

FORTRESS OF HOPE

Fortaleza, 2,800 kms north of Rio de Janeiro, is known for its beautiful beaches, plentiful fishing and resourceful, industrious people. Luxurious hotels attract visitors from all over the world.

But Fortaleza has also huge pockets of poverty, with 302 favelas (slums) including one holding 280,000 people, the second largest favela in Brazil.

Two years ago a group of Fortaleza community leaders attended a gathering in the MRA Centre in Petrópolis. They decided to pass on what they found there, and last month organized a three-day gathering, in which leaders of 22 of their communities took part. Six community leaders from Rio and Bill Clarke from America travelled 48 hours by bus to join them.

At the opening, a chorus sang in the characteristic style of Brazil's North East. Then unemployed fishermen and their wives performed a moving sketch on the theme of solidarity: 'You might bring nothing from the sea, but we thank God you are back alive'.

Lawrence Fearon, a community activist from England set the tone for the discussions: 'Dare to dream. And if you dream together with others, your dreams will become reality.' He told of his own change. One of the attendants remarked, 'Lawrence's words went deep into our hearts because he spoke about reality and hope, faith and persistence.'

In the opening meeting, the State Governor's representative said, 'You did not seek to hold this event in a big, modern auditorium, which we would have provided for you. MRA came to the rough heart of this community, in contact with its day-to-day needs. That tells much about your aims.'

Luis and Evelyn Puig

A GOOD JUMP IN OREGON

Portland Rabbi Joshua Stampfer returned from the Caux Jubilee conference with the conviction that MRA's profile in the city was not high enough. As a result, there was a major MRA conference at Portland State University last month. *The Oregonian* wrote, 'They didn't solve the problem of racism. But they got a good jump on it. Nearly 200 people from all walks of life, spirituality and ethnicity met for honest conversations on racial reconciliation.'

Several state senators and representatives, black

and white, Republican and Democrat, spoke; and the conference concluded with a concert by Joe Carter in Rabbi Stampfer's synagogue. Participants from Richmond, Virginia, included State Senator Henry Marsh, the first African-American mayor, Walter Kenney, another former Mayor, and Warren Kennedy, head of the city's NAACP. Kennedy told an *Oregonian* reporter that the conference was 'probably one of the most exhilarating experiences in my life'. The conference's emphasis on race relations and coalition-building had the interest of the White House, and these issues were focused by MRA's challenge to start with oneself, and not leave anyone out. An 8-page report is available from Richmond.

Michael Henderson

FROM INDIA TO CAMBODIA

Asia Plateau is 'buzzing' with conferences, seminars and workshops. Fifty police officers from the District of Satara came for a one-day workshop on Creative Leadership and Integrity. The officers were moved to hear Sushobha Barve describe her work with the Mumbai police force to overcome conflict in the city. A session led by Darius Forbes of Forbes Marshall, Pune, was also greatly appreciated. There was much laughter of recognition as skits and creative games brought home fundamental truths. The District Superintendent of Police, in her closing remarks, said how keen she was for her officers to be exposed to the ideas of MRA, and to experience the professional way the centre is managed and the programme conducted. As the officers left, many expressed their appreciation. 'I was so happy that I could speak frankly about everything in my heart,' said one.

In recent weeks, as well as the regular Creative Leadership Seminar for Industries, we have had a four-day workshop for teachers and educationalists, a two-day seminar for Indian Army religious instructors, and a three-day visit by a large group from Hong Kong brought by Rachel Wai.

Neichu Angami, a drugs counsellor from Nagaland who has helped lead several MRA courses, is now in Cambodia with the Indira Devi Association, giving training in HIV/AIDS care and prevention, and working at the Missionaries of Charity AIDS hospice in Phnom Penh. She is now preparing a Christmas show with destitute and disabled children.

Jyothi and Viji Subrahmanyam

ON THE CUTTING EDGE

At the end of January we finish a year in Europe, which we have found stimulating, scary and encouraging. *Foundations For Freedom* has been our priority. With its imaginative framework of Visiting Courses, International Courses, Seminars and Regional Meetings, FFF is doing a vital work linking and training young Europeans.

In FFF we have experienced a structure that leads to a lot of outreach and inclusion of people. It tackles an issue of huge importance in the current world. At the same time this innovative programme rediscovers in a fresh way basics like moral standards, quiet times and the possibility of change.

This programme is clearly on the 'cutting edge' of MRA work. As we return to Australia, we are aware of the need for more people involved in it. Who might like to give 1-5 years with this great team?

Rosemary and Peter Thwaites

A FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH

MRA has always used methods appropriate to the time (in addition to timeless 'personal work') to pass on the life-changing experience at its heart. Training courses may be the modern equivalent of the stage productions MRA used in earlier years. In an age of overbusyness, the hardest thing to get from most people is their time. At training courses people give undivided attention for long enough to allow deep reflection, discovery and change.

There have been over 30 FFF courses and seminars in the four years since we began, giving several hundred people the opportunity of encountering MRA in some depth. But we are conscious of areas of weakness, particularly in the follow up of individuals. How do we offer those who want to stick on the path of God's calling sufficient backup and resources to enable faithful continuance? We are considering a concept of five stages of training to enable a person to work through to a full commitment to God's plan for their life and career.

Stage One: 'Introduction to Change' – preparing the ground for first steps of personal change (e.g. through a 'Visiting Course').

Stage Two: 'Rooting the Experience' – the all-important phase when a person seeks to apply this initial experience in daily life, in the family, at work.

Stage Three: 'Broadening the Vision' – a chance to see the wider picture, to encounter the world and relate personal change to it (e.g. through an FFF International Course, a visit to Caux, or by participating in the co-workers programme).

Stage Four: 'Sharpening the Focus' – learning how the broad ideas apply in a specific professional vocation, e.g. business, education, media, so that the individual can be effective for God in their chosen career. (We are developing more focused courses.)

Stage Five: 'Following the Calling' – the longer-term life journey, in which constant growth is needed.

No structured training courses can replace faithful personal care. Courses, like stage productions, are means of reaching people and journeying together.

I would welcome comments on this, so that we can offer a coherent framework for growth in people.

Edward Peters

PEACE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Unisa Centre for Peace Education (formerly the Centre for Peace Studies) has now been in operation for nearly two years, supported by MRA.

Its main thrust this year was the development and dissemination of three courses related to peace education: Change Facilitator (six months), Mediator (nine months) and Negotiating Conflict (12 months). These courses are all available again in 1998. They are by distance education with a practical component, so students can study in their own time and do the practical work in their community or workplace, tailoring it to those needs.

Sam Pono, Rosemary Mattingley

OUTSIDE THE PRESSURE COOKER

We are at the end of a sabbatical year in Australia, made possible by the generosity of South African and Australian friends, with many 'miracles' thrown in.

Meryl's courses in pastoral counselling and in word processing, and Pieter's in the science of religion, were stimulating. Pieter has renewed old acquaintances, and Meryl and our daughters have made new friends and discovered something of this vast and beautiful continent. We have treasured each other and had fun together as a family! It has been a time of reflection. It is often easier to look at one's own country and one's own involvement from outside the pressure cooker. We are learning from insights gained here as Australia attempts to come to terms with its past. We realise afresh that taking ownership of our own past as well as that of our country, difficult and painful as this might be, is crucial for the future.

Pieter and Meryl Horn

CALLING ALL ACCOUNTANTS

Next August a vacancy will appear in the small team who handle MRA's accounts in Britain. After 14 years Tony Thomas will retire from the role of 'chief accountant' for The Oxford Group/MRA. And Catherine Hutchinson, who plays a similar role for Grosvenor and MRA Productions, plans to move on. If their roles are combined, we will need a full-time accountant who can prepare the accounts of two

charities with a combined turnover of £1.25 million in a normal year; with responsibility for audit, budgets, correspondence, insurance, tax reclaims, etc.

It is more than a technical task. The accountant will work from the heart of the MRA fellowship – based, we assume, in the MRA centre in London – in daily contact with donors, MRA workers and many others, jointly responsible to maintain and develop our finances on the basis that 'where God guides, He provides'. If you know of an accountant for whom this might be the next step, please contact us. We have no assumptions about whether the position would be salaried, unsalaried or in-between, believing that once we have found the right person, the right arrangements can be arrived at.

**Chris Evans, Catherine Hutchinson
Marie MacGowan, Tony Thomas**

BRAZIL CONFERENCE

The *Encuentro de las Americas* will take place again in Petrópolis, Brazil, February 4-8, 1998.

There will be some innovations. So as to include the citizens and town governments of Petrópolis and Rio de Janeiro, the main meetings, lectures and some cultural events will be held at an auditorium made available by the Municipality in the center of this beautiful 'Imperial City'. Visits to Rio will be planned before and after the *Encuentro*.

The organizers suggest that the participants bring a flag, objects representative of their national cultures and recorded music.

Friends from other continents are very, very welcome to the *Encuentro*. English-Portuguese and Portuguese-English translation will be provided.

The cost of lodging and meals is US\$25.00 per day. Contributions beyond that amount will make possible the attendance of students and community members. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with the organizers for more information.

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**Ernesto and Tania Veras Anibal de
Vasconcellos Jorge Roberto Ribeiro da Silva
(Beto)**

GENEVA HEARS FROM SCULPTOR

Ernst Neizvestny, the Russian sculptor and painter who was at Caux this year, has been in Geneva again. In the 'salle des pas perdus' of the Palais de Nations, Valdimir Petrovsky, head of the UN Office in Geneva, opened an exhibition of Mr Neizvestny's impressive painting, 'The tree of life', and some of his sculptures. The Russian Minister of Culture, Mrs Dementeva, came from Moscow for this event with a greeting to the artist from President Yeltsin. In his speech, Mr Neizvestny spoke with great passion on the constant battle between materialism and spiritual values which permeates his work.

We had the pleasure of receiving the Neizvestnys at our home to meet a few Genevese friends.

Daniel and Monique Mottu

THE JOY OF HOUSEKEEPING

I suppose you have all made a bed in Caux before – at least your own from time to time!

We believe this is the **most important** job in the house. The housekeeping team makes it possible for you to slip between a pair of stretched, cool sheets after a good day at Caux. At present this team is shrinking. So some of you might hear a bell ringing. Why shouldn't you become a housekeeper?

We welcome any able-bodied men and women, ideally people who can come for at least two weeks. We plan to have training periods for newcomers during the coming summer. And finance should not hinder you: if you feel you should come, let us know.

We really care about this special part of Mountain House and value the friendships built up over the years. We find fellowship and joy as we work. We hope that soon you will be part of that.

Inger Krafft

NGO IN TANZANIA

MRA has been registered as an NGO in Tanzania, and an MRA committee was elected recently, with Cecilia Kibio as co-ordinator.

CHANGE IN KOREA

Last month Mr Chung Choon, Chairman of MRA in Korea since the sixties, retired. The new Chairman elected by the MRA Board last month is Dr Kang Suk-kyu. Dr Kang is President of Hoseo University, one of Korea's well-known private universities and for a long time has been actively involved in MRA

Kwang-Sun Cha, Director of MRA in Korea

GLOBAL CONSULTATION IN JAMAICA

The invitation letter for the Jamaica Consultation, April 23-30, 1998, is now available and can be obtained on request from your World Bulletin distributor, or from us (the Editors).

PLACES AVAILABLE AT ARMAGH COURSE

There are still one or two places available at the 20th Effective Living Course which begins at Armagh in Melbourne on 1 February 1998. It promises to be a culturally rich and diverse community with participants coming from nine countries and a faculty that includes eight nationalities. Anyone who is interested in the Course should be in touch with John Mills: e-mail <jbmills@adelaide.dialix.com.au> Tel: +61 8 8379 3211.

FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES
United Kingdom: After their year in Pretoria, Finlay and Kath Moir are moving back to Aberdeen:
 11 Beechgrove Avenue, Aberdeen AB15 5EZ,
 Scotland. Tel/fax: +44 1224 636136. They also now have an e-mail address: moir@mra.org.uk
 Russell and Ann Carpenter have moved to: Bourne Cottage, Mill Lane, Mere, Warminster, Wilts BA12 6DA. Tel/fax: +44 1747 861 365
Canada: Keith and Joy Newman have a new e-mail address: kjnewman@sympatico.ca
France: the following e-mail addresses now apply:
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 The previous address, MRA-FRANCE, has been

closed and should not be used anymore. PLEASE remove it from your address list.
Brazil: The Puigs' phone/fax number has changed to +55 21 576 8378. To e-mail them please use lpuig@compuserve.com. Their previous e-mail address (6103701@mcimail.com) will end Dec. 31
 The e-mail address for Ernesto Veras and Sitio Sao Luiz (Petropolis Centre) is:
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 E-mail for Dr Jones Santos Neves is jofilho@sebes.com.br

We do not normally carry e-mail changes, since these are regularly updated by Edward Howard on the MRA e-mail network. If you wish to receive this update, you can send an e-mail to listproc@mra.org.uk. In the space for the text write: subscribe mra-list joe blow (or whatever your name is) – Editors

Calendar of Events

DEC '97	<u>Lithuania</u>	Third FFF regional meeting in Lithuania	Dec	28 - Jan3
JAN '98	<u>Asia Plateau India</u>	Ethical values in health care - international conference	Jan	2 - 4
JAN '98	<u>Asia Plateau India</u>	Asia/Pacific Regional Consultation	Jan	12 - 17
JAN '98	<u>Hakataramea Valley New Zealand</u>	New Year camp for young people	Jan	2 - 9
JAN '98	<u>Perth Australia</u>	'Wave of hope' teenage camp	Jan	8 - 15
FEB '98	<u>Finland</u>	FFF seminar in Finland for students from St Petersburg, Russia	Feb	1 - 7
FEB '98	<u>Armagh Melbourne</u>	Effective Living training course	Feb	1 - Apr 4
FEB '98	<u>Petropolis Brazil</u>	'Encuentro de las Americas'	Feb	4 - 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
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 Thursday, January 15th, 1997

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