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EDITORIAL

Colin Murray Parkes

Princess Diana brought death into our living rooms in a way that was impossible to ignore and she taught us that violent death is not just something that happens to other people in distant countries.

The death of Diana, Princess of Wales, taught us all that the Global Village is very much more than a sociological theory. W e suddenly realised the fact of our attachment to that beautiful, frail, open-hearted Princess who had shared her secrets with us, confessed her sins and solicited the love of the people of the world. Her violent death unsettled us as has the death of no other public figure for it brought home our vulnerability as well as hers. We had seen her in her body armour, walking through minefields and comforting the victims of violence and we were brought up short by violent images too frightening to print, but not to imagine, of the way she died. She had brought death into our living rooms in a way that was impossible to ignore and she taught us all that violent death is not just something that happens to other people in distant countries, it can happen to anyone, anywhere and at any time.

In our attempts to help bereaved people we will often meet those who are bereaved by violence. They are in special need. They too are citizens of the Global Village and may share with us their own reactions to the Princess' death. There are some who will find it easier to cry for her than for the other, greater, losses in their lives. We need to keep a firm grip on reality if we are to respond appropriately to this grief for, no matter how it makes us feel, we should not imagine that our grief is anything but a faint echo of theirs nor that the person they are grieving is the same person that we grieve. To people who have lost their own spouse or child our national mourning for a dead princess may seem trivial or even obscene.

Our hearts go out to Diana's children and it is reassuring to know that they are receiving the love and care that they need at this time. Many individuals and organisations have offered their help (including Cruse Bereavement Care) and Her Majesty The Queen has acknowledged this and expressed her thanks for our support.

In this edition of *Bereavement Care* Tony Walter gives a sociologist's view of grief and shows us how the death of the Princess has set in train a review of our national biography, the history of our time. Is it too much to hope that this review will prompt us to a better understanding of the causes and prevention of the violent deaths which afflict us and of which Diana was herself preventer, therapist and victim?