

'Keep hope'

An exclusive street paper interview with the Dalai Lama

BY DANIELLE BATIST
STREET NEWS SERVICE

What is age? Having just turned 77 on July 6, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama still travels the world to spread his message of peace and reconciliation.

It seems he has been on the road for more than 50 years.

In March 1959, as Chinese troops crushed an attempted uprising in Tibet, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, fled into India. Then a young man in his mid-20s, the future must have seemed bleak.

With few countries prepared to respond to China's actions, he faced a difficult task to protect Tibetans and their traditions. Yet despite 50 years in exile, the reach of Tibet's spiritual leader has extended far beyond his community and he is now recognized as one of the world's leading religious figures.

He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his consistent opposition to the use of violence in his quest for Tibetan self-rule. But Beijing continues to view him as a "splittist," although he has repeatedly stated that his goal is for Tibetan autonomy rather than independence.

During his recent tour in Great Britain, themed "Be the Change," the Dalai Lama gave an exclusive interview to the International Network of Street Papers, of which Street Roots is a member.

Danielle Batist: *Many of our 12,000 street paper vendors in 40 countries around the world are or have been homeless. The Buddha was homeless for the biggest part of his life, and you, like many of your people, have spent most of your life in exile. What does homelessness mean to you?*

Dalai Lama: For people without a home, it is almost like they have no basis from which to conduct their lives. They have no anchor. That is very sad. But from a larger viewpoint, I would say that this whole planet is our home. The individual may be in a difficult situation, but he is still part of the society of humanity. I think it is innate that if someone is going through a difficult time, there is some kind of willingness to help out of a sense of concern that we have. So from that viewpoint, for homeless people their direct home is no longer there, but the big home is still there. So people who are homeless should not feel

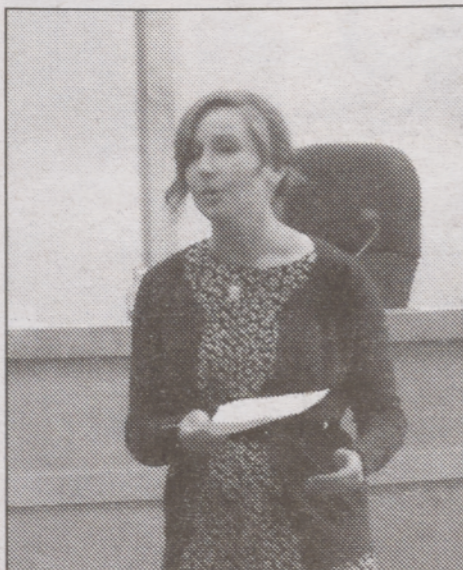
Danielle Batist is the news service editor for the International Network of Street Papers. Street Roots is a proud member of the INSP and contributor to the Street News Service.

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