

WORKING TO CREATE PEACE IN RWANDA

Since we returned from Caux last August, we have been working relentlessly to help heal the wounds among our compatriots in order to build a better future. After visiting all the regions of the country, we decided to have a meeting of those of us involved in MRA work around the country, to share our experiences and to launch out together on a new path. We held a national conference in Kigali, 8-9 January, with the theme, 'Creating peace in Rwanda'. Peace, we believe, depends on our efforts; we cannot leave it to a third party.

Sixty people attended, two-thirds of them women. We talked about the Agenda for Reconciliation and saw the video *For the Love of Tomorrow*. We examined our consciences to see where we need to change our own behaviour, in our homes, in society and in the world. Everyone had the chance to share their ideas. We all agreed that moral principles offer a road towards healing, but something more is needed. As the testimonies about healing streamed in, we felt an explosion of joy.

At the end of the conference we decided to invite foreign friends to come to Rwanda and work with us, meeting the people whose lives have been destroyed by the genocide and the evils which followed the war.

*Didacienne Mukahabeshimana and
Claude Kabutware
(translated by Hester and Jerker Mila)*

STOCKHOLM HOPE IN THE CITIES SEMINAR

'To know and be known, to accept and be accepted – that is the prerequisite for all good police work.' Police Commissioner Hans Papeveld from Holland was speaking at a seminar on 'Ethnic minorities, the police and society' at the MRA-centre in Stockholm, 29-30 November. He continued: 'To build bridges and create contacts is a life style. If you do it with your heart it is a beautiful job.'

Twenty-four people took part in the seminar, which was planned jointly by Anders Eskeland from Oslo, Mohamed Mansuri from Copenhagen and Harry Ferngren from Stockholm as part of the Hope in the Cities program in Europe.

Police officers from Copenhagen, Newcastle and Utrecht also told of their experience in working with minority groups in their cities. It was clear that there is rethinking going on in police ranks. A Danish police officer, Bent Olsen, said that he and his colleagues had left some stereotypes behind, studied Arabic, worked at crime prevention and had reduced criminality among 15-18-year-old boys by

fifty percent in one central Copenhagen district. Meanwhile Hari Shukla from Newcastle told of his experience, as a representative of a minority group, of building co-operation with the police by establishing face-to-face meetings.

The participants came from eight countries. Hamit Gurguri from Kosovo, who recently visited his homeland, told of the difficult police situation there.

The social program included a walk through the historic Old Town and a visit to the Vasa Museum where a ship, built in 1628, is preserved. Sylvie Söderlund gave a concert with songs by Nordic composers. Another evening the Somali and Pakistani participants spoke about their countries.

By the end of the seminar we found that we had many common concerns and some ideas on how to promote participation of the minorities in the daily life of our societies.

*Harry Ferngren, Mohamed Mansuri,
Anders Eskeland*

A SPECIAL NEW YEAR'S EVE IN INDIA

We have been working with the poor children living in our area. We invited 35 children, aged five to fourteen, to take part in a program on the eve of the year 2000. Most of them come from homes where their parents dropped out of school, or have never set foot in a class room. Few of the children had performed before, and they couldn't understand the fuss about turning up to rehearsals! However, when we held a dress rehearsal on 30 December, excitement began to grow.

An empty plot adjoining our house was cleared and a pandal erected. Colourful lights and loudspeakers gave a festive feeling. The program started with a Sanskrit prayer and welcome song. Songs from different countries were presented. Then every child participated in a dance tableau, 'The Garden', written for the occasion, with a Tamil commentary and Monkey as the storyteller. It expressed the values of care, love and friendship. The children had given their ideas for the tableau. After it, the Director of the Bureau of Indian Standard, Chennai, distributed prizes.

The program culminated at midnight when the entire audience of 200, including the parents and relatives of the children, stood in a circle holding lighted candles to welcome the year 2000. We all sang a prayer for peace throughout the world. Against the back drop of the Indian Airlines hijack, and the happy ending of this dramatic saga, the prayer had special meaning.

Viji and Jyothi Subrahmanyam

CONTINUING THE CONSULTATION DIALOGUE

I once heard someone say: 'Some people have a calling to confrontation, others to reconciliation.' This struck me; I decided that personally I belong to the second category, and perhaps MRA in general also does. I believe groups like Greenpeace which confront the powers that be are needed. But so are those who become friends with people in leadership positions, who can listen to their concerns, see how to help them and inspire them to grow towards a larger sense of responsibility.

This was the experience of Jane Goodall, who started out as a champion of better conditions for chimpanzees, and who has now a world wide network of 'Roots and Shoots-clubs' which help young people to improve their environment. When meeting someone opposed to her campaign against animal vivisection, she realised that the most productive course was to say: 'Let us at least fight for better conditions for these animals.' This would often result in a surprised agreement from her opponent.

Hasn't change for most of us come through discovering a loving heavenly Father who enlarged our perspective rather than from some one telling us how wrong we were? Probably the greatest need is for us to care to such an extent, that the needs of our countries and the world burn in our hearts, so that we will be led to people and places where something can be done about them.

Digna Hintzen

MELBOURNE DAILY FEATURES ARMAGH

People in the Street, a regular feature in Melbourne's main daily, *The Age*, last week featured Rob Wood who, with his wife Cheryl, hosts Armagh, the Australia-Pacific centre for MRA. Journalist Martin Flanagan describes the work of Armagh – 'an international community that usually numbers about 20' – in bringing together people and overcoming tensions between Melbourne's ethnic communities, and in reaching out to

countries such as Cambodia.

'Some would say an individual with Rob Wood's ideals is an absurd figure. War and torture are reportedly on the increase around the world. What can one person do? Wood quotes Mahatma Gandhi: in every heart there is an inner voice. Nor, says Wood, does he feel alone in his endeavours. He knows people all over the globe acting in the same spirit.'

SOMALI RECONCILER IN MALAYSIA

The New Straits Times of Malaysia last week carried a 1300-word interview with Dr Yusuf Al-Azhari, who visited Malaysia last month. 'With forgiveness as his creed, this son of Somalia is seeking to reconcile the warring factions in his country where even the United Nations failed,' writes his interviewer, P C Shivadas.

NEW BOOK FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

The Second Conversion of Dr George Dallas, a posthumous biography by a close friend Dr Roddy Evans, is available from David & Ruth Hume, 11 Fort Road, Helen's Bay, Co. Down BT19 1LD Northern Ireland. (e-mail: david.hume1@virgin.net) Price £4 (inc.p&p) Cheques payable to The Oxford Group Belfast.

MRA WORLD ADDRESS LIST AVAILABLE

This list, made possible by the painstaking work of Lotty Wolvekamp, is now available from WB distributors and/or national centres.

FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

United Kingdom: David and Ruth Hume have changed their e-mail address to: david.hume1@virgin.net

United States: please note new e-mail address for Paige Chargois: PaigeChargois@aol.com

Calendar of Events

FEB 2000	<i>Asia Plateau India</i>	MRA Global Consultation	Feb	4 - 11
FEB 2000	<i>Melbourne Australia</i>	Effective Living Course	Feb	6 - Apr 8
MAY 2000	<i>Tirley Garth</i>	Preparing the Caux conferences	May	10 - 15
MAY 2000	<i>Kampala Uganda</i>	All Africa conference for Moral Re-Armament	TBA	
JUN 2000	<i>Cameroon</i>	Family Forum	Jun	1 - 4
JUL 2000	<i>Caux Switzerland</i>	Summer conference	Jul	8 - Aug 20
NOV 2000	<i>Cartigny Switzerland</i>	Caux planning meeting	Nov	22 - 27

The deadline for the next Bulletin is Tuesday, February 15, 2000

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