

WHEN PRESIDENT CARTER entered office almost a year ago he stressed making Government responsible to the ordinary person. To that end, he has been more candid with the American people than perhaps any previous President. His blunt challenge to cut down on the excessive use of energy attracted world attention. But the results have been disappointing. Self-interested groups have enormously complicated the task. Something more is needed: a change in the basic motives of people. In Richmond, Virginia, evidence that this is beginning to happen was presented at a conference of Moral Re-Armament on the theme, 'Richmond—a model city'. It was the culmination of a week-long action at the end of 1977, which is described in this issue prepared by our correspondents in the United States.

NEW WORLD NEWS

EDITORS

Vol 26 No 8 7 Jan 1978 7p

Richmond-A Model City?

'OUR CITY CAN BE and ought to be a model for the nation.' This was the vision given last March by the new Mayor of Richmond, Virginia, Henry L Marsh III. The task of translating this vision into practical reality was the thrust of a citizens' initiative that brought people from 15 states and from Canada, as well as from Brazil, Australia, Europe, Africa and the West Indies.

At first glance, Richmond seems an unlikely city to become a pattern for the nation. A city of 250,000, just 100 miles south of Washington, DC, it was, a century ago, capital of the 11 states that seceded from the United States over the issue of slavery; could it now under the leadership of its first black Mayor pioneer relations between races, where there is neither inferiority nor superiority? Presently it is experiencing all the stresses created when middle-class families abandon a city's schools and tax rolls for the more comfortable security of suburbs beyond the deep boundaries; can such a city hope to deal effectively with unemployment and poverty? Capital city of Virginia, a city that has given the country seven Presidents, from George Washington to Woodrow Wilson, Richmond is supremely conscious and understandably proud of its heritage; can a city still rooted in the past anticipate and take on its heart the growing needs of the nation and the world?

A group of some 30 Richmonders took their Mayor's vision seriously. They visited each of the city's nine Councillors and several other Richmond personalities seeking advice and voicing their readiness to do whatever was needed. The Mayor met with them for a relaxed and frank talk about the needs of the city.

'I am glad that though there is no major crisis in the city right now you are on the offensive,' commented a prominent black clergyman. All the community leaders made it clear that a solid core of citizens deeply committed to the city already exists. The need was not for more technical experts, but for people with the secret of bringing trust between diverse elements.

Citizens' initiative

Invitations were sent across the country. 85 people responded, putting aside their work and other commitments. They took part in a three-fold action:

1 A broad program of visits in schools, homes and such offices as those of the giant multi-national Reynolds Metals, the trade unions and one of the main civil rights organizations.

2 Private meetings during which the participants found a unity of spirit and purpose and sought to heighten in themselves the qualities needed in the community.

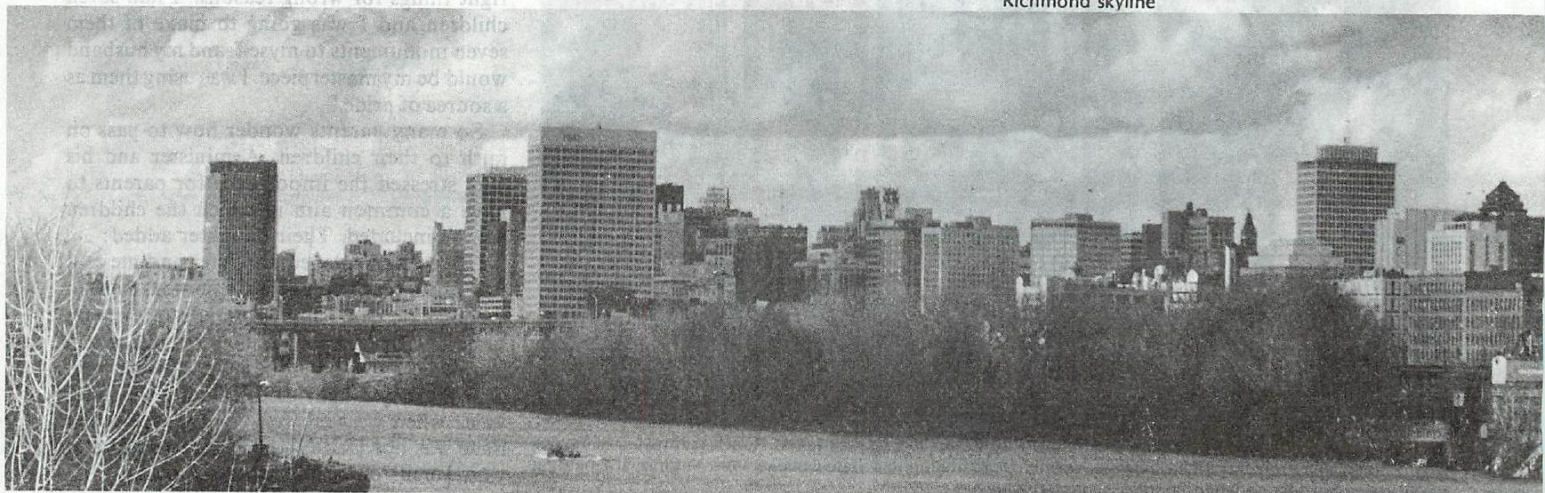
3 Public meetings and a one day conference on the theme, 'Richmond—a model city'. Each session focused on some particular issue.

By the end of the weekend there was an expanded force of ordinary citizens who recognize that the model city will be built on people who change and decide to be responsible. Some of the 250 Richmonders who attended went home more determined to bring their faith and energies to bear on city, national and, if possible, international affairs. Conrad Hunte, famous cricketer from the West Indies, perhaps best captured the purpose and vision of this 'citizens' initiative'. To a packed public meeting which was remarked upon as being equally representative of the black and white community, he spoke on the subject 'Bridging barriers between peoples—a global issue':

'If a man says that he loves God and hates his neighbor he has told a lie. And if a man or woman be in Christ he becomes a new person with a new mind and a new heart and a new personality, not adjusted but transformed. For the world to take seriously the urgent need for a new civilization based on new men with new motives, a city may have to pioneer the new type of personalities and the new type of policies needed. Maybe that is Richmond's destiny.'

RICHARD RUFFIN

Richmond skyline



Richmond Newspapers

New World News 7 January 1978

A MAJOR AIM of the conference was to explore in small groups certain specific issues of concern to the city and nation. Leif Hovelsen of Norway led a provocative discussion entitled 'The relevance of human rights'. He drew on his meetings and friendships with many of the dissidents who have left the Soviet Union in recent years.

Another session focussed on unemployment, in particular among black teenagers where, despite dedicated work by many agencies, the figure is 40 per cent. Howard Murray, former President of the Richmond Central Labor Council, pointed out that Government programmes needed to be supplemented by private initiatives. A banker told a story illustrating how God could make an ordinary individual effective. A customer whose firm was on the verge of bankruptcy came to him with his mortgage. Rather than turn him down as a bad risk, the banker found an answer to the antagonistic attitudes that were jeopardizing the firm's existence. Over 400 jobs were saved.

Further working sessions were held on education and on family life.



No problem child

'ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN. There is no such thing as a problem child, but there are children with problems,' said a teacher of ten and eleven-year-olds to some forty people attending the education working session. 'We need to take the time to look into the child's problems,' she continued.

Mrs Dunn had changed her plans to attend the workshop with a second member of her team of four teachers at a public elementary school located in a poor black neighborhood. They came to share their experiences of giving character training to children who come from difficult home situations. Their participation was characteristic of the fruitful collaboration with the Richmond Public School system during the week-long action in the city.

Mrs Dunn's colleague, Mrs Chambliss, described how the team used posters, popular songs with original wording, TV and role-playing to help pupils learn respect and concern for others, unselfishness and other values. Films and speakers brought by Richmonders associated with the work of MRA have also been a frequent feature. The school

provides a 'quiet period in which children can listen to their inner voice and see how to handle problems, sort out their feelings and determine their goals,' she continued. 'The children know what is right, but need help sticking to it.'

The working session was co-chaired by Richmond's Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, Mrs Lois Jones, and Miss Sara Ensor, recently retired Maryland teacher. It discussed the challenge of providing character education in an environment where many teachers hesitate to speak about values, because of a Supreme Court decision banning formal prayer in public schools. But, as Mrs Jones so clearly put it, 'There is still acceptable behaviour,' and she has personally urged teachers 'not to be afraid to talk about what is right and wrong'.

Slide reversed

During the previous week speakers went to four of Richmond's public schools to talk on subjects ranging from Russian dissidents and drama to separatism in Quebec. People also had the opportunity to meet with both past and present heads of the council of Parent Teacher Organizations for the city. The week provided evidence that the downward slide that has gripped so many schools is beginning to be reversed.

Resigned from 25 committees

'I HAVE COME TO LEARN how to get my husband to change his ways,' whispered a young teacher as the family session was about to start. She was among some eighty people who gathered in the spacious chapel of St Catherine's School to explore the theme 'Family life—what is missing?'

A common aim, family meals, patience, discipline, listening to each other were some of the missing elements suggested by the participants.

A young woman, mother of two, began: 'I was a self-centred builder in both family and community with aims no larger than ego and the project at hand.' She went on to describe how she had been changed by God into a builder who cared about a new spirit and unity within the family. This in turn had spilled over into truer priorities and commitments in the community. One day she resigned from 25 of the committees she was on. 'I felt God telling me, "It is not bad for you to be president of this or that but I want you to learn the privilege of being a wife and a mother,"' she said. 'For two or three years I was just that. Then God gradually nudged me back out in the community. But by then I had learned to listen to Him, and in turn to my husband and children. Today, though we don't always agree, we have trust and honesty in the family.'

The wife of a trade unionist told of doing the right things for wrong reasons. 'I had seven children and I was going to make of them seven monuments to myself, and my husband would be my masterpiece. I was using them as a source of pride.'

So many parents wonder how to pass on faith to their children. A minister and his wife stressed the importance for parents to have a common aim in which the children can be included. Their daughter added:

'Three elements led my sister and me to a real faith. Our parents had a commitment to God which came first. Secondly they were honest with us about their struggles which enabled us to be honest with them too. Thirdly they taught us to listen to the inner voice when we were very young so that the issue was not Daddy's or Mummy's point of view versus ours, but what is right.'

PHOTOS BY TERENCE BLAIR



Councilman Walter T. Kenney, of the Richmond City Council (left) with James Houck (centre), a Baltimore businessman, and Professor Richard Brown, former Dean of Bluefield State College, West Virginia, at a meeting on 'Bridging barriers between peoples—a global issue'.



Winston Jones, mail carrier with the US Postal Service and father of ten.

White flight stopped

WINSTON AND JANENE JONES live with their ten children in one of the few successfully integrated neighborhoods in the Richmond area. A steady stream of friends and neighbors pours through their small, but well-kept home. They have had to work hard to feed and clothe their children, often overcoming great obstacles. Before becoming a letter-carrier, Winston worked as one of first blacks on the production line of a large chemical plant. The other workers would not even call him by name. They thought he should eat with the janitors and for almost a year refused to sit at the same table with him. That was only thirteen years ago.

From the earliest days of their marriage, the Joneses decided to live out their faith in the most practical way and to give leadership in bringing change. But four years ago when they met with Moral Re-Armament, Janene says, 'We were at the end of our rope.'

Since then, despite problems of home, community and city, the Joneses have opened their heart and home to the whole world. At one point, Janene visited Quebec to meet French and English-speaking Canadians in Quebec. Upon her return she said, 'I knew that I was going to really have to make a change. I was going to have to be serious about being honest and unselfish and having a pure heart and love in my heart for all. And I found out that you can change. Now I'm not what I ought to be but I am not what I used to be.'

This is the story the Joneses told at the opening session in Richmond's down-town Sheraton Hotel.



Mrs Winston Jones (Janene) who brought light to the streets of 'the candlelight community'.

JANENE: I have lived in Richmond all my life. First I lived on Church Hill, in an area which I guess might have been called a slum. In a family of five I was the only girl. We had a three-room home. We shared the front porch with our neighbors, also the back yard and the bathroom, which was outside. At school many of the books were third or fourth hand. It was a depressing situation.

At the age of 18 I was married. We moved into a small apartment in South Richmond. We moved down on a Thursday. That Friday morning I woke up and I heard all this noise outside. I found out that my neighbors were celebrating. They got intoxicated every Friday morning and stayed that way through Friday night, all day Saturday and all day Sunday. In that area there was a 9th Street gang, a 10th Street gang, and an 11th Street gang. We lived on 11th Street.

We were tempted to draw into our shell, but we decided to show them another way. It got so that I could walk without Winston in the streets of South Richmond and the rough people in the neighborhood would say: 'There goes Mr Winston's wife. Don't bother her.' And when the children were outside playing or in the park, I did not have to worry because they knew that these were Mr Winston's children.

Then we moved to West 30th Street. It was just the perfect neighborhood. We had a playground close by, we were near Forest Hill Park. Schools—I've got ten children, so schools are very important—there were good schools in the area.

But after we had been there awhile I found out that our white neighbors—because we had white as well as black neighbors—feared speaking to us. If black and white children were fighting in the street nobody would get involved. We realized we would have to do something about it.

WINSTON: A lady came by one day and she talked to Janene about forming a community association. I got home from work and Janene told me the lady was coming back at seven o'clock. Up till that time we had never had anyone of the other race visit our house so I was looking for one of us. But it didn't happen that way. The lady came back and she was a white lady from Tennessee, and I was sure then that there was no way that this thing could get off the ground.

But we began to discuss issues and the fact that the whites were afraid of the blacks and were moving out. And not only were they moving out but they were raising the prices of their homes. We wanted to stop white flight. We wanted to bring in people

who would be interested in the community. We wanted white neighbors to speak to their black neighbors on the street without looking over their shoulders to see who was watching.

JANENE: One great need was to have light on the street at night. So we asked if each family would keep their outside lights on all night. During 1973 we were called 'the candlelight community' because everyone did this.

We had tracts printed and we took them from door to door. At first it didn't look as if it would work at all.

Many of our black friends called us the token niggers, and said we were just getting involved to get a taste of black into this organization. Once we scheduled a meeting at the park, and nobody came!

WINSTON: One night Janene and I said, 'Let's take the meeting to our house.' There was a gasp all over the whole room and people began to turn around and look because they didn't know what to think of this, even though we were planning a community association. They couldn't bring themselves to realize that if it was going to be a community, it was going to have to be for all of us. It would have to be something from the heart, not just something from the books.

We wanted better street lights, we wanted our alleys graded, we wanted trees planted, we wanted sidewalks, but we really wanted to break down the barriers in our hearts and minds and attitudes. The physical improvements came easy. But eliminating the barriers came much harder. It is not easy to cast off ideas and suppositions that have been with you all your life. It is not easy to lay aside fears and frustrations that have been a part of you. But we knew that the community association would not be a success until this had happened, until we were able to meet as people and as friends.

It happened. It was not an overnight thing but it happened. People got so that they knew their neighbors and were glad to be a part of Woodland Heights. White flight stopped. Blacks moved out, whites moved in; whites moved out, blacks moved in. And it far surpassed anything we expected the first night we met in my home, this Tennessee couple, and my wife and myself. I am not saying that all attitudes have changed, because that is going to take time. But I know my children are going to have something entirely different from what my wife and myself went through.



Rear-Admiral Denton (left) with Howard Murray, former President of the Richmond Central Labour Council.

Compassionate foreign policy

by Rear-Admiral Jeremiah A Denton, Jr, USN (Ret)

Rear-Admiral Denton was one of the first pilots shot down and captured in North Vietnam and received national acclaim for his heroic response to seven and a half years of arduous, often solitary imprisonment. He was later Commandant of the Armed Forces Staff College. Following his retirement Admiral Denton became a special assistant to the President of Springhill College in Alabama. He has founded an organization called the Coalition for Decency with the purpose of reversing the drift towards more permissive programming on TV. He spoke on the theme 'Making democracy work—the challenge to the ordinary person'.

An idea all want

by Luis Pulg
Senior Manager with VARIG Airlines of Brazil

'I WAS A MARXIST. I hated America. I did not want to speak a word of English because I hated Americans so much.

I came to a Moral Re-Armament conference in America. I met a capitalist who had changed, and people from the extreme left who had found something more revolutionary than the Marxism I had learned. They were living a moral discipline. They knew the kind of a world they wanted to build and they were doing it. I went back to my Catholic faith; I put right every single resentment and hatred that I had in my heart. I found myself loving this country, not with a sentimental love of someone who says "Oh America is so nice—I'd like to go there for a vacation." No! As a matter of fact I have never been here on holiday.

The day I decided to change, I started to meet Americans man to man. I learned the language—very fast. I feel I am ready to give my life with any American anywhere to transmit these ideas. You have here a treasure

'I WOULD LIKE TO START with a word about MRA. I am always very impressed with the people associated with this work. They don't come and go with presidential elections. They don't follow any particular line, not even the American one. But they have followed lines which are in the interests of the US in every case I have known. Selfishness defeats yourself, your country, your perspective. To combat selfishness is what MRA is all about. This is why I am here tonight.

'Making democracy work is related to our capacity for change. It requires a partial conquest of selfishness in the hearts of a sufficient number of citizens. Partial conquest because few, if any, of us can become wholly unselfish. Experiencing pain and deprivation was the start of my change. Change usually requires some pain, an imposed situation. Those who have changed out of their free will deserve more praise.

'Our system of government relies on voluntary discipline and compassion. If we look at the last 200 years it has functioned imperfectly but effectively. Every major change except for the civil war was undergone without violence. The issue today is whether a generally affluent society can arrest a growing tendency to become selfish.

'I retired from the service not because of a distaste for it or for the government I was serving, but because I was convinced that the remedial action has to be taken elsewhere. The pollution in our country is coming from our number one socializing agent, television.

that brings to reality the traditions of the founders of America and if we live this reality and use all means of communication to reach millions, you will have an idea which the Russians, the Chinese, the Latin Americans, the Africans, the Asians—everybody will want.'



Mr Carter and his government have had to become fully aware of the power of TV which more than anything else shapes the national consensus. In the light of that consensus, they have had to rule out a number of actions which they knew were vital to the interests of this country and of freedom in the world.

Peace is not just the absence of war. We can't back away from our responsibilities to the rest of the world. At the beginning of our history we adopted compassion as a principle for our domestic politics. But out of necessity it was not applied to our foreign policy. We have been generous to other countries often since, but it has been more a spontaneous manifestation. We need now to adopt compassion as a principle in our international dealings, otherwise our efforts will backfire.

Warning tribute

'May I finish by quoting Carlos P Romulo, Foreign Minister of the Philippines, who spent 17 years in our country and who said to America as he left these shores: "What I have to say now in parting is both a tribute and a warning. Never forget, America, that yours is a spiritual country. Yes, I know you are a practical people. I marvel at your factories, your sky-scrapers and your arsenal. But underlying everything else is the fact that America began as a God-loving, God-fearing, God-worshipping people. May God keep you always, and may you always keep God."

Three who have done much to shape the life of Richmond: Oliver W Hill, who has been for many years one of the principal legal brains of the civil rights movement (right) shakes hands with Mrs Blair Buck, former National President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Mrs Buck's husband was a leading figure in the Virginia educational system and did much to keep the schools open at the time of 'massive resistance' to integration. In the centre is A H Todd, Assistant City Manager of Richmond.