

## Centre de Rencontres Internationales

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pour le Réarmement moral

# CAUX

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### ARCHIVES

Mountain House  
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Dear friends,

Most of these letters start describing sunrises or sunsets... I would rather pay my respects to the moon which has been accompanying us in growing splendour in cloudless nights, weaving a blanket of peace and blessing over the mountains and the lake. Such a contrast to the whirl of people and events during the days!

A week ago we finished the Pssst! conference with an evaluation on our Communities. Gerd Ekdahl, who had been leading the workshop 'Painting from within', commented on the fact that in order to do this, one has to be completely honest. To me it showed how doing these various inspirational things caught an 'old timer' like me on the blind side. Aspects of our characters, hitherto untouched by words, revealed themselves in this new way. There were also the comical sides. A friend of mine walked behind someone carrying his tray to the dishwasher in a rather wobbly way. It turned out he was practising breathing in with one step and breathing out with another, which he had learned in the 'Contemplative movement' workshop!

Then: what a transition! The tables for ten in the dining room, which had been initiated during the ATD reunion, were reduced to two, the rest being restored to the normal round ones. As rooms were frantically being prepared for the next guests, allocation and housekeepers were surprised by the arrival of the Emirs of Kano and Daura and their party... two days early! They had to give away the room prepared for Mrs Yukika Sohma, arriving the next day. But immediately a cancellation came, so there was an even better room for her! Campbell Leggat told me there had been five or six such miraculous cancellations during the week.

The opening night of 'Healing the past - forging the future' was historic. Here was the Maori Queen, with her party of seven, Mrs Joan Bolger (whose husband is the Prime Minister of New Zealand) and Mrs Rosa Birch (whose husband is the Finance Minister). Then, the two Emirs and many others from Africa were welcomed. The large Jamaican delegation was presented, led by Governor General Sir Howard Cooke. He had also brought his friend Sir Colville Young, the Governor General of Belize. The New Zealanders, Nigerians and Jamaicans each greeted the assembly in their own characteristic way. There were people present from 56 nations!

A touch of local colour: on Sunday morning there happened to be a number of parishioners from Montreux present at the protestant church, who apparently were very struck by the depth of the sermon and the colourful congregation. In fact, there were so many people that taking communion lasted much longer, so the service in Glion had to start fifteen minutes late!

The Sunday plenary was on 'Restitution' and this was not just the personal restitution we usually talk about, but really the putting right by nations of wrongs against whole peoples. In a very moving speech Mrs Jean Bolger told how for the first time politicians and other New Zealanders had said to the Maoris: 'Tell us about it.' Nobody had ever asked or listened to them when they had protested against the injustice of not honouring the treaty that had been made with them in 1840. Not even when their King had travelled to see Queen Victoria. Then, two years ago at the Maori Queen's marae a new settlement was signed when their rights were restored and compensation promised. Not all are

in favour. 'It took enormous courage,' Mrs Bolger concluded, 'We pray to God we may continue this process.' The Queen, a dignified lady with a noble face, started her speech by saying how she brought greetings from the mountains and forests of her country to the mountains and forests of Switzerland.

Then the Australians produced the report of the 'National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal children' which had gone on until the late sixties. In parliament Kim Beazley, leader of the opposition, had commented in tears, : 'We cannot walk away from this document.' This too is the beginning of recognition of the terrible suffering caused, although it will be impossible to restore for the lost years. Equally the history of Jamaica has been marred by the elimination of the native people and by the importation of slaves. And even recently, after independence, 'golden opportunities were missed' said one of the delegation. Now a volunteer body, led by Sir Howard Cooke, was working to restore the wrongs of corruption and poverty. It struck me how these two island nations, New Zealand and Jamaica were setting a pattern for bigger nations to follow.

One of the most gripping events this week was the Caux lecture by professor Piet Meiring, member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. He described for us what it meant for a nation to see night after night on TV the suffering inflicted by one lot of people on the other. 'After the walls of history are down, we will have to face each other,' Meiring said. It can't be done on the cheap. It is a catharsis, but the operation must not last too long, or the patient will die.' It actually ends December 14. But heartwarming things do occur. A policeman who had been guilty of murder asked his prison chaplain if he could meet his victim's family to ask their forgiveness. The widow first refused but the whole family decided to meet him. After talking a night long the eldest son actually forgave him. When Meiring got this news he phoned Archbishop Tutu right away. After a long jubilant conversation Meiring felt he was taking too much of Tutu's time and wanted to hang up. But Tutu said: 'No, let us first pray together to thank the God of surprises.'

He was full of admiration for Archbishop Tutu, who insists on praying before each session. At times the legal people complain: 'We are in a courtroom, not a cathedral!' Tutu also uses his lunch hour to pray. Meiring: 'Usually he finds a quiet place but once I saw a purple figure huddled in one of the translation booths: it was Tutu praying.' In answering questions Meiring, who is professor of theology, said: 'Yes, we are a country of believers. That's what makes our work possible. But we need to create a new moral order in South Africa. In many respects we are still a spiritual wasteland.' Finally, he concluded, 'we must put our trust in the God of surprises!'

In the meantime a Politician's Round Table has got under way, initiated by former Japanese Prime Minister Hata, Yukihisa Fujita and by Yukiho Hatoyama, grandson of the Japanese Prime Minister who decorated Frank Buchman and leader of a new political party with a spiritual background. He has been to China and Korea recently to personally apologize for Japan's role in WW II. MP's from a number of nations are taking part. There has been a constant coming and going of Ambassadors.

The Middle East has been powerfully present these days. Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom changed his airticket to leave from Amman because his Palestinian friend, Omar Amira, was not allowed to fly from Israel, after the suicide bombings. In fact, it still took him 24 hours to cross a distance which usually takes an hour. But he made it and here they are.

One central figure in Caux is Conference Manager Alan Weeks, who goes around with an impressive beard. The reason is not vanity, but stems from his deep involvement with the conflict on the island of Bougainville. He has become a friend of those involved on all sides and has been in constant touch with those who are trying to reach a settlement. In the native tradition there, in respect for those who grieve, one grows a beard. Let us hope and pray he will soon be able to shave it off!

Warmest greetings!

*Digna Hintzen*