0
São Tomé/Prin.	0	0	251	609	1,346	2,149	2,132	0.2
Senegal	35	73	266	402	504	454	231	3.6
Seychelles	0	0	1,334	1,503	2,868	2,237	-	-
Sierra Leone	23	54	135	202	302	292	909	1.2
Somalia	16	42	98	208	275	282	3,671	2.6
Sudan	28	100	277	417	614	660	2,131	16.9
Swaziland	88	70	371	369	330	279	-	-
Tanzania	16	73	132	185	247	247	666	7.4
Togo	20	52	402	310	365	364	298	1.5
Tunisia	117	198	552	672	942	1,106	-	-
Uganda	15	19	54	87	158	186	639	3.7
Zambia	194	348	568	662	933	763	545	7.1
Zimbabwe	44	31	112	290	333	444	-	-



Above: (4) 'Blair puts debt relief on agenda' By Martin Kettle, and (5) 'Why we can make a difference' [interview with Martin Kettle], 'The Guardian', 15th. May, 1998.

Notes-Source:- Columns 1-6: World Development Indicators 1997, World Bank, compiled by CAMEC, Holcombe House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 4HY. 19/02/98. Column: 7 - figures for 1994-96; Column 8 - figures in US\$bn. for 1996, The World Bank, 'The Guardian', 15th. May, 1998.



He argues that debt relief should be given in such a way so as not to hinder present and future investment in Africa 'The recent Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative is a promising step. ... The results of the Initiative have been disappointing, however. At present, only four African countries meet its requirements.' (Para. 94) 'Africa has far too little to show for the burden of debt that has now accumulated'. As most debtor and creditor countries are beginning to admit, the present situation should be a shared responsibility which has to be acknowledged. This is especially so of the Cold War years when aid and loans were used to buy political influence - even when 'substantial sums were likely to be diverted or misappropriated.' (Para. 95)

There is certainly more awareness of this now. The USA brought in legislation to tackle corruption in 1997, and the OECD countries have drawn up the 'Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions' which should come into force this year. Despite such changes more needs to be done. Perhaps one other development could be a change within some creditor countries where bribes to foreign officials are still tax-deductible.

Following from a request from the Organisation of African Unity to clear the debt of the poorest African countries in a short time and to reform the continent's economy, Kofi Annan urges. 'two immediate steps': 'First, I call upon all creditor countries to convert into grants all the remaining official bilateral debt of the poorest African countries. Second, I call upon the international financial institutions to significantly ease and quicken access to facilities for heavily indebted poor countries, and to provide countries with sufficient resources to enable them to attain a substantial and sustained pace of economic growth and social development.' (Para. 96)

Cardinal Hume echoes what is central to Africa's debt issue and points to the important role played by the G8 countries: 'What is required, therefore, is a joint commitment from creditors and debtors. In 1996 the IMF and the World Bank launched the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative, designed to offer the prospect of debtors and creditors sharing responsibility for agreeing and implementing a comprehensive strategy which, over a period of years, would lead to a final release from unpayable debt for many of the most acute cases.' The Cardinal continues 'Although some progress has been made, last weekend's G8 Finance Ministers' communiqué [9th. May, 1998] says that so far only six countries have been declared eligible for HIPC debt relief. It expresses hopes that more will follow, but there is increasing anxiety among the charities working with the very poorest, such as Cafod, Christian Aid and Oxfam, that the HIPC initiative is in danger of delivering too little, too late.' (1)

WHO ARE THE G7 OR G8? *

The original 'Group of Seven' (G7) is the seven leading industrialised 'democracies'. They are Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, and together they account for almost half of world's economic output. At the G8 Summit in Birmingham the 'Group' became eight, with the full involvement of Russia. The present 'Group of Eight' (G8) has its origins in an informal discussion in the library of the White House which, on the 25th. March, 1973, was convened by George Shultz, the then U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. He invited the finance ministers of France, Britain and Germany to discuss the international monetary situation. They also agreed to invite the Japanese to join and the meeting was dubbed the Group of Five ('G-5') or the 'Library Group'.

In 1974, two of the four finance ministers, Valery Giscard d'Estaing (of France) and Helmut Schmidt (of Germany), become Heads of State. At the suggestion of the new French President it was decided to continue these informal meetings at Head of State level. The first Summit was held on the 15th. to 17th. November, 1975, at Chateau de Rambouillet, France. It was hosted by President Valery Giscard d'Estaing and attended by the Leaders from France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain, and the United States.

THE SUMMITS AND THEIR PROCESS

The G8 Summits are spread over two days and are an opportunity for Heads of State, or of Government, to exchange views in an informal setting. Each Head has only one senior adviser, known as a 'Sherpas', present. The 'Sherpas' are senior officials from each member country who represent their Head of State personally. They meet in between the Summits to prepare the Summit agenda, which includes the draft declarations. There are also separate meetings between 'Sous-Sherpas', two senior officials from each country who specialise in Foreign Affairs and Finance respectively. The President of the European Commission now attends as well.

The whole arrangement of the G8 is very informal and is really the final meeting of a year's background preparation. The G8 has no headquarters or secretariat, so the venue changes each year with the host country being responsible for organising the meeting and the expenses incurred. Senior finance officials, known as 'Deputies', consult regularly, and the Foreign and Finance Ministers have their own parallel meetings and usually attend the

plenary session of the Summit. There is also a variety of working and expert groups which have been set up and they meet throughout the year to prepare specialised subjects. There is continual consultation on different issues of topical interest during the year and also in order to carry out the follow-up on various commitments which arose from the previous Summit.

Over the years a network of supporting ministerial forums has developed surrounding the Summits: for the Trade Ministers (1982), for Foreign Ministers (1984), for Finance Ministers (1986), and for Environment Ministers (1992). The G8 Ministers meet on an ad hoc basis to deal with important issues, such as: on assistance to Russia (1993), the Ukraine (1994), jobs-unemployment (1994 and 1996), the global information society (1995), terrorism (1996), the nuclear capability of India and Pakistan (1998), and Japan's economy (1998). There are also working groups that



* see the table on page 23 for statistics about the G8 countries



look at issues such as drug-related money laundering and a nuclear safety.

The final part of the process is the agreed communiqué by the Heads that is issued at the end of each Summit. The communiqué commits each country towards common goals and can often act as a catalyst for action in other international fora. This can result in the establishment of new organisations and in shaping international policy. The Summits have often gone in tandem with the various major issues that have been topical at the time. For instance matters which tie in with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the different 'rounds' of discussion have been included.

The media attention given to the Summits has grown over the years. At the first Summit 400 official press credentials were granted, in Denver (1997) 5,000 and Birmingham 3,500. As a result the Summit's proceedings, and especially the various communiqué, are subjected to great international scrutiny. Because of this it is possible for issues, such as debt, to be given a high profile. This is also the reason why demonstrations take place near the Summit venue and various interest groups make the occasion a focus to have their voices heard.

THE BIRMINGHAM G8 SUMMIT

The venue for the G8 Summit in May of this year was probably one of the best possible venues. The Birmingham Summit was a first in many respects: the first true G8 to fully include Russia; the Heads of State Summit was separated from the Finance and Foreign Ministers meeting; the first with a limited agenda of three themes; it regained some of its previous informality the first time the such a UK Summit was held outside of London.

The G8 Leaders met against a world background of strong US, French and German economies; the completion of the first stages

of a European single currency; problems with Japan's and Asian economies; the sacking of the Russian cabinet and slow though troubled economic recovery; and the Indian nuclear tests. The economic crisis and disturbances in Indonesia were also unfolding as the meeting took place and so, as often happens at Summits, the agenda was overtaken by these world events.

The agenda for such occasions is centred on matters which mainly effect the political and economic lives of the G8 members. Despite this it was thought that there was more hope for the poorer countries of the world at this Summit than before. The extraordinary sense of hope, especially in connection with debt issues, was reflected in the concern shown by many ordinary people, by the media, by NGOs and by politicians. The Summit had been dubbed the P8 (poor 8 countries) versus the G8, because of a recent Christian Aid report. Maybe the hopes of those concerned with debt were too high, it certainly would appear to have been from what appeared in the final communiqué.

The main areas for discussion were:

Employment and Growth: it is recognised now that unemployment and development are both global problems needing new approaches on an international level and that they include such issues as wages, taxation, and job creation.

International Crime: the open borders which have arrived with globalisation, and the end of the Cold War, have brought further problems especially in the fields of international crime and of modern technology.

Finance, Trade and Investment: this time these issues were looked at in rather a different light with the collapse of the Asian 'Tiger Economies' and the effect this is having all over the world.

THE COST AND RESULT OF THE SUMMIT (6)

Various sources have estimated the cost of the Birmingham Summit at over £10m., which according to Unicef figures would have paid for the immunisation of about a million children against the six main preventable diseases. Birmingham City Council spent £800,000 on different preparations, most of which were due to have been undertaken in any case. In the end this was probably the best return on an investment as it is believed that the Summit put about £10m. into the local economy and certainly put the City of Birmingham (England!) on the international map. Some sponsorship, items in kind and technical support, was also given by some major companies, but in the end it is the British tax-payer who paid the bill.

As regards debt issues, the Summit was labelled a 'failure'. Not much of benefit for the indebted countries came out of it. Even the human chain of 50,000 to 70,000 people on Saturday 16th. May was largely ignored. The leaders were on 'retreat' at Weston Park, Shropshire, and the reply to the 'Jubilee 2000' petition (signed by 1.5m. people) was handed over by Jacques Santer of the European Commission - though Tony Blair did return to meet with people from 'Jubilee 2000'. (see next issue)

The final communiqué, of Sunday 17th, May, 1998, stated that the Leaders are 'encouraged by the new spirit of hope and progress in Africa. The challenges are acute, but confidence that they can be overcome is growing' (para 6) and that they commit themselves to support reform, democracy, transparency and development in Africa. They also seem to 'recognise' the part that they have to play in finding solutions to the debt crisis. To this end they 'pledge' themselves 'to support the speedy and determined extension of debt relief to more countries, within the terms of

the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative'. They also 'welcome the progress achieved with six countries already declared eligible for HIPC debt relief and a further two countries likely to be declared shortly. We encourage all eligible countries to take the policy measures needed to embark on the process as soon as possible, so that all can be in the process by the year 2000. We will work with the international institutions and other creditors to ensure that when they qualify, countries get the relief they need, including interim relief measures whenever necessary, to secure a lasting exit from their debt problems. We expect the World Bank to join the future financial effort to help the African Development Bank finance its contribution to the HIPC initiative.'



Opposite: (6) Communiqué taken from the official G8 Web Site at: <http://birmingham.g8summit.gov.uk/>

President Clinton on his way to have a lunch time pint at the 'Malt House' pub



‘to call on those countries who have not already done so to forgive aid-related bilateral debt or take comparable action for reforming least developed countries;’ (para 7)

The Leaders recognise many of the problems facing Africa and what action is needed: ‘We see a particular need to strengthen Africa’s ability to prevent and ease conflict, as highlighted in the UN Secretary General’s recent report. We will look for ways to enhance the capacity of Africa-based institutions to provide training in conflict prevention and peacekeeping. We also need to consider further ways to respond to the exceptional needs of poor post-conflict countries as they rebuild their political, economic and social systems, in a manner consistent with democratic values and respect for basic human rights. In addition to immediate humanitarian assistance:’

‘we recognise the need for technical and financial assistance in creating strong democratic and economic institutions, supporting good governance alongside programmes of macro-economic and structural reform supported by the IMF and World Bank. We call on the World Bank to play a strong role in co-ordinating bilateral and multilateral assistance in these areas;’

‘we also agree on the need to consider ways for debt relief mechanisms, including the HIPC initiative where appropriate, to be used to release more and earlier resources for essential rehabilitation, particularly for those countries with arrears to the IFIs.’ (para 8)

In the final analysis the UK proposal to implement the ‘Mauritius Mandate’ for HIPC was rejected. There was even an apparent about turn on what was agreed by the Finance Ministers the previous week. ‘‘I think the honest answer is to say that we did not go as far as many would have liked us to go, but I think we did make very considerable progress,’’ Mr Blair said. The Prime Minister hinted that, on this issue, public opinion in Britain had run ahead of other countries and that the Government’s ‘‘pretty advanced position’’ had proved unacceptable to some G8 leaders.’ (7) As the Summit ended news came that at least Britain has promised £60m. for the World Health Organisation’s ‘Roll Back Malaria’ campaign.

It was reported that the two countries most reluctant to move matters forward on the debt question were Germany and Japan. It is ironic that these two countries, who received so much financial help after the Second World War, should refuse to help others out, and that Germany should accuse Britain of hypocrisy over how it deals with debt! What is being asked is similar to what was done with the ‘Marshall Plan’. In 1953 - in the ‘London Accord’ agreed by the Allies - Germany had two-thirds of its war debts cut and it was agreed that servicing the remainder should not take more than 5% of the country’s exports. In the HIPC terms a country has to pay up to 20% of export earnings.

_____ *to be concluded in the next issue*

SOME NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY AND DEBT RESOLVING INITIATIVES

Multilateral debt - is a debt owed by a country to the World Bank, the IMF, the various Development Banks, or the European Union etc.

Bilateral debt - is a commercial debt or a debt between individual countries.

The ‘Brady Plan’ - is named after Nicholas Brady, the then US Secretary of Treasury, who introduced the initiative in March 1989. The idea was to give debtor countries debt reduction from commercial banks, with the support of the International Financial Institutions and other creditors. Brady said that as debts to commercial banks had decreased in real value then the value of the debt repayment should also be reduced. This could be carried out by writing off part of the debt and by rescheduling some of what

remained in the form of bonds - ‘Brady Bonds’. This helped to a certain degree for commercial debts, but the majority of money owed is multilateral.

The ‘Paris Club’ - was formed in 1956 and it is also known as the ‘Group of Ten’. The countries now involved are the US, Canada, Switzerland, Japan, Russia and the European Union. It is an informal meetings of OECD creditor governments, coordinated by

a Secretariat based in France, which are the main source of loans to developing countries. The ‘Club’ is a forum where the creditors discuss economic matters such as the renegotiation of debt. Since the ‘Club’ began it has negotiated a total reduction or rescheduling of \$300bn. worth of debt involving seventy countries. There is also a ‘London Club’ which is a group of commercial bankers who meet to restructure debts owed by governments, or private organisations, in countries with debt problems. The Bankers usually work with countries which already have a debt rescheduling arrangement with the ‘Paris Club’.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - was first established as the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in order to coordinate ‘Marshall Plan’ aid in 1948. It became the OECD on 30th. September, 1961. It’s aim is to promote economic growth and development, and to maintain financial stability among its 27 member countries.

The ‘Trinidad Terms’ - these terms were put forward by John Major, then UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the September, 1990, Commonwealth Finance Ministers’ Conference. The idea was to reduce debt stock which was owed to ‘Paris Club’ creditors. It was not accepted but the ‘Enhanced Toronto Terms’ were agreed the following year.

The ‘Toronto Terms’ (1988-91) and the ‘Enhanced Toronto Terms’ (EET)(1992-93) - were agreed in September, 1988, after an economic summit which was held earlier the same year. They are a way of cutting the debt of low-income and debt-distressed countries. The method does this by reducing the interest rate, partially writing off debt servicing, and extending the time of repayment. In 1991 the ‘Paris Club’ ‘enhanced’ the basic terms were by provision of a consolidation option at market rates, with a 14 year period of grace and repayment over 25 years.

The ‘Naples Terms’: The ‘Paris Club’ reached agreement on the ‘Naples Terms’ in December, 1994. The former UK Prime Minister, John Major, proposed that creditor countries should cancel half the debt owed to them by the lowest income countries and reschedule what remained. This eventually came out as a G7 agreement to cancel 67% of the debt for a few countries. Debts are reduced each year and after three years there is a write down in all outstanding debts - stock reduction - if the debtor has maintained its track record with creditors as with the IMF.

Sources - articles in: ‘The Daily Telegraph’; ‘The Guardian’; ‘The Independent’; ‘The Times’. Articles and reports from: ‘The G7 Research Group’ at the University of Toronto; HM Treasury and British Government; Cafod; Christian Aid; Eurodad, Brussels, Belgium; ‘Jubilee 2000’; Oxfam; US Dept. of State, Washington DC.

Related articles in previous issues: ‘The African Debt Situation’, issue 302, Feb.-March, 1992; ‘Aid and Development’, issue 304, June-July, 1992; ‘The African Farmer’, issue 309, April-May, 1993; ‘Influences in Africa Pt. 5: Globalisation’, issue 338, Feb.-March, 1998.



(7) ‘Campaigners blamed Japan and Germany for their continuing resistance’ - ‘Blair admits failure on debt relief package’, By Alasdair Murray, Economics Correspondent, ‘The Times’, May 18 1998. Opposite: Nigerian Demonstrators outside the ICC in Centenary Square



That there may be peace in Ghana

By Sr. Prosperine Samba W.S.

The very first national Eucharistic Congress of the Catholic Church to be held in Ghana took place in Kumasi in 1951. Forty-six years later, in 1997-98, the Catholic Bishops of the country had the desire to celebrate a second Congress to coincide with the 40th. anniversary of the independence of the country. They wanted to offer 'to all persons of good will' a time of thanksgiving for the good things received from God, and to make it also a time of intercession for peace, reconciliation and justice for all. In addition, this Congress was planned as an important phase in the preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Universal Church

WHY TAMALE?

"In recent times, several regions of the country have experienced ethnic conflicts, but it is especially in the Northern Region, of which Tamale is the chief town, that tribal wars and segregation were more intense and on a scale

that made many people homeless and destroyed families, while others lost life and property. As a nation we need to be reconciled and to make Ghana indeed more livable and loveable."

"Tamale was therefore purposely chosen as a venue to highlight the basic purpose of the Eucharist, that is ... reconciliation and fraternity. Hence, partaking in this sacrament requires that we work for racial and tribal harmony and continue to struggle against tribal prejudice in oneself as well as around us." (Extracts from the programme of the Congress)

A WEEK OF CELEBRATION

I was looking forward to sharing fully in all the activities that were scheduled during that week between the Sundays of 4th. and 11th. January, 1998. Each day Tamale became crowded. The week was launched in the evening of the 4th. with a candlelight procession starting at 6 p.m.

from Holy Cross parish to the cathedral. While protecting our candlelight, we walked, sang and danced to the rhythm of drums and brass band music, through the five kilometres between the two parishes. Joy was on each face. Once in the cathedral, we had an hour of adoration, during which the whole week ahead of us was introduced as one single and prolonged Eucharistic Celebration. The stress on that day was reconciliation, and we began that 'single' celebration by examining ourselves to see within ourselves and around us, in our families and in our communities, where there was need for reconciliation. We had set out on a pilgrimage of peace.

On Monday the 5th., we had the joy of welcoming the Papal Legate to the Congress, Cardinal Christian Tumi, Archbishop of Douala, Cameroon, accompanied by the Apostolic Delegate, Most Rev. André Dupuy. Throughout the day, many other pilgrims from all the dioceses of Ghana arrived and joined in the celebrations. Each evening there was a Holy Hour to end the day's celebration.

On Tuesday the 6th., the feast of the Epiphany, there was a solemn open-air Eucharist at the Police Park. Our attention during the celebration was captured several times by the arrival of traditional Dagomba Chiefs on horses, mounted with large parasols, and accompanied by elders and attendants, singing, drumming

and dancing. Somebody said to me, "I have never seen such a display of traditional Chiefs." I thought to myself, "How fitting all this seems for this feast day. Like the Magi of old who set out in search of the Infant King to worship him, so the traditional Chiefs of Tamale have come on that day.

Finally the President of Ghana, J. J. Rawlings, arrived. Needless to say how he was accompanied. As he took the time to walk around the Square and to greet the people, Sr. Salvina Farrugia and I were able to shake hands with him. It was an exciting time and good will messages were presented by many official delegates.

WHY DIVISION?

From Monday to Friday evening, six conferences were given on the general theme, "One bread, One body, One Lord of all," to help us to deepen the meaning and our understanding of the Eucharist. Each of the conferences was followed by group discussions in fifteen languages. It was very challenging. I remember a woman say-

ing in front of a bishop who happened to be in our group: "If this is the meaning of the Eucharist, then I am becoming afraid to receive it." Indeed we were all challenged at every level of life, as questions were asked:

- "If the Eucharist makes us one and whole, why disunity within myself, why disunity in family life?"
- "Why do religious people eat at the same table and then not talk to each other?"
- "If by dying, Christ has reconciled to himself the whole of creation, why is there disharmony between ourselves and the environment?"

In the Eucharist, we are permanently challenged to take seriously what we receive.

To apply what we had discussed, on Thursday afternoon we were sent throughout Tamale town to clean, sweep and collect whatever rubbish we could find, as a way of becoming reconciled with the environment. We accomplished this communal labour joyfully and some of us even sang and praised God while cleaning up.



of Christ was carried by four priests, surrounded by enormous parasols like those of the Chiefs. There were ‘talking drums’ and impressive ‘wild animal horns’ blowing very special musical sounds of praise. We all accompanied the Lord in the Eucharist, praising and singing and dancing with all our energy to the rhythm of the brass band music in the procession that lasted three hours. Many people of other beliefs stood and watched the passage of the Lord and they waved to the crowd as the procession passed. I am sure the Lord blessed them all on the way.

Once in the Police Park, the pilgrims of the different dioceses went forward to praise the Lord according

Friday the 9th. was a day of penance. The Eucharist was celebrated for different groups: catechists, lay church leaders and their spouses, married people, religious, the elderly, the widowed, single parents and those from broken marriages, adult single men and women. In our group of religious and priests, we were challenged concerning our collective sins ... “too conscious of our status and privileges, too conscious of our rights, unforgiving attitudes, pride and selfishness”. That evening we had a penitential service and there was the possibility for individual confessions at the Police Park, followed by a vigil of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament until midnight.

WE ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS

According to me, Saturday was the climax of the week when we celebrated the feast of Corpus Christi. The day was introduced by a long Eucharistic service at the Police Park, with the theme, ‘Mary our Mother and Model of Eucharistic Life’. In the early afternoon, we all gathered at Holy Cross parish, ready for the Corpus Christi procession. The Body

to their customs. It was a very rich and moving experience. We were no longer strangers to each other in this ‘One Body’ celebration. At 10 p.m. a concert and entertainment marked the closing of this day.

Finally on Sunday 11th. January, the National Eucharistic Congress ended with a Mass of thanksgiving, presided over by Cardinal Tumi, and concelebrated by more than 200 priests. We had the impression of coming down from the mountain after having seen God. The Papal Legate spoke to us in such a simple and relevant way that he touched many people. Some were even writing the texts he quoted on the palms of their hands. At the end of this celebration which lasted five hours, we were sent to our homes with a blessing to become true instruments of peace, love and unity. It is estimated that there were about 20,000 Catholics at the closing celebration.

I am so grateful for having been able to participate in this great event of the National Eucharistic Congress in Tamale, Ghana. May the Lord be forever praised!

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

DEPARTURES

- Sr. Loreto Rey to Arusha Novitiate, Tanzania ①
- Sr. Celia Natanek to Arusha Novitiate, Tanzania ①



A NEW WHITE FATHERS GENERAL COUNCIL

In the summer of this year the White Fathers held their twenty-fifth Chapter in Rome. During the proceedings a new General Council team was chosen. The Superior General is Fr. François Richard (ordained 1966) from near Anger, France, and has worked in Zambia and France. His Assistants are: Fr. André Simonart (ordained 1971) from Louvain, Belgium, who has worked in Zambia and Brazil; Fr. Benito Undurraga (ordained 1970) from Yurre (Vizcaya), Spain, who worked in Burkina Faso and Spain; Fr. Richard Nnyombi (ordained 1988) is from Buwunga, Uganda, and worked in Tanzania and Kenya; and Fr. Albert Thevenot (ordained 1980) from Treherne, Canada, who was in Canada and Tanzania.



Change of address

If you are about to move, or have moved, and would still like to receive the magazine please fill in the form below and return it to:
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The Corpus Christi procession - the Blessed Sacrament is in the middle



Fr. Patrick Fitzgerald W.F. writes about quite an amazing 'day out', when all roads led to Birmingham and thousands of people said with one voice 'Let's Break the Chains of Debt'.

"For evil to triumph", said Edmund Burke, it is sufficient that good people do nothing". Well, on Saturday, 16th., May, upwards of 50,000 'good people' converged on Birmingham from all parts of the United Kingdom and from overseas. They had come with a message for the leaders of the eight largest industrialised countries in the world. It was a message concerned with the debts owed to them and to other wealthy countries and institutions by poor Third World Countries. The message was simple: "Enough is enough!". Taking their cue from John Paul II who appealed to Biblical precedents in the Year of Jubilee the organisers of 'Jubilee 2000' asked as many people as possible to come to Birmingham and let the big boys see us and hear our appeal for 'forgiveness' of unpayable debts, or debts that are being paid at a terrible price to the health

and education of many people. In fact the 'Eight' decided to get out of Birmingham on the day the 50,000 of us called on them. Hopefully our message got through. At least Clara Short was sincerely interested.

Talking with fellow-travellers on the

coach to Birmingham I was pleased to discover that their feet were firmly on the ground. The 'good people' who must do something about the plight of countries like Zambia must be found in those countries, not only among the wealthy nations. John Paul II's is but one voice raised in protest at the affluent life-style of some Third World leaders, at their seeming indifference to the poverty of their people, at corruption at many levels, at refusals on the part of leaders to declare how much each year they spend on weapons, at the assumption that 'the donor community' will always bale them out.

Having said all that, on our coach to Birmingham, at least, we thought that the time had indeed come to allow impoverished nations to spend more money on health, education and food for their people and less on paying interest on endless loans.

Did we do any good by going to Birmingham, forming a human chain round the Centre where

the 'Eight' were holding their meetings, and letting them know we were in town? Personally I am quite sure we did. We were not a powerful group, what we were asking and from whom we were asking it was disproportionate to our influence. But is that not precisely the reason for believing we did some good? Is not the history of Judaism and Christianity filled with evidence of small people achieving great things, from the not over-endowed apostles at Pentecost, to Group Captain Cheshire and the

homes he founded, to Mother Teresa and her work for the poor?

It was heartening too to spend the day with 'good people' of all and no churches, who were in Birmingham out of concern for people worse off than themselves. In a world not short of bad news it was a tonic to rub shoulders with men and women, young and old who were united in a worthy cause. Christ was surely in the midst of us, and not as an indifferent bystander.

SOME G8 FIGURES

	Britain	Canada	France	Germany	Italy	Japan	Russia	USA
Land Area (sq.km.)	244,820	9.98m.	547,030	356,910	301,230	377,835	17m.	9,372,610
Population	58,489,975 ^{6e}	30.14m.	58.03m. ⁵	81.54 m.	57,460,274. ^{6e}	125.2m. ⁵	148.14m.	267.7m. ^e
Work force *	28.048m. ²	15.354m. ⁴	25.7m.	37m. ⁴	25m. ⁴	65.87m. ⁴	77m. ⁴	136.3m.
% in agriculture	1.2	-	5.0	4.0	9.0	7.0 ⁰	14.0	-
% in industry	-	25.0	29.0 ⁰	38.0	31.0 ⁰	34.0 ⁰	42.0 ⁰	-
% in services	62.8	66.0	-	-	-	-	-	13.5
Nominal GDP (US\$)	1.29tr.	618.4bn.	1.35tr. ^e	2.11tr.	1.149tr. ^e	4.198tr.	463bn. ^e	8.08tr.
Real GDP growth (%)	3.5	3.8	2.4	1.3	1.4	1.0	0.4	3.8
Inflation rate (%)	3.1	1.6	1.2	1.0	2.0	1.0	11.4	2.3
Unemployment rate (%)	6.7 ⁶	9.2	12.5	11.4	12.3	3.4	9.5	4.9
Budget surplus/deficit as % of GDP	-4.5 ⁶	0.0	-3.0	-2.0	-2.8	-3.0	6.5 ^e	-0.4
Current account surplus/deficit (US\$)	-3.3bn. ^e	12.3bn.	37.5bn.	-1bn.	26bn.	94.6bn.	3.9bn.	-166.4bn.
ODA (US\$) as % of GNP	3.15bn. ⁶	2.5bn. ⁶	7.5bn.	7.9bn. ⁶	2.2bn. ⁶	10.9bn. ⁶	-	6.2bn.
	0.27	0.4	0.48	0.33	0.2	0.2	-	0.1
Exports (US\$)	369.2bn. ^e	247.7bn.	365.4bn. ⁶	548.84bn. ⁶	311.3bn. ^e	482.76bn. ⁵	88.8bn.	931.4bn.
Imports (US\$)	380bn. ^e	237.2bn.	344.2bn. ⁶	548.51bn. ⁶	281bn. ^e	406.41 bn. ⁵	72.2bn.	1,046bn.

Source: The 'Birmingham Summit Countries: Key Economic Data Fact Sheet' released by the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, May 5, 1998.

Notes: The above data is for 1997 unless otherwise indicated ie. 0 = 1990, 2 = 1992, 4 = 1994, 5 = 1995, and 6 = 1996. m. = million/millions, bn. = billion/billions, and tr. = trillion/trillions. (e) = estimate.

* Other British work force % = in manufacturing and construction 25; in government 9.1; in energy 1.9. Other USA work force % = in managerial and professional 28.3; in technical, sales, and administrative support 30; in manufacturing, mining, transportation, and crafts 25.3; in farming, forestry, and fishing 2.8.

Exports and Imports are 'of goods and services'. ODA = Official development assistance.



Some of the people who formed the 'Human Chain' in Victoria Square, Birmingham



SISTER LEA ACKERMANN

Sister Lea Ackermann, Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa (White Sister) **'Woman of the Year'**.

Sr. Lea was given the award 'Woman of the Year' for 1998, by the 'European Movement' in Germany. The award is given in recognition of initiatives taken by women for the betterment of Europe. Winners include women who have outstandingly helped children in poor hospitals, victimised women in Bosnia etc.

How come that a Missionary Sister of Africa gets the Award? The story goes back to the time when Lea was working in Mombasa, Kenya, where she became involved with prostitutes and started a movement called 'Solidarity with Women in Distress' (SOLWODI)

When she returned to Germany she discovered something even worse than what she had witnessed in Mombasa - a real sex Slave Trade. The following true story reveals the working of this tragic marketing.

Rike, a 15 year-old Polish girl, meets a German boy at a friend's house. He courts her, praising her beauty and declaring his admiration. His friend from Poland translates. He tells her that he wants to take her to Germany as his girlfriend, and maybe they will get married.

Rike is enthusiastic and agrees to leave Poland with him, leaving behind an unhappy home.

In Germany, the euphoria does not last long. The boyfriend turns out to be a mean pimp, who places her in different brothels to earn money for him. Knowing no German, she has no one to turn to and she is completely at the mercy of this man who even denies her food for two days at a stretch, if he is dissatisfied with her.

Within two months Rike has lost all sense of time. Everything is so horrible that she has blocked it out of her memory. Eventually the police find her during a raid.

Cases like this fired Lea to build on her African experience and extend SOLWODI to Germany. There, the emphasis has been on such work as supporting women in court where they some times have to give witness. They get the impression that they are the criminals, not the victims of cruelty and injustice, and they greatly need to be befriended.

Another activity of SOLWODI is helping women to return to their own countries when they want to leave. SOLWODI has also

several Counselling Centres for women in distress.

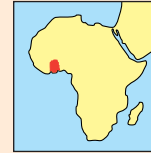
Lea has enlarged her circle of aid-workers by bringing together a group of religious from ten different Congregations, who operate as 'Religious against the Trade of Women'.

Over the 12 years that Lea has been working in Germany she has become very adept at collaborating with the media. Her first interview was in Nairobi in 1985 during the U.N. Conference of Women. One of the journalists present was so impressed that she made a film on SOLWODI. Lea was invited to Berlin, where

she was interviewed on TV in a documentary entitled 'Women: loved - praised - tolerated'. Her many later TV interviews cover such topics as 'Women Trafficking', 'Mail Order Brides'. These interviews always have a great impact and are followed by many phone calls, letters and questions.

With all this service to her credit, it is not surprising that she was acclaimed 'Woman of the Year'. Mrs Rita Sussmuth, President of the German Parliament and of the European Movement said truly, "SOLWODI is an example of active faith, and at the same time reveals that human rights are everywhere neglected."

SISTER CONNIE GEMME



In issue the Aug/Sept 1997 of this magazine Sr. Connie wrote from Tamale, Ghana about the same tragic problem of trafficking in women. She described her own organisation in Ghana 'Collaboration with Women in Distress' (COLWOD) which helps women who wish to free themselves

from the trap of prostitution, by training them in all sorts of skills. Today she tells us how her work is progressing.

This past year has been very busy and fruitful, not only for me but also for the Ghanaian women that we are striving to release from the trap of prostitution. A few of them have been able to obtain work and we are helping others, either to acquire professional training or to start a trade.

Eight of our women were able to follow an intensive three week workshop in tie-dye, batik, jewellery and the making of pomades. After that they divided up into two groups, each now running a business. The batiks they are producing have become very popular among the local people. While some sales have been made in Holland, Germany and the United States, we are looking for more overseas markets for their goods. To date, twenty-two women were helped to set themselves up in business, selling various types



of goods thanks to the loans that we were able to provide; in addition eleven street-mothers have begun a three-year training as seamstresses. Some are already in secretarial school, while others are learning weaving, sewing, baking of bread etc. Once these women (65 of them) have become self-sufficient, we will start to interview others, many of whom are waiting to be assisted.

Last September, 1997, I attended the Conference against Trafficking in Women held in the Netherlands (at which Sr. Lea gave the speech, starting with a story of Rike - see the previous article). This Conference intensified my desire to help as many women as possible in my area to be trained for an income-generating activity, so that

they may not become a prey to the fine promises of unscrupulous and money-hungry traffickers.

At present I am trying by every possible means to sensitise the population of Ghana about the ravages of this terrible traffic of women and

little girls everywhere in the world - a traffic which is in danger of becoming a booming business. If concerned people all over the world do not get involved in fighting this evil, it will continue to increase.

SISTER PATRICIA (MARY BURNS) WS. - R.I.P.

Patricia was born in Co. Cork in 1909. Her father died when she and her brother were still very small. Later Patricia helped her brave mother on their small farm. But a seed was developing in Patricia's heart, and when she read a small article on 'The White Sisters' in the 'Catholic Fireside', she felt sure of her call to religious missionary life.

In 1938 she went to Heston, Middlesex, for her postulate, after which she was sent to Belgium for her first year's novitiate. As was the rule at that time, she was to have gone to the Mother House in Algeria for her second year. But World War II broke out and changed all that.

In May, 1940, Belgium was invaded by Germany. The Belgian Sisters and novices in the North of the country set out for France, hoping to link up with our Sisters there. They travelled on foot by night, fortified by lumps of sugar, which the thoughtful Superior distributed every hour or two. By day they slept where they could. But when they reached the French border, it was only to find the route cut off by the German army. At Dunkirk, a small vessel bringing the wounded back to Britain brought a few of the Sisters to England but the great majority, including Sr. Patricia, had to walk back to the North of Belgium again. Here she continued her novitiate and

after two years made her first Profession there in 1942.

When peace came Patricia returned to England, where she rendered any services, until in 1954 the happy day dawned when she set foot on African soil, in Zambia. The people loved and respected Mama Pat. Like many others she never managed to master Chibemba, the language of that region, but her ready smile and active service were the best means of communication. Once the workmen she was responsible for learnt that their dear Mama Pat had been appointed to another house. Bent on keeping her, they signed (by thumb-mark, I presume) a petition for her to stay. The wise Provincial allowed her to remain.

A Sister who lived with her in community stressed what a happy person Patricia was. She writes, "Patricia and I liked to laugh together. Her laughter was quiet, coming from deep down within her. It was 'contained', as if she were afraid of laughing out loud. It made her eyes shine and her shoulders shake." Another endearing trait in Pat was her curiosity. She just wanted to know what was going on everywhere, in the dispensary, in the village, in the school. That curiosity could get her into trouble, as when she shattered a subdued and very serious community reunion. She just could not resist opening what turned out to be a jack-in-the-box and a big paper snake shot out!

After eighteen years in Zambia, Pat returned to England, where she helped out in various places, including Totteridge, where she was the cook in the White Fathers' training centre. She became involved in the Legion of Mary in Bayswater. Later in Ealing, she agreed when asked to become their Spiritual Directress. She was greatly appreciated. One of them wrote, "Sister Patricia took a special interest in each of the legionaries and also in the apostolic works done by them in the parish of Northfields. Her guidance was invaluable. Her great love for her fellowmen was so obvious; she showed us, by word and example, the unique value of each person."

Patricia's latter years were clouded mentally. She spent the last eight of them, together with Sr. Bride, (see last issue of the magazine) who died four months earlier, in St. Raphael's Nursing Home in West Sussex. Here she was cared for with the greatest dedication by the Augustinian Sisters and staff, until her death, when her loving and inquisitive spirit was surely given the answer to one of her life-long questions, "What on earth is Heaven made of?"

Patricia was a woman of faith. She really did seem 'to find God in all things'. She was a woman of prayer, simple prayer, just being with God, speaking with God like a child with her Father.

May She Rest in Peace



BROTHER JOHN MENNIE WF. - R.I.P.

An appreciation by Fr. John Sandom W.F.

We all know of aspiring W.F.s who dreamt of becoming professional footballers. But for few indeed was this ever even a remote possibility. John was an exception, being a schoolboy international.

John was born on the 1st. June, 1932, at Coatbridge in Lanarkshire. He had three brothers and four sisters, all older than himself. He did his primary schooling at St Mary's School, Coatbridge, then went on for his secondary studies at St Mary's Secondary School in the same town, completing them at Our Lady's High School, Motherwell, obtaining Highers in maths, French and history. His two years' National Service were spent in the Air Force.

At the end of 1953 he applied to join the White Fathers as a brother. He seemed to have good health and was robust. With refined manners and above average intelligence he made a very good impression. This was backed up with excellent reports from his parish priest. Having entered our Postulancy at Monteviot in February 1954, he received the habit in August of the same year and at the same place, taking the name of Columbkil. His technical formation was at Mariental, in Luxembourg, where his talents were shown to be more intellectual than manual, so it came as no surprise when he was appointed to teach in our Junior Seminary at 'The Priory', Bishop's Waltham. Here his health started to give cause for concern, necessitating a major stomach operation. This blocked his chance of going to Africa until he was fully recovered. In the meantime, he joined the Promotion Team at Sutton Coldfield with bookkeeping and office work, later he was secretary to the Provincial Treasurer.

Eventually his health had improved sufficiently for him to be appointed to Ujiji Seminary

in Tanzania, where he spent over twelve years, mostly teaching. But by the end of 1978 it was clear that he would have to return home for a long rest. This he did, taking the opportunity of following a series of courses, including the Jerusalem Biblical Sessions.

There was some talk of his returning to the missions, but doubts over his state of health eventually ruled this out. Instead, he served the Province as assistant to the Treasurer at Stormont Rd., London. Then he was sent to help out at our Promotion Centre which was then in Grove St., Edinburgh. When his work there was completed, he returned to help out with accounts at Stormont Rd., where he commuted daily from Oak Lodge, Totteridge, his residence.

By this time he had become quite a computer 'buff', his expertise benefiting not only Stormont Rd., but confreres up and down the Province, who sought his advice on various cybernetic problems. We, in Oak Lodge, also benefited from his culinary skills, when we were deficient of a cook.

Early in 1997, John was being treated for suspected anaemia when the doctors found he had a small stomach tumour. A course of chemotherapy followed by an operation was suggested. Our brother suffered these procedures with cheerfulness and courage. All thought these interventions had been successful.

After he had left hospital, John convalesced in Beaconsfield, before taking a short trip up to Scotland. He then returned to Oak Lodge, with the intention of resuming his work at Stormont Rd. But he was readmitted to hospital when swallowing became difficult. Tests revealed his tumour had returned with a vengeance. John was informed that his life expectancy was measured in weeks, rather

than months. There was nothing the doctors could do for him. He returned home to Oak Lodge to pass his remaining days.

Swallowing solids had been difficult, this was then the case with liquids, and finally even this was impossible. The poor man was getting thinner by the day. But his spirit was indomitable. His was a shining example of

John gave us a shining example of "putting one's house in order", not just spiritually, but materially as well. Not only was his office work right up-to-date and completed, but his room was left in perfect order. He gave away most of his belongings as he was dying. The remainder were carefully listed and assigned to various individuals and organisations.

John had kept regular contact with his relatives and friends all down the years. Several of these were able to come and spend a few days with him. Among these were Jimmy Judge, Alex Soper, and Pat McGurk, life-long friends from their school days at Our Lady's High School, Motherwell. It was a bittersweet occasion, joy at meeting, sadness that it was for the last time. One of John's favourite quotes was "Live a little, die a little, cry a little, laugh a little, but in all things be happy and at peace."

John died very peacefully on the 18th. March. His funeral Mass was at the church of the Sacred Heart and Mary Immaculate, Mill Hill, on the 24th March, the burial taking place that afternoon in the White Fathers' plot at Kensal Rise. Jimmy, Alex and Pat came down again for John's funeral, Pat's wife Mary and his daughters joining them. Tom Mennie, John's older brother and sole surviving

a holy death. We thank God that at Oak Lodge we were able to fulfil his wish to die at home, thanks to visiting nurses and a devoted GP. We took it in turns to be with him. He actively joined in all our prayers, right to his very last hours.

sibling, came down from Scotland with his wife Isabel, as did his niece Mrs Catriona Tyers. Mrs Jean Mennie (sister in law) came up from Southampton. Amongst friends who came were Martin Brennan and his son Paul.

May He Rest in Peace



Let Us Pray

*For the following
who have died recently:*

Mr & Mrs Baillieu, The Bungalow,
1a Betts Close, Beckenham, Kent.
Mrs Blackburn, 21 Loretto Road, Urmston,
Manchester.
Kevin Francis Brady, Glasgow.
Mrs Rosemary Brand, 56 Normandy Road,
Worthing, West Sussex.
Mrs Isobel Buchanan, 11 Cloverhill Terrace,
West Mains, East Kilbride.
Mrs J. Casey, 18 Oakfield Tower,
Motherwell, Lanarkshire.
Mr Eugene Clerkin, 64 Carmichael Road,
South Norwood, London.
Mr John W Cooper, Flat 98b,
2 School Road, Moseley, Birmingham.
Mrs Elsie Alexandra Cottam, 12 Park Drive,
Rustington, Little Hampton, Sussex.
Mrs Catherine Coyle, 7 Victoria Court,
West Victoria Street, Consett, Co. Durham.
Mrs Peggy Curran, 86 Henchman Street,
East Acton, London.
Mr Jim Daly, Scarborough, North Yorks.
Mr George Scalamere Davison,
1 Colchester Terrace, Sunderland.
Mr Harry Dennis, 15 Chalkwell Park Avenue,
Enfield, Middlesex.
Mrs R. Dilworth, St. Joseph's Home,
43 Gilmore Place, Edinburgh.

Mrs Annie & Mr William Docherty,
43 Broomieknowe Drive, Rutherglen.
Miss Mary Dooley, 39 Mount Avenue,
Wirral, Merseyside.
Mr John Downing, 4 Belmont Road,
Hindley, Wigan, Lancs.
Connie Duffy, Carricka Haskin,
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.
Dr & Mrs Fekete, 148 Canford Cliffs Road,
Poole Dorset.
Mrs M Fitzgerald, Maltby, South Yorkshire.
Mrs E.B. Fitzsimmons,
148 Hartington Street, Barrow in Furness,
Cumbria.
Mr Martin Flanagan, 4 Riverbrook Lawn,
Shannon Banks, Corbally, Limerick.
Mrs Celia Gill, 134 Norwich Avenue,
Southend on Sea.
Mr Thomas Green, 1 Princes Street,
Houghton Le Spring, Co. Durham.
Mrs Anne Hegarty (nee Punchon),
Flemming House, Lancaster.
Mrs M. Hendry, 29 Stirling Drive,
East Kilbride.
Miss D. Henery, 42 McCallum Court,
Armadale, West Lothian
Mr Alfred Houghton, Alcester.
Mr Jenner, 110 Applegarth Park,
Seasalter Lane, Whitstable, Kent.

Olive Kelly, St. Ayles, Sillerhole Road,
Leven, Fife.
Mrs T. Lyle, 69/18 Risk Street, Dumbarton.
Carmel McCabe.
Mrs Teresa McDade, 4E John Wilson Street,
Greenock.
Mrs Chris McDermott, 1 Cortleferry Grove,
Dalkeith, Midlothian.
Mrs C. McGuigan, Chesterfield.
Mr John McKeever, Newry, Co. Down,
Northern Ireland.
Mrs Letitia McKell, 3 Lampson Lane,
Killearn, Glasgow.
Margaret McKenna.
Mrs Freda McNulty, 27 Heath Road,
Penketh, Warrington.
Mrs M Miley, 10 Fern Hay, Thornton,
Liverpool.
Mrs Doris Mitchell, Nazareth House,
Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex.
Mrs Hilda Morgan, 75 Bedford Road,
Edmonton, London.
Mrs Murphy, c/o 14 Quarryfoot Gardens,
Bonnyrigg, Midlothian.
Mrs Ann O'Connor, 13 Storths Road,
Birkley, Huddersfield.
Elizabeth O'Connor, Kenilworth.
Mrs A E O'Grady, 9 St. Andrews Close,
Stanmore, Middlesex.

Mr O'Neill, 37 Alva Road, Oldham, Lancs.
Mrs Jean Winifred Phoenix,
133 Bridgewater Street, Little Hulton,
Manchester.
Mrs Margaret (Dolly) Ralston,
122 Eldon Street, Greenock,
Renfrewshire.
Fr Joop Raijmans WF., The Netherlands
(previously at St. Edward's, Totteridge).
Reverend H Grant Scarfe, Stoney Steep,
23 Northfields Lane, Brixham, Devon.
Kath Sellers, Dunelm Crescent, Doncaster.
Mrs C Shuttleworth, 11 Brook Street,
Workington, Cumbria.
Mrs Maura Staniforth, Sheffield
Mrs Patricia Stopford, 4 Park Homer Road,
Wimborne, Dorset.
Mr Robert Treadaway, 53 Craiglands,
Rochdale, Lancs.
Mr J. Thompson, 6 Marcus Avenue,
Southend on Sea, Essex.
Mrs Peggy Venables, Hornchurch, Essex
Miss Mary Welsh, 38 Grant Street,
Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire.
Mrs Catherine Worrall, Bolton.
Mrs K. Wright, 4 Brandon Court,
308 Poole Road, Poole, Dorset.

*"Come, you whom my Father
has blessed,
take for your heritage
the kingdom prepared for you
since the foundation of the world".*

(Mt. 25.34)



May they rest in peace

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