GUEST COLUMN *MICHAEL BATES*

ENGAGING WITH NORTH KOREA

In the Sixties, there were occasional news reports of Japanese soldiers emerging bewildered from the jungle, having not realized that World War II was over. One wasn't sure whether to deplore their foolishness or to admire their dedication. North Korea and her people present the world with a similar conundrum. The country is a political anachronism.

I got involved in North Korea after attending a US Congressional Breakfast during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in 2003. The room was set for 100, but only 20 turned up, as a result of an 'unofficial' boycott related to the impending war in Iraq. The only two non-Americans were the Prime Minister of Mongolia and me. As our American hosts vented their disappointment, the Prime Minister began to talk with great compassion, knowledge and wisdom about the causes and potential cures of the nuclear stand-off in North Korea.

I was humbled by how little I knew about a situation which was so threatening to international peace and asked the Mongolian Prime Minister what could be done. 'Engage with the issue and then engage with the people,' he replied.

GRIPPED BY FEAR

I approached Gary Streeter, an internationally-minded British Member of Parliament, and we resolved to walk this path of engagement with North Korea together. We approached the North Korean Embassy in London and eventually received an invitation from the Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly, Cheo Theo Bok, to visit Pyongyang in late 2003.

On our flight from Beijing we were provided with the English language newspaper, *The Pyongyang Times*, for in-flight reading. The lead headline read, 'Bush prepares for nuclear strike against DPRK' (Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea)—an insight into its siege mentality. It was part of the routine news feed of a people gripped by fear.

PROUD AND ANCIENT

Some ridicule North Korea for their paranoia, but when one learns about the troubled history of the Korean Peninsula one begins to understand where they are coming from. This is a proud and ancient people, which has been successively pushed around by its neighbours: Japan, China and Russia. The most brutal of these interventions was when Japanese imperial forces annexed the country in 1905 and repressed its people harshly for 40 years. The defeat of Japan led not to freedom, but to a divided land. The 38th parallel became a frontier of Cold-War politics, and three million were killed in the ensuing confrontation between North Korea (backed by China and the Soviet Union) and South Korea (backed by the US). The conflict has still not been officially ended.

The feeling of being under threat is one of the principal forces which holds this improbable country together.

One of our key questions was why had North Korea remained standing when so many other totalitarian and Communist regimes had been swept into the pages of history? Kim Il Sung, the founder of North Korea, differed from Mao and Stalin in his respect for the mind and the soul. He added a pen to the traditional hammer and sickle on the Communist flag of North Korea, and developed a religion for his state, *juche* or self-reliance. North Korea succeeded in capturing not only the bodies of its citizens, but also their minds and souls in a triple lock. This is one reason why sabre-rattling from the West has been so ineffective.

On our last day we travelled to the Boman Co-operative Farm in North Hwanghae Province where conditions were very tough. It was an opportunity, after a series of high-level meetings, to spend time with ordinary North Koreans. We found people of real warmth, great humour and incredible generosity. We talked about the challenges of raising teenagers and realized how similar we were. We talked about sport: remembering our teams' triumphs in England during the 1966 World Cup and bemoaning our inability to repeat them.

If we reach beyond the political rhetoric with the hand of friendship, then we may realize that we share a common humanity and spirituality and that ultimately that which unites us is far greater than that which divides us.

I HAVE A DREAM

Our discussions are ongoing. A high level delegation led by Cheo Theo Bok came to London last March, and in April I returned to Pyongyang. We are seeking further exchanges. It is a painfully slow process, but problems born of 100 years are unlikely to be resolved in one. This requires humility, persistence, patience and prayer.

On my return from my first visit to Pyongyang I was given a copy of a remarkable personal reflection by Syngman Rhee (*For A Change*, October/November 2002), who had spoken that summer in Caux on his work for reconciliation between North and South Korea. He concluded his article with these words, 'I have a dream that some day a delegation from North Korea and a delegation from South Korea will gather together in this hall on this holy mountain, in a spirit of true reconciliation and peace.' I share that dream and pledge to work towards its realization.

__Michael Bates__ is Director of Research for Oxford Analytica, an international consulting firm. Between 1992 and 1997 he was a UK MP, and held a number of ministerial posts including Paymaster General.

Next Issue

Lead Story: Fifty years after the birth of the Civil Rights movement, For A Change audits the progress of racial equality in the US.
Profile: William Commanda, Algonquin chief, canoe-builder and spiritual leader

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FOR A CHANGE

HEALING HISTORY/TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS/BUILDING COMMUNITY

HUMAN SECURITY ALERT

CAUX CONFERENCES 2004

SPECIAL ISSUE INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES OF CHANGE CONFERENCES

EAR TO THE GROUND

HUGH WILLIAMS AT THE RENEWAL ARTS FORUM IN CAUX, SWITZERLAND

HARMONY AND AGONY

Svetlana and Maja Kutlaca, mother and daughter from Serbia, give a harpsichord lecture recital at last July's Renewal Arts Forum at the Initiatives of Change centre in Caux. Svetlana traces the history of ideas about harmony from the Crusades to the French Revolution. She draws on the contribution made by Greek, Arab, Byzantine and Renaissance European thinkers. The Kutlacas play the harpsichord in turns—Frescobaldi, Scarlatti, Couperin—then they play together, three hands. Maja says she is lucky—she only has to use her right hand. They play beautifully.

Meanwhile Zuriah Aljeffri from Malaysia projects slides of her paintings. Among them is a highly acclaimed series which evokes the agony of Bosnia in the 1990s.

KHASI COMEBACK

Khasi musicians and singers from Shillong in north-east India tell me that they are grateful for the Welsh missionaries who in the 1880s brought the Gospel and education to their people. However, they also suppressed the Khasi language and culture. The hill people are only now recovering. One example of this progress is *Sohlyngngem*, a Khasi operetta, composed and directed from the piano by Neil Nongkynrh, with string performers from Britain, a German jazz saxophonist and a Nigerian drummer. Combined with four singers from Meghalaya the effect is stunning.

HAUNTING SOUNDS

The Catholic chapel opposite the front door of the conference centre is the setting for a recital by two remarkable musicians—Markus Stockhausen from Germany and Tara Bouman from the Netherlands. Markus plays the flugelhorn, the silver trumpet and the piccolo trumpet; Tara the clarinet, bass clarinet and the basset horn. (No—not all at once.) They play their own compositions and improvisations. The close blending of the haunting sounds, that echo around the high ceiling of the chapel, reflects the closeness of their relationship—they are husband and wife. Their young son in the front pew earns the occasional wink from his mother. As we leave he is at a table, selling their CDs. A harmonious family.

ORIGAMI MARATHON

The Origami workshop, led by three women from Japan in traditional dress, is supposed to meet from 9 to 11 each morning. I look in at 8pm and it is still going strong. Not a Japanese lady in sight. Laura Noble, 11, from England is doing the teaching. The women have not only taught Laura well, they have also been generous with the special Origami paper. Despite the long hours of usage it doesn't run out. How did they have room for anything else in their suitcases, one wonders?

INDIVIDUALS MATTER

Why did Russian theatre director Viatcheslav Dolgachev bring an American play, *Twelve Angry Men*, from his New Moscow Drama Theatre to Caux? He replies that he looked for a play that would show that the choice of the individual does matter—set, in this case, in a jury room where the fate of a young man accused of murder is in the balance. To begin with, only one of the eleven jurors has 'reasonable doubt' about the boy's guilt. By the end of the play the figures are exactly reversed—thanks to the courage of the lone juror. Dolgachev's direction is as tight as a taut wire.

RED THUNDER

On the first evening we are treated to a colourful pageant of Plains Indian dance by the Red Thunder troupe from Alberta, Canada. On the final morning they reappear in entirely different costume to perform two Maori dances from New Zealand. The reason? Their director is Aroha Crowchild, a Maori married to a Plains Indian. Several of her children are among the dancers.

BEGINNINGS

Young German composer Uwe Steinmetz's *Genesis* combines imagination with vision. His seven movements for strings and wind instruments are preceded by readings from the Qur'an in Arabic, the Bhagavad Gita in Hindi, the Torah in Hebrew and the New Testament in English (no Greek-speaker was available). They tell similar stories. On a screen are projected some of the 137 woodcuts executed by Herman Fechenbachs between 1926 and 1936, before he was forced to flee from Germany. They illustrate the Book of Genesis. The music itself draws on Gregorian chant, Indian ragas and jazz motifs. Several art-forms contributing to one powerful experience.

Origami marathon

KENNETH NOBLE

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contents

OCT/NOV 2004

SPECIAL ISSUE INITIATIVES OF CHANGE CONFERENCES, CAUX, SWITZERLAND

COVER PHOTO: *Panos Pictures*

Villagers from Kitoga, Democratic Republic of Congo

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Caux 2004: narrowing the gaps

For many of our readers, the overriding news image of the summer of 2004 will be the agonies of Darfur, Sudan, where tens of thousands died in ethnic attacks and hundreds of thousands were driven from their homes.

The harrowing pictures of starving children may seem a million miles away from the peace and beauty of the Swiss mountains. But Mountain House in the village of Caux, high above Lake Geneva, holds a key to the resolution of such tragedies. For the last 58 years, the Initiatives of Change conferences there have urged people to tackle war and poverty at their roots—in the hatred and selfishness which so easily grip the human heart.

Since 1946, when the first official delegations to leave Germany after World War II met their former enemies at Mountain House and laid the foundations for reconciliation and reconstruction, Caux has brought people together across the gulfs of race, religion, nationality and class. While other forums focus on presentations and action plans, Caux's emphasis is on the heart-to-heart encounter—and on the shared assumption that change begins not with someone else, but with oneself.

At the core of the Caux experience lies the search in silence for new beginnings, and the challenge of eternal values of honesty, purity, love and unselfishness. Each year, people return home with the determination to make changes in their lives—and with new, and sometimes far-reaching, approaches to the problems around them.

Among those who attended this year were Palestinians and Israelis, North and South Sudanese, people from the conflict-ridden Great Lakes area of Central Africa, representatives from Indigenous communities around the world, Muslims and Christians from Nigeria, police and young people from the inner cities of Europe. This year's theme was 'Narrowing the gap between ideals and interests' and the challenges of global economic justice were high on the agenda. This issue of *For A Change* offers a glimpse of the myriad encounters, presentations, workshops, performances and personalities that made up the summer.

Mary Lean

MARY LEAN

www.forachange.co.uk

FOR A CHANGE

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FOR A CHANGE

For A Change is about change, how to make it happen and how to live it. We believe that what happens inside people has an effect on the world around them. At the heart of global change lies change in the human heart.

We draw our material from a wide range of sources, including Initiatives of Change. We give a voice to people all over the world who are making a difference. We invite our readers to join them. Your stories are our stories.

Initiatives of Change

Initiatives of Change (formerly Moral Re-Armament) works for moral and spiritual renewal in all areas of life. It was born out of the work of Frank Buchman, an American who believed that change in the world must start in individuals.

Initiatives of Change is open to all. Its starting point is the readiness of each person to make what they know of God and eternal moral values central in their lives. This personal commitment to search for God's will forms the basis for creative initiative and common action: standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love help to focus the challenge of personal and global change.

These ideas have given rise to an international community in more than 70 countries, working in such areas as reconciliation; tackling the root causes of corruption, poverty and social exclusion; and strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations for democracy.

CAUX CONFERENCES 2004

THE HUMAN FACE OF SECURITY

Peace is more than the absence of war, discovers Caz Hore-Ruthven

JOANNA MARGUERITTE, THOMAS BUEHLER

In an ideal world, everyone should be able to enjoy a general sense of 'security'—dignity and freedom, personal safety, access to basic services and resources. Sadly, the world is far from ideal, and millions of people suffer and die in appalling circumstances.

In response to this dire situation, people from over 40 countries came to Mountain House in Caux, Switzerland, in August for IofC's fourth conference on 'Human security through good governance', organized under the Agenda for Reconciliation programme. Delegates included diplomats, officials, academics, students and citizens from developed and developing countries. They met in a spirit of kinship, to share experiences, impart knowledge, or simply to listen and learn about how to further the cause of human security. An underlying theme was the need to 'globalize and personalize responsibility'—bringing issues of development and peace back to the way we live our daily lives and care about what happens to people on the other side of the world.

On the global political stage in the last decade, the concept of security has begun to shift its emphasis from national security to people's security—their everyday needs and struggles. In 2003, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said: 'Human Security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and resources to fulfil his or her own potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict.'

Many speakers gave distressing facts about the terrible poverty, illness, violence and intimidation endured by people all over the globe. Thirty wars are currently raging; 40 million people live with HIV or AIDS; more than 40 per cent of Africans live on less than a dollar a day; and 50 million people fled their homes between 1990 and 2000.

'Poverty, conflict, political instability, disease and corruption together make the theme of crisis in Africa,' said Leonora Kyerematen, National Programme Coordinator of Ghana's National Governance Programme. 'According to the African Union, conflicts have cost the continent seven million lives and around $250 billion in the last 40 years. In the face of these dire statistics, the archetypal African leader of recent memory has proved incapable of personal restraint. The primary reason for leading is to make a positive difference to the lives of people.'

Eric Laroche, Deputy Director in UNICEF's Office of Emergency Programmes, reminded us that children suffer particularly in armed conflicts, not only as victims of attack, but also through displacement, loss of family, ▶

CAUX CONFERENCES 2004

Leonora Kyerematen, Ghana: conflicts have cost Africa seven million lives in four decades

disability, homelessness and lack of schools and medical care. He gave an impassioned plea for an end to abuse and rape against women and children—something that happens increasingly in modern conflicts.

Some speakers told moving personal stories. Shabibi Shah spoke from the heart about her first-hand experience of insecurity. In 1982 she escaped with her three children over the mountains from Afganistan to Pakistan to rejoin her husband. In 1984 the whole family came to Britain. 'Refugees are the most vulnerable people on earth,' she said. 'They have to be content with being second-class citizens in a foreign land. The forces which push people to leave their countries are not only personal but political. They affect thousands of people whose lives are thrown into confusion, fear, anger and sorrow.' She described what she was doing to support more recent arrivals.

In his keynote address, Niketu Iralu spoke about the long and gruelling fight for freedom of the Naga people who straddle the border between India and Burma. In the process rifts had opened up between different tribes and clans, and there had also been substantial environmental damage and a tendency for people to turn to drink. In 2001 the Naga Reconciliation process was launched to 'truthfully

'ALL GREAT PLANS OF THE UN WILL GET BOGGED DOWN UNLESS EACH PERSON REALIZES WHAT THEY CAN DO—AND DOES IT'

examine the ways and areas in which we have hurt others so that the needed changes may begin with us'.

He spoke about the practical benefits of this process of honest dialogue and inner change in his own village, Khonoma. An annual day of healing and apology had been established, beginning with five minutes of silence when each villager listened to his or her conscience. In the last five years, the trapping of birds and animals had been successfully banned. Logging, the collection of wild vegetables for commercial purposes, and the sale of alcohol, betel nut and cigarettes had also been stopped. And a bird sanctuary had been established in the mountains.

'We can, and must, go far and deep enough in accepting the needed changes in our greed, fear and hate in order to make our fragile, most beautiful planet a common, safe sanctuary for ourselves, our children, and their children,' said Iralu. 'The concept of human security has given us a framework to achieve this aim, but all great plans of the UN and governments will get bogged down unless each person realizes what they can do—and does it.'

One of the most moving personal stories of building security through reconciliation came from South Africa. Ginn Fourie's 23-year-old daughter, Lyndi, was murdered in 1993 in an anti-aparthied attack on a Cape Town restaurant. The man who ordered the attack was Letlapa Mphahlele, who years later was in the media spotlight, promoting his book. Fourie went to one of his book signings and identified herself at the public question time. Mphahlele was deeply moved and offered to meet Fourie in private—and so began a remarkable journey of reconciliation and forgiveness.

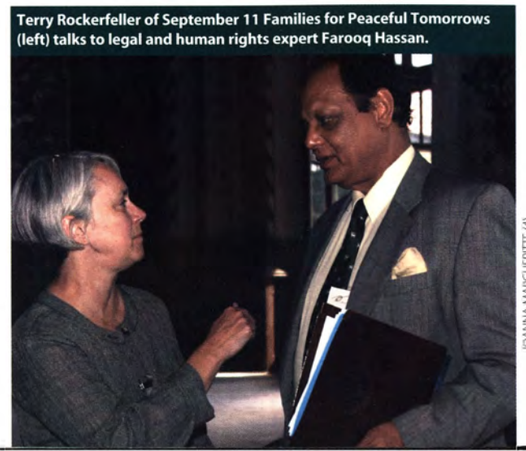
'I did not ask for forgiveness,' said Mphahlele, 'but she forgave me. It was the most important gift that one can receive from another human being.' Fourie explained, 'It's not that I don't feel the great sadness of losing my daughter but forgiving her killer has made it bearable and given me a creative way forward.'

A particularly poignant moment came when Mphahlele invited Fourie to his ceremonial homecoming to his village after 18 years in exile. Fourie was one of only a handful of whites amongst 1,500 blacks, and she was invited to speak—a great honour for anyone. 'I had sleepless nights over what to say,' said Fourie, 'But I was able to say that my ancestors are deeply sorry for 350 years of oppression of your people, first through slavery then through colonialism and finally through the dreaded apartheid. What was fresh in my mind was a saying from René Depestre: "What have we done, we the wretched black people of the earth, for the whites to hate us so? What have we done to weigh so little in their scales?"' Caux delegates gave Fourie and Mphahlele a standing ovation.

While apartheid is thankfully no longer with us, there are new issues that undermine security—not least the Iraq war, global terrorism and deepening distrust and suspicion between the Muslim world and the West. Dr Farooq Hassan, a legal and human rights expert who has served as advisor to four prime ministers of Pakistan, passionately argued that we should not see the situation as a 'clash of civilizations', since this implied that difference is not okay. Instead, he thought the West and the Muslim world could learn from each other. Great religions were responsible for moralizing people, and everyday personal values of 'common decency' could help prevent atrocities, and enhance dialogue.

Hassan believed that the root cause of the crisis was civil strife in many Islamic and developing countries—people reacting against their own corrupt and non-democratic regimes. He felt this was overlooked by the mainstream media. 'We live in a virus-creating laboratory where hatreds are multiplying,' said the professor, who sees a 'similarity of purpose' behind extremist violence, rather than some mysterious super-organization. He particularly decried fake or imported leadership imposed from outside. 'You cannot create an artificial leadership,' he warned.

The theme was further developed by Dr Basil Mustafa—an expert in Islamic affairs and the Nelson Mandela Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. He talked about Iraq, where vital institutions and services need developing urgently if human security is to be restored. This is



Terry Rockerfeller of September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows (left) talks to legal and human rights expert Farooq Hassan.

JOANNA MARGUERITTE (4)

Niketu Iralu, Nagaland: keynote speech

especially true of the education system: about 42 per cent of the population is under 15 years old. 'Educating young people, providing jobs for the jobless and homes for the homeless should become part of the same package aimed at promoting reconciliation and advancing social and economic revival,' he said. 'It is incomprehensible to talk about stabilizing Iraq from a security point of view without addressing the acute problem of unemployment.'

On global terrorism, Mustafa expressed discomfort with the phrase 'Islamic terrorism'. 'I am a Muslim and I don't condone any act of terrorism undertaken by anyone in the name of religion. It is morally and professionally wrong [for journalists] to use these kinds of terms. The IRA's campaign was not called "Catholic terrorism". I don't think bringing in any religion is appropriate.'

Mustafa believes Islamic teachings are entirely compatible with participatory governance and responsible decision-making—a key issue of the conference. 'Muslim rulers can only claim legitimacy and gain credibility if they discharge their duty to protect people from hunger, disease and other threats and improve human welfare. NGOs and international bodies like the UN could build on this to encourage Muslim individuals, and those in government, to act in accordance with the values of their faith.'

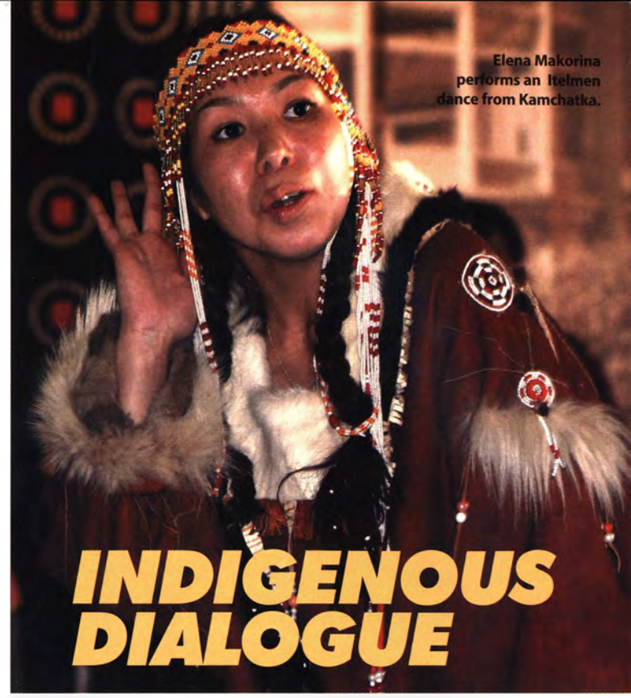
The need for responsible governance was echoed by many, including Peter Rundell, Director General for Development Policy at the European Commission. He said: 'An accountable and transparent government is the key basis for economic and human security. When governments are accountable not only through the vote but also through a free media and civic society then they tend to be richer and more secure. The personal stories that we have heard [at this conference] and the costly forgiveness and repentance on which they are built would give anyone hope. But they also remind us that the solutions won't be quick or easy. Eliminating poverty, transforming conflict, improving governments take time and patience.

'If triumph, like genius, is 90 per cent perspiration and 10 per cent inspiration, then we still need that 10 per cent, and that may come from time in quiet with God. Most officials I know are very open to fresh wisdom and fresh hope, and politicians usually are too. And we certainly need it.'

The conference heard from some remarkable people and organizations who are making a real difference to human security. The St Egidio Community, which began in Rome, has had tremendous success in curbing AIDS through its DREAM project in Mozambique. The 'Other Three Rs' education project (Responsibility, Relationships, Respect) has been so successful in Ghana that it has been adopted in schools across the whole country. Terry Rockerfeller, whose sister died on 11 September 2001, told how she and other relations of victims were campaigning for peace and had visited Afghanistan and Iraq to meet the families of civilians who had been killed by Coalition bombing.

To learn more about certain issues, delegates joined workshops. Among the themes covered were good leadership; how to build trust through honest conversation; the value of asylum seekers as an economic and cultural asset; and dialogue between youth, police and their wider communities. People from indigenous communities from the Arctic to Australia took part in a Global Indigenous Dialogue, which climaxed with a presentation to the whole conference (see box above).

On the final day, delegates enjoyed a variety of audio and visual delights, reflections and reminiscences from the week gone by. John Graham from the US left us with a highly charged and personal account of his own remarkable transformation in Vietnam, when he found himself giving an order for his soldiers to shoot on looters. At that moment, he said, he simply didn't care who would win the war; and he eventually went on to help bring down apartheid in South Africa through his work at the US Department of State. John left us with the message that we can all find meaning in our lives, and like his Giraffe Project, encouraged everyone to stick their necks out for the greater good. ■



Elena Makorina performs an Itelmen dance from Kamchatka.

INDIGENOUS DIALOGUE

THE POWER of traditional song and dance exploded within a 'Great Circle of Life' at Caux on the International Day of the World's Indigenous People in August.

Community leaders from Africa, Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, India, Russia, Tibet had been meeting for five days to offer ways of restoring, renewing and sustaining a nourishing relationship with Earth and the Creator and of sharing a sense of common destiny with the whole human family. They considered the changes needed to improve relationships both within and between Indigenous communities, and with those who share traditional territory and modern political, cultural and social environments.

More than 300 million people today are, by UN definition, 'Indigenous'—living where they have always lived, speaking a unique language within a distinct culture, while being a political minority in their nation state. Their plight and progress is increasingly on the global agenda.

Participants went home to report to their communities and consult about the possibility of establishing an annual dialogue, with wider representation from Indigenous communities around the world.

Wayne Kines

JOANNA MARGUERITTE (3)

The orange 'community' perform at the variety evening.

The door, the hinge and the handle

The summer started off with a perfect introduction to the spirit of Caux, writes Joanna Margueritte.

The opening conference of this summer in Caux, called 'Service, Responsibility, and Leadership' (SRL), was much more than just an ordinary conference.

In the United States, there is a programme called the 'Giraffe Project', which promotes stories of local heroes, and in this way encourages people who think they can't make a difference to take action in their communities. The SRL conference was like a Giraffe Project for the Caux community. Suddenly one discovered the charming lady, who had served tea and coffee yesterday, speaking from the podium about a community centre she has helped build in Simferopol, Crimea. The gentleman with a funny accent, who went to the trouble of cutting the cheese you had for breakfast this morning, is now sharing stories of a ground-breaking initiative from Australia: the Journey of Healing. You suddenly find yourself surrounded by heroes, and it sure is an encouraging feeling.

The team of young professionals from Eastern Europe who organized the conference, with help from Mexico, the UK and Switzerland, were hardly visible during the whole process—giving a worthy example of good, ie servant, leadership. The week was divided into three stages. The first two days examined how change could happen within the individual. The next two focussed on individuals bringing change in groups and communities. And the last two explored the possibilities of a community changing a whole society or nation.

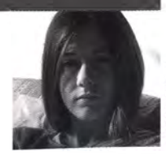
Left to right: Sasha Shimina, Rob Corcoran and David Campt answer questions on Hope in the Cities.

On 10 July, people from outside the conference came in for the first of the summer's Caux Lectures and a speech by the new President of the Caux Foundation of Initiatives of Change—former diplomat Bernard de Riedmatten. The Caux Lecturer, the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, spoke of the way humanitarian action gets caught in the crossfire between governments and warring parties. There were some 20 crisis situations around the world, just as serious as Darfur in Sudan, where the victims could not be reached.

'We need to see a moral and ethical revolution, in international relations and domestic politics and power struggles,' Egeland proclaimed. 'The humanitarian community must be able to act always and everywhere in accordance with humanitarian principles.' Just a few days before coming to Caux, he had been on an official mission to Darfur.

In the opening address of the conference, Krish Raval recalled the words of IofC pioneer Bill Jaeger. To be a good leader, he had said, you must 'always have a vision for what people can become'. And, at one of the first plenary sessions, pediatrician Omnia Marzouk spoke of the theme of the conference from her experience in managing emergency care for 200 children in Liverpool. 'If leadership is a door,' she said, 'then the hinge on which the door rests and turns is service and the handle that opens it is responsibility.'

A three-day workshop was run by David Campt and Rob Corcoran of Hope in the Cities in Richmond, Virginia, a programme which builds bridges across racial, social and economic divides. It explored practical methods of building and sustaining diverse teams and creating a space for honest conversation, as well as developing facilitation skills for community builders.



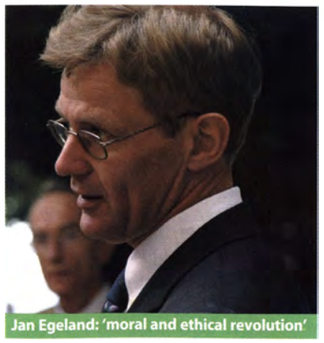
N KOZLOWSKA

'YOU SUDDENLY FIND YOURSELF SURROUNDED BY HEROES, AND IT SURE IS AN ENCOURAGING FEELING'

Finally, John Mills from Australia spoke about Sorry Day and the Journey of Healing, initiatives launched back in 1998 in response to the suffering of Aboriginal people caused by the government policy of removing children from their families to 'civilize' them and bring them up in a white environment.

For me personally, one of the highlights of the conference was the hour every morning when participants met in smaller 'community' groups. The meetings began with about ten minutes of silence, after which the members of the community shared what was on their minds and in their hearts. There were no constraints, and the community leaders were an integral part of the group. Many said that it was the one time in the day when they could reflect in peace on what was happening.

The conference included many more stories of people making a difference; Lubow Zysko from Crimea, Richard Hawthorne from Nottingham, Randy Ruffin from the US among them, and there was a baroque concert and a variety night, as well as an evening of international dancing. The second week of July, for those who attended, was the 'perfect introduction to the spirit of Caux and Initiatives of Change'. The SRL team is planning to organize another conference next summer: I recommend that you don't miss it! ■



Jan Egeland: 'moral and ethical revolution'

KENNETH NOBLE

Intern for change

José Carlos León Vargas from Mexico describes his first experience of Caux, as one of the interns who ensured the smooth running of the conference centre.

CHANGE RESTS in the hands of those who have the courage to make a different future come true. I started believing in Initiatives of Change this summer after I took part in its internship programme at Caux, Switzerland.

As an intern, I was enriched both professionally and personally. I was part of an international team whose main job was to produce press releases and internal newsletters. When I interviewed important journalists and attended outstanding debates and plenary sessions, I felt as if I was in the UN headquarters, witnessing high-ranking discussions: the dream of every recent graduate in international relations.

The corridors of Mountain House exuded multiculturalism: people from many countries and backgrounds, full of thoughts. This created a stimulating atmosphere in which you could learn about a conflict transformation project in Africa while talking to a specialist on intercultural dialogue working in the United States or India.

Yet there was a more important element: the human dimension that permeated everything. Everybody worked together in the kitchen, dining room and conference hall as equals, without distinction; a former ambassador or a politician alongside a university or high school student, a talented musician alongside a medical doctor. At Caux I understood that change starts by recognizing yourself in the other, by putting yourself into someone else's shoes. This is the filter through which I perceived and assimilated the spirit of Caux.

During the summer, 76 interns from 27 countries worked at Caux, attached to the kitchen, dining room, reception, press team, secretariat and other areas of responsibility. Our contribution was valued not just because we were all volunteers (as are most of those who run the Caux conferences), but also because young people are an essential component of Initiatives of Change. I have never before worked with people who dedicated time every week to ask me how I felt, what workshops or activities I was attending and how this experience was transforming my life.

The days passed quickly because there was always something to do: a plenary session on ethics and business, followed by a workshop on leadership and team building, preceded perhaps by a concert or a walk in the mountains. I found myself in an international melting pot of ideas.

Being at Caux has helped me to take another step towards understanding my role as an individual in an interconnected society. Initiatives of Change is undoubtedly contributing to my personal and professional growth. My ideas are gradually materializing, taking shape, the shape of change.

If you are interested in becoming a Caux intern in 2005, visit **www.caux.ch**

PHUONG NGUYEN & MIHO SANOU

ACCORDION & PIANO CON BRIO

BLAIR CUMMOCK

A London-based former Vietnamese boatperson and his Japanese wife tell Kenneth Noble of their love of music, teaching and freedom.

'Stunning! Technically brilliant,' was the verdict of a top-flight professional musician after a concert by the husband and wife duo, Phuong Nguyen (accordion) and Miho Sanou (piano) during the Renewal Arts session in Caux this summer. Even I, a musical illiterate, could appreciate the verve and enjoyment with which Vietnamese-born Nguyen and his Japanese-born wife played pieces by César Franck, Noriko Motomatsu from Japan and Argentinian Astor Piazzolla.

In Nguyen's case, the joie de vivre undoubtedly springs in part from his dramatic experiences—as a victim of political oppression and, later, as a refugee. For this dapper, cheerful man of 31 nearly perished in a small boat in the China Seas at the age of 16.

'Vietnam is a beautiful place with friendly people,' says Nguyen. 'It's a wonderful place to live—in some ways.' The reservation is due to the fact that, at the age of eight, he was talent-spotted by the government, taken away from his family and enrolled in a music academy in the capital, Hanoi, where he was forced to learn the accordion, rather than the drums as he had been promised. 'They told us what to do, what to eat, what to play,' he recalls. 'I hardly saw my family after that. For the first two or three years life was tremendously tough.' He was only allowed to visit his parents twice a year, and had to do his own cooking and washing as well as be responsible for his homework. But he did enjoy playing 'the squeeze box'.

Nguyen's father, a well-known actor and playwright, also came under 'tremendous pressure' from the authorities after 'speaking his mind'. By the time he was 16, Nguyen had had enough, and decided to flee the country.

BOATPERSON

His family arranged his escape, and one day in the summer of 1989, as he was hanging out with friends, the word came: 'We are ready'. Nguyen and 79 others were put aboard a 27-ton boat and covered in salt. The plan was to pass the vessel off as a fishing boat. They travelled overnight and were nearly suffocating by the time they reached Chinese waters.

Their troubles were just beginning. The China Sea is notoriously rough, and a great storm blew up. 'The waves were enormous,' Nguyen recalls. 'We burned our clothes and blankets and cried for help.' At one point they were convinced that they were going to perish. 'We all tied our hands together thinking that it would be easier for people to find all our bodies that way.'

Nguyen, whose doctor mother had taken him to temples at a young age, started praying to God, to Allah, to Buddha for the first time. Eventually, they spotted some dark dots, which they thought might be fishing boats. As they steered towards them they ran onto some rocks and stuck fast. Although this was by no means a safe situation, once the storm abated they were able to make some repairs and when, seven nights later, the flood tide lifted them free, they continued their journey.

DETENTION CAMP

Nguyen had a strong sense that someone was watching over him—and he did eventually make landfall on a small island in Hong Kong. This was the beginning of almost four years' detention, with up to 63,000 boatpeople waiting for the British authorities to process their asylum applications.

Nguyen eventually found himself in a camp sharing a large hut with 250 men, women and children. They slept on bunk-beds and had no privacy. Music was something of a life-saver as people used any old instrument they could get their hands on. Nguyen remembers performing at many weddings in the camp.

His talent attracted the attention of Marie Myerscough, a British volunteer with the UN international social service. Home in London, she spoke to Sir Cameron MacIntosh, who was staging the musical *Miss Saigon* in the West End, and he paid for an accordion to be sent to Nguyen. Later Myerscough recorded Nguyen and arranged for the tape to be heard by a professor at the Royal Academy, the only institute in the UK which offered a course in the accordion. The professor was so impressed that he got the Academy to send a letter of support to the authorities in Hong Kong and, with additional help from John Major, Sir Edward Heath and other political figures, Nguyen was finally admitted into the UK to study.

It was at the Royal Academy that Nguyen and Sanou met.

Sanou's background could hardly have been more different. As the child of a well-to-do family she studied the piano from the age of four. She began by playing the tunes from TV cartoons by ear, and progressed to the point where she was accepted to study in Britain for three-and-a-half years. She then went home to Japan, returning two years later to the UK to marry.

'WE TIED OUR HANDS TOGETHER THINKING THAT IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO FIND OUR BODIES THAT WAY'

Nguyen and Sanou have eight degrees between them—and combine their love of music with a love of teaching, through which they both earn their livelihoods. Nguyen teaches at Blackheath Conservatory, a private school, and also at two schools in poorer neighbourhoods—'I believe passionately in helping people from all backgrounds.' Sanou teaches one-to-one at two schools in south-east London and also gives private lessons. They also find time to further their concert careers. Since graduating in 1999 Nguyen has toured the UK with Pimlico Opera and given concerts in Spain, China, the Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, France, and the USA. Sanou completed her Masters at Goldsmiths College, London, in the same year—with a much-acclaimed interpretation of Shostakovich's Second Piano Concerto with Goldsmiths' Sinfonia. Together, they often do concerts for good causes—at one charity performance they raised £3,000 for needy Vietnamese children.

REUNITED

It was on the day of the London Marathon in April 1993 that Nguyen managed to contact his family for the first time since leaving Vietnam. This was the result of a message that he had broadcast on the BBC World Service. A family friend in Vietnam happened to hear it, and told his family where he was. Somehow a message was sent to Nguyen, telling him the family's phone number.

Since then Nguyen and Sanou have visited both Vietnam and Japan, though Nguyen says that he is watched wherever he goes in his homeland. His parents are still alive but his father has had a stroke.

For such talented musicians, Nguyen and Sanou have less glamourous jobs than they might have. But they insist that they are happy with what they are doing. Nguyen speaks passionately of his gratitude, and of the importance of appreciating all the gifts that he and Sanou have been given: 'Thanks to music, art and enormous luck, I survived. Not many of my fellow-countrymen have the luxury of being free and being able to share creativity.'

AMBASSADORS FOR PEACE

Phuong Nguyen and Miho Sanou's visit to Caux was sponsored by Gillian Humphreys and the London-based Concordia Foundation, whose website proclaims: 'building bridges through music and the arts'. Nguyen echoes this thought: 'At our wedding there were people of 20 different languages. Music is a way of bridging between languages, and of expressing things that you are not allowed to speak. We see ourselves as ambassadors for peace through music and the arts.' ■

FOR A CHANGE

'A fresh air to the mind and heart'

Raimundas Klimavicius, Lithuania

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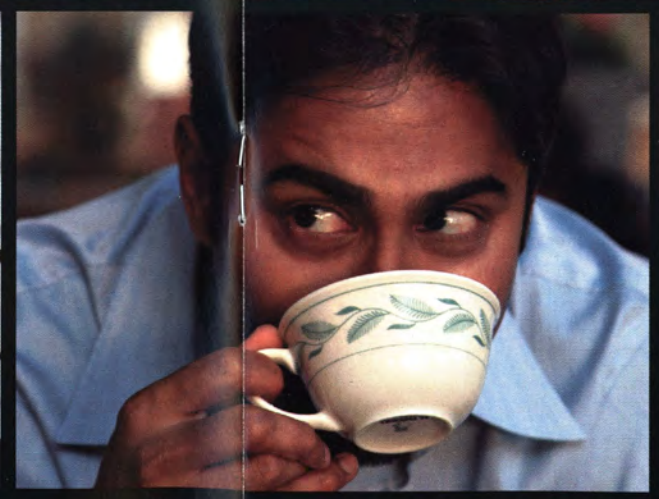


KENNETH NOBLE, JOANNA MARGUERITTE (12)

Gabriel Minder of Youth Business International (left) talks with British Labour MP Tony Colman

BUSINESSES URGED TO CLOSE THE WORLD'S POVERTY GAPS

India and China have achieved enviable rates of economic growth over the past two decades, said Prabhat Kumar, the Director of an independent Centre for Governance in India and former Governor of Jharkand State, but 'there is a palpable crisis of governance in many developing countries'. Kumar served for three years as Cabinet Secretary to the Government of India and was addressing the 32nd annual Caux Conference for Business and Industry.

The 'gap in good governance' was a global challenge, at a time when over 1.2 billion people were surviving on an income of under a dollar a day. In some Indian states nine out of 100 babies died in infancy, because their parents were too poor to get to hospital, he said.

Kumar urged businesses and civil society to put into practice models for good governance. 'Governance is too serious a matter to be left to governments,' he said. The turnover of the world's leading 200 multinational corporations was greater than the GDP of all developing countries. Yet none was coming up with the low-cost appropriate technology needed for water management, power systems, housing and transport for poor rural communities. 'There is not a single technology developed by the multinationals for the villages of the poor countries,' he believed.

The Centre for Governance, which was launched by Initiatives of Change last year, was working with an Indian institute of management to research ways of 'closing the development divide' between states within India, Kumar said. 'We shall consider our mission accomplished if we can make a small dent in the better governance of India.'

Prabhat Kumar: 'crisis of governance'

British Member of Parliament Tony Colman welcomed the recent commitment by Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer to work towards an aid budget of 0.7 per cent of GDP. But it was also vital that poor countries were enabled to trade equitably, he said.

Prior to his political career, Colman had launched retail businesses in East and West Africa before becoming a board member of the Burton retail group in the UK, where he founded the TopShop chain of fashion shops.

Business had a role in closing the gap between rich and poor, he said. The businesses which would make a difference in this field would be 'sustainable, equitable, which bring together labour and management, and which look to the long term'. Legislation could help encourage these qualities. Bribery, for instance, is now an offence for British citizens anywhere in the world, thanks to his 2002 Private Member's Bill on the subject. And the all-party committee on socially responsible investment, which he chairs, has forced pension funds to account for the social, environmental and ethical basis of their investments.

Gabriel Minder, founder of two IT consultancies in Geneva, has launched a series of initiatives in the developing world. One has provided 250,000 people with low-cost wheelchairs. Another is enabling 120,000 to receive cataract surgery.

Minder is an advisor to the Prince of Wales' Youth Business International (YBI), which is a product of developing teamwork between industry, international organizations and NGOs, particularly Rotary Clubs worldwide. It has enabled 4,000 disadvantaged young people to launch their own business enterprises, and YBI aims to increase this number to 250,000 people. It has active programmes in 23 countries, and is in discussion in 37 more. The Chinese Government has just invited YBI to help launch a large number of pilot projects in China. ■

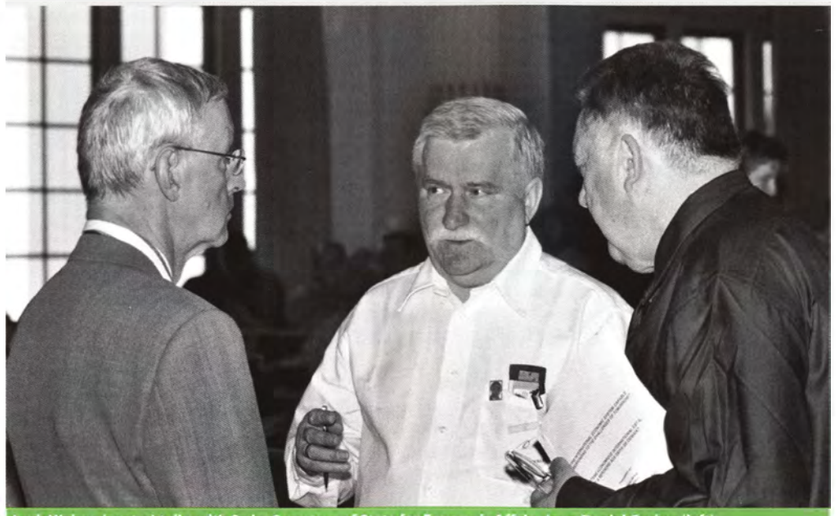
Michael Smith and John Bond

'TOO SERIOUS A MATTER TO BE LEFT TO GOVERNMENTS'

LECH WALESA CALLS FOR AGENTS OF CHANGE

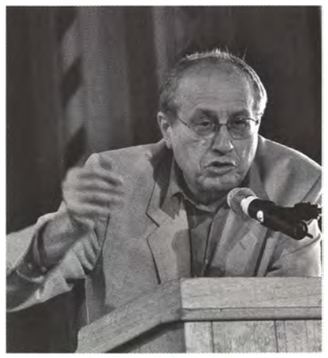
'YOU CAN change a government in a night, and laws in the life of a parliament, but a change of mentality is vitally important, and is very hard to bring about,' Lech Walesa, President of Poland from 1990 to 1995, told the conference. The former Gdansk shipyard worker, a Nobel Peace laureate and a founder of the Solidarity trade union movement in Poland, spoke of the change from a world of blocs and nation states to one of globalized information, intellect and technology. He called for everyone to be active agents of change, instead of just complaining. 'Your children and your grandchildren will ask you what you did, and why you did not do enough.'

Poland's historical experience was rooted in its geography, he said, noting wryly that her two great neighbours, Russia and Germany, were 'tourist' nations who had discovered that the shortest route to the other lay through Poland. As leader of Solidarity, which helped overthrow Poland's Communist regime, he had seen a fight that needed to be fought, and it had been worth it. Now, there were struggles for others to fight.



BLAIR CUMMOCK (4)

Lech Walesa (centre) talks with Swiss Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Jean-Daniel Gerber (left) and Warsaw journalist Bernard Margueritte



AWAKENER OF CONSCIENCE

BERNARD CASSEN (above), Director General of *Le Monde Diplomatique,* architect of the Porto Alegre World Social Forums and founder of the ATTAC movement for economic justice, described 'liberal globalization as a social failure that accentuates inequalities', and maintained that such bodies as the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO and the OECD recognized that it was not working.

'What we have been experiencing is a disconnection between the world of politics and the world of economics and finance,' Cassen said. Citizens could vote in elections but had no say in global economic matters. 'You can vote for anything you like, except for the world's economic and financial structures.' Here there was no democratic tradition. Politicians, in his perception, had surrendered power to the financial markets. 'The market rules and not the electorate.'

It was no wonder, he said, that people stopped voting when the French Prime Minister could say there was nothing he could do when a company closed down because it could only achieve a profit of eight per cent instead of the 'normal' return of 15 per cent. Only 20 per cent of the electorate of the new member states of the European Union had voted in the recent European elections, just two months after the expansion of the EU.

The ATTAC movement had a role as 'an awakener of conscience', he said. 'We are for another kind of globalization'. The World Social Forums were a 'participatory democracy'. Individual action was important, such as consumer boycotts, but 'it is only collective action that can really change things'.

Goat farmers of Meru, Kenya

FARM AFRICA

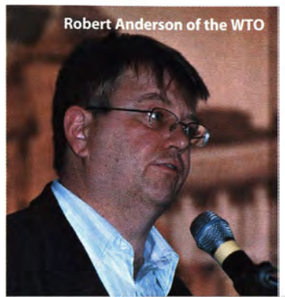
Fairer deal needed for Third World farmers

Michael Smith attends a farmers' dialogue on tackling poverty.

At the end of July, Europe and America agreed to slash their agricultural subsidies, which have been blamed for driving Third World farmers out of business. No timetable was set, and aid agencies and campaigners thought the deal didn't go nearly far enough. But the decision, at the World Trade Organization (WTO), put the so-called Doha round of negotiations back on track.

The issue of farming subsidies was also a focus of the Caux Conference for Business and Industry, which took place earlier that month.

Reducing tariffs and subsidies would benefit both the developing and developed world, maintained Robert Anderson, a Canadian counsellor to the WTO. But it would be a 'long and tortuous process', not least because those developing countries that are net agricultural importers also benefit from subsidies, 'at least in the short run'. There was a need for 'honest evaluation' of such issues as price-fixing cartels, which act as 'unofficial reverse development assistance that transfers wealth from poor countries to rich countries'.



Robert Anderson of the WTO

Switzerland's newly-appointed Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, Jean-Daniel Gerber, also called for urgent action to give developing countries better access to rich-world markets, as well as grant them debt relief. The world's development aid had totalled $68.5 billion last year, yet agricultural subsidies in the rich world came to $300 billion, and military spending stood at $1,000 billion, he said in a Caux lecture.

There has been a 'scandalous' two-thirds decline in investment in African agriculture in the last decade, according to Christie Peacock, Chief Executive of the UK charity Farm Africa. She described Africa as 'the most rural continent in the world', with 80 per cent of the population depending on farming (compared with only 3.3 per cent in Europe and America). Yet direct food aid to Eritrea, for instance, was 40 times the aid to agricultural development.

'The World Bank has given up on agriculture, yet farming is where people are,' said Peacock. She called for a 'significant increase in government spending on agriculture'. There was a need to give the rural poor access to land and water resources, technical and other support services and to local political processes.

She cited the example of Meru, Kenya, where 50,000 smallholder farmers had benefitted from a goat-breeding scheme sponsored by Farm Africa. They were now selling breeding goats to five East African countries and the knock-on effect to the local economy had been 'huge'. One beneficiary, a former casual labourer, now owned two hectares of land and had been able to send his daughters to school. His sons were starting a business in the local town. 'A virtuous spiral is developing,' commented Peacock.

There was only $2 billion of intra-regional trade in Africa, she continued, yet there was a $50 billion domestic demand for food crops, which is predicted to double in the next 15 years. She called on voters in the rich countries to press their politicians to increase aid to agricultural development.

'We're proud to give some hope from Zimbabwe,' said Dr Ian Robertson, who has taught microbiology for 27 years at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare. Seventy per cent of Zimbabwe's population live on less than $1 a day. Robertson's firm, Agri-Biotech, employs some of his graduates and draws on their research to produce virus-clean sweet potato and cassava. Three thousand farmers are benefitting from these strains, with threefold rises in sweet potato yields and fourfold in cassava.

'THE WORLD BANK HAS GIVEN UP ON AGRICULTURE, YET FARMING IS WHERE PEOPLE ARE'

The CEO of the American Corn Growers Association (ACGA), Larry Mitchell, declared that American agricultural subsidies of $20 billion a year were 'critically wrong'. He quoted a report from the Agricultural Policy Analysis Center (APAC), at the University of Tennessee, which accuses the US of 'exporting poverty', because subsidies depress farm prices worldwide. The APAC report suggested that the way out lay in a 'careful and balanced application' of measures that would have the goal of 'improving the welfare of farmers worldwide'. (http://apacweb.ag.utk.edu/blueprint.html)

'There is a large difference,' Mitchell noted, 'between a subsidy and support. The former is paid by taxpayers, and the latter by the users. If we raise the support programme, we can reduce or eliminate the subsidy programme.' ■

*With reporting by **Joanna Margueritte** and **Andrew Stallybrass***
www.cauxinitiativesforbusiness.org

Christie Peacock, Chief Executive of Farm Africa (below); Larry Mitchell CEO of the American Corn Growers Association (bottom)

BLAIR CUMMOCK (4)

HOW MY FARM COPED WITH LOSS OF SUBSIDIES

Garfield Hayes, New Zealand

MY WIFE and I have a family farm in the South Island of New Zealand, 100km from Mount Cook. We own 865 hectares. In the summer we have nearly 10,000 sheep, 100 beef cattle and 100 hectares of barley and lucerne crops.

We farm with two and half permanent employees—I'm the half—but use the services of many agricultural specialists—people who dip, spray, shear and pregnancy-test sheep, and other contractors who spray seed and fertilize our paddocks, by truck and plane.

When I was 30 I had an increasing conviction to return to New Zealand to take responsibility for the farm that my father had left me. I had spent over 12 years abroad in voluntary work.

What were the challenges? My back was not 100 per cent; I had never received agricultural university training; farm product prices were depressed and, shortly after my return, we were snow-bound for three weeks, with one metre of snow and with all our animals living outside to feed. Four days after the snow, all the stock were reached by bulldozer or helicopter with feed. Regular exercise greatly improved my back.

Amazingly product prices went through the roof two years after we returned. This covered many of my mistakes and helped me to set up on a good financial footing.

My father, still living on the farm, was completely blind. After four previous operations for glaucoma, he reluctantly accepted one more for a cataract removal. To his astonishment, he regained 90 per cent of his sight—in his words a miracle. He could see his wife and children for the first time in 10 years and threw away his white stick.

I was on the National Council of the New Zealand Farmers Federation when the Labour government decided to drastically change the economy. A 10 per cent goods and service tax was introduced. The New Zealand dollar was floated, the reduction of tariffs was started, and, overnight, all farm subsidies terminated. We were receiving 20 per cent of our income from the New Zealand taxpayer. Our farmers marched in the streets, but as one of their leaders I knew in my heart that New Zealand had no alternative. We exported 90 per cent of our agricultural production and our trading partners had threatened us: remove subsidies or face tariffs.

'SOME FARMERS LOST THEIR FARMS. I WORKED SO HARD MY HIPS WORE OUT'

The next years were difficult. Some farmers, big and small, lost their farms. Some committed suicide. I worked so hard my hips wore out. We survived by selling a city property we had been led to purchase when we were receiving subsidies. But the fact was we were overproducing a product that was hard to sell.

During the past 20 years there has been an enormous turn around. New Zealand's sheep population has fallen from 70 to 40 million. Farmers have become very innovative and, where possible, successfully diversified into alternatives, such as producing trees, venison or dairying. Sheep farmers and our meat processing industry have substantially improved efficiency, and quality. We now cannot meet demand, and product prices are the best they have been.

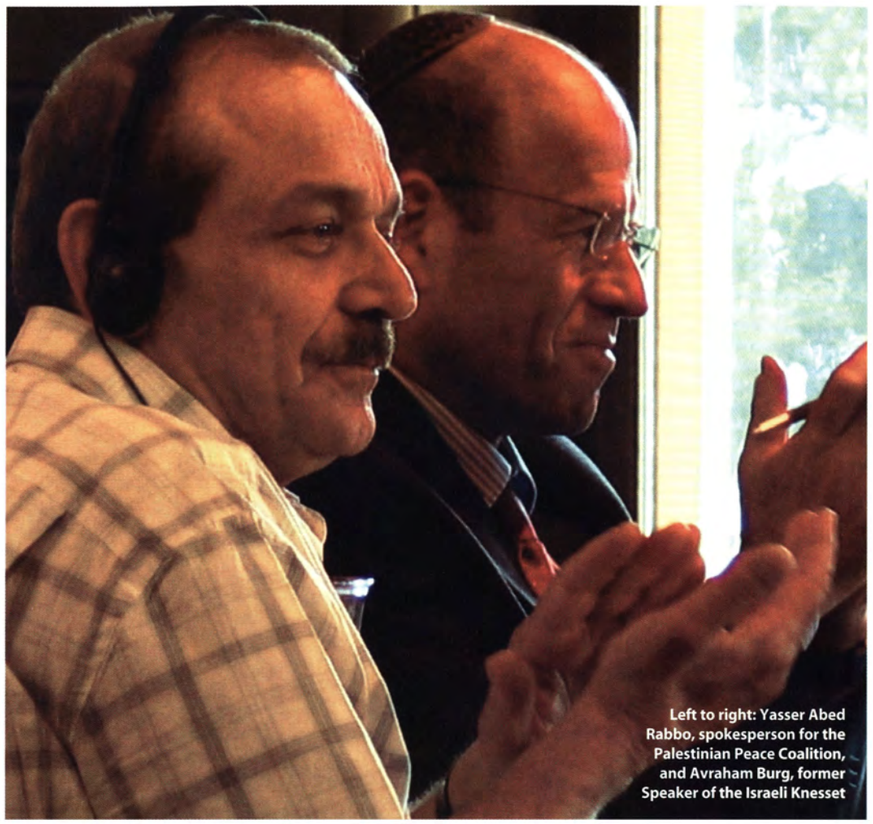
During this time I could purchase farm advice from specialists, but by far the most secure, satisfying and stimulating daily advice came from my early morning times of silent reflection. If God could steer us through such changes, I am convinced that he can supply the answer to the problems and challenges of world agriculture, if we choose to listen to him.

For instance, for 20 years we baled our wool in jute packs instead of synthetic packs, to give trade to the jute growers of Bangladesh. To keep things transparent all our farm sales go through the company books.

Historically there has been division between farmers and trade union leaders in our meat processing industry. My wife, Helen, and I have met these leaders, had them to stay in our home and arranged meetings with local farmers.

Alcoholism is a big problem among our sheep shearers. Although contravening custom, we ran an alcohol-free wool shed. But with Helen giving excellent meals, the shearers were always keen to return.

In a global world, where the need for change and innovation is always constant, for New Zealand agriculture there has definitely been good life after the removal of subsidies.



THOMAS BUEHLER

Left to right: Yasser Abed Rabbo, spokesperson for the Palestinian Peace Coalition, and Avraham Burg, former Speaker of the Israeli Knesset

Middle East peace initiative

FOUR OF the Israelis and Palestinians behind the Geneva Initiative, a civil-society effort to produce a peace agreement for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, spoke together in Caux.

Welcoming Avraham Burg, Tsvia Walden, Yasser Abed Rabbo and Walid Salem as well as other Palestinians and Israelis, Swiss Ambassador Urs Ziswiler described the Geneva Initiative as 'a taboo-breaking proposal'. Its very existence 'is the proof that there are partners for peace on both sides, a real alternative to the senseless cycle of violence and destruction'.

The Initiative was the result of more than two years' patient work, with the help and support of many people, said Abed Rabbo, a member of the executive committee of the PLO and spokesperson for the Palestinian Peace Coalition. They had built on the foundations of many previous peace efforts and negotiations to arrive at a 'realistic, detailed and credible agreement'.

There was no solution without pragmatism, he continued. The claims of religion, culture and history must be addressed, 'but in the most open and pragmatic way possible'. In this approach, the devil didn't lie in the details, but rather 'the details can overcome the devil'.

Avraham Burg, a former Speaker of the Israeli Knesset, now working in private business, said he 'belonged to the same orchestra' even though his music was a little different. Governments and leadership had failed. They had long talked of 'painful compromise', but had never spelt out the details. Both sides tended to be paralyzed by the feeling that they had no partners on the other side, 'but we have a partner on the other side,' he insisted. 'He empowers me, and I empower him.'

They needed to move to an understanding that both sides could be winners—too often, they still lived in a mentality of total victory, and contempt for the vanquished. 'We want to be sensitive to each other, to respect each other,' he said. They were dealing with icons, symbols and emotions, 'the trauma of history'—the Holocaust for the Jews, and colonialism for the Arabs. It was important to 're-integrate hope into the equations of despair'. In the Middle East, 'If you don't build your rationale on a miracle, you're a lunatic!'

The power of dialogue

'PEACE IS possible—though it isn't easy,' Andrea Riccardi, the founder of the Rome-based St Egidio Community stated. Drawing on the community's long and successful involvement with the peace process in Mozambique, Riccardi underlined the importance of non-state actors, with no means of pressure. 'There is a humble power for peace, rooted in dialogue and in prayer. This weak force is one of the most precious inheritances of the 20th Century.'

'We must never accept war which is the mother of poverty and the expression of evil,' he said. Peace demanded a commitment of many actors, at the level of the state, but also civil society.

Sixteen years of civil war in Mozambique led to 1.5 million dead. It took more than two years of negotiations to arrive at a peace accord between the FRELIMO government and the RENAMO guerrilla movement. 'We opened up a space for dialogue through a growing climate of trust,' Riccardi said. Former UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali called the process 'the Italian formula, a mix of governmental activity and NGO efforts'. Faith could seem weak in the face of the complexity of society and the powers of evil, Riccardi said. 'But believers have a power for peace, founded in the power of dialogue.'

Andrea Riccardi: 'peace is possible'

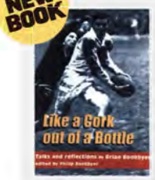
Michael Melchior

ISRAEL NEEDS THE PALESTINIANS, SAYS KNESSET MEMBER

'WE WILL not have peace for Israel without peace for the Palestinians; there is no future for Israel without a future for the Palestinians,' said Michael Melchior, a former Chief Rabbi of Norway and former Deputy Foreign Minister of Israel.

'Religion is not a side issue,' he stressed, 'it is at the heart of the issue. The bad news is that religions can be the gateway to hell. The good news is that there is another way.' We must leave space for the other, he continued. There are some who seek a conflict of civilizations, 'but the real clash has to be within, inside each civilization, with the totalitarian elements within our civilizations, our religions, and even inside ourselves—there is no better option'. The main fault with the peace process so far was that it had ignored the religious and ethnic dimension, he claimed.

NEW BOOK



Brian Boobbyer was one of the outstanding sportsmen of his generation. This collection of short pieces reflects his faith, his love of nature and literature, and his passion for sport.

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Tackling communal violence in Nigeria

TWO NIGERIANS spoke side by side of their work to reconcile Muslim and Christian in Kaduna, northern Nigeria—after having taken part in inter-religious violence themselves.

Imam Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa, the Imam of Kaduna, and the Rev James Movel Wuye, are the Joint Directors of the Inter-Faith Mediation Centre in their city.

'We were two militant religious activists,' said the Imam, 'but now we are working to create space, not just for peace, but also for the transformation of society.'

Movel Wuye continued, 'We were programmed to hate one another, to Islamize or evangelize at all costs. This threatens the very existence of Nigeria.'

'We were both victims of the situation that we had both had a part in creating,' Nurayn Ashafa added. His spiritual master and two brothers had been killed by Christian militias; Movel Wuye had lost an arm in the violence.

'What motivated us to transform hate into love, vengeance into reconciliation?' the Imam asked. 'In our hearts, we were weeping, but we were still full of hate.' A turning point had come when he heard another Imam preaching in the mosque at Friday prayers about the power of forgiveness, and the example of the Prophet. This had led to a war within, he said. Then embracing Movel Wuye beside him, he added, 'he is no more an enemy but a friend.'

Movel Wuye said that it had taken him three years to overcome his hatred and to start to trust the Imam. The process had started when Nurayn Ashafa had visited him after his mother died. An American evangelist had told him that you cannot preach to someone you hate. 'He was radiating love, but I'd been blinded by hate and pain,' he added. Now they were working with other spiritual leaders, 'to create space for peace and understanding'.

JOANNA MARGUERITTE (3)

Left to right: Imam Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa and Rev James Movel Wuye, Nigeria

CAUX CONFERENCES 2005

CAUX 2005

7 July–20 August
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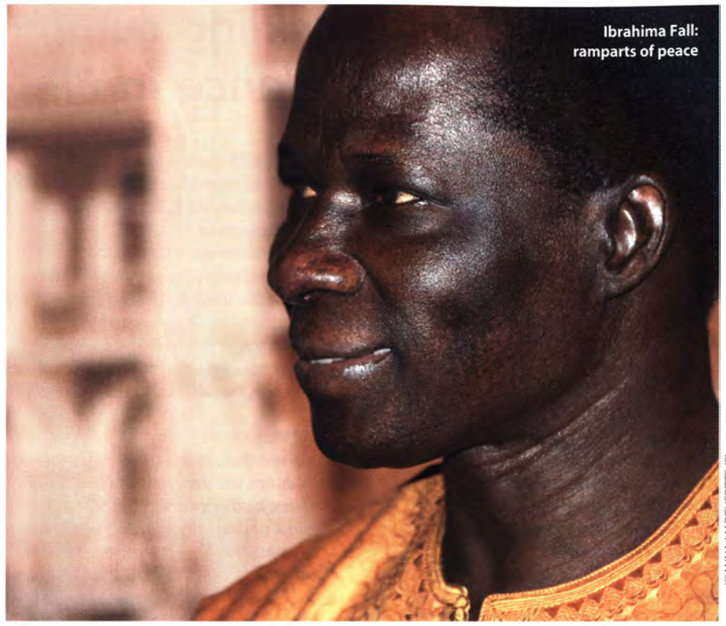
CAUX CONFERENCES 2004


Ibrahima Fall: ramparts of peace

JOANNA MARGUERITTE (2)

Great Lakes encounter

Frédéric Chavanne reports on a meeting of people from one of Africa's most turbulent regions

'WAR IS born in the human spirit. And it's in the human spirit that the ramparts of peace must be erected,' said Ibrahima Fall, echoing the preamble of UNESCO's constitution. As Kofi Annan's Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa, Fall is coordinating the international conference on the peace, security and development of the Great Lakes region which will take place in November, organized by the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union.

Fall was in Caux to take part in a meeting of IofC's Great Lakes programme, which for the last four years has sought to support peace initiatives in the region. Fall expressed his wish for cooperation between IofC, the national committees preparing the November conference and civil society in the Great Lakes region.

The meeting at Caux began on 13 August, the day when 160 Banyamulenge refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo were massacred in a camp in Burundi. This weighed all the more on the exchanges at Caux because a member of the affected community was taking part. The international community has condemned the killings and has committed itself to finding and punishing the perpetrators. But, as a Congolese participant commented, 'It is all of us Congolese who are responsible. In so far as we do not cure the politics of exclusion which made the Banyamulenges into pariahs, condemned to living in camps outside our country, we allow such massacres to happen.'

IofC believes that, if the UN/AU/EU conference is not to turn into a vast tribunal with everyone accusing each other, delegates should go through a process of examining the past—so that they can understand the reasons for the madness which has plunged their countries into torment. Suspicion, fear, frustration—both within and between the countries—must be overcome, particularly in the three countries which since the early 1960s have formed the epicentre of the main explosions of violence. Every Burundian, Rwandan and Congolese must look at the things in himself which have hurt, thwarted or humiliated the other, so that a frank and sincere dialogue can take place.

These days in Caux made a modest contribution to creating trust and understanding between people returning to these countries in conflict.

AID IS NOT ENOUGH

SADAKO OGATA, President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, spoke of the need for a 'seamless harmony' between 'humanitarian action' and 'development assistance'.

Humanitarian action and development assistance had to be seen as complementary, she insisted, working on common principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

But there were tragic ambiguities. Bringing together refugees in camps in order to feed and care for them had also provided soft targets for killer groups—as, recently, on the border between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo—but agencies' absence from such conflict regions likewise condemned refugees to certain death.

She expressed the hope that more effort could be made towards tackling the root causes of conflicts—and she had already taken pioneering steps in this direction, as head of the UNHCR. All too often there was 'unbearable frustration amid the lack of political solutions', and even worse, 'humanitarian assistance became a fig-leaf for political inaction'. There needed to be 'a commitment to a long-term healing process,' she said. In the aftermath of ethnic, religious or tribal wars, 'fought door to door, between neighbours', the trust between people was destroyed, the social fabric torn. Refugees could return home, but their social relations with the communities where they live had to be rebuilt.


Sadako Ogata: 'seamless harmony'

WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF FORGIVENESS?

I WAS 14 at the time of the partition of India. My uncle died and my family lost their home and possessions. My parents never spoke about this period or laid blame. However, those events came back to me many years later at an interfaith meeting when a man apologized for the mistakes the British had made in India. I shared the pain I had felt at the time of partition. At the same time I acknowledged the good things the British had done in India.

Influenced by friends who believed that change in the world started with oneself, my wife and I decided that we would move forward together in faith into the future God wanted to give us. This came in an unexpected way when we were invited to attend a conference in India on the theme of 'Reflection, Healing and Reconciliation'. I spoke at the conference about my family's experiences at the partition of India. I concluded by apologizing as a Muslim to Hindus and Sikhs for the violence at that time. The graciousness of their response over-whelmed me and I felt a sense of release.

These first steps in healing and reconciliation helped me to tackle divisions in my extended family and to communicate with honesty and sincerity. For me, forgiveness is the key to happiness.

Idrees Khan, Cardiff, UK

IT WAS a good friend who said to me, 'Until you forgive him you will not be free. The unforgiveness in your heart will weigh you down and hold you back.'

At that moment I knew there was no other way to go on but to forgive. Not because the person who had wronged me had asked for it or because he'd done something to redeem himself but because Christ forgave me... and in doing so asks that I do likewise.

I understood this but I guess I kept waiting until I could forgive him honestly. I was waiting to feel ready to forgive him... but as a wise counsellor challenged me, 'If you wait until you *feel* it—it may very well never happen.' She went on, 'Instead see forgiving him as a step of faith. In faith forgive him and watch as God heals your heart.'

Not an easy thing to do. But I did it. And I continue to do it.

Until then I had always thought of forgiveness as a process; that it takes time to forgive. But I now realize that forgiveness is a decision. It is an act we must choose if we are to move in to the process of healing.

Bek Dutton, Adelaide, Australia

SOME YEARS ago I saw the musical about St Francis, *Poor Man, Rich Man*. In it there was a song, 'Grab that crab, before that crab grabs you'—the crab of bitterness. It told of an experience of St Francis when he was bitter towards his friends because they did not faithfully follow his teaching.

The next morning in a time of reflection I realized that I was bitter towards several colleagues in the church because they had opposed an initiative that was dear to my heart. I asked for God's forgiveness and decided that I would rebuild the friendship with these colleagues. In a remarkable way, within a short time, this happened. The barriers fell away and unity and peace were restored.

Rev Lindsay Cartwright, Trigg, W Australia

WE HAD just become engaged and were 'floating on a cloud'.

As we sat together in our car, I knew that this was the moment that I must be totally honest about things in my life of which I was deeply ashamed. She must know the kind of fellow I had been even if it meant she might change her mind.

Hesitantly, I told her the worst. I did not know what to expect. She turned to me with a wonderful smile and said, 'You know, this just makes me love you all the more.' I was so moved. It also helped me to understand more deeply what God's love and forgiveness means.

Next week, we celebrate our 29th year of marriage.

David Hind, Redditch, UK

TO FORGIVE is to let go no matter what, just as God did for us in Christ Jesus. But sometimes I found out it is not so easy for me to let go. Sometimes I will say it with my mouth but it is not settled in my heart. And even if after saying it to a brother or sister, I will be scared to do anything again with him or her.

Just like a brother I prayed for and gave him some money to return back later, but he did not. So for me indeed I forgave him but since then I refused to give him again. But that is not forgiveness.

So forgiveness is to let go of any wrong done to you by anyone and never count on it for tomorrow's dealings.

Sam Nwoborth, Kano, Nigeria

NEXT ISSUE:

WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED FROM LOSING?

UP TO 200 WORDS BY 11 OCT, 2004, TO: EDITORS@FORACHANGE.CO.UK

DATELINE ASIA

NIGEL HEYWOOD

KARIN PETERS

Breaking the legacy of hatred

'My family is extreme and they find it hard to accept things from other people and places,' says an Indonesian student. 'But step by step my heart is opening and I can accept people from different religions and countries.' Throughout Asia there have been many conflicts in the last century and much reason for hatred and misunderstanding. Does this hatred have to be passed on from one generation to the next? The experience of three students from Malaysia and Indonesia show that the chain can be broken.

Nandor Lim was born in Malaysia in 1974, five years after violence broke out between its Malay and Chinese communities. As a Chinese, his grandparents warned him against having contact with Malays, Muslims and Indians.

When Lim turned 15 his parents separated. 'I was betrayed by my closest relatives; not by Malays, Muslims or Indians,' he says. 'Anger, hopelessness and self-pity became a part of my character. I built a large wall to defend myself.'

He left his family for six years. Then in 1999 a friend challenged him to return home and stay with the family member that he hated the most. Since then he has rebuilt his relationship with his parents and experienced deep healing within himself.

'What surprised me the most,' he says, 'is that as soon as I changed my attitude, the way I treated the Malays and the Indians also changed. Now that I have matured, I can throw away everything which is unhelpful and invent something new. Now I can say I am a Hakka, I am a Chinese, and I am also proud to be a Malaysian.'

In mid-2004, Lim traveled to Indonesia. There he met Mohammed Bachrul Ilmi, a Muslim student. Ilmi told him that he had been brought up to hate the Chinese—a hatred increased by the fact that many Indonesian Chinese are Christian. Even though he knew that many Chinese people had been raped and mistreated in the riots which took place in Indonesia when he was in high school, he could not remove the hatred in his heart.

He began to spend time in silence searching as to what he should do. He decided to visit the Chinese Confucianist community. He learnt that 'they hated me because they were trained by their parents to hate Muslims'. As he and Lim talked day by day, his heart changed. 'Thanks to God I now love the Chinese.'

Like Ilmi, Wardhana Dipa was at high school during the intercommunal riots in Indonesia. As a Chinese Confucianist, he developed a great fear of Muslims. From an early age his father had told him not to trust them. 'His prejudice was passed on to me,' says Dipa. 'I didn't understand it, but it grew stronger and made me confused. It's strange as my best friends in school were non-Chinese. At times I felt so sorry to be born into a Chinese/Confucianist family. I often felt it would have been better to be born into a Muslim Indonesian family.' He also felt that his people were discriminated against by the government.

It took him a long time to work through his prejudices. Then he had a realization: 'I am Chinese but I am also an Indonesian citizen. I am free to think that I am both Chinese and Indonesian.'

For Dipa meeting other people, like Lim and Ilmi, who believed that 'the chain of hate and fear has to be torn apart' was inspiring. 'The three of us are a part of today's generation who realize this legacy of mistrust has to be broken down.'

Young people everywhere face similar decisions. How will our choices affect what we pass on to our children?

__Nigel Heywood__ is an Australian fine arts graduate. This is his last article written while travelling in Asia with IofC's 'Action for Life' training programme.

REFLECTIONS

MARY LEAN

Daybreak

JOANNA MARGUERITTE

7.15 AM. A small group gathers in the bay window of the great meeting hall in Mountain House, Caux, looking out across Lake Geneva to the mountains beyond. Afghan, Egyptian, Lebanese, Swiss, Australian, Moldovan, American, British; Christian, Muslim; young and old—we come together to share the silence before the hubbub of the conference day begins.

Each day someone offers a few words of reflection. One morning, it's a young American, who describes his journey to forgiving after the fatal mugging of a friend. On another, it's a member of the coordination group of Switzerland's six major development charities on the struggle to strike a balance between action and comtemplation.

Then it's my turn—a challenge with such a diverse group. I talk about my experience of God's love, and the wonder of it: the love of the parent waiting with open arms as the toddler staggers unsteadily towards them; the face that lights up at the sight of us. 'There is nothing you can do to make God love you more,' writes the American, Philip Yancy. 'There is nothing you can do to make God love you less.' With all the pressures we put upon ourselves in this achievement-driven world, it's sometimes a struggle to hang onto the truth that God delights in us, just as we are.

As I stop, the sound of a reed pipe floats up from the terrace below, where a group of indigenous people from different countries are welcoming the new day with a ceremony of their own.

We listen to the music, to a poem, and then, in the silence, reach for that place of stillness within where we meet God—and ourselves. Outside the birds fly to and fro between the trees to the balconies.

When it is time to leave, I pray aloud and invite others to do the same. No one responds, but to my alarm one of the Muslims gets up and leaves the group. Have I offended him in some way?

And then I realize that, just behind our semicircle of chairs, he is prostrating himself in prayer. 'I prayed in my own way,' he explains to me later. And offers me a quotation from Islamic holy writings:

'My son, love me, I love you. And when I love you, I become your eye with which you see, your ear with which you hear, your hand with which you work, your foot with which you seek.'