

## CLEANING THE SLATE – UNE PAGE NOUVELLE – REINEN TISCH MACHEN

This phrase, pictured differently in English, French and German, expresses a basic concept of Moral Re-Armament – of making a fresh start by putting something right. It is the general theme for the 1999 Caux summer conferences, and it is the title of a nation-wide campaign in Britain which suggests that this last year before the turn of the millennium could be used by every citizen to take some simple steps to clean the slate.

We would like to invite all World Bulletin readers to share, in this column, experiences of putting right some wrong, leading to new discoveries and developments in our lives. The editors will give space during the next ten months for such stories, which can be anonymous or signed. The only condition is that they are recent. We believe that the clean slate theme – and its equivalent in other languages – could be a great gift to our MRA fellowship as well as to the world. It could help us rediscover the spiritual essence of our life and calling, and bring new joy and confidence into all our lives – as it has already begun to do.

To start the ball rolling, here is a very recent experience from one of us:

'A close colleague "exploded" at me over the phone during what I thought would be a friendly conversation about a practical matter. She felt strongly about quite a few things, and these came out in no uncertain terms. I was devastated by what she said, but even more by the fact that I had been totally unaware of these feelings. The days that followed were difficult but turned out to be most helpful. I "took stock" of my life, my tasks and overall calling, and my way of approaching others. I took the chance to re-commit my life to God's service, and discovered a new joy. When I called this friend back, she was shaken by the "earthquake" she had provoked in me. We still have concrete things to work out but the friendship and the transparent trust returned quite effortlessly. And we both look forward to the things we undertake together.'

Some of the things that weigh us down may seem more difficult to deal with. Yet it seems to us that there is always one end of the picture where we can come in and make even a modest step that might begin to alter the situation. We believe that there are many gifts of freedom, joy, fellowship and adventure which will be given as we deal with hurts, fears, unease, things that weigh on our conscience – so much of which holds us back from entering the new millennium with total confidence in God.

*Marianne and Christoph Spreng  
Elisabeth and Edward Peters*

## 'FORMULAE FOR INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY'

When Allan Griffith died last November, *The Canberra Times* described him as 'a trail-blazer in Australian foreign policy', and four of our major daily newspapers carried an obituary. In his last years, Allan applied his experience to documenting several important recent breakthroughs in peacemaking. He did this from Oxford, where he became a Visiting Fellow of Oriel College. The resulting book, *Conflict and Resolution*, is a study of the steps which led from war to the ballot box in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Cambodia. Allan finished it just weeks before his death.

The book was launched at Melbourne's Institute of International Affairs on February 16. Former Australian Governor-General Sir Zelman Cowen described Allan as 'a man of great integrity and of great enthusiasm'. Lieutenant-General John Sanderson, who commanded the UN peace-keeping force in Cambodia from 1991 to 1993, and then was Chief of the Australian Army, spoke of the book's optimistic approach. 'I see optimism as wholly positive and a worthy sentiment in an author who enjoins us to regard the future as something we can take control of if we are motivated by deep spiritual and moral concern for our fellow human beings,' he said. 'This book marks Allan Griffith as such a man.' He hoped that this 'remarkable merit of Allan Griffith's work' would gain 'wide recognition both as an historical text and as a formulae construction of international diplomacy'.

*Tom Ramsay*

## AFR BUILDS ON THE PAST, LOOKS TO FUTURE

Following the preparation meeting for the Caux session 'Agenda for Reconciliation' in Strasbourg, France, Belgian Member of the European Parliament Fernand Herman hosted the participants for two days in the European Parliament. We met 20 MEPs.

Among MEPs who briefed us were Leo Tindemans, former Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, now a member of the subcommittee on Security and Disarmament, and Michel Rocard, former Prime Minister of France, now President of the Committee on Development and Cooperation. There was considerable interest in our new brochure, 'Agenda for Reconciliation (AfR) – a global trust-building network', which outlines MRA's approach and contribution over the years.

Distinguished public figures have agreed to join an AfR International Advisory Council, and an international Steering Committee.

We hope that this programme will support those who have been inspired by MRA to engage in peace-making work in its many different aspects.

One of AfR's first ventures has been to publish, in English and Russian, a talk by Pierre Spoerri, entitled 'Frank Buchman and his philosophy of reconciliation'. This and the AfR brochure (in English and French) are available from: Peter Riddell, 12a Norham Road, Oxford OX2 6SF UK; email: <afr@mra.org.uk>. (Contributions to costs would be welcome.)

*Oksana Kitayeva and Peter Riddell*

### UK SCHOOLS PROGRAMME NEEDS SUPPORT

After giving a great deal in 40 schools last term, Goretti Nguyen has moved on to India where she is helping with MRA training courses. Since Christmas Danielly, Allison and I have been joined by Bhavesh Patel from Manchester, who has left his job in Barclays Bank to work with us.

We are now in the middle of a programme in 24 London schools, arranged by Allison Kenny. Our theme is 'Approaching 2000. A Chance to Rethink'. We find the 'Clean Slate Campaign' helps focus the need for personal change. One girl said after our class, 'Each week we think about different issues but what's been really good about today is that we've also thought about our own lives.'

In the weeks ahead, besides further work in London, we have invitations to Nottingham, Oxford, Wiltshire, Worcester and Brighton. We have to break into two teams; but this is only a temporary solution as the demand increases. If you know of people who might like to join our team, I would be grateful to hear.

*Howard Grace*

(Howard has recently produced a booklet of a dozen of his Sixth Form assemblies over recent years. They cover a wide variety of topics from 'Valentine's Day' and 'How did God Begin?' to 'Freedom isn't Free', and are of particular interest to teachers and students. They cost £2.50 each but he would be happy to send you one free if you don't have a UK bank account. Please write to him at 15 Lewis Walk, Newbury, Berks, RG146TB, UK or phone (+44 1635 47196. e-mail:<hmgrace@aol.com>)

### SUPPORTING INITIATIVES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The next Consultation begins on March 4 in South Africa. After it ends on March 12 actions will take place in several parts of the country. Some delegates from abroad have agreed to extend their stay so as to support the initiatives of our MRA teams, for example:

- \* Witbank, heart of the coal-mining industry in Mpumalanga Province: Rob Corcoran and others will speak to a meeting of civic and provincial leaders on the 'Hope in the Cities' programme.
- \* Durban and Pietermaritzburg in Kwa-Zulu Natal Province: visits to families in the region and the Mahatma Gandhi Ashram at Phoenix.
- \* Gauteng Province: a public seminar on 'Hope for the

New Millennium' will be held in the King-Luthuli Transformation Centre in Johannesburg on March 13. Some will take part in leadership training programmes in schools and meet community leaders in Johannesburg, Soweto and KwaThema.

\* Cape Town, seat of Parliament, Western Cape Province: meetings with the Intercessory Network, comprised of MPs from most of the political parties, and with other politicians, religious, business and educational leaders in the communities.

\* Elim in the Northern Province: meeting people involved in education and health services.

\* Bisho, Stutterheim, Graaff Reinet in the Eastern Cape: meeting people contributing to agricultural, community and business life.

The presence of our world team with their collective experience can be used by God to open doors that could enable MRA to play its full role in the ongoing changes in our country.

These people have confirmed their participation in the Consultation:

Reg Barry - SA, Collie Burton - USA, Rob Corcoran - USA, Marta Dabrowska - Poland, Amina Dikedi - Nigeria, Lawrence Fearon - UK, Harry Ferngren - Sweden, Lise Gagnon - Canada, Ailsa Hamilton - UK, Bryan Hamlin - USA, James Hore-Ruthven - UK, Bhanu Kale - India, Joseph Karanga - Kenya, Abel Katito - Zimbabwe, Suresh Khatri - Fiji, Mary Lean - UK, Claire Leggat - UK/NZ, Ren-Jou Liu - Taiwan, Patrick McNamara - USA, Mona Marzouk - Egypt/UK, Snowy Mohlala - SA, S'fiso Msimang - SA, Amit Mukherjee - India, Kiyoshi Nagano - Japan, Jean-Jacques Odier - Switzerland/ France, Edward Peters - UK, Sam Pono - SA, Andrew Stallybrass - Switzerland, Anne-Marie Tate - France, Nicole Thieke - Germany, Ernesto Veras - Brazil, Jens Wilhelmsen - Norway, Richard Wilson - Jamaica, Lotty Wolvekamp - The Netherlands, Peter Wood - NZ

We would value your prayers for this important time.

*Sam Pono and Edward Howard*

### ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE IN TANZANIA

An all-Africa consultation/conference will be held in Tanzania, 12-17 May. Its main themes will be 'Corruption' and 'Agenda for Reconciliation'. There will also be a day's tour to Zanzibar Spice Island.

The Centre in Dar-es-Salaam where the conference will take place accommodates 150 people in single, double and three-bed rooms (all self-contained).

We welcome with appreciation any suggestions. Please could those interested contact:

Eileen Mavura (emavura@dar-co.tz.dhl.com)  
fax: +255 51 86 2703 atn: Eileen Mavura  
mobile phone: 0811 32 8013 or Kate Bandawe, tel: 0812 324183 fax: +255 51 13 6608 or Julieth Mattaka phone: 0812 78 3093 fax +255 51 11 8864

We will give the programme and more information in the next Bulletin.

*Eileen Mavura, Secretary: Preparatory Committee*

## Further thoughts on the mandate for the International Co-ordination Group

The fourth point in the IC mandate is 'Discerning opportunities, developing strategies and recommending priorities in the international deployment of people and money, and setting agendas for the annual consultations'.

What a mouthful! And what a daunting prospect for those who take it on in our wonderfully disparate fellowship! How, one might ask, can any group, however wise, however humble, perceive what is the will of the Almighty for us all?

In our own MRA context, for many years, Frank Buchman and then Peter Howard and those around him decided our strategic priorities. Mostly they got it right. Sometimes they got it wrong and on those occasions there were some unhappy consequences. But when they got it right, there were historic breakthroughs. Since their passing, there has been an amazing flowering of individual initiatives in literally dozens of countries, some of which have grown beyond what anyone imagined.

Part of Buchman's genius was the ability to make changes in 'ordinary people' and their actions relevant to leaders. So his was both a 'bottom to top' approach but also a 'top to bottom' one because he believed in the ability of good leaders to inspire changes in society. Does the sum total of all that we do amount to an adequate bid to reach our leaders today?

Many of us feel the need for a more co-ordinated approach, a stronger bid for the MRA experience to reach outwards and upwards. In setting up the ICC, we are taking a bold step. We are in effect saying to a group of colleagues, 'set aside time to pray and to think out what the MRA experience has to say today's world and how we can do it more effectively'. Here are some thoughts on how the particular points of this fourth mandate item might be fulfilled:

### DISCERNING OPPORTUNITIES

A precondition of such discernment is a grasp of trends and developments in the world around us – both national and global. Peter Howard had this rare gift of relating his message to current issues that were on people's minds and nations' agendas. For this living close to the source of true inspiration is essential.

The fact that the proposed ICC will include people from different continents should make it easier to think and act without bias towards any particular race, religion, class or nationality. Receiving information from all parts of MRA's network and getting a united mind on the implications of this information, should help in discerning what initiatives should be given support or, alternatively, be scaled down or postponed to free people and resources for other tasks. This should sharpen the focus of MRA's work.

### DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

Of course the only adequate strategy is divine guidance which can reveal opportunities as well as dangers beyond the grasp of human calculations. But the ICC can help by drawing attention to the places where there is growth and opportunity, and in enlisting appropriate support.

### RECOMMENDING PRIORITIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL DEPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE AND MONEY

The guiding principles from Jamaica stress subsidiarity – decisions to be made at the nearest appropriate level to the issues concerned. It also underlines that all leadership in MRA must be servant leadership. The proposed ICC cannot tell anyone what to do – people in the world community of MRA themselves have the final say. But that freedom is also a responsibility, which includes taking the convictions of friends, fellow workers and perhaps especially the ICC, seriously.

The final say about deployment of money will continue to rest with national MRA bodies, but the ICC may encourage national bodies to use their resources in the light of global rather than just national needs.

### SETTING AGENDAS FOR THE ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS

The Jamaica proposals envisage that each global consultation chooses a preparation committee for the next consultation. Since these consultations are 'MRA's primary international policy making forum', the teamwork with the ICC will be crucial – as well as openness for and sensitivity to the convictions and ideas of our world wide community.

By the time of the next World Bulletin, the Jamaica proposals will have been agreed to or rejected. We hope the first! The ICC, with help from the panel of Elders in dealing with some difficult situations, should provide a circle of thought and calm in the midst of many pressures. It will give encouragement and help on how to make the most of often over-stretched resources to realize the full potential of what MRA stands for.

*Amina Dikedi*

*James Hore-Ruthven*

*Suresh Khatri*

*Ren-Jou Liu*

*Anne-Marie Tate*

*Jens J Wilhelmsen*

## PARTNERS ON THE ROAD

This summer will see a new phase in the development of the Hope in the Cities network. Teams from around the world will meet at Caux to share lessons learned and explore new skills. Participants will include multi-ethnic teams from Witbank in South Africa, Ramle in Israel and cities across the USA; initiators of the 'Hope Agenda for Australia'; and leaders from Muslim communities in Europe.

The conference will examine the basis for building partnerships in our multi-cultural urban centers: an inclusive 'honest conversation'; acceptance of personal responsibility which breaks the cycle of blame; and acts of reconciliation which can heal history. There will be a focus on the inner resources needed to sustain those working for reconciliation and justice. All will have the opportunity to experience 'honest conversations' and to return home equipped with tools needed to build a team.

The announcement of the 'Cities Consultation' is now available for use with the General Caux Programme.

If you can help carry the practical aspects of the session, or know others who might do so, please contact Gerald Henderson (GHenderliv@aol.com), Lawrence Fearon (LawFearon@aol.com) or Rob Corcoran (RSCorcoran@aol.com). One need is the Secretariat before and during the Consultation.

If you wish to volunteer as a 'community facilitator', please contact Ann Rignall (Rignalla@aol.com).

**Rob Corcoran, Lawrence Fearon,  
Gerald Henderson**

## AIMS AND VALUES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

In recent months have you felt the need to reflect on this theme? How about initiating a conversation at home, with friends, in a club or community centre, or with high profile people as a public event! This topic can be used effectively this year to spark reflection. That is why it has been chosen for the theme of the final Caux session, August 17 - 22.

If you have held a conversation on aims and values for the 21st Century, or intend to do so, I would love to hear from you. We could arrange to have your

findings brought into the session. Of course, best of all is that you come yourselves, bringing the experience of local/national conversations in your baggage, so to speak!

**Christoph Spreng**

## CAUX PLANNING AT TIRLEY GARTH

Those at Tirley Garth look forward to hosting the second planning meeting for the Caux summer conferences from Thursday April 29 evening until Tuesday May 4 after breakfast. Please inform Tom and Mary Jones, c/o Tirley Garth if you wish to attend. We plan to spend one day of the four exploring the overall theme of the summer - 'Cleaning the Slate'. We should also look ahead to Caux 2000.

Arrangements can be made to meet flights at Manchester or Liverpool airports, and at Crewe or, preferably, Hartford railway station (from London's Euston terminus). It will cost £120 per person, but inability to pay should not be a bar to attendance. We hope all session leaders will be represented, and the main departments. It will be a joy to prepare together for a wonderful, unexpected, challenging summer.

**Tom & Mary Jones, Anne Hamlin, John Burrows  
Douglas Paine, Lotty Wolvekamp,  
Hugh Williams, Andrew Stallybrass,  
Christoph & Marianne Spreng**

## FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

**Sweden:** Finn Harald and Alison Wetterfors have moved to: Torkils väg 46 B, 791 52 Falun. Tel/fax +46 23 226 91 E-mail: fh.wetterfors@frambygard.com

**Switzerland:** Jean and Maya Fiaux's e-mail address is <JMFiaux@compuserve.com> and not JEMFiaux@compuserve.com, as it appears in the latest MRA World Address List.

**India:** Jyothi and Vijayalakshmi Subrahmanyam have moved to Madras, where their address is Flat 1 Block 1, lison Homes, Parameshwari Nagar, Adyar Chennai 600 020. Telephone: +91 44 4901 723. Until they get a long-term e-mail address they can be reached on rls@md3.vsnl.net.in

*The deadline for the next Bulletin is Monday, March 15, 1999*

John Bond  
151 Kent Street  
Hughes ACT 2605  
Australia

Tel: +61 2 6281 0940 - Fax: +61 2 6285 3616 - Tel: +61 2 6281 2107

e-mail: 100035.3123@compuserve.com

Andrew Lancaster  
10 Dooley Place  
Curtin ACT 2605  
Australia

Those named below have been asked to distribute this in their area: **Asia:** South - C Iralu; Malaysia - Santa Maria; Philippines - Calma; Japan, Rest - Nagano; **Australia** - A Lancaster; **Pacific** - Annette Porteous; **Africa:** East - Patel; South - Euvrard; **Nigeria**, Rest - Agbi; **N. America:** Canada - J Boccock; **USA** - Ruffin; **Latin America:** Brazil, Rest - Puig; **Caribbean** - Richard Wilson; **Europe:** France - Lasserre; Germany - Bräckle; Denmark - Jørgensen; Finland - Koponen; Norway - Eskeland; Sweden - Söderlund; Switzerland - Spreng; UK - B Cummock; Austria - Vock; Netherlands, Belgium - J de Pous; Rest of Europe - E Peters; **Middle East:** - Christodoulides