JOANNA MARGUERITTE

GUEST COLUMN

PROFESSOR MARI FITZDUFF

Stranger in one's own land

AS A SOUTHERN IRISH Catholic, I married a man from Northern Ireland whose family had been Protestant British settlers, and went to live there in the seventies. My husband's family business was blown up three times, once by loyalists and twice by republicans. In our immediate vicinity 30 people—Protestants, Catholics, and British security forces—lost their lives. I began to think, 'There has to be a different way.' I studied conflict resolution and mediation and decided to teach as a way of learning more. It was such a new field that half of my first class on 'mediation' thought they were coming to a lesson on 'meditation'!

Peacefare

A tremendous tool as we go forth to do 'peacefare', as opposed to warfare, is the capacity not to simplify humans into enemy groups. A huge dilemma we have is that we like our wars to be simple. During the wars in the Balkans, as soon as it went beyond the Serbians as the bad guys, many of us didn't want to know. We like our enemies to be straightforward, and we don't like to recognise that our enemies are often as complex as we are. One of the big problems in working in peace processes is that leaders always believe their enemies are simpler, more united, and can deliver on compromises more easily than they can.

Many of us also like our beliefs to be simple. Essentially a fundamentalist is somebody who has narrowed down their belief to a particular perspective that explains the world in terms of enemies and us. This is true of most wars. In Northern Ireland, for instance, each side sees only one villain as being responsible for centuries of ills—the British if you are on one side and the Catholics or the IRA if you are on the other. There are similar tendencies in the way in which Islam is perceived, or the United States. All of us need to resist these simplifications, as they prevent us from attempting the conversations that need to happen.

Often in a conflict we need to look at the structural issues as well as the cultural issues. The structural issues are usually ones of inequity and exclusion, and of laws and constitutionality, and often have hard data that support them in terms of discrimination against minorities and so on. The cultural issues concern relationships and dialogue. There is often a clear pattern in terms of who will want to focus on which issue. In Israel, for example, the 20 per cent Arab-Israeli population are at the bottom of the social scale in terms of education, health and wealth. When I try to create dialogue between them and Israeli Jews, the Arabs will usually focus on the structures, and the Israelis will almost always focus on relationships and cultural factors.

Walking in others' shoes

There has been tension between the 'human rights field' and 'the conflict resolution field' in relation to the role of advocates. Once when I was going to Israel, to talk to the Security Council, one of my human rights colleagues said, 'Be sure to tell them how much we disapprove of what they're doing'. And I replied, 'No, my job is to be invited back again to take the conversation further'. It is the ability to hear from all groups, and to try and understand where they're coming from that is important. It can be difficult to step into the shoes of some, but it is only by being there that you can help them reach a wider perspective, which hopefully includes the other side.

The belief that we all want peace is not quite true. To think that peace suits everyone better than war is misguided. War is often what we call 'functional', particularly in the lives of young men.

Absence of war

When the war began to end in Northern Ireland I checked in with the 'squaddies' patrolling the streets at night. They were bored: 'We want to go to Kosovo where there's a real war. We want to fight—that's what we're trained for.' The paramilitaries were bored too. Some actually confessed to me that they had never felt more alive than when they were out on 'a night of action', that is killing 'the other'. Such people are troubled by the absence of war—and finding positive ways to deal with their need for excitement, or for meaning, is critical.

The need for leaders who can transcend the immediate needs of their own group is more important than ever. We eventually learned this lesson in Northern Ireland. The local councils (filled with hostile members from both sides) would be given European money only if they agreed to give to both communities. Each had to recognise the need of the other side, if they were to get funding for their own. This type of leadership is not easy. One may be seen to be colluding with 'the other' thus becoming a *strainseir* (Irish for stranger) in one's own land. Often, however, the strangers on the edge are the only people who can see the future as well as the past, the global as well as the local.

Mari Fitzduff is Professor and Director of the international MA programme in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis University, Boston, USA. This article is based on her Caux Lecture at the IofC centre in Switzerland.

Next Issue

LEAD STORY: *In a world of increasing uncertainty, this final issue of For A Change looks at how to live with change*

PROFILE: *Patrick Colquhoun, Director of Medical Support in Romania*

FEATURE: *Looking back on 19 years of For A Change*

VOLUME 19 NO 5

Oct/Nov 2006

FOR A CHANGE

Transforming the way things are

SUMMER 2006 60 years of Conferences SWITZERLAND

HEALING HISTORY/TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS/BUILDING COMMUNITY

EAR TO THE GROUND

FROM ANDREW STALLYBRASS IN CAUX, SWITZERLAND

Incomer

Hildi Zeller has only been living in the village of Caux in Switzerland for 60 years now, so she's not too surprised that someone said to her the other day: 'You're not from here.'

She came in 1946 with a small army of fellow Swiss, to turn the old Caux Palace Hotel into a conference centre where World War II enemies could meet and start to find healing. Now the local paper calls her 'the soul' of the Protestant chapel, which in a few weeks will be celebrating its hundredth birthday.

Watershed

The name 'Caux' probably derives from a pre-Roman, Celtic word for a high pasture. Further up the mountain road from Caux is the Col de Jaman—now a quiet spot but for hundreds of years an important mountain pass. The postmen from Montreux and Chateau-d'Oeux would meet here to exchange the mail.

The Col de Jaman marks a watershed: the rain that falls on one side flows into the Rhine and is carried north to the North Sea, while on the Caux side it flows into the Lake of Geneva and runs south to the Mediterranean via the Rhone.

New life

Towards the end of the war, Caux provided shelter for Jewish refugees. One of them was a small baby who had been born in a train on the way from Budapest to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Just before the start of the conference, she came back as a grandmother, with her daughter, son and grand-daughter. Before they left, the daughter asked: 'What did it mean to stay here?' She answered: 'A new life.' The daughter asked, 'I mean what did it mean to stay here now?' Grandma replied: 'Again, a new life.'

Dirty money

Caux has given its name to the Caux Round Table, an international network of business leaders. It is launching a new campaign in favour of a global anti-corruption agency. According to its head, the British lawyer Lord Brennan, ten times as much money goes from poor to rich nations as goes the other way in aid. 'Corruption is to take and use,' he summarised. 'Integrity means sharing and giving.'

Ubuntu

Other thoughts which stay with me from the summer: Jemma Kumba, Chairwoman of the Sudanese Parliament's Economic Committee said the experience of Caux had helped her to value 'the importance of inner change', and the philosophy of 'Ubuntu'—'I am because you are, and you are because I am.'

Lilian Cingo, from South Africa, told how Phelophepa, 'the people's health train' that she had pioneered, is taking health care to remote communities in her country. In the process, she had had to learn how to drive and maintain a train.

More than one million people have been treated since 1993. Cingo gave stories of social and racial healing through the train—'so many people are traumatised'. She added, to laughter, 'All our leaders need to see a psychologist.'

A family in the North uses 50 times the resources of a poor family in the South, said Ian Robertson, from the University of Zimbabwe, and also CEO of a small agricultural business. 'The planet is being gutted of resources.' When would people ask themselves 'how much is enough'?

Practical peace

The summer's conferences closed with a rousing appeal from the Nigerian deputy to the Papal Nuncio to the UN in Geneva, Fortunatus Nwachukwu. He called for African integrity and unity, and peace between Muslim and Christian. 'Islam and Christianity are both imported religions to our continent,' he said. 'They are both based on peace and harmony—so why do we allow them to foster division and conflict instead?' he asked. His words were greeted with enthusiasm by a Nigerian imam, who embraced a Christian minister and said, 'We work to make practical peace and love.'

Monsignor Nwachukwu hailed them both: 'You are living in the future. Our prayer is that such initiatives as yours spread.'

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Sixty years young

I first went to Caux, the Initiatives of Change (IofC) conference centre in Switzerland, as a starry-eyed drama student in 1992. It changed my life, setting me on the road to faith and opening my eyes to a world in need in which, I discovered, I could play my part in making a difference. Thousands of people have been similarly affected over the last six decades and this summer Caux celebrated its 60th anniversary.

The theme of the summer's five conferences (which you can read all about in this issue) was 'Globalising Integrity - Personalising Integrity: suggestions and signposts for the 21st century'. The backdrop was the conflict raging between Israel and Lebanon. With the closure of Beirut airport some Lebanese delegates found themselves stranded at Caux and unable to return home, which must have been unimaginably painful.

Caux tirelessly promotes the idea that people can change, and that therein lies the hope that the world can change for the better. At times this theory can seem naïve but perhaps it's all we have. As guest columnist Mari Fitzduff began her Caux Lecture: 'I can't tell you how hopeful it is to be with you all, given the difficult weeks we are having in our world... I believe that these conflicts do not just happen, but happen because we make it so, and the corollary means that I very much believe in the capacity of all of us to be able to change the future for the better.'

Returning from my summer holiday to the IofC centre where FAC is produced, I was greeted enthusiastically by one of the receptionists who had just been to Caux for the first time. London-born Semhar Belay, whose family comes from Eritrea, attended the African Dialogue (see p 8). 'It changed my outlook on life and my expectations,' she said. 'Before I used to think, "Give a little, get a lot." Now I think, "Give a lot, get a lot."' Delighted with her new understanding of what IofC is trying to achieve in the world, she concluded, 'I felt richer after a week's volunteering at Caux than I do when I come out of a paid job'.

Laura Boobbyer

LAURA BOOBBYER

email an article to a friend visit www.forachange.co.uk

FOR A CHANGE

For A Change is about change, how to make it happen and how to live it. We believe that what happens inside people has an effect on the world around them. At the heart of global change lies change in the human heart.

We draw our material from a wide range of sources, including Initiatives of Change. We give a voice to people all over the world who are making a difference. We invite our readers to join them. Your stories are our stories.

Initiatives of Change (formerly Moral Re-Armament) works for moral and spiritual renewal in all areas of life. It was initiated by Frank Buchman, an American who believed that change in the world must start in individuals.

Initiatives of Change is open to all. Its starting point is the readiness of each person to make what they know of God and eternal moral values central in their lives. This personal commitment to search for God's will forms the basis for creative initiative and common action: standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love help to focus the challenge of personal and global change.

These ideas have given rise to an international community in more than 70 countries, working in such areas as reconciliation; tackling the root causes of corruption, poverty and social exclusion; and strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations for democracy.

OCT/NOV 2006

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FOR A CHANGE

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Art power

*Whether you're a clown, a singer, an actor or simply a member of the audience, you have an impact on the world, **Mary Lean** discovers.*

All photos by Tania Biring

DARREN RAYMOND knows what a powerful effect the arts can have on people's lives.

While serving a sentence in Brixton Prison, London, in 2003, he went along to a drama class. 'I found myself playing silly games, and wondered what I had put myself into,' he told a group at the Renewal Arts Forum at the Initiatives of Change centre in Caux, Switzerland, this summer. 'But after about an hour of the class I thought, "Wow, I've forgotten I'm in prison". No one was treating me as a prisoner; I was being treated as an equal, as an artist. It was a turning point for me as a person.'

Raymond, now a professional actor, goes back into prisons to run workshops on Shakespeare—and says that participants frequently end up writing sonnets in their first session. 'Shakespeare's themes are universal,' he says. 'A lot of prisoners have pent-up anger and frustrations. There's no better writer than Shakespeare to bring that to the fore.'

Raymond was one of several at the Forum whose personal experience illustrated its theme: 'Transforming the way things are'.

Pauline Warjri, a music teacher and composer from Northeast India, spoke of how, as a young person, 'I felt I was nobody until it came to piano and singing. Music was my home, music brought me into contact with people young and old.' She now lives in Bangalore, where she teaches piano and voice and promotes musical literacy. Earlier this year she started a choir which includes people from a wide range of linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, from both Bangalore and the Northeast. 'People who are killing each other back home, sing together.'

For Palestinian photographer Yousef Khanfar, artists have a responsibility to social justice. 'I never want to stand next to the strong and wrong against the weak and right,' he told the Forum. 'Every creation should put questions to the public.' To communicate a message, an artist must go beyond the surface and draw on the 'silent region deep down inside'.

For, as conference organiser Elisabeth Tooms points out, art always puts across a worldview of some sort, whether it is overt or not. Renewal Arts is a network of artists and art-lovers who share a positive vision of the world and of human endeavour. 'Art has a phenomenal power to challenge and transform the way people think,' she says. 'It has the potential to be subversive, to be a catalyst for change, to be dangerous to evil. We aim to encourage artists who want to express a vision of a just and generous world.'

A huge range of disciplines and nationalities were represented at Caux, from the Swedish clowns and jugglers whose celebratory zest permeated the week to the British string quartet who gave a late-night performance of Mozart's Requiem in the chapel above the conference centre. There were rock musicians and classical actors; a Japanese calligraphy master and an Indian 13-year-old with an angelic singing voice; film-makers, dancers, singers, writers—and those who simply described themselves as representing the audience.

This last group were offered a feast of concerts, plays and other productions. Evening programmes included the West European premiere of a new Russian play, *The Nightingale Sang, the Lilacs were in Bloom*, by the Moscow New Drama Theatre; Rob Gillion's one-man play, *The Visit*, in which a priest's life is disrupted when Jesus visits his parish; a harpsichord concert by Serbian mother and daughter, Svetlana and Maya Kutlaca; and a performance by the British rock band, Advina. Stockholm's Commedia Gillet performed outside during teatimes. The afternoon 'Arts à la Carte' spot offered such choices as Ukrainian pop music or Indian classical dance, a French production on Joan of Arc or a 750-metre walk representing the history of the Cosmos, with human history filling only a couple of centimetres.

A highpoint of the week was an unusual Caux Lecture, given by the Fitzwilliam String Quartet in honour of the centenary of the birth of the Russian composer, Dmitri Shostakovich. In 1972, the Quartet were the first people to perform the composer's disturbing13th String Quartet, written in 1970, five years before he died. For the lecture, they performed it twice, engaging in discussion with the audience in the interval between.

In this interactive space, members of the audience spoke of the images the work had evoked for them—an anxious old

Left page: Séverine Chavanne. This page, clockwise from top left: Darren Raymond and daughter; learning to listen; Anna Wigan and Emily Hurrell of the Elina Trio; photography workshop; origami peace cranes

man, someone walking through the snow, a knocking on a door or the beating of a heart. An Australian specialist in terminal care recognised the emotions expressed by people who are dying: 'the highs and lows, exultation, terrible depression'. A young Lebanese man, stranded at Caux when the Isaraeli air offensive began, heard the cries of running children: 'You were the bombs and you were the men.'

Several speakers during the Forum stressed the audience's vital role in the artistic process. 'The audience does half the work,' said Welsh soprano Gillian Humphreys, whose Concordia Foundation promotes and supports emerging artists. 'We are just a channel for something from somewhere to other people,' said German composer and saxophonist Uwe Steinmetz.

Steinmetz spoke of the conflict between his passion for perfection in his art and the fact that people might be moved by performances with which he had been dissatisfied. 'It's really hard to be humble, to respect another human being and say I'm so happy you've been touched, and next time I will do it better.' Sometimes artists needed to simplify in the interests of communication.

'I react to the idea that the artist is a special person,' said Augusto Cabrera, Peruvian-born Director of Commedia Gillet. 'I think that every human being has that gift. Some of us choose to walk that path, others choose something else.'

Artists and non-artists alike were given a chance to learn new skills or develop old ones in a choice of daily workshops, which also undertook such practical tasks as washing-up, table-setting and preparing meals for the whole conference. While a group of teenagers (and some older interlopers) learnt how to juggle and form human pyramids in the grounds, Pauline Warjri trained a mixed-ability choir and Yousef Khanfar conducted a masterclass in photography.

'Understanding peace through Japanese art' found a British sculptor sitting on the floor with his children learning Japanese calligraphy. This workshop set themselves to make 1,000 origami cranes, which they gave to the Lebanese and Palestinians present on the last morning of the conference. If you make 1,000 cranes, they explained, your wish will come true: theirs was for peace.

Meanwhile, a Polish university lecturer was busy on her 'second ever' work in paint. Gerd Ekdahl, the Swedish artist leading the 'Painting from within' workshop, encouraged participants to bypass their heads and 'paint from the stomach'. Each morning, after some technical instruction, she suggested a theme ('emptiness and energy', 'insecurity and security', 'purity') and then, after a period of silence and sharing, participants set brush to paper. The results were exhibited at the end of the conference.

Other workshops focused on photography, video production, story telling, method acting, improvisation and drama games. Another prepared the final evening, centred on a new composition by Uwe Steinmetz, inspired by the four standards of Initiatives of Change, absolute honesty, purity, love and unselfishness. An innovative workshop on sound, led by Thérèse Bellut from France, taught participants to listen deeply and to harmonise, using a wide range of instruments, many of them unconventional. 'We started with chaos, but it became harmony,' said one participant. 'The workshop allowed one to become the child that perhaps one never was.'

Each day began, for the early risers, with a choice of reflections and meditations. At the end of the morning, the Forum gathered for a 'conversation', initiated each day by a different trio of artists and then continuing in small groups and in an open-floor discussion. Themes included the artist's vocation and the role of art in bringing change and building bridges. 'Western culture today is characterised by consumerism, materialism, hedonism,' said British playwright Hugh Williams. 'Can art subvert that and replace it with something better? If we go on as we are we will not only destroy the planet but our souls as well.'

Yousef Khanfar described Caux as a 'place of silence' where it was possible to empty out the trash in one's mind so as to become creative. Actor priest Rob Gillion spoke of the inspiration he found in Caux's diversity. Augusto Cabrera spoke of Caux gatherings as among the events which had changed his life 'from having a rather dark feeling about humanity to seeing how people from different cultures, religions and ways of expression can come together and work to build bridges'. 'We have been playing with a serious purpose, discovering more about the world and about ourselves,' said Elisabeth Tooms.

'You will hear a lot of stories,' American actor, producer and director Bev Appleton told the opening session of the Forum. 'What we want more than anything is that you leave with your own story.' The conference ended in a spirit of carnival, as the clowns of Commedia Gillet led the participants in a conga out of the main meeting hall onto the mountainside. ■

Left page: Augusto Cabrera
This page, clockwise from top left: painting from within; Uwe Steinmetz and Augusto Cabrera lead out the conga; Japanese art workshop; MoTSART from Ukraine; Commedia Gillet; Pauline Warjri, Uwe Steinmetz and Yousef Khanfar in conversation

No time to dance the tango

Themon Djaksam** joins Africans from across the continent to address the issues of corruption and good governance.* ***All photos by Isabelle Merminod

PEOPLE FROM 24 AFRICAN countries converged on Caux in August to attend 'An Honest Dialogue for a Clean and Just Africa'. The conference brought together 463 delegates from 70 countries in every corner of the globe: from Alaska to the Cape Peninsula in South Africa, and from Australia to Chile. Among them were participants in the Global Indigenous Dialogue (see p 17), which took place in the framework of the conference.

The conference was opened, in English and French, by Cornelio Sommaruga, President of Initiatives of Change International. 'Gathered here in this unique conference centre, we cannot live in isolation,' he said. 'We have to look further than Lake Geneva and the Alps. We have to look at the world and appreciate constantly the actuality of the international situation.'

He was followed by Alhaji Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano in Nigeria, who spoke in Hausa, one of Nigeria's three main languages. 'Africa today is at a critical point where many more nations are embracing the democratic process,' he said. 'The big challenge is how do we sustain this process and maintain the basic principles of freedom and democracy.' Africa could draw on its traditions to teach the world how to care for one another and co-exist.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has experienced 'an invisible tsunami' every six months, for years, said United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, in his keynote speech. A former Prime Minister of Portugal, Guterres condemned the marginalisation of Africa in the world's media. 'Money follows the TV pictures,' he said. 'But in a globalised world, we cannot afford to leave one continent behind.'

In response to this drastic situation, Guterres called for massive investment in people, in education and training, in conflict resolution, and in the 'software of democracy'. Although war had come to an end in several countries, he said, 'a bridge had never been built to a working democracy with viable institutions'. In Liberia, for example, teachers earned less than £1 a day and there was no running water or electricity in the capital—yet the country was still repaying loans to the World Bank.

A year ago, Guterres continued, he had been optimistic about Africa, with progress in Sierra Leone, Angola, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. 'Now, with the situation in Darfur, Chad and Eritrea, it is harder to remain upbeat.' He concluded, 'We cannot let the indifference go on; it is a duty for mankind.'

Each day started with a morning reflection, led by the participants in the Global Indigenous Dialogue. Then the conference proper got under way, with its format of plenaries and working groups. The first plenary focused on the major theme of corruption and good governance. Speakers included the Archbishop of Kigali, Rwanda, Emmanuel Kolini Mbona, and Dr Reuel Khoza, current Chairman of South Africa's Nedbank and former Chairman of the electricity giant, ESKOM. Said Khoza: 'Corruption is not a solo act, it is a tango. We talk a lot about corruptees, but there are many willing corrupters to corrupt us.'

Above top: Cornelio Sommaruga, President of IofC International, talks with Msgr Fortunatus Nwachukwu and Amina Dikedi; left: Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees; right: Reuel Khoza, Chairman of Nedbank

Addressing how to tackle the scourge, Paramount Chief Massa Yali Tham of Sierra Leone stated: 'Give people jobs and corruption will go away.'

Lucy Koechlin, a lecturer at the University of Basel and Vice-President of the Swiss chapter of Transparency International, sounded a chilling note when she presented a world map of corruption. 'Corruption kills,' she said. 'Doctors, policemen, teachers who don't do their work produce at least as much damage as "big corruption".' Echoing a well-established mantra of Initiatives of Change that change begins with each one of us, she said: 'We all need to fight corruption, we cannot just blame multinational companies or governments.'

In the remaining days of the conference, participants described the situation in their countries: from Sudan, where the war in the Darfur region is nowhere near reaching an end, to Uganda, which stands as a shining example to be emulated in the fight against the AIDS pandemic. Somalia is about to enter its second decade without a central government, yet the country's telecommunication and banking systems are among the best on the continent, thanks to the determination of local citizens and the diaspora. Farmers described their efforts to increase production at village level: such as the Kenyan milk cooperative which started out with 210 members in 2002 and now has 5,000. Daily milk production had gone up from 4,500 litres to 20,000, said Duncan Nduhui Karinga, one of its founders. 'The face of my village has changed.'

The conference ended, as it started, with a compelling address, this time from Nigerian Msgr Fortunatus Nwachukwu, a member of the Permanent Mission of the Holy Sea to the United Nations in Geneva. He deplored the effects of 'centuries of imposed or accepted slavery' which made most Africans consider themselves as 'good enough only for second pipers'. He attacked the way Africans underrated each other. 'How can Africans justly expect others to give them that which they do not give themselves?' he asked. Africa, he urged, was not a failure, but a continent on its way. 'It is time for us to begin a new Africa,' he said. 'We talk, but let's do it.' ■

'When the victim is ready to take the first step, reconciliation becomes possible,' said Mathilde Kayitesi, who lost her father in the Rwandan genocide. Now the coordinator of a women's organisation for peace education and conflict resolution, Kayitesi spent 20 years in exile. Until 2004, she was a member of Rwanda's unity and reconciliation commission, working to rehabilitate the 100,000 prisoners believed guilty of the genocide.

The genocide left hundreds of thousands of orphans, she said. Rape was used as a weapon of war, with attendant pregnancies and a boom in AIDS. 'The infrastructure was destroyed, along with the social fabric. The genocide saw people of the same religious confession killing each other: neighbours, colleagues from work, and even members of the same family.'

The commission used the traditional 'Gacaca' justice system, exercised through village courts, which include the whole community. These aim to establish the truth, and elicit confessions, in return for reduced punishments. 'I've been challenged by many victims who don't understand,' she said, 'but the fact that I lost my own father, and despite that believe in reconciliation, means that we can talk.'

Andrew Stallybrass

'How do you sit and eat with people who have mutilated, raped?' asked Betty Bigombe, who for more than ten years has been the principal negotiator between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army. 'How do you deal with victims who then become the perpetrators of such brutality?'

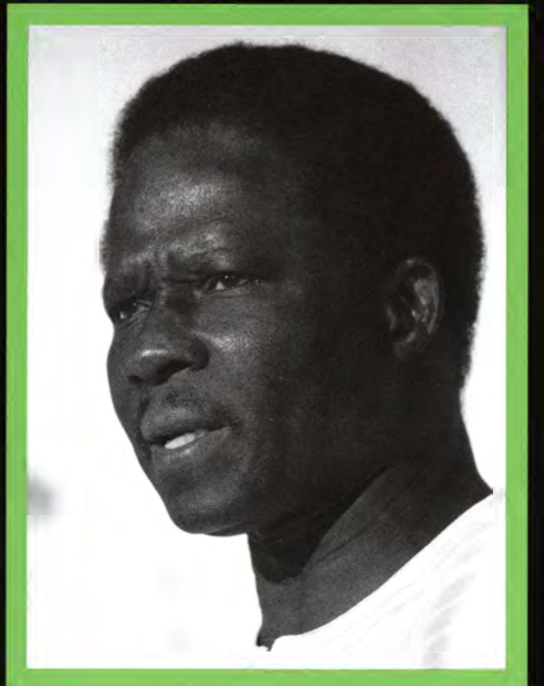
The civil war in her country has been described by the UN as the world's worst forgotten emergency. Up to two million people have been displaced, and an estimated 30,000 children abducted. 'The boys are turned into killing machines, often being coerced into killing members of their own families or communities to make any return home impossible,' she said. 'The girls are turned into sex slaves.'

Bigombe claimed that in both Uganda and Bosnia, peace had been delayed by competition between peace-makers. 'Peace-making is becoming an industry, it is seen as an easy way of making money,' she said. She called for the world to invest far more in the prevention of war.

Since she spoke, there have been further negotiations, and some moves towards peace in Uganda.

Andrew Stallybrass

Integrity and integration



ISABELLE MERMINOD

***Ibrahima Fall**, UN Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region in Africa, talks to **Themon Djaksam** about the themes of the conference.*

What is the most important question for this African conference on corruption and good governance?
It is a theme whose time has come, because with the end of a bi-polar world and the triumph of liberalism, there is no longer the fundamental need to compete which could be fuelled by corruption. If corruption exists it is because there are corrupters and corrupt people. We have to be thorough and identify both.

To what extent do you think this can be achieved?
Caux is a place for exchanging viewpoints and sharing ideas. The debate then needs to be taken to national, regional and local settings where questions of corruption and good governance can be practically addressed. In the Great Lakes region, we have put specific regional projects in place to deal with corruption.

Countries with great natural resources, like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Congo-Brazzaville, are particularly liable to corruption. What are your thoughts on this?
With corruption, the global aspect feeds the particular. If you look at international sale contracts for aeroplanes, for example, some big outfit will promise you an extra plane if you buy a certain number. Why not denounce this as corruption? The same is true of oil—often the producer country receives barely 30 per cent of the oil revenue in financial terms.

Corruption can also be encouraged by injustice. Some countries with strong oil revenues pay pathetic salaries to their officials. Meanwhile the country's resources are largely monopolised by the leaders. If the army, police and customs officials are underpaid, it encourages them to pay themselves in kind. It is an incitement to corruption.

Do you see a solution to this problem?
There are several levels. First, there is the personal level. People need to be trained in values of honesty and integrity either in religious terms or as citizens. There is no better answer to corruption than the capacity of the individual to resist it in the name of the values in which he has been educated. Individuals can be satisfied with what they have: to see those who are without rather than those who have more.

The second level is society. This requires training in citizenship. It means relativising the importance of money and wealth. People of integrity used to be respected and those who had stolen, been corrupted or had corrupted others were shamed. Today, people are impressed by wealth: he has a big car, a beautiful house, he gives his money away. They fail to question the source of his money, and that is extremely serious. When it comes to presidents, people say he is generous because he gives money to certain visitors. But the money he is giving away is tax-payers' money which is to the detriment of the nation's needs. This must be stopped and there must be a return to honesty. Moreover, people of integrity must be rewarded. There must be a positive sanction alongside negative sanctions for those involved in corruption. Unfortunately, today these values are reversed.

How might this be applied? At a national or international level?
At national level, because corruption is first of all at the individual level, the family level, the society level, the national level. The international dimension follows but it is intrinsically linked to the different internal dimensions. It is difficult to advocate integrity and honesty at family level if these values are not being applied at national and international levels. It is a whole.

You have doubtless observed the way leaders in some African countries have sought to continue in office beyond the number of terms permitted by their constitutions. What do you recommend to stop the abuse of power at national level?
It is a global problem, which must be addressed at the constitutional, legal and statutory level. We have to stop tampering with the law books according to what suits the head of state. We have to respect the principle of national interests coming before the interests of certain individuals and make it clear to these leaders that they cannot continue to tamper.

But, and there is a but, we have to settle the fate of former presidents. There are countries where the president is pursued the day after he comes down from his pedestal—even accused of not having the country's nationality, as was the case with President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. Others have been imprisoned. This does not mean that we must grant amnesty for corruption and other crimes. It is normal that those guilty of corruption be prosecuted. But how many former heads of state have been prosecuted for nothing at all?

This situation creates a psychosis among former heads of state who say to themselves, 'I might as well be president for life because when I am gone they won't be able to attack me.'

So, on the one hand, there is a democratisation process which needs reinforcement but at the same time we must find ways to ensure the security of presidents in general, but not those who steal. In Senegal, there have been two former presidents; in Cape Verde, they are onto their third former president; in Tanzania, there has been a succession of four presidents who have never had any worries. Perhaps it was because they were honest, but it might also have been because their successors did not try to nitpick. It's a complex problem.

What are Africa's other main challenges?
In Africa there are three problems: 1 integration; 2 integration; and 3 integration. As long as we are not economically strong, we will not count.

And when will that be?
We have to reinforce the five regional economic communities to create pillars of the African economic community, as envisaged in the Treaty of Abuja. Everything else is secondary in economic terms. The fact is, once Africa becomes a significant partner in world trade, Africa will count. Look at China: what has not been said against China? Ten years ago, people questioned human rights but not now. Everybody is begging for succulent contracts with China. That does not mean there are no problems with human rights. There certainly are. But a two-figure growth index like China's is what gives strength to a country's negotiations on the world scene. Africa must accept the price of hardships for the sake of economic integration.

What is your assessment of the African Union's four years of existence?
It is a bit soon to say because the four year period focussed on working things out on the institutional front, with the creation of the Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the Pan-African Parliament and other institutions including those concerned with human rights.

The change from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) was designed to create a new dynamic called African Renaissance. The AU's President, Alpha Omar Konaré, has contributed greatly to the foundation of this organisation. He works in conditions which are not easy and I am only sorry that he does not plan to renew his mandate.

NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) has also been a strong element in all this. It is involved with difficult issues and I think our heads of state have decided to restore its effectiveness.

There has been no progress on integration and the economy. President Konaré believes the regional economic communities should be reinforced but there are a number of factors which have prevented him going as far as he would have liked.

Africa can advance but it must have the will to sacrifice in order to advance. Several generations of Chinese have sacrificed to get where they are. Europe may have come out of World War II as impoverished as Africa but the Europeans seized the Marshall Plan to rise up, develop, reinforce, unite and form a world power through the European Union. It is Africa's duty to draw lessons and to commit itself along the road of achievement.

Translated from French by Mary Jones

ISABELLE MERMINOD (4)

Clockwise from top left: The Emir of Kano, Nigeria; Lucy Koechlin, Transparency International Switzerland, and Pierre Spoerri, Switzerland; Paul Agbih, Nigeria; Asana Sangare, Cote d'Ivoire talks with Hansrudi Pfeiffer, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

For those who know what but don't know how

Andrea Cabrera *talks to the organisers and participants of the Tools for Change conference at Caux.*

Just before the Tools for Change conference started in Caux this summer, Lebanon was going through one of the most difficult periods of its history. Although some of the Lebanese travelling to the conference managed to get to Beirut airport before it was closed, their families were still at home. For those who came, the stay at Mountain House could not be peaceful, but they had the courage to share their feelings about what was happening in their country. Their presence pointed up one of the most interesting challenges of the conference: how to make the connection between theory and practice.

The conference was a new departure for Caux: offering practical training in conflict-resolution and other skills to people who want to be constructive agents of change. Participants were given a choice between seven different 'learning tracks', delivered by experts in their fields and with an emphasis on personal application. 'When something breaks or something needs doing at home, we often can't find the tools we need,' said Rob Corcoran, who was one of the organisers. 'If we try to be the change we want to see, we carry the tools with us always.'

To Krish Raval, who gave the learning track on Communication and Presentation, the importance of the conference was how the tools are transferred into daily life. 'A Palestinian woman came to me and said she wanted to learn to speak in public, so that she could represent her country's cause.'

Participants joined a community group where they discussed the issues that had been introduced in the plenary sessions. They also undertook practical tasks in the building. The size of these groups allowed for more intimacy, trust and freedom.

In the community group I attended, several people spoke openly about the difficulties of dialogue, especially when strong emotions are involved. A French Muslim woman described how she had been called 'kamikaze' by a Jewish woman when she asked her why the Jews were treating Muslims like they had been treated in the Holocaust. She honestly could not understand the woman's reaction. A Palestinian participant talked about how, the day before, a German participant had asked her why the Palestinians could not understand Jewish people. She was worried about how to have a dialogue with someone who seemed so aggressive. A young Senegalese woman explained that in her culture, when there was a problem between two people, there was always a third person who acted as an intermediary.

The cultural diversity of the conference allowed an exchange of ideas about different ways to solve problems. Even though it was often painful, people listened to each other.

Professor Mari Fitzduff of Brandeis University gave a Caux Lecture during the week, drawing on her experience as a peace builder in her own country, Ireland, as well as others. 'We want our enemies to be simple; we like our beliefs to be simple,' she said, 'Leaders always believe that their enemies are simpler, more united and can deliver on compromises more easily than they can.' She insisted on the importance of making conversation with the 'other' robust and strong enough when dealing with issues of equity.

A young man said at the final plenary session, 'We Jewish people have suffered and we are afraid to speak in certain places. However, I have communicated with Arabs and Muslims like I never have before. My heart is open to listening and it's also beginning not to have fear.'

THOMAS BUEHLER

JOANNA MARGUERITTE

***Zeke Reich,** from the United States, helped provide logistical support to the conference.*

I attended the learning tracks on Dialogue Facilitation and on Conflict Transformation and Healing History. The first focused on how to communicate with each other, team-building and personal growth, and the second brought up crosscultural and multifaith aspects of peace-building.

Mountain House is a safer place to try out these tools than the rest of the world. It's an inspiring place, which allows things to happen—in spite of our weaknesses. It's not always easy to face conflict and differences.

One thing that helped me to feel open to others and to my own feelings was taking time to be quiet. It made me have an open spirit so that I could connect with others spiritually, rather than with words. I stopped being afraid of being judged in advance by others. That gave me the space to sit with someone who was different from me and talk as two human beings.

Dialogue, conversation and acknowledgement of each person's responsibility to the world are important. I'm still deepening my commitments to this process and this conference was a major source of inspiration and strength.

GRANT RISSLER

***Mona Ayyad,** from Palestine, works in a human rights organisation.*

I left Gaza three weeks ago to attend two conferences in Caux. Due to the siege on Palestinian borders the journey wasn't an easy one. When I was in Gaza I realised that Palestinian society was going through a negative change. Since I experienced a positive inner change as a Caux Scholar in 2004, I came back to Caux. For me this is not a place of leisure and pleasure but of education.

In the conference I was exposed to a new dimension of cooperation and joint work. I chose Presentation and Communication and Team Building as my learning tracks. In the second I met people of other ethnic and religious backgrounds. We worked together, even when we were completely different.

The facilitators gave us exercises, which invited us to work as a unit and thus become stronger. I had to take distance from my helplessness and hopelessness about a better future in my country and be willing to be a positive participant. People who want to change must start with themselves and I took that step.

If I could change something, I would change injustice. Once justice prevails everything can change positively. When injustice prevails the change produced is negative.

What I learnt in the team building sessions is that change has to be achieved by a group of people. Self achievement is not enough. If one person is ready to undertake change but the other is not then progress will be slower. We have to work together if we want to achieve any positive change.

***Irene da Silva Oliveira,** from Brazil, is a coordinator of Gente que Avanza and works as a psychologist.*

I attended the Nurturing Inner Resources learning track. One of the facilitators talked about listening, and then encouraged us to take a walk outside in silence, only listening. I sat down, surrounded by nature, observing the plants, the mountains and listening to the birds. In the midst of this silence I could hear the marvels of creation and give thanks. I could also hear my own inner voice.

This made me think of all I have learned with the Gente que Avanza programme in Latin America and the workshops we give in which we use drama to illustrate negative attitudes such as arrogance, indifference and hypocrisy, facing these with positive attitudes. In this way we try to help people search in the silence of their hearts for instances in which they can use the words 'thank you', 'forgive me' and 'I love you'.

When you put a problem into words you are already beginning to solve it. Once you recognise a negative attitude in yourself you have an opportunity to change it.

When I was young I spent a lot of time demanding the attention of my father and blaming him for not being the person I wanted him to be. I asked myself what my responsibility was in this 'problem' and finally wrote him telling him what I felt and recognising my own omissions. As a result of this we had an experience of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Today people die of sadness because they haven't found a meaning in their lives. They don't manage to forgive or to free themselves of what holds them back.

The spirit of Caux is a very special one. The conference has been quite intense, but I love meeting people from other countries, hearing different languages and discovering that no matter where we are from, we have the same basic needs and dreams, are going through the same process of growth and need each other.

> ❛ MY HEART IS OPEN TO LISTENING AND IT'S ALSO BEGINNING NOT TO HAVE FEAR ❜

Market leaders in trust and integrity

Michael Smith takes part in a conference that brings together business professionals, farmers and journalists seeking ethics at work.

BLAIR CUMMOCK ISABELLE MERMINOD BLAIR CUMMOCK (4)

Clockwise from above left: Joe Swann (talking) at a workshop; Geneviève LeBaron, Canada; French farmers' leader Christiane Lambert; Indian industrialist Jamshed Irani; Jim Wigan, UK; South African journalist Guy Berger

AN EAST AFRICAN trainee teacher describes how he was cheated out of his income. As part of his degree, he taught in a private school for 26 hours—but was only paid $12, about a quarter of what he was owed. There was no written contract and he thought it was an agreement based on trust. Now he feels betrayed, and comments that in future he will have 'a hard time trusting private investors'. However as a Christian he has resolved to 'take my experience positively and continue with life'.

The student teacher tells his story during a workshop on 'ethical leadership in business'—billed as for those at the start of their careers—during the Caux conference on business and values in early August.

So can there be 'trust and integrity in the global economy'—the conference title? Or will falling levels of confidence be a threat to the future? An eclectic group of business professionals, media people active in the International Communications Forum thinktank and farmers from IofC's Farmers' Dialogue have come together for six days to discuss the issues and share experiences.

The student teacher takes heart from the anti-corruption stance of Joseph Karanja, who founded a legal practice in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1998 to 'send a message that lawyers too can be trustworthy'. His firm of eight is well known for fighting corruption cases for business people 'who are willing to stand for the truth' rather than pay bribes to corrupt officials. 'We have never lost a case but the city council has suffered huge losses through compensating our clients for malicious prosecutions,' Karanja says. 'We have won over 40 corruption cases in the last four years. Today, Nairobi city council will drop a case before it goes to court, when they realise that we will be defending it.'

Sea of poverty

This means a loss of income for his firm, but it has been worth it. He believes the war against corruption in Kenya has passed a turning point, despite the fact that the country's anti-corruption tsar, John Githongo, was driven overseas by death threats. Karanja speaks of 'radical surgery in the judiciary', with 12 out of 16 high court judges, and 378 magistrates, sacked in 2004 because of corruption charges. 'Several ministers of the new government, who were perceived to be untouchable, were hounded out of office.'

In his Caux Lecture, Jamshed Irani, a Director on the parent board of the giant Indian conglomerate, Tata, says that he finds little in the West's emphasis on 'corporate social responsibility' that the Tata group hasn't been practising for nearly a century. The company pioneered the world's first eight-hour working day in 1912; free medical aid for employees in 1915; leave with pay in 1920; maternity benefit in 1928; the list goes on. When militant Maoists started attacking businesses in West Bokaro, Tata Steel's coal base was untouched because, claims Irani, the locals put out the word, 'Don't disturb Tata's'. The company was supplying water and medical aid to several hundred thousand people. 'We cannot remain spikes of prosperity in a sea of poverty,' Irani comments.

'The end never, never justifies the means,' he declares. He describes how one Tata managing director was summarily sacked, prosecuted and jailed after flouting Tata's code of conduct. 'Values transmit trust. Trust is not only at the heart of leadership but forms the essence of all relationships.' India, which 200 years ago claimed 20 per cent of world trade, is now re-emerging on the world stage, with annual growth rates second only to China.

Irani deplores the current emphasis on short-term, quarterly results, which pander to shareholders. In this he is echoed by Professor Paul Dembinski, Director of the Geneva-based Observatoire de la Finance, who says that the focus on short-term dividends gives more importance to capital than to employment. Financial speculation has too often become 'mass gambling', sometimes breaking businesses and destroying jobs.

> WHAT WOULD WE NEED TO CHANGE TO CREATE A WORLD IN WHICH ALL HUMAN BEINGS CAN FLOURISH?

Tell the whole story

Journalists too tend to pander to the market, says South African journalist Guy Berger. They too easily 'hide behind the "ethics" of getting the story at any cost'—including lying, stealing and intruding on grieving families—in order to give their viewers and readers what they want. 'Shouldn't the media be leading the market', by covering stories which address such issues as poverty? Berger, who is this year's recipient of the Nat Nakasa award for integrity and bravery in journalism, speaks from hard-won experience: his stance against apartheid earned him three years in jail and five years in exile.

The conference title contains a certain *double-entendre*: can individuals live in a spirit of trust and integrity within the global economy? And can the global economy be trusted to deliver justice and prosperity for all the world's citizens?

Canadian economist Geneviève LeBaron doubts it. 'Those who write about economic globalisation as an unambiguously positive phenomenon are not telling the whole story,' she says. As an 18-year-old serving in an orphanage in Madras (now Chennai) in south India, she passed a factory where 'young girls sat in shrivelling heat from sunrise to sunset, dipping their bare hands in toxic chemicals, piecing computer parts together. I wondered then, how are these girls benefiting from this globalised world?' That same day, Tamil Nadu state farmers crowded Madras's streets, protesting against an American corporation that was trying to patent their variety of rice.

Both situations may well have since been outlawed. But LeBaron deplores a system that excludes people, 'sometimes entire regions', from the marketplace. 'We need to question our society's conception of growth and progress,' she says. What would it take to 'shift the distributive dynamics of the global economy, to close the exponentially increasing gap in material wealth? Are we simply working towards making ourselves materially richer? What would we need to change about ourselves and the global economy to create a world in which all human beings can flourish?'

The questions are left hanging in the air. But the issues won't go away. The farmers at the conference give dire warnings about the effect that global warming, climate change and population growth will have on agricultural output.

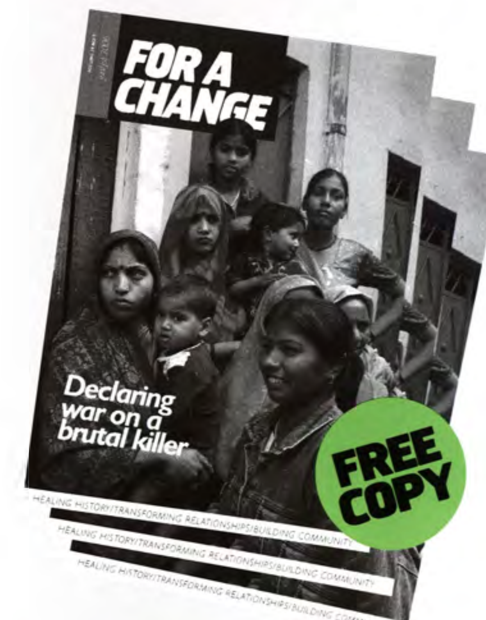
'Global water consumption is doubling every 20 years,' says Farmers' Dialogue leader Jim Wigan. 'By the year 2025, 48 countries are expected to face chronic water shortages affecting 2.8 billion people.' There is concern that Western farm subsidies are depriving developing world growers of their markets, though Europe's Common Agricultural Policy is being cut back. With global population growth the world is going to need all the food production possible, says Wigan.

Christiane Lambert, the first woman president of a French farmers' union, insists that no farmer feels happy with relying on subsidies. But she is equally concerned about the 'psychological trauma' that French farmers face in complying with 200 European Union directives, the breach of any one of which would cause loss of income. She pleads for 'a logic of sustainable development', rather than 'liberal fundamentalism' in trade, and an urgent reopening of the Doha round of negotiations at the World Trade Organisation.

Trust and survival

For the young entrepreneurs and activists setting out on their careers, these global perspectives provide a challenging context for their decisions and priorities. The East African student teacher comments, 'I am ready to be an instrument of change wherever I may be.' Conference co-organiser Joe Swann, who works for a company in London which helps the long-term unemployed back into jobs, is also challenged. 'Here I have met people who are not just living to work, but working to live,' he says. It has left him reflective on his priorities. Working to performance criteria can be pressuring, he adds. 'But I will never, never undermine the interests of the individuals I work with to pursue personal gain or promotion.'

In the end it all boils down to care for people, says Boston-based Ward Vandewege, a sole proprietor in software and information technology services. With customers in five countries, he has to deliver on trust and integrity if he is to compete globally. 'You have to demonstrate reliability. You have to care for your customers. The relationship of trust that you build up is essential for your business to survive. I know 90 per cent of my customers personally. And I think it makes life much more interesting.'



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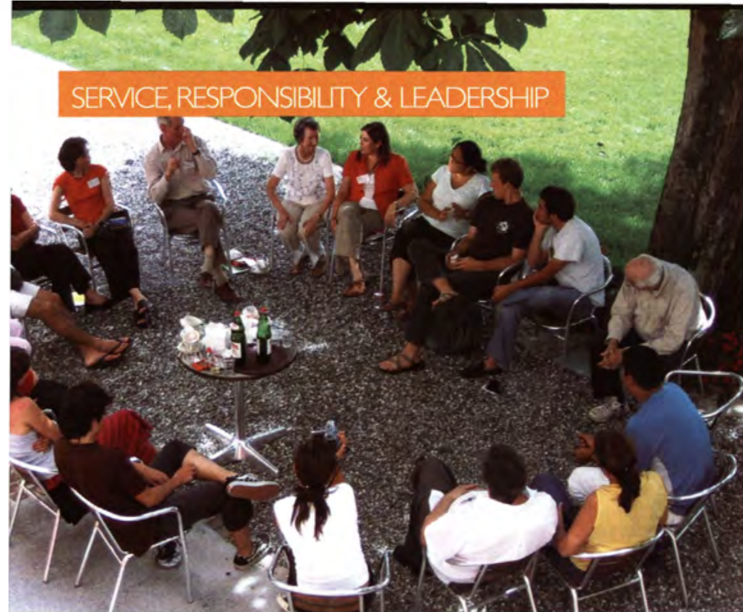


CAUX-INFORMATION (2)

Left: Meeting of the Americas
Above: Action for Life leading a session on the family

Everyone a leader

*What is it like to organise a Caux conference? **Justin Walford** finds out.*

FOR THE PAST SIX years the Caux summer has begun with a conference led by a young team from Eastern Europe. In the vacuum left in the wake of communism, young people from the former Soviet Bloc decided that the concepts of service and responsible leadership were essential to create positive development and growth in their countries, and seized upon Caux as the perfect place to explore such themes.

The planning for this year's Service, Responsibility and Leadership conference began last autumn in Kiev. In the spring, I was one of nine participants on the IofC leadership training programme, Action for Life, in Asia, who entered into the process. With frequent email and phone conversations between Asia and Kiev, we began to form a cohesive planning team.

It was not until we all met at Caux in late June, however, that we really got down to the planning. We had an intense week of rapid teambuilding and many bursts of creativity, although greater delegation of responsibility, and more time to focus on the dynamics of our team, would have led to a crisper conference.

Using concepts and structures worked out by the team in Kiev, we decided on a natural progression for the conference. The five days would focus on personal identity, family relationships, cultural differences, the creation of personal action plans, and an investigation of addiction and other obstacles to action. We envisioned a process from which participants would emerge more aware, and with less baggage preventing personal action in the future.

For the coordinating team, the conference itself was often a blur. As we were also facilitating the majority of the sessions and activities, personal time was at a premium. There were creative sessions to plan, songs and games and skits to practise, speeches to write, and ideas to be shared. In the end, it was the times of inspiration and personal connection that kept us going. Luckily, there were many.

As with all Caux conferences the participants were divided into community groups for times of fellowship. Leading these gave us the chance to create safe spaces for honest sharing, and the opportunity to interact deeply with people from diverse backgrounds. Here conversations were launched that bridged some of the world's most pressing conflicts.

For both organisers and participants family workshops were another highlight. Using guided meditation, participants were taken on journeys through their own personal histories. We focussed on relationships between family members, and investigated how changing the dynamics of some of those relationships could have an impact on other relationships and even on the direction of one's life.

Creativity was the string that linked each day's theme. More serious moments were balanced with skits including frequent appearances by Service, Responsibility and Leadership (a servant, soldier and king) who echoed daily themes and illustrated key points, and a Non-Talent Show that brought the entire conference to its feet.

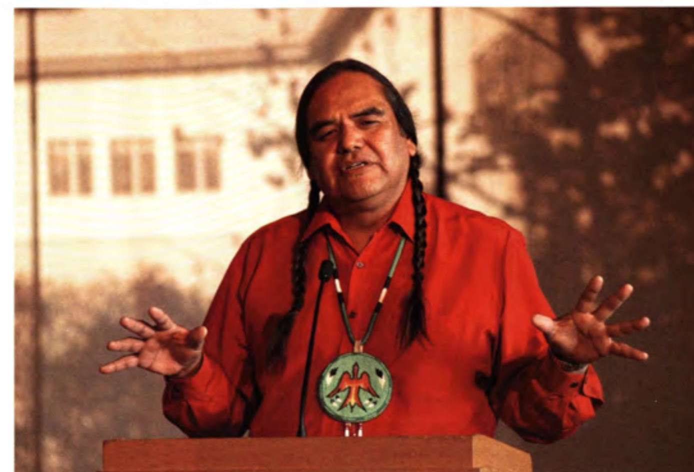
On the last morning, participants were asked to reveal their personal action plans. There was much hope and energy as people shared the concrete decisions they had made. That afternoon, evaluating the conference as an organising team, we could still feel the buzz.

Also of note were the bridges created between business and government leaders and conference participants. Twenty-five businessmen from the Japanese Management Association were present, as were the Caux Round Table of men and women from the world of business and the economy. This was important because it connected those with the capacity and resources to implement and support large-scale social change with younger generations who had grassroots experience on where such change is needed, and why. Participants from each of these gatherings had the opportunity through service shifts, small group discussion, and community group meetings, to hear from each other, network, and build ideas for the future.

People return to Caux year after year. When asked why, many turn and stare out across Lake Geneva to the French mountains or the Rhone Valley. But their answer is almost invariably 'the people'. A certain hope is imparted to almost everyone who stays at Caux. It comes from the warmth and honesty of the other participants. It comes from watching personal transformation occur, even over the course of a week. And in the end, it comes from the way that everyone there is trying, together, to nurture moral values as they strive towards making a better world. ■

newsdesk

In a world out of balance



Alvin Manitopyes, Canada

Raymond Minniecon, Australia

ISABELLE MERMINOD (2)

A Global Indigenous Dialogue (GID) on the theme, 'Understanding our Roots: from healing to harmony' marked the United Nations International Day of Indigenous Peoples in Caux.

Lewis Cardinal, an Aboriginal Relations Consultant from the Sucker Creek Cree First Nation in Northern Alberta, Canada, introduced the session. Cardinal, who is the coordinator of the GID, explained that they are a grassroots organisation that was created to provide opportunities for indigenous peoples to gather and share and act together. 'Indigenous people are not primitive,' he said, 'we are not in development or becoming civilised. We are fully developed.'

Diamonds, uranium, waste disposal and newly discovered oil reserves were all attracting industries and destroying the land, according to Adelard Blackman from Buffalo River Dene Nation, in Canada. He painted a grim picture of a community that had moved from the 18th century to a 21st century lifestyle in just 20 years, in one of the last untouched parts of the far North. 'Decolonisation should be read re-colonisation,' he said. He represents a nation of 1,200 people with 80 per cent unemployed and one of the highest suicide rates in the world. Eighty-five per cent of the world's natural resources were on the traditional lands of indigenous peoples, he claimed.

Elena Vandakurova, of the Buryat people round Lake Baikal in Siberia, the birthplace of the Russian environmental movement, talked about the Great Baikal Trail project, a successful attempt to build cultural identity across administrative separations. 'Our children were leaving the place where they were born. Now they are starting to come back,' she said. 'Our children should be free to live where they want.'

> HOW CAN WE HEAL MOTHER EARTH? HEAL YOURSELF

A respected Australian Aboriginal activist, Raymond Minniecon, played the didgeridoo, and spoke of 'the oldest living culture in the world'. They had been more than a million people when the white man arrived in 1788. Two centuries later, they were only 490,000. 'After incredible oppression and racism, we have survived,' he concluded.

When young people asked Alvin Manitopyes of the Cree-Ojibwa in Canada, 'How can we heal mother earth?' he replied, 'Heal yourself'. The adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is an historic landmark after 20 years of debate, said Manitopyes. Referring to the natural disasters and conflicts of a world out of balance, he said, 'Whatever happens anywhere affects people everywhere.' ■

Andrew Stallybrass and Christoph Spreng

Official opening

Valentine Sendanyoye-Rugwabiza (left), Deputy Director General of the World Trade Organisation, and Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun, special advisor to the UN Secretary General, took part in a panel discussion on the opening day of the summer's conferences. The other speaker, not pictured, was Lord Brennan, of the British House of Lords (see p 2).

Some 150 day guests joined nearly 300 conference participants for the event, on the theme of the summer, 'Globalising Integrity—Personalising Integrity: suggestions and signposts for the 21st century'. The panel was chaired by Daniel Wermus, Director of InfoSud press agency.

CAUX-INFORMATION

profile

MISHKAT AL-MOUMIN

Paying the price for human rights

***Mishkat al-Moumin** fought for human rights under Saddam Hussein, and survived assassination attempts as Minister of the Environment in Iraq's interim government. She talks to **Bob Webb**.*

The morning of August 24, 2004, was like any other in the Baghdad summer: hot, sunny and dry. Dr Mishkat al-Moumin was reviewing her paperwork in the back seat of her chauffered automobile en route to her office as Minister of the Environment in Iraq's interim government. It was an ordinary car, made for security purposes to look like a taxi.

Suddenly her world changed forever. 'My driver/bodyguard turned to the right, the car went over the sidewalk and then there was a huge explosion,' she recalled. She was covered with shattered glass, but unhurt.

'Minutes later someone started shouting at us as I got out of the car, and saw what had happened,' al-Moumin told me in Washington DC. 'The car behind us that had my four bodyguards and served as a backup was completely burned, and I saw their flesh all over the place.' A suicide car-bomber, aiming for her, had instead killed her bodyguards. Her driver's quick swerve to the right may have saved her life.

Guards protecting the nearby headquarters of a political party heard the blast, she said, and thought someone was trying to attack them. Chinadaily.com quoted a local resident, Ali al-Tai, who was standing outside his home near the site of the explosion: 'I opened the door to leave for work, and the blast knocked me over.'

'Serving the Iraqi people is not a crime that deserves this,' she told Reuters at the time. Half an hour after her escape a similar attack elsewhere in Baghdad targeted Education Minister Sami al-Mudhaffar's convoy, missing him but killing one of his bodyguards. In both attacks, people in the vicinity were injured.

Devastated, al-Moumin nevertheless went on to her office that day. 'I went to the Ministry to be among my employees,' she said. 'I did not want them to feel that I was afraid.' But ahead lay sleepless nights. Even her eating habits changed. 'The first time I was served meat after that I could not eat it,' she said. 'I became a vegetarian. It was an experience I don't think I will ever get over.'

She knew her bodyguards and their families well: one was taking care of his parents, another newly married, another newly engaged. For fear of being the target of new violence, she couldn't attend their funerals. 'I felt part of me was killed in that event,' she said.

Women's rights

As a lawyer, al-Moumin had fought for women's rights under Saddam Hussein, when few existed. After the war of 2003, she had succeeded in having 25 per cent of seats reserved for women in Iraq's new 275-seat parliament. (In the first election, in January 2005, women gained a third of the seats.) But her activism angered Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the al-Qeada-linked commander in Iraq, who described her as 'leader of the infidels'. After the failed assassination in August 2004, he sent word that 'we'll get her next time'.

A second attempt also failed when, defying a warning from Iraqi Intelligence, she went to work on a day she and the other ministers were told to stay away. 'I had an appointment with the Danish ambassador,' she said. 'So we arranged for me to travel to our meeting lying down, completely covered with a blanket, in the back seat of a car.'

Determined to elude al-Zarqawi, she changed her routines—going to work at 5.30 am, walking rather than being chauffeured, altering her hairstyle, wearing a head scarf, changing attire frequently and taking different routes to work. She declined the 'safe house' offered her as a Cabinet Minister and instead rented a small home not far from her office.

She feared more for the safety of her family, especially her son (now aged 11), than for herself. The thought was always there: will my son be in danger of being kidnapped or, worse, killed? Will other family members be targeted? Such thoughts, preying on her continuously, led her to make the painful decision to move, with her family, to the US, where she took up a scholarship to do a master's degree in public policy at Harvard's John F Kennedy School of Government. Her father, who had been a lecturer at Baghdad's Institute of Fine Art, is a book collector and had a huge library. 'We had to get rid of 5,000 books of his,' she said. 'We didn't want to sell them. Instead, they were given to the University of Baghdad and to the National Library.' He could only take a treasured few.

After completing her master's earlier this year, she became Visiting Scholar at the Environmental Law Institute in Washington DC and looks forward to lecturing at George Mason University in Northern Virginia on 'The Environmental Challenges in Post Conflict Countries'.

Environmental issues

Was she able to achieve anything in her Ministry? 'Yes, I structured the Ministry, and got it to function since Iraq did not have a Ministry of Environment before. I developed local projects, training courses and awareness campaigns. I also developed 15 projects with the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank. The Ministry issued the first report on the environmental status in Iraq in our history.' She refused to tolerate corruption, as two of her staff found when they were fired.

> THE CAR WENT OVER THE SIDEWALK AND THEN THERE WAS A HUGE EXPLOSION

The Environmental Law Institute website shows more: 'She also developed new environmental law, led campaigns to support Iraqi people living in environmentally dangerous areas, and initiated awareness and cleaning projects.' She lectured at the University of Baghdad College of Law on 'human rights, fundamental rights, international and constitutional law,' and facilitated conferences on women's issues. Today she continues to help communities worldwide improve the health of their citizens.

Al-Moumin was born in Beirut to parents who took her to Iraq as a child. Her father, she says, taught her to read and her mother, who has a diploma in child-rearing, taught her to respect all people regardless of their religious or cultural background.

She describes Islam as a peaceful religion that has long summoned Muslims to protect their environment. 'Islam was founded in an area of desert, that is why Islam has an environmental component,' she said. 'Otherwise Muslim people would be in danger.' She is developing a project with the Environmental Law Institute and US Environmental Protection Agency, highlighting this.

Third generation

'I started my career as a lecturer in Baghdad University's College of Law,' she said. 'I chose to lecture on human rights in a country that does not respect human rights. I wanted to give my students hope for a better future if the present is not working. When I first stepped into the classroom I asked, what are human rights? A class of 500 students kept silent. In the next session, I asked the same question. I saw five hands go up, with a little bit of encouragement the hands became 10, then 20. I described what was happening in Iraq.' When she felt she was getting near the limits of what it was safe to say, she used to talk about what happened in South Africa under apartheid. 'I lectured on human rights, and I kept my head on my shoulders.'

She describes the environment as the 'third generation' of human rights. 'In my work in the Ministry, I asked my employees what do you think environment is all about? They kept silent as my students did.... We concluded that environment is about protecting people's lives; it is about the right to a healthy and clean environment; it is about a better future.' Her vision is of a healthy, clean and war-free environment in Iraq, and that is what she is committed to building.

'I hope Iraq will progress and recover soon,' she said. 'Iraq can be a successful story, and there will always be a chance to build a nation. I hope there will be a time when all Iraqis can walk safely near the Tigris's shores, when all Iraqis can have basic services, water and electricity.'

ISABELLE MERMINOD

JOHN FREEBURY

Water for a thirsty land

*Kenyan lawyer **Joseph Karanja** tells how he found spring water on his land, which will soon be marketed nationwide.*

WORLDWIDE 1.3 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water, according to the UN. Thirty-one countries face chronic water shortages, and by 2025 nearly 50 countries will face shortages affecting 2.8 billion people. With population growth, global demand for clean drinking water is expected to grow by 40 per cent in the next 20 years. Every initiative to secure water supplies will be necessary.

Eight years ago I was looking for land near Nairobi to build a house. I was shown a plot that I didn't like, simply because there was no water supply. It had everything else I was looking for. Those who were already settled there bought water from vendors who brought it from far away in tankers. My immediate reaction was to say no. However, I promised to get in touch with the seller the following day.

The next morning I woke up feeling that I should buy the land and use the money for house construction to drill a borehole instead. I looked in the Yellow Pages and rang the first water drilling company I found.

I bought the plot and the driller assured me of the prospects of striking water. I will never forget the day in February 1999 when the drilling began. A group of 72 women from a Presbyterian church, who were on their way to prayers, decided to stop by and prayed, thanking God that water was coming.

It took several months to drill the nearly 700-foot-deep borehole. It left me without a penny. In April 2000 everything was ready: the borehole fitted with the pump, the powerhouse with a water-selling point at the front, an office at the back, and a 20 foot tower holding two plastic tanks of 10,000 litres each.

At this time Kenya was going through a drought that had lasted for many years. People came from near and far to buy water at my borehole. They came on donkeys, in vehicles and tankers. For two months we operated for 24 hours a day. I brought the cost of water down from 20 Kenya shillings per 20 litre jerry-can to two shillings.

My next thought was to supply my neighbours with water directly to their homes. Today, 46 homes and three schools have running water in their taps. I have employed seven people, mainly meter readers. Over 40 young men earn a living, buying from us and selling the water elsewhere. The government has asked us to bottle the water and soon we will have 'Summer Drop' mineral water in shops and supermarkets in Kenya, and possibly in Uganda and Sudan. This will mean employing at least 20 more people.

By the end of 2000, the income from water sales enabled me to put up a house where I now live, in the same compound as the well. I am expanding and early next year I will be in a position to accommodate at least 10 guests comfortably. But for me the greatest satisfaction is that I am able to meet a basic need of the community, at an affordable price. ■

Joseph Karanja was addressing the conference on Trust and Integrity in the Global Economy (see p 4).

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Rethinking lazy stereotypes

Rob Neal (centre) with his students

*Teaching English in China was an eye-opener for **Rob Neal.***

SOME DROOL OVER its economic growth. Others are more concerned with law and order or environmental issues. Everyone agrees it is in a state of flux, increasing in influence and impossible to ignore. China is hot news in the West. Intrigued, I have spent the last two and a half years teaching English at Beijing University. This is what I learnt.

As might be expected of high achievers, the overwhelming majority was highly focused and motivated. University was primarily a time for hard study, making friends and participating in new activities. As David commented in his self-introduction, 'We need to try more, experience more and give ourselves more things to look back on when we're older.'

It was a challenge to teach such gifted students but I need not have worried. Relishing the opportunity to practise their oral English, they threw themselves wholeheartedly into debates on all sorts of prickly issues; and they created highly original dramas, debunking the Western stereotype of Asian students as passive, group-oriented and lacking in critical thinking skills.

Another commonly held Western viewpoint is that the Chinese, without any religious belief to hold on to, are increasingly motivated by the gods of nationalism and materialism. As in the UK, I occasionally came across chauvinistic jingoism or crass displays of nouveau riche ostentation. However, this was always outside the language classroom.

Many of my students displayed a healthy patriotism and were keen to contribute to Chinese society. Every week, a number took part in a range of voluntary activities, from teaching blind children to visiting elderly people in nursing homes. A few months after a series of anti-Japan demonstrations had swept the country, the university held a festival to celebrate its cultural diversity. At the bustling Japanese stall, far away from newspaper headlines, lasting friendships were forged.

It was refreshing to work in surroundings where no one was concerned about which brand of clothing you were wearing or whether you had the latest mobile phone. Many felt a deep reverence for nature. One of my abiding memories was trekking in northern Sichuan Province with a small group of students. So outstanding was the natural beauty of the lakes, mountains and waterfalls that we were all reduced to a hushed silence.

Some were clearly engaged in an earnest search for a deeper truth. They were quite prepared to discuss their values and what had shaped them, often mentioning love, friendship, their family and country. A number took subsidiary courses in world religions and would ask thought-provoking questions about Christianity. Their spirit of humility and tolerance, in contrast to the fundamentalism or cynicism seen in some parts of today's world, was striking.

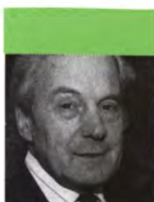
One reason for their lack of arrogance may lie in their respect for the elderly. Some had been brought up by their grandparents and often spoke about how deeply they had been influenced by their thinking. Life was a journey in which you learnt as your experiences and ideas unfurled. The older generation—having experienced the most—could teach you the most.

Under the weight of economic growth and urbanisation, traditional family life was coming under increasing strain, but remained exceptionally important. Parents were held in the utmost respect and most students enjoyed excellent relationships with them. Contrary to Western reservations about the one-child policy producing a nation of spoilt brats—the 'Little Emperor' syndrome—many were already looking to the future when it would be their turn to provide for their parents.

It would be wrong to ignore the pressure-cooker atmosphere in which many students spent their days. Exam results mattered and parental expectations could be over-burdening. Nevertheless, most retained a sense of perspective. Life was ultimately something to be positive about as they carved out their own niches. One young woman, Sophia, reflected in her journal, 'Though I know one will be hurt in this complicated and out-of-order society, the world is always beautiful and full of wonder, isn't it?'

Back in the UK, I miss my students. No matter where we come from, we all have much in common. Face-to-face interaction is crucial as it helps banish sweeping generalisations and means that we are less likely to be manipulated by lazy journalism and facts taken out of context. As Rachel wrote in a recent email, 'The most important thing I learnt in your lesson had nothing to do with English, but that I could really make friends with a foreigner. The only thing we need is to be sincere when we communicate.' ■

MICHAEL HENDERSON


DAVID CHANNER

Wilberforce's great change

I WAS ONCE asked to give the opening prayer for the Oregon senate. The senators duly bowed their heads. As I spoke astonished heads were slowly raised. It was the English accent that did it, plus an invocation unlike others they were used to. I simply told the story of a politician who I thought was a good example for politicians anywhere, anytime.

I am speaking of William Wilberforce who led the British parliamentary battle to end the transatlantic slave trade. The year 2007 will be the 200th anniversary of that great achievement and will be marked by events in Britain and around the world.

Wilberforce was well off, had great charm, was a gifted speaker, a fine singer and three years after he entered Parliament his best friend, William Pitt, became Prime Minister. He had the world at his feet.

Then a remarkable experience transformed Wilberforce's life. He faced the fact that he had really achieved nothing worthwhile in his first years in Parliament, for, as he said, 'My own distinction was my darling object.' He accepted a larger commission. 'God Almighty has laid before me two great objects,' he wrote in his diary, 'the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners,' which we might call the whole moral climate of the country. This was at a time when Britain was the leading slave-trading nation in Europe and slavery supported one of her most profitable industries.

Wilberforce decided, as I told the senators, to put these new objects before claims of political party, before possibility of office, before popularity. He began a lifelong habit of rising early to spend time in meditation. He enlisted around him a team of people in public life that was said to be more talented than the cabinet. Indeed, they called their meetings 'cabinet councils' and devised an imaginative strategy to advance their twin aims privately and publicly. They were nicknamed 'the saints'.

Wilberforce became one of the best-loved men in England but also one of the most hated. His life was threatened by slave-ship captains, he was opposed by the Establishment, cold-shouldered by royalty, and endured all sorts of attempts at character assassination. Even the great Lord Nelson could refer to his 'damnable doctrine'. He was never a well man. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, in the very last letter he ever wrote, cautioned him, 'Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils, but if God is with you who can be against you?'

Wilberforce kept at it—for 46 years. After 20 years of unrelenting battle the House of Commons passed the bill abolishing the slave trade by 283 votes to 16. 'Well, Henry,' Wilberforce said to his colleague Thornton that evening, 'what shall we abolish next?' Twenty-six years later, on his deathbed, Wilberforce was told that within a year all 800,000 slaves in British territories were to be set free.

Meanwhile such a shift in the moral climate had occurred that it was reckoned that there were scarcely a hundred upper-class families where at least one member had not undergone what was called the 'great change'. The groundwork was laid for major social reforms and democratic developments in the years ahead.

Many other names are associated with that classic struggle, men and women like Thomas Clarkson, Hannah More, Granville Sharp and Zachary and Selina Macaulay. They give substance to the words of John Pollock who writes, 'Wilberforce proved that one man can change his times, but he cannot do it alone.' Pollock's classic work *Wilberforce* is being reissued for the anniversary, as is Garth Lean's aptly named *God's Politician*.

William Hague, another MP from Yorkshire, is also writing a biography to mark this bicentenary. He says, 'Wilberforce, more than any other man in his generation, exemplified in his life how to translate a religious calling into political action.' ■

Michael Henderson is the author of 'Forgiveness: breaking the chain of hate', Grosvenor Books, 2002, ISBN 1-85239-031-X
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MARY LEAN

Meeting place of two great longings

I'M PART OF A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS who visit asylum seekers in detention. We sometimes get touching letters from them, expressing what our visits mean. One man wrote to the person who was visiting him, 'You are to me what an oasis is to an extremely thirsty desert traveller.'

This man was thirsty for friendship, love, someone who cared about him in his desperate situation, someone who would listen.

On some level, most of us are thirsty for those things. And on some level, most of us are thirsty for the water which only God can provide, the spring that bubbles up to eternal life, to a different quality of being and living in the here and now.

The Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore, expressed this deeper longing in a prayer poem which I love.

When the heart is hard and parched up, come upon me with a shower of mercy.
When grace is lost from life, come with a burst of song.
When tumultuous work raises its din on all sides shutting me out from beyond, come to me, my lord of silence, with thy peace and rest.
When my beggarly heart sits crouched, shut up in a corner, break open the door, my king, and come with the ceremony of a king.
When desire blinds the mind with delusion and dust, O thou holy one, thou wakeful, come with thy light and thy thunder.

For years I was thirsty, trying to live a Christian life, to follow and obey God and to do his work, and somehow never quite finding the water. And of course in one sense we never do. But increasingly I am discovering that I cannot assuage my thirst by my own efforts. It's not about how fast I rush around frantically digging wells, but about how open I am to God's gift—and to finding it in unexpected places.

So often I have felt that my relationship with God depends on my effort, on getting things right, on trying harder, on earning his love. Yet actually my relationship with God has nothing to do with my hard work, and everything to do with his love, his free gift.

I can find that extraordinarily hard to accept. I used to know a toddler who, whenever you tried to do something for her, would say with immense determination, 'I want to do it *by self*!' And I'm a bit like that. I want to be able to cope on my own. I want to be wise, calm, patient, caring, centred. And when I find that I am stressed, ratty, irrational, irritable, scattered, I can be devastated at my inability to be what I want to be.

Yet when I come to God, as I really am, in all my frustration and powerlessness, he tells me that he loves me as I am, and that he will use me as I am. It's not in my perfection that we meet: if I was perfect I wouldn't need him. It is in my incompleteness, my imperfection, that he comes to meet me. When I have the courage to tell him who I really am, how I really feel, what I really long for—however exorbitant, or trivial, that longing may seem.

There is nothing I can do to reach God. All I can do is express my longing for his love. And as I do that, I realise that God's longing for my love is as great as my longing for his—and that prayer is the meeting place of those two great longings.