

Initiatives of Change Global Consultation

Tirley Garth, Cheshire, U.K. — 17-24 October, 2002

Executive Summary

We experienced afresh that the life and values we share in *Initiatives of Change* are more important than our differences. Yet we all recognize the need to learn more about the other, to deepen our understanding and knowledge.

Conclusions on the main agenda items:

- We endorse vigorous dialogues between Muslims and non-Muslims, in a spirit of deliberate inclusion. We support a programme of proposed visits, between Muslim and non-Muslim countries.
- We will build on a rich history of dialogue between civilizations, including notably two conferences/round tables in Caux last summer specifically involving Muslims. These initiatives will be continued.
- We will build on existing relationships of trust, to intensify conversations involving people of the Middle East and those closely connected to it. (See Project Proposals, p.7)
- As a world-wide fellowship, we will reach out to citizens of the USA at all levels and wherever we are.
- We will expand IC's engagement with the United Nations through visits arranged with the IC office at the UN in New York and through wider participation in UN conferences. The IC International Association's responsibility for the office is a symbol of this commitment.

Other points:

- We support an international resource network (IC Development Team) which is currently evolving in response to an increasing demand for individual and team development and skills building.
- We endorse a second *Action for Life* programme, starting in November 2003, and recommend wider participation from Muslim communities and the USA.
- We encourage the development of training tools for Caux, offering an introduction to IC, leadership development for the Caux interns, and skills development for the IC team.
- Three people were selected to serve on the International Council: Niketu Iralu (India), Ravindra Rao (India) and Mike Brown (Australia). Dick Ruffin (USA) was re-selected to serve for an additional two years.

Dear Friends,

As thirty-eight people from 21 countries gathered at Tirley Garth in the north-west of England for the 2002 Global Consultation, the falling autumn leaves reminded us that the season was also nearly over for Tirley as a centre for MRA and *Initiatives of Change*. After 62 years of richly varied fruitfulness the house is now in the final month of events before preparations to hand over to the new owners. We thought also of all those who have poured out their love and care for this place over these years. A wonderful team from six countries came specially to care for us. Together we looked back with gratitude, and forward with openness to God's leading.

The backdrop of the world's needs and crises seemed as desperate as ever, yet stirrings of fresh life were there too. On the first afternoon we heard of IC's role in building trust and peace in the

African Great Lakes region; great enthusiasm for the message of moral and spiritual values among Indonesian students; bridge-building between Korean and Japanese students; a Clean Election Campaign in Kenya; and many other initiatives of change and hope.

From the outset we recognized that our time together needed to be a spiritual as well as a strategic process. There was an amazing variety in the morning meditations, and an unconscious sharing from the deepest of our different faiths. Our agenda concentrated on two pressing issues: 'Relations between Muslims and non-Muslims: partners in a dialogue of hope and healing' and 'The USA and the Global Community: engaging the heart and mind of a superpower.' Over the first four days we wove these two subjects together in eight sessions. This emphasised the importance of both, and the links between them, as we moved from general discussion towards practical contributions which we in IC could offer. Thinking of how to sustain this remarkable fellowship, we discussed means of empowering new and existing teams around the world.

The words *reaching out*, *understanding* and *true partnership* emerged repeatedly, even on the first morning, as keys to finding a constructive path in the midst of chaos. 'Tolerance can be indifference. We need understanding, which is love,' said one. We were reminded that despite our discussion being about vast, global issues, we could all find first steps in reaching out to another and showing our care. The ideal of reaching out was powerfully brought to life as Muslims and Christians among us shared in each other's Friday prayers and Sunday church service.

Our purpose was described by one as to offer "a common expression of what inspired citizenship means in a polarised society". We affirmed how much we have in common: our human experience, our faith, and our shared commitment to *Initiatives of Change*. This was perhaps the first Consultation at which a Lebanese spoke in Arabic, and was translated into French by a Tunisian and into English by an Egyptian!

The week made a family of us. We shared laughter and sorrow; excitement and sheer exhaustion; global concerns and deeply personal experiences. Honesty enabled an opening-out of formerly entrenched positions and perceptions. We learned from each other and with each other, as we strove for a common objective.

We now share with you the responsibility for turning those words into actions. As we do so, we recall Mona Marzouk's words from the beginning of our meeting: "I pray that we enter a dialogue with hearts and minds open to each other and that the dialogue helps each of us come closer to God. In that spirit we will be given abundantly more than we expect or deserve."

With our heartfelt gratitude and good wishes,

Hatem Akkari (Tunisia), Charles Aquilina (Malta/USA), Fabiola Benavente (Mexico), Paige Chargois (USA), Nathalie Chavanne (France), Rob Corcoran (USA), Chris Evans (UK), Peter Everington (UK), Jean Fayet (France), Birte Finken (Norway/Denmark), Laurent Gagnon (Canada), Bryan Hamlin (USA), Pieter Horn (South Africa), Hiroshi Ishida (Japan), Joseph Karanja (Kenya), Leena Khatri (India/Fiji), Wadiaa Khoury (Lebanon), Andrew Lancaster (Australia), Chris Lancaster (Australia), Ron Lawler (Australia), Claire Leggat (New Zealand/UK), Fiona Leggat (New Zealand/UK), Mona Marzouk (Egypt/UK), Mohammad Murtada (Lebanon), Thomas Ntambu-Kakoma-Aon (Congo/Switzerland), Sam Pono (South Africa), Ravindra Rao (India), Krish Raval (UK), Peter Riddell (UK), Dick Ruffin (USA), Nagia Abdelmogney Said (Egypt), Imam Abduljalil Sajid (Pakistan/UK), Marianne Spreng (Switzerland), Andrew Stallybrass (UK/Switzerland), Anastasia Stepanova (Russia), Nicole Thieke (Switzerland/Germany), Rosalind Weeks (Ireland/Canada), John Williams (Australia), Lotty Wolvekamp (The Netherlands).

Muslims and non-Muslims reaching out to each other: a dialogue of hope and healing

The events since 11th September 2001 have brought to even greater prominence the global need to bridge the gaps between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds. In Caux this summer there was a constructive dialogue between 39 concerned Muslims and non-Muslims, and a conference entitled *The Spiritual Factor in Secular Society*.

A survey of IC's current involvement across the Muslim world revealed the exceptional scope and depth of activities already under way. From these, four broad areas emerged for further consideration:

- Links between Islamic communities in the West and Arab countries, particularly our teams in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia who were represented at the Consultation;
- Skills training and leadership development;
- The quality of life which IC offers;
- Frameworks for ongoing internal dialogue within IC on Islamic issues.

There was a strong emphasis on the need to deepen understanding of Islam and other faith traditions within IC's existing training programmes: *Action for Life*, *Foundations for Freedom*, *Caux Scholars Program*, and others. Specific suggestions included: a visit to Lebanon by a delegation from IC in the US; a dialogue in Egypt between Muslims and non-Muslims; an offer by South Africans to host and to share lessons from their road to healing with a group from Palestine and Israel; the development of a 'resource group' on Islamic thought, to be available to all those in IC. (See p. 7)

We felt privileged to hear expressions of deep wounds, especially among our Muslim friends. We reaffirmed that we must look beyond the problems to "find solutions and actions that release a creative energy which is greater than the sum of each of us individually". Some excerpts illustrate the depth of our searching together:

Hearing each other's pain

I try to practise Islam, and believe that it is compatible with Western society; but I feel that people like me are being forced to make a choice between going back to a dogmatic practice of Islam or belonging to the Western world. I feel strongly the sufferings of Americans and Australians [in 9/11 and Bali], but also the suffering of many Muslims in Palestine, Kashmir, and other places. There are double standards from the West and the Muslim world, where human rights are upheld in some places but not others.

Mona Marzouk, Egypt/UK

*Some in the West don't seem to know that the majority of Muslims were in real pain due to 9/11. We count what happened as a threat to everything we stand for. The 9/11 acts targeted innocent people and this is not at all tolerated by Islam as a faith. One of the hurts I feel from 9/11 is that my faith, which is there to make me a better person for a better world, was polluted: by the perpetrators who used it as a justification for their deeds, and by those who responded by blaming my faith. Both sides conspire to pollute the dignity of my faith. We need Christians, working on the basis of their Christianity, to bridge the gap between the West and the Muslim world. **Mohammad Murtada, Lebanon***

*We, the West, are building up in the Muslim world and in Africa a tremendous sense of grievance and injustice. If we have the wisdom to respond to it, politically and economically, we may yet avert what will otherwise be a terrible retribution wreaked on our generation and our children's. **Peter Riddell, UK***

I am convinced that humanity is universal, and that the culture of others belongs to me. But we live in a society where exclusion is a kind of principle, whether racial, religious, or ethnic, and it often leads to conflict... Western policies, which seem to consist in supporting dictatorships in the Congo and the Third World, are regarded as a deep injustice. In the Congo and other African countries the attacks on September 11th have been seen as a reaction against this injustice, leading to a number of converts to Islam, especially among young people. Our work is to find the causes of that injustice.

Thomas Ntambu-Kakoma-Aon, Congo

Very often we Muslims and Arabs have projected ourselves as victims, using that as a weapon.

Hatem Akkari, Tunisia

The dialogue we need

Dialogue presupposes equality and putting ourselves in question. In the Arab and Muslim world we can only be open to dialogue by examining ourselves and breaking out of our cultural isolation, which is responsible for the absence of a Muslim voice in the West. **Hatem Akkari, Tunisia**

Three key words for building bridges: exposure (to each other); experience; trust.

Nagia Abdelmogney Said, Egypt

Among the prerequisites for a meaningful dialogue are active listening, honest acceptance of the other side, and acknowledgement of the other's pain.

From the concluding statement of the 2002 Caux Dialogue

Understanding each other

I spent most of my early life in a purely Islamic environment; consequently for me the Christian was something unclear, unknown, vague. All I knew was that it was some other presence which was shelling us... like a monster scarring me and threatening my existence as a Muslim. ... I thought I would be healed by time, until in this house in 1994 I met a Christian Lebanese and we clashed: I found I was not healed. The only thing that helped me to heal my pain was committed Christians who lived their Christianity. My attempt to be a committed Muslim goes back to those Christians who encouraged me to live as a committed Muslim. We need to know each other, accept each other, cherish each other, and help each other in our journey of trying to live our faith.

Mohammad Murtada, Lebanon

I live in a Christian city. The first time I had a real dialogue with a Muslim compatriot was at Caux, when I was 17. Until then, I often saw Muslims as a danger and inferior. Dialogue helped me overcome my prejudices, and last year, Action for Life gave me many opportunities to 'walk a mile' in Muslim people's moccasins. The Muslim-Christian relationship and dialogue are Lebanon's treasures: the two communities share a common destiny. **Wadiaa Khoury, Lebanon**

How do we find a healing of unconscious fear, arrogance and indifference in the West, and hurt, anger and inferiority in so many Muslims? **Birte Finken, Norway/Denmark**

What we share

Living together as human beings must lead us to share each other's pain, dream each other's dreams, and be each other's keepers. **Mohammad Murtada, Lebanon**

We have more in common than we acknowledge. After 9/11 we are all more vulnerable. We are wounded, hurt, and feel got at, but we also have in common our faith. Therefore we must have compassion and support one another. **Bryan Hamlin, USA**

Our common ground is to view the world and its events from a faith perspective. **Dick Ruffin, USA**

Faith is not certainty. It is the courage to live with uncertainty. It is not knowing all the answers. It is often the strength to live with questions. It is not a sense of invulnerability. It is the knowledge that we are utterly vulnerable but that it is precisely in our vulnerability that we reach out to God and through this learn to reach out to others, able to understand their fears and doubts.

A Muslim, quoting Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

There is a danger in glorifying death; we must rather together celebrate life and living.

Imam Abduljalil Sajid, UK

*Let us stress the common core of values that binds us together, and trust that ‘man’s extremity is God’s opportunity’. The most difficult person can change; the most intense crisis can be overcome. **Nagia Abdelmogney Said, Egypt***

Looking ahead

*As Muslims we need people of vision: we are currently suffering from a lack of vision. The Western model is not the model we want to follow: we should draw from it but find our own way. I would like to leave with a new vision for those who clamour for confrontation, and will say to them that we are condemned to dialogue and to getting closer to each other. **Hatem Akkari, Tunisia***

*One of the best ways to end conflict with a person is to begin calling them by their rightful name. **Quoted by Paige Chargois, USA***

We Arab Christians have the potential to be a bridge between the West and Islam.

Wadiaa Khoury, Lebanon

*The goal of our exchanges is to get the facts straight, to keep the faith alive, and to embark on the future with hope. **Nagia Abdelmogney Said, Egypt***

The USA and the Global Community: engaging the heart and mind of a superpower

We acknowledged the deep divisions and differences of perception between America and the global community. These differences are hard to bridge, even among friends, in such a short time. The process of dialogue must go on. The USA has a vast ‘footprint’ — economic, political, military and cultural — across the world, with the power to impact everyone’s lives. Yet America does have its needs, which include the divides between white, African American and Hispanic; between North and South; and between rich and poor. One American friend began by voicing some discomfort that we should be discussing the ‘needs’ of a country which appears to be privileged in comparison with other nations. Yet we all responded to an America which is able to share a sense of its own need, and many expressed their gratitude and affection for this country.

So how to take the USA onto our hearts and to give our best for its best? Three of the five participants from America were born overseas (along with 31 million others who now call America home). This diversity of America’s was seen as an asset, with its large populations from every part of the world representing potential bridges to other countries and cultures. Rob Corcoran, a Briton by birth but now a US citizen, spoke of getting to know another country: “It is quite an experience to identify with another country, to the extent not just of loving it but of identifying with its weaknesses as well as its strengths.” The IC community are all encouraged to seek constructive links with Americans as a first step in building partnerships to break down the stereotypes which are too easily projected in both directions.

A number of possible projects emerged to build partnerships between Americans and other parts of the world, both within the US and through visits overseas. (See Project Proposals, p.7.) American colleagues highlighted a serious need to enlarge their core team in America. We saluted the dedication and sheer hard work of the relatively few who have taken on a huge nation. They asked that we give serious consideration to who might make a longer-term commitment to IC’s work in the US, either by undertaking regular visits or by basing there for a substantial period.

One particular need for us all to consider is the *Initiatives of Change* office at the United Nations in New York. It has just been taken under the auspices of the IC International Association, and so it is now the responsibility of our world-wide team to make the most of the many opportunities it affords.

If we could speak to the US President...

Our American friends invited us to speak to them as we would like to speak to the US administration. This led to sometimes painful but lively and heartfelt exchanges (although we were reminded that our task is to build, deepen and enhance IC's strategies rather than US foreign policy!). We made a point of really listening to each other.

Poverty combined with humiliation and a sense of powerlessness is behind much of the present violence.
Pieter Horn, South Africa

As America loves the world, so the world will love America. **Lotty Wolvekamp, The Netherlands**

I am grateful that the world's strongest nation has a deep response to freedom. But freedom for whom?
Chris Evans, UK

Please consider that there are people whose integrity urges them to disagree with your foreign policy. You cannot say, "You are either with us or with the enemy." **Mohammad Murtada, Lebanon**

Are you ready to take the lead in providing a Marshall Plan for the rest of the world, acting together with Europe? **Jean Fayet, France**

Are you really listening? Can we together create a world where every human life has the same value?
Andrew Stallybrass, UK/Switzerland

Could America discover a patriotism that embraces the other? **Claire Leggat, New Zealand/UK**

Other thoughts...

In the post 9/11 world, a great many Americans are more reflective, more concerned about their primary relationships, and more desirous of understanding Islam and of reaching out to the Muslims in their midst. **Dick Ruffin, USA**

My vision is for the proud, patriotic American—who is confident, creative, convinced about the best ideals of America, and full of positive go-ahead—to have deep sensitivity to others and how American power and policies can hurt and humiliate people and nations.

Bjørn Ole Austad, Malta, in pre-Consultation correspondence

Equipping ourselves for the tasks ahead

If you have a big heart and a big conviction, you have to learn a big lot!

Marianne Spreng, Switzerland, quoting Bill Jaeger

IC Development Team

Just a week before the Consultation, an international working group of twelve people had gathered in Richmond, USA to initiate a conversation and a process that might lead to a more coherent, collaborative and co-ordinated approach to IC's global training and team development needs. The group has adopted the working title of the *IC Development Team*, and the report of their two-day meeting was tabled for the Consultation. They say: "The focus of our training must be to serve IC's strategic goals to reach the leadership of our nations at all levels. We should ask, 'What kind of people are needed and what skills will they need to meet the challenges of the future?' Our goal should be to build an integrated, global network of skilled community builders and change agents."

Contact person: Rob Corcoran.

This team exists to serve both current and future initiatives, such as the following:

Action for Life

We trust that all IC teams worldwide have received at least some reports of the marvellous experience that was *Action for Life*: a ten-month leadership training programme in which 34 people (mostly under 30) travelled in India and Asia, working as a team to offer their best to communities in 12 countries. For Consultation participant Wadiaa Khoury, AfL was a chance to see some of the world's real needs: a journey of "expanding ourselves to be able to look at the world through God's eyes".

On behalf of AfL, Leena Khatri thanked IC for the support which had poured in from around the world in many ways, including prayer, personnel and finances. She pointed out that AfL was not a new idea, but simply MRA's tried and tested method. The Consultation strongly endorsed *Action for Life 2*, which starts at Asia Plateau on 1st November 2003. Help is asked from all IC teams to gather a diverse and dynamic group of participants (particularly from areas related to our agenda).

Richmond community learning laboratory

The IC/Hope in the Cities team in Richmond, USA is undertaking to provide a 'community learning laboratory' where emerging leaders from IC's global network can develop their skills and contribute their perspectives and insights. This arises from the conviction that IC's experience has prepared it to play a vital role in creating a process for true dialogue and healing of divisive history, and for the building of diverse, multi-sector teams. In Richmond there are opportunities for access to and engagement with all sectors of the community: political, business, media, education, religious, cultural, NGOs, etc. This action also represents a practical mechanism for the engagement between the USA and the rest of the world which was a major part of the Consultation's agenda.

Five modules are currently being prepared: community change through personal transformation; team development and leadership skills; dialogue development and delivery; acknowledging and healing history; and communications and advocacy.

Caux 2003

One of the first steps of the IC Development Team is to develop training tools for Caux 2003 which will include:

- Introduction to IC, as part of all conferences. This would articulate in fresh and imaginative ways the basic essentials of the IC way of life.
- Leadership development for the Caux interns and others. Two one and a half hour sessions each week will be a required part of the schedule for every intern.
- Skills development for the IC team. Continuing education, such as modules on team-building, leadership and personnel management, conflict transformation, prejudice reduction and facilitation, offered at regular intervals throughout the summer.

The Consultation welcomed these initiatives as part of our ongoing, collective responsibility to offer IC's best to all who come to the Caux conferences.

Project Proposals

The input of these days led us to review initiatives and actions that are already giving 'legs to ideas'. We also looked at new suggestions, including the various development and training programmes with *Hope in the Cities* as well as the *Action for Life* programme mentioned above. We discussed and worked on 19 specific initiatives, which naturally fell into three categories: visits, training and events. We applied a disciplined methodology to focus and structure our existing actions and ideas, identifying the person responsible for each initiative, the time frame, the partners to work with, cost, fund-raising, spiritual inspiration, and support needed from the IC team. For each of these initiatives a quarterly report will be sent to Laurent Gagnon for the IC Council, and information put in to the World Bulletin.

We looked at specific proposals for visits, including: Muslim IC friends going to America; American IC friends visiting Lebanon and the Middle East; a group of Israelis and Palestinians to attend the *Agenda*

for *Reconciliation* peace-building conference in Caux; and a proposal for visiting speakers to tour North American college campuses.

Two areas being addressed by MRA/IC in India are globalization and the environment, and an interaction between senior business people and civil servants and other concerned groups. An international conference in Asia Plateau and a round-table in Delhi are planned in January 2003 as part of this process. A centre for environmental studies, as presented at the Global Hoho, will be set up at Asia Plateau in 2003.

We are conscious that these paragraphs report on the initiatives and places that we were able to discuss, and gratefully recognize that many other initiatives and events are taking place. We recommend that information be better circulated among our world fellowship, through the World Bulletin and the soon-to-be-launched 'extranet' (part of the new international IC web site).

IC Council selection

The Consultation was deeply grateful for the willing spirit of service shown in all who offered themselves for nomination, and also to the ICC Nominations Committee for facilitating the nomination and selection process. After much reflection, the following people were selected to serve on the *Initiatives of Change* Council:

To start on 1st October 2003: Niketu Iralu, India
 Ravindra Rao, India
 Dick Ruffin, USA (selected to serve for two further years)

To start on 1st October 2004: Mike Brown, Australia

ICC membership 2001-2006:

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Selected in South Africa (1999) to serve from 1999	Ailsa Hamilton Pieter Horn Ashwin Patel Peter Thwaites				
Selected in South Africa (1999) to serve from 2000	Laurent Gagnon Rajmohan Gandhi Dick Ruffin	Laurent Gagnon Rajmohan Gandhi Dick Ruffin	Dick Ruffin	Dick Ruffin	
Selected in Richmond (2001) to serve from 2001	Claire Leggat	Claire Leggat	Claire Leggat		
Selected in Richmond (2001) to serve from 2002		Joseph Karanja Leena Khatri John Williams	Joseph Karanja Leena Khatri John Williams	Joseph Karanja Leena Khatri John Williams	
Selected at Tirley Garth (2002) to serve from 2003			Ravindra Rao Niketú Iralu	Ravindra Rao Niketú Iralu	Ravindra Rao Niketú Iralu
Selected at Tirley Garth (2002) to serve from 2004				Mike Brown	Mike Brown
Selected at 2004 Consultation to serve from 2004				Person A Person B Person C	Person A Person B Person C
Selected at 2004 Consultation to serve from 2005					Person D Person E Person F

ICC terms of service start and end on 1st October.

Other business

Consultation and IC Council

The International Council reported back to the Consultation on their year's activities. A summary is available in the next World Bulletin.

Consultation and IC Council Review Process Team

The 1998 Jamaica Consultation, which established the IC Council and other international structures, provided for a review after five years (at the next Consultation). This process will be co-ordinated by Anne Hartnell, Mona Marzouk and Marianne Spreng. We invited them to co-opt others for this task.

IC Council Nominations Committee

It was agreed to re-nominate Andrew Stallybrass, Jackie Euvrard and Vijayalakshmi Subrahmanyam to co-ordinate the selection process for the IC Council.

In order to find enough candidates for the next selection process, they strongly recommend that all of us try to think more in terms of nominations from our group/country/area, put forward and prepared by a team, and less in terms of an invitation for an individual to stand. Many in our teams are fully stretched, whether they be in jobs, or 'full-time'. One way we can find more candidates for the next selection process is if we discuss together in groups and teams who of us might/could/should at some point stand, and that together we work to help free these people from enough of their current commitments to be able to stand.

Richmond Affirmations

There have been several suggestions for modifications to the Richmond Affirmations. The Consultation proposed to put this on the agenda of the next Consultation.

Consultation preparation team

Andrew Lancaster and Nathalie Chavanne continue their terms. One more person is needed to begin a three-year term of service; Andrew will welcome offers.

Next Consultation

It was agreed that the next Global Consultation should be in March or April, 2004, thus returning to a pattern which was this year interrupted by the Global Hoho. Offers to host the Consultation came from Lebanon, Egypt and Kenya. There will be opportunity for further discussion to shape its major themes, which will be communicated through the World Bulletin and the IC internal web site (extranet) which is in preparation.