

WHY?

By Richard Young

I had a conventional childhood. Sea baths sans parental permission, tennis ball cricket a "Tuthiri Pittaniya", cross-bar riding or doubling, down country lanes, ogling neighbourhood belles. Adulthood came pleasantly.

Then followed the conventional past-times. Meets at the YMCA for a tea with a snack and a yarn, a beer at the Lord Nelson or the Metropole; an arrack at Browns and a lunch at the Jaffna with Nandu; the 9.30pm show at the Majestic followed by hoppers at the Green Cabin. How can one forget Curd and treacle (mee kiri and pani) at Lion House? Shopping for toys at Christmas with the kids and tea and cakes at Paivas.

Till one fateful day. I saw tears in the eyes of the two elder girls. The Sinhalese tutor had just arrived and learning the language was bitterly resented. My comfort zone was shattered. **Why?** It then dawned they would have a restricted future. Australia beckoned. The interviewing officer inquired why I needed to leave the country. Dumbly I pointed to the three girls soulfully seated on a lounge. So now we are here.

We were the chosen, but many of our fellow-beings have been refused admission. Fate, karma -call it what you will. Many are today in dire straits and in 1982 at a small gathering we decided we wanted to help. **Why?** Because we felt it was right.

Our first meetings were held at homes. We organised street stalls and sold cakes, sweets, chutneys and pickles. The monies earned were promptly despatched. Time passed. Our first dance was held and Eric Martinus and his friends provided the music. Gradually we grew and more money went to the desperate in Sri Lanka. In helping we derived satisfaction. **Why?** Because we were chosen. I recall this passage in my readings - "In the Sermon on the mount, Jesus commands the crowd to love their enemies. He said that 2000 years ago. So why, after all this time, don't we know anyone who likes their enemies. It seems strange until you think about it and then it becomes obvious. Jesus tells the crowd what to do but He does not tell them how to do it. He does not tell them because they were merely called. They were not the chosen. How to love is a secret reserved for the chosen. "

Think about it as you plan your daily life. That's WHY I continue to belong to the 80 CLUB MELBOURNE. It constantly promotes LOVE and CARING. It provides a measure of happiness: it means doing something that has a purpose.

A child when asked why she did not concentrate replied - "Mummie I was hungry". A mother who walked 5 kms a day to hand-wash clothes for RS.50 or \$1.00. Another child with one uniform washed it daily to wear the next day. An 18 year old burgher lass condemned to use a public latrine. These incidents of human misery have been reported in our Newsletters.

In supporting broken lives through the 80 CLUB, life has been given a meaning.

*"We eat while others are hungry,
We laugh while others are sad:
For what we have, we are thankful.
Grant us always to remember others have not,
And where we can, to restore it."*

Morris West