

Humiliation is strong drink

by John Bond

When the present government came to power in 1996, their first act was to remove \$400 million from the ATSIC budget. Since then many humiliations have been piled upon the Aboriginal community. The current revelations of abuse are the latest. The whole community now wears the stigma. It is right that abuse is exposed and abusers are prosecuted. But we will not solve the problem if we treat it as a matter principally of law and order. We need to deal with the extreme deprivation that has led to this depravity.

In the 1990s, when the reconciliation movement was at its height, Aboriginal people had hope that their situation was improving. Now that hope has gone. In its place is a sullen anger.

Some months ago I went to see a Cabinet Minister. He listened to my concern about the likely consequences of our inaction. I pointed out that humiliated people eventually turn

destructive, both to themselves and others. I don't think the depth of my concern got across.

Writing in *The Age* (24 May), former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser urges that we stop blaming each other. 'We have all helped create the situation,' he writes. 'The stories of Aboriginal men bashing and raping their women and children are horrific. But anyone who studies the history of European settlement knows that white men have been guilty of terrible crimes on Aboriginal women and children. Tens of thousands of mixed race children were born to liaisons between white men and Aboriginal women, and we cannot pretend that all were conceived in consensual relationships.'

Last week National Sorry Day took place. It commemorates these mixed-race children, many of whom were removed from their families in an attempt to assimilate them into Western culture.

It is a day which offers an opportunity to learn about the causes of the painful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and to discover ways to work at overcoming this legacy.

Hundreds of events took place, in city centres and suburbs, in universities and schools, in government offices and prisons. One of the most moving events took place in a prison. Many of those removed from their families as children have ended up in our prisons. In this prison, the stolen generations prisoners came together and wrote a play about their experiences. On Sorry Day – which they called Healing Day – they presented this play to the whole prison, together with poetry and songs. And invited everyone to join them in a special meal.

In preparing for this, they wrote to us asking if we could help with the funds. We set to work, and were able to send them \$1,500. The first contributor was the Catholic Archbishop. 'Our prisons are very sad places,' he wrote, 'and the lot of Aboriginal inmates is another part of the Sorry story.' Next the Federal Member of Parliament contributed. Lastly, a French journalist, who was shattered by seeing the conditions in which Aboriginal people live. He consulted his family about money they had set aside for a family holiday and, with their approval, gave this sum.

Breaking the ice in Cronulla

A public forum was held in the Sydney suburb of Gympie, near Cronulla, on May 30 entitled *Breaking the Ice in Cronulla*, organised by the Forum on Australia's Islamic Relations and hosted by Geraldine Doogue.

Some had speculated the event would not be received with enthusiasm. However, by the start of the meeting it was difficult to see a vacant seat.

Taghred Chandab, co-author of *The Glory Garage – Growing up Lebanese Muslim in Australia* and well-known journalist, spoke from her experience. She underlined the importance of promoting understanding in our schools, as they will determine the future of this country. Our leaders at the moment, she explained, are often too quick to criticize. At the same time, Taghred encouraged Muslims to articulate the true essence of Islam to their children – including emphasis on respect, manners and peace.

Indeed, Mahatma Gandhi once said, 'If

you wish to create a lasting peace, you must begin with our young people.' With this in mind, four young members of the Sydney community came forward to present their perspective of understanding and hope for the future.

Accepting responsibility

Natalie Nichol, a Sydney University student pointed out that people resist change and fear the unknown. 'The Shire was once called God's Country,' she said. 'This still holds true. It is not ours, or yours, but God's country, whoever your God may be.' Mohommed Danuun, a student from Sir Joseph Banks High School voiced the anger he once felt from the suspicious and hostile glances when hanging out with friends around Bankstown. He has since spent time working towards mutual respect and positive cross-cultural relations, and was awarded the Australian Lebanese award for community service earlier this year.

School Captain of Caringbah High, Glen Kembry, lives in the Shire, but works in a Japanese sushi bar. 'Ignorance,' Glen claimed, 'when accentuated by the media, can only bring conflict. Everyone has been blamed – the Shire, the Muslims, the Press – but no one accepts any responsibility.' Ola El Hassan, a young Arabic Australian social worker from Liverpool, brought the discussion to a close with an appeal to everyone: 'The only way to challenge our fear and mistrust is to challenge the authenticity of the media. Judge people for yourselves face-to-face rather than on ignorant stereotypes. Get to know someone outside your comfort zone.'

Is there hope of new respect and understanding in the Shire and across Sydney? I met a lovely Muslim woman that evening, around the same age as my mother. Instinctively I extended my hand, forgetting for the minute that Muslim women don't shake hands with men, based on cultural tradition. She smiled at me and took my hand anyway

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Alan Weeks

A legacy of care for the Pacific

Alan Weeks, who worked with Initiatives of Change (IofC) based in Melbourne, died in April after a struggle with pulmonary fibrosis. An obituary published in The Age is included. His wife, Liz Weeks, and son-in-law, Nick Foster, write about the man they knew:

His was an adventurous life, beginning in India, then Canada and Britain, the Antarctic after a stint as a merchant seaman, touring with MRA (as IofC was then known) musicals, marrying and settling into Australia, and dedicating his life to peace-building in the Pacific. All of this done employing a shoe-string budget, a strong marriage and family life, a 'fix-it' approach to life, a twinkling eye, a ready laugh (often at himself), earnest 'salty' friendship, and a deep well of obedient faith.

'His whole story was one of leaning into the wind... perhaps that was one of the secrets of his life - he found peace at the heart of the storm,' said Jim Coulter, long-time friend and colleague.

Tributes

Alan's departure has had a profound effect on the lives he touched. His Papua New Guinean friends considered him a brother; Bernard Narakobi, PNG High Commissioner to New Zealand, said he thought 'like a local'. Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of PNG, described him as a 'peace-builder who worked very hard to maintain, restore and strengthen peace by promoting reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of disputes both before and after the terrible conflict which took place in what is now PNG's Autonomous Bougainville Province between 1989 and 1997.' Having been 'called', Alan started on 'Track Two' negotiations despite early setbacks, helping pave the way to agreements for the cessation of conflict.

Joseph Kabui, President of the Autonomous Government of Bougainville said, 'Alan's unwavering dedication combined with a deep love for his fellow men and women encouraged us immensely in Bougainville in our time of great need to pursue peace for all our people at all cost.' Alan received a 30th Anniversary Independence medal in 2005 in recognition of his 'effort in assisting the Bougainville Peace Process'. Sir Peter Barter MP wrote of Alan 'he did not come as an expert or out of ambition.' As he explained. 'Peace-building is a calling. Once called, even if there is no visible end point, there can be no turning

back.' In his own case, the calling involved him in staying - or, as he himself put it, 'living rough' - in villages, and moving around Bougainville developing contacts and trust on all sides.' Alan's understanding deepened through learning Pidgin English.

Speaking at the funeral, David, Alan's son, said, 'He had such a genuine interest in people, regardless of their age, gender or background. This enabled him to build friendships of great depth and trust, which, along with his immense integrity, were essential elements to his success as a peacemaker.... Dad also encouraged us to consider the impact of our words and actions. He suggested we consider, "is it true, is it kind, is it necessary?"'

Albert Joseph Noro, Ray Himata and Jobson Misang wrote on behalf of 'members of all civil society groups... people from all walks of life'. They said, 'Thousands of kilometres of sea and sky had no limit to the life-long commitment Alan had to the people of Bougainville. Alan was highly regarded... a mentor throughout various stages of the Bougainville crisis. Many Bougainvilleans appreciate his unselfish, caring and honest life style. He lived a life that made changes wherever he set his foot.'

Russel Anelwo and the MRA/IofC team in PNG wrote, 'Late Alan is better known through his actions as much as his words. He has been an inspiration to all of us who walked with him during many of his journeys in PNG through good and bad times and indeed his life and times with us will forever remain a living

inspiration and memory'.

Alan also contributed to the IofC team in Melbourne and Australia, church, scouts, a community organisation, Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network and remained in touch with the Antarctic Commission.

Cathie-Jean Foster, spoke of her dad: 'He said there were three types of relationship. Face-to-face, where you see each other clearly, but see the rest of the world with peripheral vision; back-to-back where you feel each other but can only see the world from different points of view; or side-by-side, hand-in-hand, seeing the world together and walking the journey together.'

The journey from here.

The day after the funeral twenty people gathered to discuss the continuation of Alan's work. Bernard Narakobi and Sioni Gaileko (PNG) Ratu Meli and Mosese Waqa (Fiji) and Fetu Paulo (Samoa) were present as well as a group from Australia.

The practical outlook for PNG is:

- A *Developing Meaning For Life* course is planned for June
- The Electoral Support Programme has received a proposal to fund a Clean Election Campaign
- The PNG team wish to establish a legal body and are drafting a constitution
- A plot of land has been identified to build a local centre in Alotau, Milne Bay
- Amongst others, Liz Weeks and Nick Foster stay in regular touch with the team

As Jim Coulter commented: 'It was not that Alan did not fear, it was just that he never let it control him.' Alan was an ordinary man, led by God, who did extraordinary things. That's the challenge.

Communications officer needed

Initiatives of Change (IofC), Australia, is looking for a creative, dedicated person or persons, paid or voluntary, who will be responsible for projecting IofC's message and stories of its practical application to existing and potential supporters in Australia and beyond. Imagination, creativity and faith will be needed along with an enthusiasm to engage with people. Depending on time available, tasks will include:

- Raising IofC's profile with potential funding sources and in the media.

- Overseeing creation and publication of newsletters, brochures and reports as needed
- Keeping supporters informed
- Liaison with IofC International Web Team to develop and maintain the *IofC Australia* website
- Regular liaison and participation with IofC International Communications Team to produce international communications products

For more information, contact Mike Lowe, email: mike.lowe@iofc.org or telephone (03) 9822 1218

12th Asia Pacific Youth Conference is on its way

At the end of July in Indonesia, 200 purposeful young people from around the Asia Pacific region and beyond will gather for the 12th Asia Pacific Youth Conference. It will be held near Jakarta from 21-30 July under the patronage of former President of Indonesia, Abdurrahman Wahid.

The APYC is a unique opportunity for open dialogue between young people about issues of concern to them related to the future of their countries. This year's conference will focus on the theme 'Healing the Past, Hope for the Future: Creating a Culture of Peace' exploring the questions of 'human security and social justice towards a brighter future for the Asia Pacific region'; 'Islam and universal peace – creating a culture of peace'; and looking at how diversity can be a source of strength rather than conflict.

APYCs have given inspiration for

many grass-root level initiatives in the South-East Asian countries. The last Asia Pacific Youth Conference was a turning point in bringing the young Cambodian team to a further stage in their development, by giving them enough courage and determination to start working for their community. They have also developed a significant dialogue between young people from Cambodia and Vietnam, addressing the historical legacy of conflicts in the region and creating a common vision for the future.

There are already more than 20 young Cambodians and a further 20 Vietnamese, who have applied for APYC this year. However their participation will not be possible without financial assistance from outside sources. The cost for one participant including the travel fares is around USD 800 and at the moment a support team in different parts of Asia

(and the world) is trying to raise needed funds. This year the organisers would also like to see more people joining APYC from Thailand and Laos, and the young Cambodian *IofC* team (with help from the *Action for Life* group) has taken on the commitment to assist in fundraising for prospective participants

The total budget for this fundraising is approximately USD 32,000, so as a group we *AFL*ers have a big task in front of us. Any assistance we can receive from either individuals or organizations will be greatly appreciated. We pray that we will be able to find the way for these young people to participate in APYC, knowing from the experience of previous conferences what inspiring outcomes may lie ahead!

If you would like to support the participation of young people from South-East Asian region or find out more about it, please contact Kim Vuth (Cambodia): kim_vuth@yahoo.com or Rob Wood: rob.wood@iofc.org (Australia) or get in touch with your local *IofC* team.

Rob Wood

Renewal Arts Forum at Caux

The work of artists is to interpret, comment, inspire. Artists have gifts to be shared for the common good. Artists share with others their inner lives interpreted by words, music or visual arts.

Most artists are sensitive souls especially responding to the deep emotions and convictions within.

Renewal Arts is an international network of artists and lovers of art from different disciplines, cultures and beliefs who share the conviction that the arts can be a catalyst for spiritual renewal, inspiring positive transformation in our

lives. Our vision is for the arts to play their part in creating a society that is just, kind, generous and understanding.

Renewal Arts has grown from people linked to *Initiatives of Change*. People from more than forty countries are part of the *Renewal Arts* network.

People at the 2006 *Renewal Arts Forum* at the *IofC* centre in Caux, Switzerland, July 23 -29, will explore the concept of transformation, the kind of world we want to create and what this means to each of us.

The program will have interactive workshops including photography, music, theatre and painting. There will be interviews, presentations and discussions. Live performance of all sorts of music, theatre and dance will offer an amazing smorgasbord of international talent.

Most importantly there will be time set aside for quiet reflection, meditation, prayer and worship which inspire and energise *IofC* conferences at Mountain House, Caux.

Margaret Opie and David Allbrook from Western Australia will go to give their support to what will be an inspiring and life-changing week.

David Allbrook

Book talk

Beyond Borders -

Initiatives of Change in Quebec
Life experiences compiled by Laurent Gagnon

For anyone who believes that *Initiatives of Change* has ideas to offer the world, this book is a must.

It gives fascinating accounts of people whose lives have been enriched and even transformed by their encounter with the philosophy and life principles of *IofC*. One was a successful businessman who met the initiator Frank Buchman and his team of thirty-two people in 1932, who subsequently repaid \$12,200 to the government for undeclared goods brought into the country. Another was a translator/interpreter who discovered *IofC* first in 1999 and is now helping spearhead a new dynamism in the life of the team there.

A small section at the back of the book outlines a history of the movement in the world and then the developments to make an organization that is appealing to today's world, while not at all diminishing the spiritual heart of what the initiator established.

Cheryl Wood

\$30 including postage and packing. Available from Grosvenor Books, 226 Kooyong Rd, Toorak, VIC 3142

Breaking the ice

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as I stumbled over an apology. 'It's OK,' she laughed, 'you remind me of my boys. You are just so cute!' My family being overseas, I felt an amazing warmth from this woman, like I was her own son. Yes there is hope, there is love, there is a future for all Australians if we can learn to understand one another. With this understanding we can build an undivided community for all to call home.

Keith Mills

Conrad Hunte bats on



PHOTO: DENNIS MAYOR

Conrad Hunte and Jim Coulter in the '60s

The Sir Conrad Hunte Memorial Foundation has just been established in The West Indies 'in recognition of his contribution to Barbados, the Caribbean and the wider world'. The inaugural memorial lecture was delivered by the Rev. Wes Hall who was the strike bowler of the West Indies team in which the late Sir Conrad Hunte was vice-captain. I

well remember my first meeting with the towering Wes Hall. He bowled at an intimidating pace and his verbal delivery was similar. The conversation in Adelaide was in the '60s during a Test Match and I remember his words well...

'Conrad has gone too far with his absolute honesty – paying back money to the West Indies Cricket Board saying that

he had claimed too much for his cricket equipment. Now they think we've all done it. And that absolute purity! I told Conrad it was impossible. But do you know what, he's living it – and he's happy!'

I first met Conrad Hunte in Melbourne during the '60/'61 'tied test series'. My last conversation with him was in December 1999 in Sydney the day he was due to give the opening address at an International Conference for Moral-Re-Armament. We had been hitting up on the tennis court when Conrad had a heart attack from which he did not recover. In that last conversation he was again addressing the need for restitution – this time to (then and current) W.I. cricket captain Brian Lara, about whom Conrad had said something which Lara had found wounding.

How the West Indies could win the Cricket World Cup

The *Weekend Nation* published in early May this year the thoughts that Conrad had in 'his time of quiet' on the morning that he died. Written in 1999 it was his vision for how the West Indies could win the Cricket World Cup in 2007! His niece, Dr Donna Hunte-Cox who released the seven-page manuscript to the press, recalled how 'quiet times, especially in the mornings and listening to that inner voice were part of his beliefs.'

His vision for the resurrection of the West Indies team had thoughts for key players, starting with Brian Lara with the suggestion 'Raise the level of confidence and courage and release the hidden potential within. I do believe you have it within you to turn around the West Indies team.' Hunte spelled out a plan for the team to succeed suggesting 'work with Wes Hall (who had by then become a church minister) on the spiritual component, Rudi Webster on the psychological side and Gary Sobers, Everton Weeks, Viv Richards and Clyde Walcott on the technical aspects'.

The week-long launch of the Memorial Foundation included a TV presentation of *Chapter and Verse*, a documentary on his life, a Twenty20 night cricket match, and concluded with a national youth rally.

Jim Coulter

The Morning Quiet Time

It all began the year of the Queen's Coronation. My husband Kim had been part of the Australian delegation to it. While away he was invited to a conference of Moral Re-Armament (now *Initiatives of Change*) in Caux, Switzerland. He went for eight days and stayed six weeks. On his return home all I could say was 'how changed he is'. I did not know that it was the philosophy of change, change in people and change in nations.

I wanted to know 'how'? And so began the morning quiet time – considering what might have gone wrong the day before, how to put it right and what for the new day. The children noticed us sitting quietly writing and asked what we were doing. 'We can do that', they said, and did so in their early years.

We continued the practice and came the year of Kim's election to Federal

Minister of Education in 1972. Moving to Canberra we continued the same practice. I was thankful, for Kim was so busy with planning and work that I could not ask him about it, but the essentials would come out in the quiet time. One morning his thought was 'Every child's need must be met'. I said, 'Kim how wonderful. That covers every child, rich and poor, clever and backward, Aborigine and white'. After a while the press even seemed to have caught on and started referring to 'the needs policy'.

We are in our eighties now and our minds are not so alert and our movements limited. We continue the practice and find it sets us up for the day. They are happy days.

I should mention too that our quiet times are based on four absolutes - honesty, purity, love and unselfishness - and they provide space for God's direction.

Betty Beazley