

Centre de Rencontres Internationales

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pour le Réarmement moral

CAUX

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Caux, 31.07.00

Dear Friends,

Tomorrow is Swiss National Day, and we are half way through the Caux conference season. This time last week we were in transition from a far-reaching yet very spontaneous session on "Aims and values for the new century" to a more structured Caux Conference for Business and Industry (CCBI) on "The heart of partnership".

The numbers present at Caux were rising and recruits for the workteams were needed. David Campt, former advisor to the President's Initiative on Race in the USA, who now works with the Hope in the Cities programme, treated us to a novel form of recruitment. Over breakfast he ran an impromptu competition, including prizes for those who had travelled longest in reaching Caux (won by the 12 Moldovans who spent over 48 hours in a minibus, and who continue to make a great contribution to the life of Mountain House) and the Imelda Marcos Award for the person who brought the most pairs of shoes to the conference. (The winner had eight pairs. For a modest contribution to conference funds, your correspondent might be prepared to reveal who it was.) After all this, finding recruits was not a problem.

Once the CCBI was launched, a large Forum run by Hope in the Cities ensured a wide range of professional backgrounds. The expanding Junior Round Table for young professionals in business, and a large number of students, held the average age well down - or is it just that I am getting older?

The Hope in the Cities Forum brought together business people and community activists to explore true partnership in combating social exclusion and building community, with a strong group from the United States. They studied situations such as that presented by Rev B. Herbert Martin, a well know pastor and one of the organisers of the Million Man March, from Chicago - "the most racially segregated city in America". He described how people from two contrasting neighbourhoods, Bronzeville and Bridgeport, had begun to reach out to each other in the aftermath of the racist beating of a young African-American, with the result that "the racial healing, truth and justice that developed between these two communities is now being considered as a model for racial healing across metropolitan Chicago".

Anything the conference lacked in participation by senior industrialists was made up for in the depth and zest of the speakers at large meetings and small. Themes of contributions in plenary sessions ranged all the way from matrix management to deep personal and family experiences to the Jubilee 2000 campaign for international debt relief. One of the campaign's founders, Bill Peters, was with us again, more energetic than ever. Asked for her personal comment on the conference, a Swiss student of economics simply told how she had been considering giving the subject up, but had seen at Caux such a new dimension to it that she would continue, with new vision.

As for several years past, globalisation of the world economy was a recurring theme. Several speakers and many conversations reflected a rising concern about its negative side and about the abuse of economic power by powerful organisations and interests. The violent protests in Seattle and elsewhere recently are signs of the same concern. The conference affirmed the faith that individuals can play a role even in such huge and seemingly impersonal processes as globalisation, and the Forums explored ways in which this might be done. In his wide ranging Caux Lecture, "Money, Globalisation and Equality", Rajmohan Gandhi suggested that a *globalisation of heart* might be part of our response to a process where those who gain and those who lose are often continents apart from each other.

From the great Indian industrial house of Tata came trade union leader Appal Raju, and Chandreshwar Khan, a human resources manager. They related how the hugely significant Human Resources at Work programme, using concepts and seminars developed at Panchgani, continues, and has touched all 18,000 employees at TELCO, one of the main Tata companies. Chandreshwar Khan's flair for presentation was fully deployed and appreciated. [In presenting the need for total quality - "What is missing from QALTY?" Answer: you and I!]

Quality, contrasting and highly entertaining, was a hallmark of the evening programmes too. In an exquisite concert Sylvie Söderlund accompanied by John Burrows on the piano caught the emotion of song after song in several languages. When John was understandably perplexed to find his piano slowly rolling away from him across the stage, it did not matter to the audience. The artists had captured so many moods already that a moment of comedy seemed quite in order. The instrument was quickly anchored, and the music continued.

It was followed the next evening by an equally uplifting violin and piano concert by Erwin and Philippe Lienart, twin brothers from Belgium, who later added sparkle to the concluding meeting of the conference with another duet. Then an evening set aside for space and a walk in the fresh air, when it rained almost incessantly. But the next evening we were back on the heights with an hilarious performance of "Marriage", a play by Russian author Gogol, presented by the New York Stari Theatre company under their Russian director, Oleg Kheyfets.

Now we are back in transition, with multiple hand shaking (and bed making) as many leave and many others arrive. This afternoon the house is full for the start of a new session, "The Arts in Perspective", which promises much

It would be nice to mention the many unseen people who make all this possible, both at Caux with their work of hand and heart, and from a distance with prayers and support of all kinds. Nice, but not possible in a short letter. Each one is deeply appreciated - and please keep praying.

With warmest wishes,

Chris Evans