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THE CAMBERA TIMES, Wednesday, June 10, 1992



SCIENCE
by GRAHAM O'NEILL

Dr Myers has used a supercomputer to compare the genetic code of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, with the genetic code of other viruses. The results show that HIV is a new virus, not a variant of any known virus. This is a major breakthrough in the understanding of AIDS.

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AIDS' African ancestry vital to vaccine search

Homebush

Sahaja Newsletter

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JUNE 12, 1992

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Sit in a rooftop garden
The flowers and buds I behold
Speak in silent beauty here
Of a plan and a depth untold.

In my Mother's house, halfway up
There's a place 'neath a cool grey sky
Where to sit full of peace, with a
Bird's song, as the distant rush
goes by,

'Tis a clear,
And a joy fulfilling,
As cool breezes waft on past,

And I feel
that from centuries seeking,
I know,
I've come home,
At last.

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West must take action to slow the pandemic

Australia has been fortunate in escaping the worst of the AIDS pandemic, and owes a great debt to the promptness of its action in recognising the threat posed by blood donors to blood banks by individuals who were unaware that they were infected.

In 1983, AIDS was still a minor medical curiosity, and US and European scientists had not yet formally accepted that the HIV virus was the cause of AIDS.

However, an Australian team led by Professor Ian Gant of the Fairfield Hospital for Infectious Diseases decided the evidence provided by Professor Luc Montanier, of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, was sufficiently convincing to take immediate action to prevent contamination of blood supplies by infected donors.

Truck drivers moving through the length and breadth of the country are spreading the virus after being infected by prostitutes in cities, towns and villages.

Professor Short warns that unless something is done by 1995, Western nations ignore the plight of African and Asian nations at their own peril.

The cost of humanitarian and medical assistance to nations devastated by AIDS will be astronomical. It is in the economic interests of Western nations to take all possible measures to slow the plague before it becomes unstoppable.

A similar 'witch's brew' of social world, including Africa, could exceed the combined total of AIDS victims in India and other countries in the world.

By the turn of the century, the number of AIDS victims in India could be as high as 10 million.

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AUDIO TAPE ROOM REQUEST

Would the person who borrowed the most recent Diwali Puja tape please return it to the tape room. This was the only copy in Australia and its disappearance means that copies cannot be made for the whole of Australia or South East Asia. It is Tape Room policy (and common sense) that no tapes are to be taken for any reason whatsoever. Due to the large number of tapes that need to be copied the decision has been taken to have them commercially made - thus taking a little longer... please bear with us we think it is worth the wait.

Because of the large number of tapes from Shri Mataji's recent Australian tour many copies of the set (10 tapes in all) have not been collected by the people who requested them. If you wish to keep the order on hold while you sort out the financial details (eg mortgage the house or negotiate with unrealised relatives) please let us know pronto. If you don't require the set you ordered let us know so that we can forward it to our brothers and sisters interstate or overseas.

BABY NEWS

Robert & Belinda Henshaw are delighted to announce the birth of their baby boy Julian born on Monday 1st of June in Melbourne. Parents & baby are doing fine.

MUSIC TAPES AVAILABLE

There is a range of Indian music tapes available from Italy. These tapes can be ordered through either Rob or David in the tape room. Money must be paid upfront with the order as the money has to be transferred in Lira to Italy.

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|-------------------|---|
| Sahaja Dhara: | Recording by Ravindra Jain & Henlata. Includes Vishwavidya & the Stick Dance Song (Approx \$15.-) |
| Mirror of Sahaja: | The most recent recording of Nirmal Sangeet Sarita. Includes the Holi song & Sahaja Bina (Approx \$12.-). |
| Meditation: | Prabhakar Dhakade (Gurujii) + Sandesh Papatkar. Morning ragas for violin & tabla (Approx \$12.-) |
| Ujalay: | A: Deepak Verma - incl Shri Ma Ke Ujaala
B: Noida musicians - incl Jago Savera + Mahamaya Mahakali (Approx \$12.-) |
| Nirmal Jyoti: | Deepak Verma's second cassette (Approx \$12.-) |
| Sahaja Sadhana: | Sanjay Talwar's latest cassette. Incl. Sitting in the Heart of the Universe (Approx \$12.-). |

Puhaar: A compilation cassette of some of Sanjay Talwar's latest recordings, taken from Sahaja Sadhana + Roohani Roshri (Approx \$12.-).



Church doctrine is not just losing followers; it's unnecessarily hurting them, says an American priest and author. **CHRIS MCGILLION** reports.

SMH, Tue. 26 May '92

THE CHURCH and its clergy

DOING MORE HARM THAN GOOD?



Joseph Girzone ... strict religious practices are causing psychological damage. *Picture by BRUCE MILLER*

MANY people leave their church because it causes them more pain than anything else, many others stay despite the guilt and anxiety they are made to feel within it. Most priests and ministers will not admit the truth of that statement or, if they do, will admit it only to insist that that is how it was meant to be.

Joseph Girzone is one of the exceptions. An American Roman Catholic priest, Mr Girzone visited Australia this month to promote a series of novels he has written along the theme of what Jesus Christ would find if he revisited Earth - and his Church - today.

"My experience of working in parishes and schools is that people are hurting terribly," says Mr Girzone. "They're desperate. People crave a spirituality and a relationship with God that's genuine, and our churches are not giving them that. We're giving them concepts; we're giving them rigid religious ideas; we're showing this stuff down their throats and it's doing a lot of psychological damage."

Mr Girzone believes that the Church has promoted an exaggerated notion of piety. Consequently, when people "get religion", when they begin to take their church and all it says seriously, they can become "so damnably obnoxious" that marriages can break up and families fall apart under the strain. A deep faith should not make a person a freak, Mr Girzone says. It should be woven into a person's personality to the extent that it doesn't even show.

But sanctimony is not the worst of it. The Church's traditional approach to religion, which holds that sin and holiness are incompatible, "has done more damage to human beings than anything we've taught", suggests Mr Girzone. It is an approach which denies our humanity. It demands spiritual maturity overnight when our emotional and psychological maturity can take 50 or 60 years. It encourages people to believe that they are no good and are cut off from God when they fail to live up to the mark.

In the United States, notes Mr Girzone, 40 per cent of Catholics are divorced and remarried without the blessing of their Church. Many more people practise artificial birth control in violation of the Church's teachings.

According to the canons of the

Catholic Church, these people are not entitled to receive the sacraments. Nor are practising homosexuals, couples engaged in a sexual relationship outside of marriage, or anyone living in a state of serious sin. As a result, many of these people feel a terrible sense of shame and guilt that has nothing to do with the message of joy, peace and freedom Jesus came to bring.

That is why Mr Girzone wrote *Joshua*, a simple novel about a young

wood carver living in a run-down cottage on the outskirts of a small American town and how he touches ordinary people with his sincerity, compassion, and non-judgmental approach to life.

There are no points for guessing that *Joshua* is Jesus or that his criticism of the way priests and ministers treat their people leads him to fall foul of Church authorities. In the process, *Joshua* tackles such issues as divorce and

remarriage, celibacy in the clergy, alcoholism, the Catholic Church's excessive legalism, the Jewish-Christian divide, interdenominational rivalries and the use of resources by the churches.

Mr Girzone is the first to acknowledge that *Joshua* is not a literary masterpiece. In fact, he says the book does nothing at all for him. But since *Joshua* was first distributed by a major publisher in 1989, it has sold more than 1½ million copies in the US alone.

More than 12 million Americans are estimated to have read the book, and it has been translated into Italian, Korean and Spanish. *Joshua* has been recommended as a therapeutic tool by the American Journal of Psychiatry. It has been used by 70 per cent of Alcoholics Anonymous groups in the US and is claimed by hundreds of people to have had a profound healing effect on their lives.

The power of *Joshua* as a book is still a mystery. Mr Girzone says there is nothing about the Jesus of *Joshua* that isn't to be found in the New Testament, but that people find it easier to relate to the character of a novel and that, anyhow, the New Testament is identified in many people's minds with all they loathe about the Church.

Still, from the feedback he has received, Mr Girzone believes that the book "must have a deep cathartic effect, spitting out, vomiting out all the pent-up guilt that people have experienced all their lives".

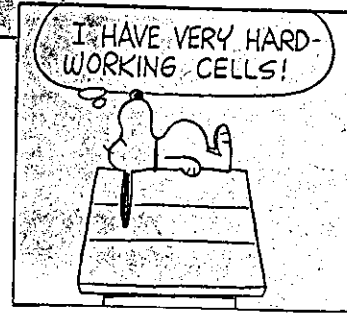
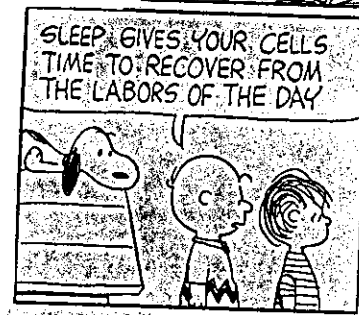
But the *Joshua* phenomenon is not unambiguously encouraging. General Norman Schwarzkopf, who commanded the US-led multinational force in the Gulf War last year, read *Joshua* during the massive aerial bombardment of Iraq. He wrote personally to Mr Girzone on the morning the ground offensive began to say that *Joshua* had brought him peace of mind when he was desperately in need of guidance.

"What he got from the book God only knows," says Mr Girzone. "I felt personally devastated when I realised what had happened after that. [But at least] the guy was thoughtful enough to seek some spiritual help."

The message of *Joshua* is addressed first and foremost to the hierarchy in the Church, and the message is to ease up and allow people to be human. Mr Girzone believes this message is slowly getting through. The presiding US Episcopalian bishop has told priests across the country that they should read *Joshua* and use it as a basis for discussion in their parishes. Lutheran bishops have strongly recommended it as well and so have Jews, Hindus and Buddhists. Catholic priests and bishops have reacted favourably to *Joshua* too, although Mr Girzone says the more conservative among them "hate it - they consider it a threat".

But *Joshua* is addressed also to those people who feel cut off by the Church from God. It is a call for them to support people like Mr Girzone in their attempts to change things and a call for the alienated and marginalised to demand their rights within the Church. "No-one can stand in the way of your relationship with God," says Mr Girzone - which is perhaps what the original message was all about after all.

Joshua (published by Collins Dove, ISBN 1 86371 1007, 271 pages, \$9.95) has just been released in Australia.



Scientists wonder at 'magical' Indian tree

IN its native India, the neem tree has long been believed to have miraculous powers. Scientists around the world are beginning to agree.

For at least 2000 years, Indians have cleaned their teeth with its twigs, smeared neem-leaf juice on skin blemishes, and drunk neem tea as a tonic.

They have placed neem leaves in their beds, books, grain bins, cupboards, and closets to keep out troublesome bugs.

The tree has relieved so many pains, fevers, infections, and other ailments that it is known as "the village pharmacy".

After two decades of research, even cautious researchers are calling the neem a wonder plant.

"At least as of today, the vision is certainly an entrancing one," says Noel Vietmeyer, neem study director at the American National Academy of Science. "The world should be exploring it. Even if we realise just a fraction of the vision, the benefits will be tremendous. It could provide new resources that are gentle on the land and powerful against many of our insects and diseases."

Earlier this century, people found a way to get the tree from India to West Africa. In Ghana, the fast-growing tree has become the main producer of firewood for the densely populated Accra Plains.

It is a leading candidate for helping halt the southward spread of the Sahara Desert.

In the Caribbean, the broadleaf evergreen, which can grow to 27 metres high and more than 2.1 metres in girth, is being used to reforest several denuded nations. It has become a major species in Haiti.

Although such research has received little publicity, the neem tree is being looked to as a potential source of cancer prevention, a harmless and temporary contraceptive, and a safe insecticide.

"US Department of Agriculture studies have shown that chemicals in neem-tree oil give good to excellent protection against 131 insect pests, and it shows activity against an additional 70 pests," says Eugene Shultz, who recently chaired

an international panel to study the tree.

"Neem can become a safe, non-toxic replacement for some of the more toxic and polluting synthetic pesticides on the world market," says Schultz, a professor of engineering and applied sciences at Washington University in St Louis. "Its use as an insecticide can't come fast enough."

A recent World Health Organisation study estimates that there are about a million pesticide-poisoning incidents reported each year around the world. Most victims are agricultural workers contaminated by toxic chemicals in synthetic pesticides, and about 20,000 of the victims die.

"The most valuable aspect of neem is that it is a tree that can be grown in the backyards of the poorest people in the poorest countries," says Noel Vietmeyer. "It's a chance to give them ways to control pests and diseases in their crops, perhaps control some of their own diseases, and even avoid unwanted pregnancies."

Neem extracts have been used to prevent tooth decay and to prevent and heal inflammation of the gums. Extracts have been used as an active ingredient in toothpastes in Germany and India.

Research shows that neem leaves also contain an ingredient that disrupts the fungi that produce cancer-causing aflatoxin on mouldy peanuts, corn, and stored foods, says Deepak Bhatnagar, a Food and Drug Administration researcher in New Orleans. "I grew up in India, and I can tell you that my people have used the neem for centuries to protect grain stored in barrels and for other things."

"In fact, I use nothing but neem soap myself. I bring back a supply every time I go to visit."

Neem-seed oil has been effective in reducing the birth rate in laboratory animals, as well as in a recent human test of 20,000 wives of Indian Army officers, says Noel Vietmeyer.

The oil is a strong spermicide, and other neem compounds show early promise as an oral birth-control pill for men, he says.

— AP

HEALING

The human heart does not stay away too long from that which hurt it most. There is a return journey to anguish that few of us are released from making.

—Lillian Smith

Those hurts and pains that we experience in childhood don't just magically evaporate as we grow older. They rumble around in us, and when we have reached a level of strength, maturity, insight, and awareness to handle them, they come up to be worked through. This is one of the ways our inner being is loving to us. It gives us every opportunity to heal the hurts that we need to heal, and it gives us that opportunity when we are strong enough to handle it.

Frequently, as children, we have experiences that we simply aren't strong enough to handle without a lot of support and help, and often that support is absent. So we push them down and we wait. When we are ready, they come back up. This gives us the chance to work through these old anguishes when we have what we need for this task.

WHEN I AM READY, I will have the opportunity to make these journeys to old hurts with the knowledge that I can heal them and move on.

QUEENSLAND NEWS

As the development of Shri Mataji's Queensland property progresses the Brisbane collective is going to run a nationwide raffle. The proceeds from the raffle will go towards construction cost of Shri Mother's Queensland property. The prize is a walkman worth \$150. Tickets are on sale from the 12th of June and will be drawn on the 17th of July. Tickets are 1 for \$5. or 3 for \$10. Tickets can be bought from: Lyn Roles - Cairns, Rob Henshaw - Melbourne, Peter Baten - Adelaide, Judy Dobbie - Sydney, John Fisher - Canberra and Graham - Perth.

