

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Welcome Home, Doug

Other than a small fact-checking error that could have been avoided, I thought Bunny Adams' and Gabrielle Wise's article "Forum Focuses on Hope in the Face of AIDS" (Oct. 24 *World Tribune*) conveyed the spirit and reported the information of our HIV/AIDS forum here in New York quite well.

The SGI-USA member who spoke about HIV "being the best thing that ever happened to me" was me, Doug Ferguson. Jack Lambe, the speaker [cited in the article], was unable to attend that day because of health complications.

My disappointment actually arises from the fact that any readers who may have been encouraged to learn that I had returned to this practice after leaving the organization 17 years ago did not get the opportunity.

— DOUG FERGUSON, New York City

Buddhists in Business: Good News

Regarding the business group meeting in Chicago as reported in the *World Tribune* (Sept. 12): Given the cumulative effect of business activity on human welfare, the fact that such a group has been formed is good news. The organizers and participants are to be commended for their initiative. While there are any number of issues to be tackled, certainly those of environmental responsibility and fairness must be listed as priorities. The failure to date of the U.S. greenhouse gases initiative due in large part to an unexpectedly high level of business activity, the continuing abuse of third world workers due to the "realities" of the global marketplace, and the 37 million (the government's conservative figure) human beings living in poverty in the United States during a period of so-called prosperity are only a few of the problems that are heavily influenced by the activities of businesses.

While these issues have structural and systemic components, it cannot be denied that business people of all stripes are at best passive participants in an ideologically driven hyper-market system that is guilty of severe exploitation. SGI President Ikeda has clearly elucidated a Buddhist perspective on these issues in his peace proposals and other works such as his dialogue with Johan Galtung.

Increasingly, responsible business leaders, recognizing their culpability, have begun meeting, studying and seeking solutions, many under the rubric of sustainable development. I think any Buddhist business group worthy of the name will at the very least act as a forum to educate and inform its members concerning these issues.

— JOHN CARY, Chicago

Smile On

A special thanks for Chuck Gomez's personal "Perspective" (Oct. 17 *World Tribune*), sharing how he turned his morning commute on the A train into the "Fortune Express" by smiling.

The *World Tribune* is my morning companion every day on the subway to work. In the past, I folded the paper over several times, covered up headlines, experiences, etc. I was afraid to be judged a religious fanatic — but no more! Now I open it wide for all commuters to see.

Going public with reading my SGI publications wasn't easy at first. But now I figure, if anyone wants to read over my shoulder, hey, maybe they'll pick up a book on Buddhism and give the sports section a break.

As for Chuck's spontaneous public smiling — smile on!

— SEAN GROVER, New York City

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