

## EMIR'S INVITATION

At Caux this year, HRH the Emir of Kano invited everyone for a conference in Kano to seek together how to fulfil Frank Buchman's vision of Africa as 'a pattern of peace and unity'. This conference will take place from April 19 to 25, 1997. The final day is the day of the Durbar celebration, a colourful event when all the traditional rulers in Kano Emirate ride on horseback to pay homage to the Emir. It's a great challenge for us here to organise this conference, but we are looking forward to this marvellous opportunity to bring Africans and many other friends together.

*Paul and Sylvia Agbih on behalf of MRA Nigeria.*

## AMBASSADOR JOINS BELARUS COURSE

Visiting Course eleven was invited to Minsk by Marina Naranovich who, since VC3, has founded and now chairs the Belarus Union of Social Pedagogues and Social Workers (BUSPW). Her hope was that the VC would help some of the young people who are helping her develop this new institute. In all we were 16 people.

The cost of this VC was underwritten by the British Embassy on the recommendation of the Ambassador, Jessica Pearce, who came for a day. In the afternoon she and some VC participants spoke to the BUSPW Board. She began by saying that she had just spent a 'fascinating morning with the course'. She continued: 'The issues discussed are fundamental stuff we all know but never stop to consider. I am convinced .... that if we go to the roots like this, intelligently and with concern, it will bring a better world. I hope there will be many more VCs: they deal with simple issues but no one has managed to put them together before.'

Among the comments made by participants, then and after the concluding quiet times and course evaluations, were:

'This is the first time I have expressed myself clearly, honestly, openly. It's wonderful to hear others do this too.'

'VC is entirely different. Knowledge alone makes people into machines; this gives the spiritual dimension. When we arrived we could not discuss

with each other. Now we are so close. You just begin to love each other.'

'I have not been honest to myself or God and we all need to be honest. I have decided to go back to church.'

'I now see how to make decisions more easily, and feel more confident and ready for the reality of life.'

Though circumstances of language and selection were against us for this VC, we feel that about two thirds of the participants are likely to make something of the material and some are specifically keen.

*Erik and Sheila Andren Elizabeth Carlisle  
Steve McLoughlin*

## FROM NORTHERN IRELAND TO MALTA

The *Malta Independent* recently carried the headline 'Peace and reconciliation activists learn from Malta's experience.' Journalist Anthony Manduca was writing about Peter and Fiona Hannon's work in Northern Ireland and South Africa. The Sunday magazine of the same paper carried an interview with Fiona featuring her cookery book, *The Castle Kitchen*.

Since 1987 a process of reconciliation has been going on between Malta's two main political parties. Peter's book about his journey across the divides in Northern Ireland, *Whose Side is God On?*, seemed to us an important contribution to that process, so we invited him and Fiona. They arrived on election day, when the Labour Party defeated the Nationals to take government. Their victory has brought many fears to the surface.

During their three-week visit the Hannons lectured at the university, spoke twice on radio and to a public meeting, met trade union leaders and politicians from both main parties and talked with one of our sharpest and most outspoken journalists. At informal meetings in our home they were able, in more depth, to go into what trust-building and being healed from the past mean.

*Josephine and Bjørn Ole Austad  
Kathy and Charles Aquilina*



## FARMERS FROM FOUR CONTINENTS

The International Farmers' Dialogue in Minnesota, November 10-17, was a time of real dialogue between very diverse parties, including a representative of the grain giant, Cargill Co. Three Thais, three Cambodians, a Laotian refugee from France, and two Indians brought vital issues affecting Asian farming to the attention of European and North American farmers. Three came from Poland. The very difficult and important African scene was presented by Abbe Remb from Zaire; and South America by Dr Jorge Molina from Buenos Aires.

The Dialogue was made possible by a local team which included Cambodian-Americans; Canadians, who also helped with the planning; and through the strong French and British leadership of the on-going Farmers' Dialogue program. The two-day farm visits, arranged by John and Jane Sainsbury, proved very useful.

Pat Evans' new book *Farming For Ever*, with its profound commentary on the development and promise of agriculture globally, was launched. It is available from Pat (Longlands Farm, Whitbourne, WORCESTER, Worcs WR6 5SG, UK) for £6.50.

*John and Louise Morrison*

## PAINFUL CHOICES IN FOR A CHANGE

South Africa, Cambodia and Jewish Poland feature in the next issue of *For a Change*, due in late January. In the lead story, Professor Gerald Pillay of the University of South Africa analyses the difficult task of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Kassie Neou, Director of Cambodia's Institute of Human Rights, examines the painful choices associated with the decision to amnesty one of the main Khmer Rouge leaders. Dr Milowit Kuninski of Krakow tells the traumatic history of relations between Jews and non-Jews in Poland, and the increasing interaction between the communities today. Anne-Marie Tate from France deals with a personal dimension of 'Healing the Past'. And Russian poet Zinaida Mirkina describes finding God as a reality in the hostile environment of the Soviet Union. Extra copies are available from Tirley Garth and other centres.

*Tom Jones*

## CALL TO RENEW TRUST

In Britain public discussion is growing on how the millenium should be celebrated. The Archbishop of Canterbury has urged that it be a 'Christian party to which everyone is welcome'. In a letter to *The Times* Michael Smith agrees that it should include 'expressions of gratitude for the contribution that

Christian virtues have made to global development, as well as a commitment by individuals to renew the spiritual dimension in their lives in an age of increasing secularisation. It might also include a note of repentance for wrongs committed by Christians, from the Crusades onwards, who have failed to live by their creed and morality.

'The next centuries will see an increasing dialogue between the world's great faiths and their spheres of influence, but we are still a long way from a basis of trust. If the millenium celebrations could help renew trust, for instance between Western culture and Islam, then we would really have something to celebrate.'

Mike Smith, Peter Riddell and others have formed a 'Millenium committee' to plan ways of giving legs to these ideas.

## A MEMORANDUM ON NORTHERN IRELAND

Last March, David's brother rang us from his home in Scotland and enquired 'What's going on there?' David did his best to answer his queries, and he asked us to send him a memo on the situation. It was at a time when there had been a cease-fire for about 16 months but very little meaningful political initiative.

So we set to, and have been encouraged by the response, in particular from the few Members of Parliament to whom the memo has been sent. A senior Labour MP wrote 'Your excellent paper is a very useful summary of the major issues that are most frequently raised'. Another who is on the backbench Northern Ireland Committee commented, 'A very clear and precise description of the background and of the problems which need to be overcome if peace is to be achieved'. A Liberal Democrat found it 'most informative, providing much needed insight into the present events'.

In a recent article in *The Independent on Sunday* (London) David McKittrick quoted a 16th century proverb: 'The war of Ireland is like alway to continue, without God set it in men's breasts to find some new remedy that was never found before.' It could not have been put better. The responsibility lies on both sides of the Irish Sea to explore together what that new remedy might be, so that the search for a just settlement can be successful and peace permanent.

We would be glad to send a free copy of the airmail edition of our updated three-page memo **A Contribution Towards Understanding Northern Ireland** to anyone interested: please write to us at 11 Fort Road, Helen's Bay, Co. Down BT19 1LD, Northern Ireland, or telephone +44 1247 852843 or e-mail: dave@tohubohu.demon.co.uk

*David and Ruth Hume*



## THINKING FOR THE WORLD

Are the four standards that MRA spotlights so seminally 'Christian standards' only? Do other faiths not talk of them?

For some time now as a non-Christian I have found it amusing and a bit insensitive that we in MRA often still call these 'Christian standards' rather than universal.

Haven't scriptures of other faiths, that go back at least three to four thousand years before Christianity, mooted these timeless values, and helped build inspiring societies on this basis?

For those of a comparatively 'new' faith to appropriate them as their own particular contribution to humanity is, to say the least, a grossly erroneous monopolisation. Some educating – and thinking for the whole world – is required of us, isn't it?

*Suresh Khatri*

## FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

**New Zealand:** Nigel and Jane Cooper are now at 63 Aorangi Road, Christchurch 5. Tel: +64 3 351 3599.

**Australia:** Brian and Lorna Lightowler have a new fax number: +61 7 3378 0112 (Tel:+61 7 3378 0357)

### Some new or changed e-mail addresses which we have been asked to note:

Breakthroughs: brkthrus@aol.com  
 Anders Eskeland: aeskelan@sn.no  
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 Peter Wood: pwood@xtra.co.nz

A full list of MRA e-mail users is available from Edward Howard at: mra@pixie.co.za

# Calendar of Events

DEC '96	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	Healing the Past, Forging the Future – family conference	Dec 26 - Jan 2
	<u>Prague Czech Republic</u>	Youth gathering/FFF regional meeting	Dec 28 - Jan 3
JAN '97	<u>Asia Plateau India</u>	Learning from the 20th Century, preparing for the 21st	Jan 3 - 7
	<u>Fitzroy Falls NSW Australia</u>	Teenage camp: 'Signposts for the Future'	Jan 11 - 17
	<u>Petropolis Brazil</u>	'Encuentro de las Americas'	Jan 30 - Feb 2
FEB '97	<u>Britain</u>	'Making Democracy Work', 12-day prog. for young Ukrainian MPs	Feb end of Feb
MAR '97	<u>Sydney Australia</u>	International Communications Forum	Mar 15 - 16
APR '97	<u>Kano Nigeria</u>	Conference: Africa - pattern of peace and unity	Apr 19 - 25
	<u>Victoria Australia</u>	Global Consultation on enlistment and training	Apr 19 - 26
JULY '97	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	The World of Tomorrow – A Dynamic Learning Community	Jul 12 - Aug 24

*The deadline for the next Bulletin is Wednesday January 15, 1997*

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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; Zimbabwe - Sibare; Nigeria, Rest - Agbih; N. America: Canada - Weeks; USA - Ruffin; Latin America: Brazil, Rest - Puig/Vogel; Caribbean - Fiona Edwards; Europe: France - Lasserre; Germany - Bräckle; Denmark - Jørgensen; Finland - Koponen; Norway - Eskeland; Sweden - Söderlund; Switzerland - Mottu; UK - C Evans; Austria - Vock; Netherlands, Rest - J de Pous; Middle East: - Christodoulides