

PREPARING FOR THE JAMAICA CONSULTATION

In this issue, we want to devote some space to the upcoming international consultation in Jamaica.

PRAYING TO BE SURPRISED

An MRA consultation needs to be a gathering which is truly representative of our world family, assembling different experiences and perspectives on the subjects at hand. For each of us who gather in Jamaica, the challenge will be to try and

withdraw from our cherished ideas and opinions, in order better to listen to one another – and most especially to those with a different view to our own.

Above all, it is vital that we listen to God's Holy Spirit and so conduct ourselves that He feels welcome in our midst. We should come expecting to learn and to have our minds, and our hearts, changed. To be surprised by what God gives.

THE SUBJECT UNDER DISCUSSION

In a supplement letter headed 'Preparing for 2000' that came with your December WB, the plea was made that 'we continue, individually and collectively, to open our hearts to the gifts of spiritual renewal and to search for clarification of our purposes and the essentials of our calling'. Some specific questions to be discussed at the Jamaica consultation were laid out in that letter and we repeat a few of them here:

- * What new visions and ways of working are being revealed through significant growth points in MRA's work?
- * Can we improve our capacity for common action?
- * Are other lines of agreed decision-making and authority needed, or do we need simply to implement more strongly what has already been agreed?

PREPARATORY THOUGHT

In response to this, several people, particularly those who are not able to be in Jamaica, have written us with their thoughts.

This is important and there is still time for you to send us your thoughts, via the Washington MRA office please, and by April 1st! Thank you to all who have written.

In addition, those responsible for many of MRA's outreach initiatives around the world were asked to

prepare brief papers evaluating what God may be revealing through these initiatives. These include named programmes – Foundations for Freedom, Hope in the Cities, Agenda for Reconciliation, International Communications Forum, Caux Scholars Program, Caux Round Table – as well as other initiatives of our work. Copies of these papers will be distributed to all consultation participants, and will be available to others on request from your WB distributor by early April, but do bear in mind the volume involved!

For this same reason we cannot, in the pages of the WB, give you even a digest of the ideas that our different friends have. Any attempt would probably distort the full picture.

But it would be fair to say that in the 30 papers already received a ferment of thought is evident, some suggesting various leadership structures, others urging that we should be more shepherds than managers – all, it is worth noting, stressing that the individual's response to God is at the heart of MRA.

MESSAGE FROM SIR HOWARD COOKE:

We in Jamaica are eager to welcome the MRA team for the global consultation April 23 - 30. We look forward also to introducing those who come to many Jamaican friends in the days following.

The meeting is timely. The world has great needs and yet our leaders seem helpless. So God is asking MRA to step forward boldly to offer its experience to leaders and ordinary people alike. To this end, we need to put aside our fears and our understandable feelings of inadequacy and respond bravely to His call. The world needs MRA and we in Jamaica want to do all we can to help prepare us for service in the years ahead.

PARTICIPATION

As we go to print, here is the participation for Jamaica as it stands at present:

Africa - Amina Dikedi, Joseph Karanja, Mona Marzouk, Samuel Pono; **Asia/Pacific** - Ed Espiritu, Glennis Holden, Joan Holland, Bhanu Kale, Suresh Khatri, Jonathan Lancaster, Ren-Jou Liu;

the Americas - Rob Corcoran, Steve Dickinson, John Graham, Karen Greisdorf, Bryan Hamlin, John Moore Jnr, Luis Puig, Dick Ruffin, Ernesto Veras, Richard Weeks; **Caribbean** - Conrad Hunte; our host, Sir Howard Cooke, the Governor-General of Jamaica, will take part in some of the meetings along with four compatriots; **Europe** - Frédéric Chavanne, Anna Christine Christensen, Neville Cooper, Maarten de Pous, Chris Evans, Ailsa Hamilton, Philippe Lasserre, Claire Leggat, Camilla Nelson, Edward Peters, Peter Riddell, Marianne Spreng, Jens Wilhelmsen. We are still awaiting confirmation from Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia and Somalia.

Please be in touch with any of the above if you have thoughts you would like them to carry to Jamaica.

CALL TO PRAYER

At the time of the 'Jubilee Renewal' meeting at Tirley Garth in November 1995, groups of friends around the world met simultaneously to pray for that gathering

and for the renewal we all need. It would be wonderful if this could happen again, at the time of Jamaica. Would you pray, trusting that your friends there will be truly questing God's will, and that His leading comes clear. Part of the spiritual reflection at Jamaica will probably be on the theme of 'From tension, to balance, to wholeness'. How can the intimate and global be held in harmony? How do we find the balance between trusting and questioning, between serving others and taking leadership, between action and reflection, between personal initiative and teamwork, between independence and unity? How can we find a wholeness encompassing God's personal call to each of us to stand alone – and the call to be a fellowship and global team? And afterwards? Let us continue to trust and to listen to each other, being patient with each other, as we talk through together as a world family what God is leading us to.

Mike Brown, Rob Corcoran, Bryan Hamlin and Edward Peters for the Jamaica preparation committee

REASON FOR JAMAICA MEETING

We should expect an accepted global leadership to emerge.

But leadership for what? What is the task? The remaking of the world is still the task. The word is 'remaking' which goes on and on. Just as God's work to shape mankind according to His ways goes on and on, so must our belief and our endeavour be unswerving. To move the world Godwards, we need levers at every stage and in every age. For me, this has been the main plea of Sir Howard Cooke over past years, and the reason for our meeting in Jamaica. His plea initially was for a leadership for MRA, a group of spokesmen and women who can sit down with the leaders of nations and help them to find God's Plan in the responsibilities they carry.

Why do we not have such a leadership in place now, accepted and respected by us all? It may be that we, as a force, are not selfless enough to follow St Paul's injunction that we 'humbly consider the other the better man' (or woman). In many cases it may be that 'my patch' is more of a priority for me than nurturing the common ground, or the greater good.

There is a pain when you accept to give leadership. You are misunderstood, criticised, undercut, under-appreciated. But we sorely need leadership who can look any of those in power in the eyes and help enhance their effectiveness. Do we seek something for ourselves? Power? Position? Praise? If so, we have no convincing message for the world's worldly leaders.

I would hope that those who lead would aspire more to sainthood in a fellowship rather than to be efficient executives of an organisation. If we want to go higher and wider we must first go deeper in a continuity of search. We have a hard choice before us in Jamaica: to rise up and embrace the vision or to play safe and manage decline.

Gordon Wise

MRA AMERICAS STRATEGIC CONSULTATION

From January 14 to 20, MRA advocates from USA, Canada, Jamaica, Guatemala, Colombia, Brazil, El Salvador, Europe and Japan met with a group of Mexican leaders in Mexico City. We told of MRA's work – in the reconstruction of postwar Europe, in healing the hemisphere's history of Indian oppression and African slavery, in El Salvador's peace process, in the socio-economic improvements in Brazil's marginalized communities, in the work of Colombians to rescue their country from the ravages of the drugs trade and in the initiation of the Caux Round Table.

Well-known personalities in the Mexican government and the private and NGO sectors were moved. They discussed their own situation, listening to one another 'as rarely happens...with humility and honesty,' as one expressed it.

Those who work with the poor described a country vastly different from the one presented by the heads of corporations and government. Understanding between these two perspectives is scarce but, during the Consultation, a promising start was made. A Mexican businessman said, 'today the invisible borders which divide Mexico began to be erased'. One of the Mexican organizers proposed that the first all-Mexican MRA gathering should focus on the armed conflict in Chiapas. This objective might be advanced by the presence of Caux Round Table representatives, who meet in Mexico, March 25 - 28.

Proposals were made for cooperation among MRA groups in different countries of the Americas; these were further developed during the Encuentro in Brazil in February and will be revisited in Caux this summer. The thrust is towards building a bridge of cooperation between 'the North' and 'the South' within the hemisphere, which might become a model for the rest of the world.

To move towards this goal, there were suggestions for an MRA publication in several languages, an exchange of programs among MRA teams, efforts to reduce the disparity between rich and poor, improved communication between Anglo and Latin Americans, promoting learning from Indian cultures, and steps towards healing the wounds inflicted upon them.

The visiting delegations pledged support for the emerging team. 'I felt I stood at the cradle of the new born MRA team in Mexico, somewhat like a fairy godmother, which implies a commitment for life,' wrote one visitor.

Héctor García, Steve Dickinson and Mike Olson

NEWCASTLE GOES TO DENMARK

A three man delegation from Tyneside, UK, visited Copenhagen this month. City Councillor Zafar Khan, Hari Shukla, former Director of the Racial Equality Council, and I were received by Councillors, and interviewed on national radio.

The Imam gave a reception for us at the mosque of the Copenhagen Islamic Cultural Centre. There were meetings at the Islamic-Christian Study Centre and at Tvaerkulturelt Centre, which caters for Copenhagen's

diverse minorities; and a discussion with a church congregation and their pastor, Ole Skjerbaek. We met Somali refugees resident in Scandinavia, and representatives came from Stockholm and Oslo.

The visit was timely. Issues of race were to the fore in the national election campaign then in progress. Some politicians had appealed to racist elements. Mr Khan and Mr Shukla shared their experience of improving community and race relations in Britain through cooperation rather than confrontation.

There was much interest in the conference planned for June in Newcastle on *Social and Spiritual Regeneration - New Challenges for the Millennium*.

Tom Jones

MORE THEME ISSUES

After two days of discussions near London, 24 of us, including participants from India, Canada and Switzerland, concluded that FOR A CHANGE should continue to be published six times a year for at least a further five years.

Much of our time was spent discussing how FAC could better support the aims and strategy of MRA around the world, as was done in the recent issue on Australia - 1,000 extra copies of which have been sold. We intend to increase the number of such 'theme' issues, interspersing them with more varied fare. To do this, we will need to include many more people.

For a detailed account of our discussions, and a copy of our new internal Mission Statement, please contact the editors at 12 Palace St, London SW1E 5JF - Fax +44 171 828 7609 - E-mail: fac@mra.org.uk

Tom Jones Ken Noble Mary Lean Mike Smith

WARM BATH IN COLOMBIA

I returned from my yearly visit to Colombia with the conviction to include a younger generation on this mission. I have seen a new Colombia of responsible citizens with moral values being born, with people trained in MRA at the heart of it. Many of them have children in university or in a profession, who would be delighted to meet people of their age. Already there is an invitation by a young landowner to take us to the now pacified area of Uraba. So I hope to take 3 or 4 people for three weeks June/July 1999. They will need a working knowledge of Spanish, a personal experience of change and an open mind; there is a lot to learn! Cost: approx. US\$ 1500,- (based on air fare from Europe).

My confidence in the future is based on God's extraordinary leading over the past 30 years and the qualities of the Colombian people. Come and see for yourself! A visit there is like a warm bath for the soul. Please contact me at dhph@worldonline.nl or any other way, so we can use this year to prepare!

Digna Hintzen, Netherlands

WHAT IS MRA?

It is always a challenge to answer the question, 'What is MRA?'. We are working on an answer which will form the centrepiece of MRA's international web site. Our

draft text is now circulating widely. It is available on request from the Geneva office, on paper or by email. We hope to reach agreement on the text at the forthcoming consultation in Jamaica. This text, if agreed, may also be useful as the basis for a booklet about MRA, which many feel is needed.

Andrew Stallybrass

LIFE - FAITH - FELLOWSHIP: CAUX, 23-30 JULY

We hope that as many as possible of those who feel responsible for Moral Re-Armament, whether in jobs or full time, will participate in this special week in Caux. Please consider who from your area should come, and send applications as soon as possible.

We have just had a stimulating planning weekend. The response has strengthened our conviction. Many of us feel the need to re-think the relevance of our calling, to consolidate our relationships in our MRA fellowship and to continue the renewal which began as we prepared the Caux Jubilee. We envisage this week as a time which, with the help of wise people from diverse religious and cultural traditions, can enrich our spiritual life.

The Swiss Foundation has generously agreed on a special price of SFr 30 per person per day. A solidarity fund to support those finding it difficult to cover both fare and stay has also been set up. Contributions to this fund will be welcome!

Any of us listed below will gratefully receive your suggestions and/or questions.

Paul and Sylvia Agbiih, Deepak Ajwani, Demie Blair, Bryan and Juliet Boobbyer, Philip Boobbyer, Ademar de Broutelles, Jacqui Daukes, Amina Dikedi, Martin-Eckart Fuchs, Joan Holland, Christine Karrer, Suresh Khatri, Mona Marzouk, Jean Piguët, Evelyn Puig, Kumar Raval, Ramez Salamé, Vijayalakshmi Subrahmanyam, Alain Tate, Patrick and Rachel Turner, Lotty Wolvekamp.

Annejet Campbell and Anne-Marie Tate

CAUX 1998 PREPARATION MEETING

The preparation meeting for the 1998 summer conferences will take place in the Maison St Gérard, at HAGUENAU, near Strasbourg. Arrival for dinner on Wednesday May 20, departure on Monday May 25 morning (after breakfast). Could the organisers of each session (Learning Community - Business and Industry - Industrial Caux Round Table - Life, Faith and Fellowship - Dialogue of Discovery - Agenda for Reconciliation - Caux Politicians' Round Table - A Conversation on Aims and Values for the Next Century) be represented, and those responsible for the main departments in Mountain House. Cost of the full stay: 1,080 FRF: single room, 200FRF extra.

Please announce yourselves to: Charles Danguy:

E-Mail: DroYutz@AOL.com - Tel&Fax: +33 3 82 56 27 95 or: Michel Koechlin: Tel: +33 3 88 60 21 84 - Fax: +33 3 88 75 76 40 (Attn) before MAY 11.

Marianne and Christoph Spreng, Charles and Juliette Danguy, Michel and Catherine Koechlin

NATIONAL SORRY DAY

MRA's experience in healing past wrongs is helping shape a major Australian initiative. The National Inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal children from their families recommended that a national Sorry Day be held. A committee has met, and decided that this will happen on 26 May. Last week the country's foremost Aboriginal leaders launched the concept at a ceremony overlooking Botany Bay in Sydney, where Europeans first landed in Australia. National TV and major newspapers carried the news. A former Governor-General is a Patron of the event, and local government leaders and many organisations are giving wholehearted support. MRA workers are at the heart of the initiative. Information is available from me at the address below, or from <http://www.austlii.edu.au/rsjlibrary/sorry/>

John Bond

WITNESS IN DIALOGUE

A major symposium on the theme of 'Witness in Dialogue - Christians Meeting the Challenges of the Culture at the Turn of the Millennium' will be held at Reichenberg, Germany, 27-31 May. It will bring together well-known theologians and church leaders from many countries. This symposium was designed by an informal network of friends in different Christian groups and denominations, some of us involved with MRA. I hope that a good number of MRA friends will take part. It will be an occasion to meet interesting people and to think through issues of great relevance to the Caux conferences. If you want to know more, please contact me at Mettnauweg1, D-88690 Uhdingen-

Mühlhofen. Fax: +49 7556 5489 E-mail: thieke@konstanz.netsurf.de

Rolf-Alexander Thieke, Germany

CAUX: SERVICE LEADERS AND SUPPORTERS

Instead of inviting a new group of British students to lead service teams at Caux, we have written to those who have come in previous years, asking their help again. We hope for a good response; but we will still need others who can help create the right spirit and give leadership. Could each national team consider this question, so that one or two people from their country come to Caux with this particular need at heart, either to lead a team, or to help care for the participants in the pre-work meetings.

Frédéric Chavanne

FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

Kenya: Ashwin Patel can be reached at the following e-mail address: aswin@net2000ke.com

Germany: MRA's and Thomas and Christa Bräckle's new fax number in Berlin is: +49 30 85 96 26 62

United Kingdom: New e-mail addresses for Tirley Garth are: Tirley Garth: TirleyG@aol.com

Brian Thirlaway: ThirlawayB@aol.com

Jim Wigan: Jimwigan@aol.com Ginny Wigan:

Ginnywigan@aol.com. The present Tirley Compuserve number will operate for another month and then it will become Blair Cummock's address which he will keep when he leaves Tirley in July.

Japan: correction: the MRA office no longer has its own e-mail address, so please delete the old address, LEB03056@niftyserve.or.jp

Calendar of Events

MAR '98	<u>Strasbourg France</u>	Preparation meeting for 'Agenda for Reconciliation' session at Caux	Mar	6 - 8
APR '98	<u>Jamaica West Indies</u>	Global Consultation	Apr	23 - 30
APR '98	<u>Rzeszow Poland</u>	CCBI conference: 'The application of business values in the West and the new market economies'	Apr	3 - 5
MAY '98	<u>Parubice Czech Republic</u>	International Communications Forum	May	8 - 12
MAY '98	<u>France</u>	Planning meeting for Caux '98	May	20 - 25
MAY '98	<u>Kenya</u>	'New men, new nations, a new world' - All-Africa conference	May	20 - 25
JUN '98	<u>Odawara Japan</u>	National MRA conference	Jun	6 - 7
JUL '98	<u>Melbourne Australia</u>	'Life Matters' course for young adults	Jul	3 - 12
JUL '98	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	Caux summer conference - 'Changing the ways of the world'	Jul	11 - Aug 23
SEP '98	<u>Tirley Garth UK</u>	FFF International Course (prospectus available)	Sep	3 - 22

The deadline for the next Bulletin is Wednesday April 15, 1998

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