

**MINIMALISM.** I used to be a maximalist. As a photographer, I had a lot of gear; as a music lover, I had a big stereo and hundreds of records. I value books, hence I had a fine library of photo books. **B**ut I never owned a house, so I didn't have the space to keep all that stuff and - by the time of my retirement - I had gotten rid of it all. Over the years, circumstances forced me to become a minimalist. **N**ow that I'm used to it I cherish the status. Less stuff; less upkeep; less insurance concerns; less worry about what I should buy next. Minimalism is a form of freedom ... I am free of thinking about stuff.\* **N**ot thinking about stuff leaves me free to think about my writing.

*\*except for books; my new favourite quote (Erasmus, 1469 - 1536):*

*"When I get a little money I buy books,  
if any is left I buy food and clothes."*

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**MUSIC.** Music is a language that is understood everywhere, by everybody; nowhere more so than at Playing For Change. **A** crew travels the world recording and filming musicians. They create Songs Around the World and build a global family. **M**usic as meditation. Hear and see for yourself on my blog 1027

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**MISSIONARIES.** At school I had to attend scripture classes. Once our teacher told a story about a missionary who came to a tribe that revered a god living in a tree. **H**e challenged the tribe thus: "If your god fails to stop me from cutting down your tree, will you then convert to my god?" **C**onfident in their faith the pagans agreed. Their god did not intervene and as a result they were coerced into Christianity. **I** stood up and asked: "If I tossed that cross to the floor and your god did nothing, would you stop believing in your god?" **T**he teacher told me to shut up and sit down.

*I don't remember this incident, but my mother used to tell me that one day, when I was about fourteen years old, I came home from school rather outraged, and I told her the above story. I excommunicated myself later that week.*

*At the same time in my life I became a pacifist. At school one day we were shown the based-on-a-true-story 1959 German (anti-) war movie, Die Brücke (The Bridge) by Bernhard Wicki. It impressed on me the horror and futility of war.*