

International Conference Centre

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for Moral Re-Armament

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Dear friends,

This letter takes us over a watershed: it's the fifth letter this summer, only four to go. We're over halfway through this massive, turbulent and exciting series of events and people. It's not seven days since I last wrote. As I warned you last week, I'm cheating, writing this letter on the Sunday morning, to protests from my bio-rhythms. I look anxiously out of the window as the sky starts to lighten and brighten: I'm heading for the mountains for four days climbing with my brother, and last night, yesterday, the spell of fine weather broke and we had some thunder storms. At least we can stop watering the garden! Numbers in the house (and hotels in Glion and Montreux) are again coming down off another peak, as the 'Caux Conference for Business and Industry' (CCBI) and the 'World Media Forum' come to an end. But not for long - after the Swiss National Day on 1st August, we expect 100 plus arrivals, and by the 3rd and 4th, numbers will again be over 600, and the house overflowing again.

It is even more impossible than usual to offer a coherent picture of the whole. The busier life gets, the smaller one's horizon. There have been in parallel a Junior Round Table (of professionals under 35 years), and forums on 'Implementing the Caux Round Table principles', 'Rediscovering the soul in business for the 21st century', 'Application of business values in the West and the new market economies', 'What are the principle factors in the success of an enterprise', 'Women in the workplace: a voice of healing', and 'Workplace culture for the present day'. And for those uninvolved in all that, there have been the regular community meetings going on! It is always one of the more difficult times, with the house so full, and a greater-than-usual tension between all the work that needs to be done to cater for the multitude, and the desire of many to attend all the many meetings. The service, housekeeping and cooking teams have been stretched, there have been frequent appeals for ad hoc helpers here and there - but that too is part of 'a learning community'.

The International Media Forum meetings that I have been attending have been of such a quality that even the difficult early afternoon sessions kept us all awake! Some 60 media professionals have been talking about values, ethics, codes, but also about their personal callings, their journeys in faith. It has been the ninth in a series of gatherings that started five years ago in Caux but that have spanned the world and included over 1200 people on all continents, senior journalists and editors, and young people still studying their chosen profession. And the amazing variety and mix goes on: an Albanian cheese-factory owner arrives with a gift of his product for Caux; a leading spokesman for Islam in Britain and his wife come; a senior Bosnian figure visits for a few hours; a Lithuanian bookplate competition is opened in the 3rd floor corridor. The latter sprang from the conviction of two Lithuanian ladies who came to Caux two years ago, and heard of the preparations for the Jubilee. They latched on to the idea that every country might have something to offer. They contacted 200 artists who produce bookplates, the small artwork 'easily transported and smuggled' in the period of Soviet occupation, a third Lithuanian lady explained the other day, who brought the winning entries to Caux to be displayed. She had been blessed by her bishop for this journey, and her local media were covering the whole adventure. A Western artist commented on the courage it took to launch such a venture. 'Without courage, there'd be no Lithuania,' she replied.

Fortunately, one of the highlights of the week has been the quality of the evening programmes. Joe Carter gave a spell-binding evening of Afro-American

music, telling the story of his people's journey to freedom, but also his own journey to spiritual freedom: 'If I have hatred in my heart, I'm not free.' Laughter and tears alternated as we sang with him songs written by slave parents, rejoicing in the death of a child, freed from slavery and welcomed into heaven. Mary Sue Dobbin, the blind friend, with the help of other American friends, gave us another evening of songs, many of which we were invited to join in. She told one of our 7.30 planning meetings of her own journey to faith, and named God as 'the thing in me that would never give up'. Philip and Vendela Tyndale-Biscoe brought us more relaxation of laughter with *Stalling between two fools*. There is another Russian piano concert; an afternoon presentation of *Letter to Wollongong* in the great hall. A fine new production of *The Silver Thread*, a collage of Kathleen Dodds' music, received standing ovations in a jam-packed theatre. The large, diverse and highly professional cast had only five days of rehearsal all together. Behind the scenes, the technical and stage crew have been working long hours to keep up the flow of quality productions.

On the same day that the 'Caux Conference for Business and Industry' opened with a lively and varied presentation, Michael Medved, the controversial Hollywood film critic and author, and Martyn Lewis, the BBC TV presenter, held a full hall enthralled through the early afternoon, providing the press team with an opportunity for some fast work. But it wasn't finished: we still had a Jubilee Lecture to come, from Youichiro Ichioka, chief editorialist on Nikkei, Japan's Financial Times, a writer and one of the CRT participants. Today saw the close, with one of the most lively and unexpected meetings ever, with the eight forums reporting in two minutes each. We were invited after a time of quiet to turn to our neighbour and share one thing we'd decided to do, and one thing we'd learnt - we must move from contemplation to action, we were told. One of last year's English participants then spoke in French, confirming the decision he'd announced a year ago to learn a language to improve communication in 'this special place, blessed by God'. A Korean businessman said that in Korea, men never asked women's opinions, but here he'd worked in the kitchen and 'learnt a lot'.

The Caux Round Table has come and gone, the largest meeting so far, with 35 round the oval table in the small dining room. Seventeen were attending for the first time; others have been for each of the eleven meetings held here. This year's themes were job creation, the relationship of work and the family, and collaboration in the fight against corruption. 'Most business meetings are so boring,' commented one of the business leaders, 'but these meetings are very different and very special.' They heard of a Danish corporation that is revising its policy on corruption to incorporate the CRT principles set out last year. There seems to be a black or at least a grey market developing for these principles, which are being discussed, written about and talked about far beyond the small gathering here. I received a letter from the University of Fribourg, who plan a conference on business ethics and human rights next year, and ask for CRT participation. They have already included the principles in one of their studies of the field.

Last Sunday saw a meeting with a presentation of the finances of Caux, and a collection that brought in promises and gifts for 22'000 francs. I'm afraid I allowed lack of space in last week's letter to crowd out the news. One reader, who found that there was no room for him in Caux, and so couldn't come, has given the money 'saved' to the Caux Jubilee Fund, and has asked to know where the fund now stands. The answer is that we have received promises and gifts that amount to just over 1'200'000 francs, including the generous gift of 300'000 from three sisters, who have given part of the capital realised by the sale of their family home. This is fantastic, but still leaves much scope for further sacrifice and imagination, since the target is a total of 5 million francs by the end of next year, in 5'000 gifts of 1'000 francs.

Warm regards from a spirit already absent in the Alps,
Andrew Stallybrass