

PARTNERSHIPS SPREAD THE HOPE

Under the headline 'Toward Unity', the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* carried front-page news of Richmond's third annual Metropolitan Richmond Day, organized by Hope in the Cities. Michael R Wenger, former deputy director of the President's Initiative on Race, spoke to 300 people at a breakfast forum. The forum was chaired by Virginia State Delegate, Viola Baskerville; Jim Dunn, President of the Chamber of Commerce; and Robert Grey, the first black chairman of the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association.

Wenger painted a graphic picture of the changing demography of America. In the November elections, 59 African Americans and Hispanics were elected to Congress. 'When you go to work today,' he said, 'chances are that two out of three of your fellow employees is other than a white male.'

'If we cannot get beyond our fear of the changing composition of our population,' he went on, 'we will crumble under the economic, political and social burden which our racial divisions impose on us... To ensure we do not go down that path requires looking in the mirror without flinching, and acknowledging the pain that some have endured and the pain that others have inflicted. It will be harder for white Americans because it will put at risk the unearned privilege with which we have lived since this country was founded.' The only way to disarm the 'racial minefield', he said, was through 'constructive dialogue in which we talk *with* rather than *at* each other. That is why the work of groups like Hope in the Cities is desperately needed.'

The media also reported on the seven busloads of school students who visited sites in the city's racial history. At the monument to Confederate soldiers and sailors, Robin Reed, executive director of the Confederate White House and Museum, told them that history 'can be a spiritual guide, not a haunting ghost'. At the site of Lumpkin's Slave Jail, Senator Henry Marsh, Richmond's first African American mayor, encouraged his listeners to reach out to their enemies, saying that Hope in the Cities had 'helped me and this community to grow'.

Joining the Richmonders for these events, and for a three-day training retreat, were teams from 12 cities where HIC is developing partnerships with the support of the Kellogg Foundation. Its grant of \$242,000 is the first by a major foundation to MRA. The retreat's goal was to pass on the key principles of Hope in the Cities – the spiritual foundation, the walk through history, and the skills involved in getting to honest conversation.

A group of nine came from Selma, Alabama, led by Councilman Yusef Abdus-Salaam. They included a journalist, a nun, a lawyer and 88 year-old Annie Lee

Cooper who had confronted hostile deputies during an historic civil rights demonstration.

John and Denise Wood inspired everyone with stories of their work of bringing the Pasadena community together. One black participant said of Denise, 'She can put into words what an African American feels deeply. That is very rare for a white person.'

Former diplomat Joe Montville riveted the group with a seminar on 'walking through history'. Richmond Mayor Tim Kaine also met with the group. Kaine is white, and was recently elected mayor by a majority black council. 'The most important work we are doing in the city is the work that Hope in the Cities does,' he said.

A healing ceremony under a 350 year-old willow oak at Shirley Plantation on the banks of the James River resulted in another front-page story. 'Carters may share more than history,' wrote Michael Paul Williams describing the meeting of the plantation's current occupant, C Hill Carter, Jr, with Minnesota singer Joe Carter whose great grandfather was born to a slave master in the Richmond area.

Dr David Campt, a policy associate with the President's Initiative, teamed with Patrick McNamara, a former Caux Scholar based in Los Angeles, to lead a facilitator training session. Campt will join the HIC staff in January, while Patrick is working part time as West Coast coordinator. We've also just been joined by Randolph Carter from Liberia, a 1998 Caux Scholar, who will work with HIC as an intern until next summer. Lawrence Fearon has returned to Britain after an invaluable six weeks with us, and intends to give the next year to the 'cities' work there.

Rob Corcoran

NEWS FROM A SIMMERING POT

There has been plenty of interest in the International Communications Forum (ICF) in recent months. In October the Society of Professional Journalists – the major association for journalists in the USA – invited me to their annual convention in Los Angeles. My talk was headlined in the convention newspaper, 'Restoring public's confidence in the media'. I also visited Denver, where a film producer has begun work on a documentary on the ICF, which he hopes to premier at an ICF conference for North America in October 1999. In Washington Bob Webb took me to meet a range of journalists, including the Managing and Executive Editors of *The Washington Post*.

Then I visited Jamaica in response to a request by Sir Howard Cooke, the Governor-General, that we set up a media conference for the Caribbean and Central America. I met the heads of the major associations

representing the owners, the journalists, the TV companies and advertising. They were all eager to support the conference, as were a group of businessmen at a lunch given by a prominent Jamaican businessman and chaired by the Governor General. So the conference will take place next April. David Flint, Chairman of the World Association of Press Councils, invited me to their annual conference in Istanbul. I visited Madeira for a conference of European journalists sponsored by the Council of Europe; and the Cardiff Centre for Journalism Studies for a conference on 'Reporting Africa', attended by a remarkable group of media leaders from sub-Saharan Africa. In Beirut I chaired a session of a UNESCO-sponsored symposium.

This year I was travelling for 180 days, in 16 countries. We seem to be in a pot that is beginning to simmer.

Bill Porter

RENOVATING FOR THE NEW MILLENIUM

Last year the World Bulletin noted that Brazilians are raising money for the needs of Sítio São Luiz, the MRA training and seminar centre in the hills above Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Now Ernesto Veras who, with his wife Tânia, is responsible for the centre, writes that donations totalling \$35,000 (60% from Petrópolis, Rio, Sao Paulo and elsewhere in Brazil, and 40% from

friends in Europe) have enabled them to renovate five of the nine houses which make up the centre, and to renew electrical cabling on the site. 'Providence becomes a perceptible reality through people's action,' writes Ernesto. 'We wholeheartedly thank our friends who care about us and send us their heart.' This has enabled them to welcome more people to programmes at Sítio São Luiz. In the coming year they intend to continue with other much needed renewals and renovations, for which they will need a further \$50,000.

FROM CITY TO COUNTRY

In 1997 in Australia MRA launched a series of 'conversations' aimed at bridging gulfs in Australian society, such as the gulf between city and country. Rural Australia has been hard hit economically in recent years, and many rural people feel that the city dwellers don't understand their plight. At the first 'conversation', in Melbourne, a farmer, John O'Brien, told of the despair in his area. 'I counted 19 suicides in a three-month period last winter on farms in our part of Gippsland,' he said.

Last month John O'Brien and his wife Mary held a 'conversation' in Gippsland. Fifty-five people met at their invitation, including several car loads from Melbourne. A searching discussion started at lunch and went on through the afternoon. Many intend to continue the process.

SOUTH AFRICAN CONSULTATION

The Preparation Team for the next Consultation, in South Africa, March 5 - 12, 1999, would like to thank all those who have sent in ideas for the agenda which will be as follows:

Ready for 2000 - Global Friends in a Global Task

The main purpose of the Consultation is to identify, acknowledge and evaluate the fresh initiatives throughout the world work of MRA, and in this context to look at the named programmes.

One of the aims of the Consultation will be to acquaint all participants better with the work and principles of the various initiatives, leading to a better integration with one another and opening the way to new ideas on the overall contribution MRA is meant to make in the next twenty years. As usual participation will be balanced and will include both those associated with various initiatives and others.

The following issues will be addressed:

- What is the relationship between the identified programmes, some of which are becoming more publicly visible than MRA itself, and the heart of the MRA work, namely the personal experience of change and the natural chain reaction that results from it?
- Are there unintended consequences, in terms of finance and people for instance, for MRA's development?

- How do we affirm the role for those within the MRA community who do not feel called to be part of a major initiative?
- Is all this an adequate response to the global needs or are there other definite tasks we should take on in the next decades?

As well as the main agenda, time will also be given to seeing how to implement the Jamaican proposals and in particular to select the new people who will serve on the International Council. Any last suggestions for the Jamaican document can be sent by December 31 to the Consultation Support Group, 73 Victoria Road, Oxford OX2 7QG.

Fifty suggestions were received from national teams, groups and individuals for the SA Consultation. We were grateful for the spirit of those who sent nominations while expressing their readiness not to be part of the Consultation if others were meant to be there in order to get the balance right. Considerable work is involved now in consulting and informing people. We hope this will be completed by the end of the month. A letter of invitation will then be sent from SA hosts and preconsultation papers will also be sent out in due course.

**Claire Leggat, Bryan Hamlin, John Mills
on behalf of the Preparation Team**

From the International Co-ordination Group

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE MANDATE OF THE PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL (IC)

The mandate of the IC is a tall order. Just take the second point: 'responding to and empowering committed teams at every level'.

From this summer the IC may number 7-9 people, while the teams around the globe are multitudinous. We do not have a recipe for fulfilling the mandate, rather the opposite: we confess our helplessness and ask for thoughts and ideas on how we better can respond to and empower each other throughout our far-flung work. How do we do it on the local and national level, and how do we do it world-wide?

To start with the first: Buchman insisted that his team work two by two. Of course some of us have spouses, but Buchman was after something beyond that. Are we all part of small groups, say three or four people, who meet regularly, share joys and sorrows, stimulate change in each other and pray together for change where it is needed, in individuals or in society? Such cells might make the difference between us being colleagues in a work or part of life-giving communities.

'Responding to and empowering teams' will of course include supporting their initiatives and helping to focus them in the light of global considerations, within or outside the MRA work. Mark Twain said: 'If you think you can do something, or that you can't, you are likely to be right.' Kindling a sense of expectancy and an understanding of what God wants to use us for, is one of the most challenging aspects of the IC's task.

One crucial point is of course who we consider to be our team. 'Adenauer is my team in Germany,' Buchman once said, although Adenauer is not known to have attended many team meetings. If we think that our team consists of all those who share our aims, and a commitment to follow God's guidance or the voice of truth, fulfilling the mandate becomes even more daunting, but oh!, so much more interesting.

A catalyst will only work if it does not absorb the characteristics and essence of its surroundings. As the concept of who our team is expands, it is essential that our cohesion and the quality of our team life gets strengthened.

Parochialism and a narrow outlook will always be a danger. Thinking and working merely within the framework of one nation, one programme or one profession comes all too easy.

Internet and e-mail is a help to keep in touch and to respond to each other's needs, but technological miracles are not enough. An expansion of heart and mind is needed. If that is real, the electronic signals will convey genuine concern and participation in each other's life and work.

From his prison cell before he was executed by the Nazis in April 1945, German thinker and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: 'Not the infinite and unattainable aims represent transcendence, but the person we can reach next to us.' Responding to and empowering teams is a people-centred task. Campaigns and programmes can help us to act more unitedly and strategically. But the core challenge is the way we live together, perhaps in small groups of three or four?

Amina Dikedi

James Hore-Ruthven

Suresh Khatri

Ren-Jou Liu

Anne-Marie Tate

Jens J. Wilhelmsen

EAST ASIAN TEAMWORK

Yeon-Yuk Jeong & Joung-Suk Ryoo are a young couple who, after two years' training with MRA in Australia, intend to work full-time with MRA in their own country. First they are spending three months in Taiwan because, as Yeon-Yuk puts it, 'it is important for us to experience Taiwan MRA; our two countries have much in common in our culture, and we both have Sing-Out groups in our schools. There are about 500 groups in Korean schools.'

They recently visited Japan, where they met with a group of young people, MOE ('a better society for everyone'), set up after the '97 Asia-Pacific Youth Conference there. Then they made a short visit to Korea. 'My mother told me, "You will see a great difference since you left", writes Yeon-Yuk. 'She was right. As we met our families and friends we found the economic situation and the currency crisis far worse than we had expected. It is causing much suffering.

'At the invitation of the Executive Director of MRA

Korea, Dr Cha Kwang-Sun, who is also General Secretary of the National Council of Youth Organisations, I attended a three-day youth leaders' workshop organised by the Council. This was a good chance for me to get to know the leaders of the other organizations and to learn about the difficulties which young people face in Korea.'

WANTED: INSIGHTS ON FORGIVENESS...

I have been commissioned by an American publisher to write a book on forgiveness. It can draw on our stories but will not be written through the prism of MRA, so I can draw on a wider net of sources. I have a pretty free hand on content, treatment, etc. It would be a great help if you could send me in the next few weeks all the insights, stories, experiences, perspectives, that might be considered for a book that would then be useful to you.

Michael Henderson

...AND ON ASIA PLATEAU

'Asia Plateau has been a beacon of hope to so many people,' writes Bhanu Kale, a member of the Board of Trustees of the centre at Panchgani in Western India, 'But how do you describe it?'

He has decided to create a full-colour 48-page pictorial on Asia Plateau, with photos by Rahul Kapadia and Pankaj Shah. 'We want to tell of its origins, of the many seminars that take place, and of the changes that have come in people.' He asks the help of all who have been there. 'Your photos, stories and anecdotes will be of great help,' he writes. 'All the material will be returned safely.' They plan to start this month, and have the pictorial available by May 1999.

They hope to sell it for Rs80 (US\$2) and, before deciding on the print run, would like to hear from other countries how many copies they wish to order.

Please write Bhanu at Asia Plateau, Panchgani, Maharashtra 412 805. Fax: +91 2168 40004.

Meanwhile 18 young Australians and New Zealanders will arrive at Asia Plateau in early January to take part in the five-week course on 'Daring to Live Effectively'. With them will be Mike and Jean Brown and Rob Wood. Some of the group will arrive early to attend the Asia Pacific Youth Conference. Many will also visit New Delhi, where R D Mathur and others are planning a programme. In all kinds of imaginative

ways, each of the group is raising the A\$3,000 the venture will cost them.

THE PRINTED WORD

The 1999 Caux conference programme is at the printers, and will be ready before Christmas. It is probably the most widely used of our printed expressions of MRA ideas.

Please note for your diaries, that for the third year running, there will be two days of meetings in Caux on MRA publications and media, and the World Wide Web, on July 16-17. Ideas and participation welcome.

**Andrew Stallybrass, Charles Piguet,
Edward Howard**

FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

United Kingdom: Finlay and Kath Moir have moved to a new address: Flat No. 8, 37 Malbet Park, Lasswade Road, Edinburgh EH16 6SY. Tel: +44 131 664 3490.

Laurie and Elsa Vogel have moved to a new address: Flat 27 Sorrento Court, Wake Green Road, Birmingham B13 9HB. Tel: +44 121 449 4382. E-mail: laurencevogel@compuserve.com

Calendar of Events

DEC '98	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	'To venture or not to venture – that is the question' – New Year conference	Dec 26 - Jan 2
DEC '98	<u>Moldova</u>	FFF Regional Meeting	Dec 28 - Jan 3
DEC '98	<u>Asia Plateau India</u>	Asia Pacific Youth Conference	Dec 28 - Jan 4
JAN '99	<u>Batemans Bay Australia</u>	'Launching out – beach camp for young teenagers	Jan 6 - 12
JAN '99	<u>Asia Plateau India</u>	Study Course – 'Daring to Live Effectively'	Jan 8 - Feb 12
FEB '99	<u>Armagh Melbourne</u>	'Life Matters' course for young adults	Feb 12 - 21
MAR '99	<u>Chapel Hill South Africa</u>	MRA Global Consultation	Mar 5 - 12
MAR '99	<u>Tirley Garth UK</u>	Global Club	Mar 26 - 28
APR '99	<u>Simperofol Crimea</u>	'Foundations For Freedom' Visiting Course - Crimean American University	Apr 10 - 21
APR '99	<u>To be announced</u>	Spring planning meeting for Caux 1999	Apr 30 - May 3
JUL '99	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	Summer conference: 'Cleaning the slate, the promise of a new start'	Jul 10 - Aug 22
DEC '99	<u>Collaroy Sydney Australia</u>	A conference to mark the new century	Dec 3 - 7

The deadline for the next Bulletin is Friday, January 15, 1999

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