

## REFLECTIONS AFTER ASIAN VISIT

Following my seven-week visit to Hong Kong, China, Taiwan and Australia, I am wrestling with the implications of the Melbourne Consultation, and of the growth and heritage of China.

China, a rich civilisation built up over 5000 years, contains almost a quarter of the world's population, and will have a major impact on the 21st Century. In Beijing five of us spent a day and a half discussing with 20 senior Chinese 'How to build a sound moral basis to our respective societies and ourselves'.

With growing prosperity and the pull towards 'money madness', this subject deeply concerned our hosts. MRA is the first Western group they have invited for discussions on this theme. It seems that we have a great opportunity to build together – provided we are open to MRA developing from its Western, Christian roots to a truly international, intercultural organism.

It hadn't impinged on me that traditional Chinese have no concept of a Creator, Father, God. They are not like Western atheists who reject the notion of God. God is just not part of their psyche. Yet they do talk about the 'spiritual civilisation'. Values such as love and integrity of heart are precious.

The core of MRA is Frank Buchman's Keswick experience. He found inner liberation, from which all else flowed. For him it was a Christian experience. People of other faiths and cultures have a similar experience of inner liberation, but think of the source differently. A Chinese friend of mine who found inner freedom from hatred of the Japanese found it through the riches of his own tradition.

In the Consultation we struggled with how to express the 'core values' of MRA. Would traditional Chinese feel included with any expression of 'guidance' that we come up with? It is very difficult to find a form of wording acceptable to everyone, whilst keeping the moral and spiritual cutting edge of MRA's challenge. For each of us the interpretation of where the experience is rooted is important. However I am left with the sense that, rather than being dogmatic about interpretation, it is the inner struggle and change of heart that needs to be focused.

*Howard Grace*

## MOLDOVAN STUDENTS' INITIATIVE

Last month in Moldova, Mircea Eladi convened a seminar entitled 'The Search for Freedom'. He had

attended a *Foundations for Freedom* course at Tirley Garth, and wanted to pass on what he had learnt. Twelve selected university students took part. Four of us, from Japan, Britain and Australia, went too. The country faces huge problems – unemployment, pitifully low pay and the legacy of Communist rule. During our four days together, a determination grew among the students to seek solutions to their most immediate problems. 'I have come to appreciate my own self-worth in this process,' said one. They have now booked a room in their Union building, so that they can meet regularly and search further for inner, as well as their country's, freedom.

*Liz Carlisle Graeme Cordiner  
Atsushi Ohta Miles Paine*

## CAMBODIA'S QUEST FOR PEACE: A SPIRITUAL APPROACH

While Cambodia's political situation appears to be deteriorating, more than 100 Khmers gathered with their French friends last month in the MRA home in Paris to launch the French version of the film *The Serene Life*. With beautiful pictures and the straightforward teaching of Patriarch Maha Ghosananda, this video by David and Alan Channer goes to the heart, challenging us all to live in accordance with his ideals, with peace and compassion.

The event was organised by three local Khmer associations in partnership with MRA, and chaired by Venerable Touch Sarith of the Khmer Buddhist Foundation for Peace, and Alan Channer. It began with a lunch prepared by several Cambodian families and closed with a performance of traditional dances.

After the screening of the film there was a passionate debate in the course of which Mr Son Sann, former Prime Minister, appealed to his compatriots: 'What counts today is what each one of you will do for our country.' The wife of a Khmer newspaper manager said as she left, 'Thank you for this spell of fresh air'.

*Alain Tate*

## CLEARING THE CURSE OF LAND MINES

David Channer was a guest speaker alongside the newly-elected British MP and former BBC war correspondent Martin Bell at a sculpture and art exhibition in London this month on the theme, 'Can

art influence politics?' It aimed to highlight the global problem of land mines and their eradication.

Channer spoke about making the two films, *The Serene Smile* and *The Serene Life* in Cambodia, whose fertile land has been devastated by the indiscriminate planting of millions of land mines, which kill civilian farmers and children.

'As we set out to make *The Serene Smile* in the Khmer language, Cambodians encouraged us to move away from politics towards art, and towards a central need – healing the wounds of history,' Channer told a packed audience in St James' Church, Piccadilly. 'The film indirectly promotes an ethos of peace-building and reconciliation. As foreigners, that is what we were encouraged to do.'

'Great suffering, great animosity and great corruption need great compassion, great integrity and great wisdom to overcome them,' he concluded.

Martin Bell called for Britain's foreign aid programme to invest in systems to clear anti-personnel mines. There are as many as 110 million still in the ground world-wide; up to six million in Bosnia, and up to 11 million in Angola, he pointed out. 'Nothing can justify the scale of this curse,' he said. According to UN estimates, 20 times more land mines are being laid than are being cleared. 'We are losing ground and losing it fast.'

#### **BUNNY AUSTIN CHEERED AT WIMBLEDON**

A crowd of nearly 10,000 people at Wimbledon's new Number 1 Court stadium gave prolonged applause and cheers to Bunny Austin, aged 90, when he was introduced by Pam Rhodes, presenter of BBC TV's 'Songs of Praise'.

Rhodes interviewed Bunny about his life and faith for the broadcast, to be transmitted on June 29 during Wimbledon fortnight. Bunny spoke about his childhood and his friendship with players like Stan Smith. Broadcast around the world, 'Songs of Praise' is television's longest-running religious programme, in its 36th year. This special edition was recorded to inaugurate the new No 1 court.

A photo of Bunny with the programme's presenters and the opera singer Lesley Garrett appeared the following day in *The Daily Telegraph*, with the headline 'Songs of Praise is first service on court'.

**Mike Smith**

#### **PANDAS AND PEOPLE**

On June 6, *The Church of England Newspaper* gave front page publicity to the Guest Column by the Bishop of London in the latest issue of *For A Change*. Under the headline ' "Save the family, not just the whales", says London Bishop', the paper reported: 'Saving the family is more important than saving the whale, the Bishop of London said in the article for Moral Re-Armament. Writing in the June/July issue of *For A Change*, the social pressure group's magazine, the Rt Rev Richard Chartres spoke of the decline of community and the heavy burden placed on human relationships in a society which disregards the divine. "It can lead to great disappointment," he said. "Then we find it easier to love whales and pandas rather than our fellow human beings." '

#### **PILGRIMAGE TO ST PETERSBURG**

A number of us from Britain took part in a pilgrimage to St Petersburg on the occasion of the Orthodox Easter. We were guests of the Agora community, a group of academics, church leaders and administrators who are working for 'spiritual growth and the creation of a new civil society'. The high point of our visit was the Easter celebration in the Preobrazhensky Cathedral. Yevgeni Koslov, a graduate in Russian literature, drove us over 1,000 miles in his minibus during our ten-day stay, and now plans to bring a delegation to the 'Creativity, Freedom, Service' session in Caux this year.

**Ken Rundell**

#### **TRIBUTE TO FORMER IRAQI STATESMAN**

*The Times* of London and *The Australian* both carried an obituary of Dr Mohammed Fadhel Jamali, one of the last surviving signatories of the UN Charter, who died last month aged 94. It quoted his appeal as Foreign Minister of Iraq to leaders of the non-aligned states at the Bandung Conference of 1955 to 'work on the basis of moral rearmament'.

The obituary tells how, after a narrow upbringing, Dr Jamali's world view was exploded at university in the Beirut of the 1920's by encounters with Christians, Jews and other Muslims, the future leaders of the Middle East. 'For the rest of his life he was convinced that cooperation with the People of the Book was essential for world order.' This was

'The inner voice defies description. I have been a willing slave to this most exacting Master for more than half a century. His voice has been increasingly audible, as years have rolled by... There are moments in your life when you must act, even though you cannot carry your best friends with you. The 'still, small voice' within you must always be the final arbiter when there is a conflict of duty. I have no special revelation of God's will, but my firm belief is that he reveals himself daily to every human being.' – Mahatma Gandhi

*One suggestion from the Melbourne Consultation was that each month the World Bulletin might carry a reflective, inspirational thought of this kind. If you have suggestions of appropriate items, please send them – Editors*

enhanced by his marriage of 63 years to Sarah, an American. Sarah was recently decorated by the Tunisian Government (where she and Jamali lived) for her work for the mentally handicapped.

Jamali's influence on the thinking of his friend Frank Buchman can be found in *Frank Buchman – A Life*. His own story is told in Harry Almond's *Portrait of an Iraqi Statesman*, (Grosvenor Books, USA). When he was condemned to death in 1958 following a coup in Baghdad, the world fellowship of MRA prayed and worked for his release. From 1961 he and his wife paid annual visits to Caux.

*Peter Everington*

### **ALBANIAN JOURNALIST REPORTS**

During the law and order crisis in Albania, Albanian journalist Shefqet Meko, who was in Caux last year, took an initiative for peace: 'There were three days of terror. No police, no soldiers, nothing. All civilians were carrying guns. Amid rumours that rebels would attack the radio and TV, a colleague and I made a call to our listeners. My inner voice was directing me: "You are our brothers and sisters, and parents like us. Please be quiet for a moment. Your inner voice will tell you what to do and say - put away your guns. Talk together as brothers and children of God. Our future is in our own hands."'

*Richard Channer*

### **LEADERSHIP: TRYING A NEW APPROACH**

Forty of our national team met over a long weekend in Melbourne in early June to search for understanding of the spiritual challenges of Australia, and to quest for more inclusive and responsive operating structures without an excess of organisation.

We agreed to trial open meetings the day before all main Council of Management meetings. A well-publicised agenda will include 'nuts and bolts' decisions coming before the CoM as well as matters of direction and planning whose proper place is in the wider domain. We committed ourselves to hold these tandem meetings in various parts of the country to help overcome this continent's 'tyranny of distance'.

To help this process, and to act as a spokesperson for MRA, we resolved to create a new role: National Coordinator. We see this person as a 'servant leader' who through networking skills, spiritual insight and pastoral sensitivity can help us as a team relate better to each other and get to grips with national issues. Michael Brown was unanimously endorsed to fulfil this role for at least the first year.

Our Council of Management has accepted the recommendation of the wider team gathering and

appointed Jonathan Lancaster as its Secretary to replace John Williams who retired after five years of service, and Alan Weeks to replace Jonathan as Assistant Secretary. Michael, Jonathan and Alan were commissioned during a prayer service at the conclusion of the four-day gathering.

*Glennis Holden*

### **DISCIPLINES OR TRUTHS?**

May I comment on one aspect of the excellent report of the Melbourne Consultation?

It would be verbally accurate to describe the four points on page 3 of the Report as core disciplines or practices of MRA rather than as truths.

Furthermore, if we suggest that these points represent the core truths of MRA, as could well be inferred from the Report, people can legitimately ask why other truths, which they may regard as more fundamental, are not included. If we describe them as the core practices or disciplines of MRA we avoid getting into an area which inevitably touches on religion and theology. MRA is more about conveying the reality of a change of heart personally or in the national context, thereby inspiring people to take on new aims, than about expressing or promulgating truths as such.

*Brian Lightowler*

### **LITHUANIA TO HOST FFF SEMINAR**

The fourth annual *Foundations For Freedom* International Seminar will take place near Kaunas in Lithuania from August 24 – 31. Post graduate students and professional Lithuanians who attended the previous seminar in Slovakia are inviting participants there to seek ways of 'Living effectively, in a changing world' by 'making faith practical and relevant'. Further details from John and Diana Bennett, Tel/Fax: +44 121 455 7596 or by e-mail: 106544.2241@compuserve.com

*John Bennett*

### **MRA BODIES TO MEET IN CAUX**

As mentioned in last month's WB, representatives of our various MRA bodies across the world will meet in Caux on August 11 and 12. So that the gathering is not unwieldy, we feel we should limit attendance to two people per country/board. I have received some suggestions as to subjects we should discuss. Those taking part will receive an agenda on arrival in Caux. It would help to know in advance who from your country/board intends to participate. (100745.1622@compuserve.com, with my name in Subject box).

*Philippe Lasserre*

## REGIONAL CONSULTATION IN INDIA

At the Melbourne Consultation it was decided to hold an Asia-Pacific consultation. The Indian national team meeting last month responded wholeheartedly to the idea, and on their behalf RD Mathur, Bhanu Kale and Suresh Vazirani have written offering Asia Plateau as the venue, 12-17 January 1998. Under the theme 'Asia-Pacific Renaissance: launching together into the 21st Century', discussion topics will include 'China and her part in our future', 'learning to include our Moslem nations', and 'linking the youth of our region in joint campaigns'.

## MELBOURNE CONSULTATION REPORT

We hope that all WB readers have received the report of the Melbourne Consultation. If not, please request a copy from your local distributor. Report-back meetings have been held in many countries, and already some progress has been made in implementing recommendations. A booklet detailing

training courses and other MRA opportunities around the world for young people will be available in July.

For those who would like more information, the first MCFUG (Melbourne Consultation Follow Up Group) newsletter will be available on request from me by the end of June.

*Edward Peters*

## FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

**Sweden:** from September 1, Philip and Vendela Tyndale-Biscoe will be at a new address in Stockholm: Klubbacken 34, S-129 39 Hägersten, SWEDEN. Tel/fax +46 8 464 7624

**Japan:** The new e-mail addresses for the Fujitas in Tokyo are: for Yuki (personal) yf01-yfj@t3.rim.or.jp for Leiko and Yuki's office lf02-yfj@t3.rim.or.jp

**United Kingdom:** Until further notice Laurie and Elsa Vogel's address is 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF.

# Calendar of Events

JUN '97	<u>Minneapolis USA</u>	International Conference at University of Minnesota	Jun 24 - 29
JUL '97	<u>Armagh Melbourne Australia</u>	'Life Matters', nine-day course for young adults	Jul 4 - 13
	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	'The World of Tomorrow - A Dynamic Learning Community'	Jul 12 - 13
	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	Opening weekend 'Creating values-centred leadership'	Jul 15 - 20
	<u>Odawara Japan</u>	Asian Pacific Youth Conference (APYC)	Jul 20 - 29
	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	'The life of faith'	Jul 22 - 28
AUG '97	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	'Psssst ...! Creativity, freedom, service'	Aug 5 - 12
	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	'Healing the past, forging the future - Dialogues towards justice and reconciliation'	Aug 14 - 20
	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	Caux Round Table	Aug 20 - 23
	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	Final weekend: programme to be announced	Aug 23 - 24
SEP '97	<u>Tirley Garth Britain</u>	FFF International Course	Sep 4 - 23
OCT '97	<u>Kobe Japan</u>	Asia: Dialogue with neighbours	Oct 4 - 5
JAN 1998	<u>Asia Plateau India</u>	Asia/Pacific Regional Consultation	Jan 12 - 17

*The deadline for the next Bulletin is Monday, 15 September 1997*

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