

AUSTRALIANS SAY SORRY

On 26 May, Australia witnessed a unique event. In cities, towns and rural centres, in schools and churches, people stopped to commemorate a national Sorry Day, expressing their sorrow for a tragic episode in Australian history - the policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families with the aim of assimilating them into Western culture. The practice went on until the early 1970s.

Sorry Day had been proposed by a report into this practice, tabled in the Australian Parliament on 26 May last year. This proposal was ignored by the Government, which argued that it could not be held responsible for the actions of its predecessors.

Many Australians felt differently. A coalition of community groups, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including MRA, came together, and launched a plan to hold a national Sorry Day. The idea spread like bushfire. Churches gave strong backing, education authorities produced study material. One group had already launched 'Sorry Books' - manuscript books offering everyone the chance to express their own apology for the forced removal policies. Demand for the books grew, until over 1,000 were in circulation. Half a million people wrote messages.

On Sorry Day the books were handed to members of the 'stolen generations' - as they are now called - in hundreds of ceremonies. Thousands of schools commemorated the day too. In Melbourne the Lord Mayor handed the keys of the city to representatives of the stolen generations, in welcome to people who had been long ignored, and the city churches rang their bells in tribute. In Adelaide a memorial was unveiled at the site of a former home for removed children. In Sydney, thousands rallied at the Opera House. Among them was Luigi, with his gelati van, handing out free gelati. 'We Italian Australians need to say sorry too,' he explained.

That evening, 15 minutes of the half-hour national TV news was devoted to Sorry Day. Prominent politicians were seen in tears as they watched the ceremony in the Federal Parliament. Next morning Sorry Day was front-page news in many towns and cities, and one of the main subjects of opinion columns and talk-back shows.

This has deeply moved the 'stolen generations', who have felt isolated by the wider community's reluctance to hear their story. At a time of growing racial polarisation in some parts of the country, that is vital.

John Bond

HOLDING OUT 'THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP'

On the day that some British war veterans turned their backs on Emperor Akihito of Japan, on his state visit to Britain, two former British soldiers also appeared on television, calling for reconciliation and forgiveness. Captain Dick Channer was seen on Independent Television's 'News at Ten' waving a Japanese flag outside Westminster Abbey, where Emperor Akihito had laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. 'After 50 years there needs to be a new beginning,' Channer said. 'We need to look ahead.'

On BBC TV's 'Newsnight', anchorman Gordon Brewer interviewed Kazuo Chiba, former Ambassador to the UK and spokesman for the Emperor, who said, 'The actions by our people - the individuals involved - at that time were beastly. I am very sorry about it.' The programme reported Emperor Akihito's gracious remarks at a banquet given by the Queen: 'Our hearts are filled with deep sorrow and pain.'

Asked to comment, Les Dennison, who was a POW on the infamous Siam (Thai) Railway during the war, said that the Japanese 'have gone pretty well all the way' in their expressions of sorrow. 'I don't know how we can reach the age of 83, in my case, and still hold on to bitterness. We need to hold out the hand of friendship.' He challenged the Labour Camp Survivors Association, which has called for financial compensation from the Japanese. 'If you get your compensation, what then?' Dennison asked, making the point that British war veterans now receive a disability pension from the British Government.

Michael Smith

SIBERIAN SPRING

The 14th FFF Visiting Course took place in Siberia last month. It was the third Visiting Course in Novosibirsk, this time invited by the Rector of the Siberian University for Railway Transport. With 21 participants it was also the largest. From many applicants 11 women and 10 men from the Transport University and the Siberian Academy for Public Administration had been selected. They were eager and interested, and responded well to the theme of the course: 'Moving out of your comfort zone'. Students recognised the idea behind it and used it happily to indicate their understanding of identity, morality, change and freedom.

Many began to look forward to the daily early morning time of quiet reflection (or R&D). As one student put

it in an e-mail since the course: 'I find R&D very interesting. You can think about different things in the morning. You may think what you want and say what you think. These are your thoughts and nobody is going to say that you are wrong. That's good.'

One afternoon participants in previous courses came to meet VC -14. Forty-five of us took part in sketches, a session on teamwork, a discussion on how to continue together after the VC and a rainy barbeque, interspersed with Scottish dancing.

After the course, Rector Komarov from the Transport University told us that he had been very impressed by his talks with participants in last year's course, and wants to continue supporting the programme. 'It is so important', he said, 'that our youth discovers anew the way of faith, truth and respect.'

*Natalia Emelyanova, Mike Lowe, Atsushi Ota,
Marina and Kees Scheijgrond*

GRAFT-BUSTING ON AN INTERNATIONAL SCALE

International corruption - the rock on which the dreams of many nations have foundered - was the subject of a *For A Change* Forum at the Westminster Theatre last month.

The heads of the British and French chapters of the anti-corruption coalition Transparency International and Simon Webley, Director of the British-North America Research Association, looked at the cost of 'grand' corruption, and some of the 'weapons' which are proving effective in combatting it.

Daniel Dommel, formerly a senior civil servant in the French ministry of finance, and currently chairman of MRA's legal body in France, vigorously countered the arguments of those who advocate turning a blind eye to under-the-counter payments. Bribery, he said, led to a vicious circle: 'As soon as your competitors suspect that you are prepared to bribe, they will be tempted to do the same. The more the buyer feels the same, the more he will insist on his kick-back.'

M. Dommel told of a company with a no-bribes policy which had done well after initial setbacks.

George Moody-Stuart, a businessman who has worked in the Caribbean, East Africa and Fiji, and now chairs Transparency International in the UK, spoke of stratagems being adopted to combat 'grand corruption', which he defined as 'the big payments made to decision-makers, ministers and top officials to influence them in favour of the payer'.

'The most important single weapon is the criminalisation of off-shore bribery,' Moody-Stuart stated. So far the USA was the only country to outlaw the bribery of an official outside its own borders. But now the 29 OECD countries and five others had committed themselves to introducing such laws. Then overseas bribes would no longer be tax-deductible (as they are in the UK, according to the current manual for tax inspectors).

Another 'weapon' which had proved effective was the use of anti-bribery pacts or 'islands of integrity' - whereby all bidders for a contract committed

themselves not to pay bribes and the relevant officials signed an agreement not to accept bribes.

Simon Webley, author of five studies for the Institute of Business Ethics, has prepared codes of business conduct for UK companies. Such codes had to be applied by everyone from the highest to the lowest, he said. If they were, employees knew better how to operate in the 'grey areas' - those decisions which are not illegal, but where personal conscience conflicts with the perceived good of the company.

In the ensuing discussion Martin Dent, co-founder of the Jubilee 2000 debt relief coalition, asked what conditions should be applied to debt forgiveness to ensure that the benefits would not be wasted through corruption. One panellist suggested a 'probationary period' before all of a country's debt was written off.

Ken Noble

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ICG

As the International Coordination Group, we are aware of the difficulties that MRA teams in some countries have faced or are facing. We wish to make the following recommendations which, we are convinced, would help further growth and encourage newer, possibly younger, people to take responsibility:

1. That each office-bearer of MRA Boards/ Councils/Trusts/Associations has a fixed term of service, renewable by a consensus of the committed MRA community, or, where required, by a majority of the membership in a spirit of prayer and search for inspiration.
2. That even if they may not be legally required to hold an annual general meeting, each official body consider calling a national gathering before the annual meeting so that the convictions of the wider MRA community are taken into account when the official body makes its decisions.
3. That MRA office bearers ensure that accounts are properly maintained and all other obligatory legal requirements of the official body are met. For transparency, all information concerning finances, properties and legal status should be available to the MRA community in their country.
4. That each person/family in charge of any MRA centre/property review their position and responsibilities after perhaps seven years, with the possibility of extending the period of service after consultation with the MRA community.
5. That at regular intervals (possibly every five years) each person working for MRA or for an MRA programme, review with others whether he or she is meant to continue doing their particular task.
6. That where it is practical, each country consider setting up a National Coordination Group of three to five people selected for a term by the MRA community. This group, as is true in the UK for instance, would be available for the community to come and talk over issues vexing them or ideas that need assistance to be taken forward.

*Annejet Campbell, Amina Dikedi, Suresh Khatri,
Philippe Lasserre, Jens Wilhelmsen
for the Coordination Group*

CLEAN SLATE

May we share an idea for a broad-based national campaign in Britain through 1999, linked to the new millennium? It grew out of my experience over the past year, of putting right certain things from the past, including making apologies for hurts inflicted. Then I discovered that someone else had nursed resentment towards me for something I had done 15 years ago. This I was able to apologise for, and the relationship has been restored. It set me thinking about how much baggage from the past there is within our MRA fellowship, let alone in the outside world - particular unhealed relationships? In a quiet time I thought, 'Could we have a "Clean Slate Campaign" within MRA to deal with all that stops us from being free to serve God wholeheartedly?' Then, I wondered, why not a 'Clean Slate Campaign' for the whole of Britain?

'Cleaning the slate' is a powerful image in English, denoting a fresh start, a leaving the past behind. It speaks to people at the level they are ready for. In terms of what it would mean for individuals - and for our nation - it could be a leaving behind in the old millennium of the 'baggage' we all carry - be it hurts, resentments, fears, superiority - or even backlogs of matters undealt-with in the home or the workplace. Why carry that baggage into the next millennium?

A number of people here, including some in public life, feel that the idea could provide deeper content to the largely superficial debate about the meaning of the new millennium. We are working on the possibility of a national campaign, backed by a coalition of organisations including MRA. If you would like more information about the concept and practical plans for the campaign, write to me in Oxford.

Edward Peters

CAUX SPECIAL WEEK

FROM JULY 23 TO 30: no session in the summer's program, Caux is no longer like Caux!

BUT, Father Ramsperger, a Canadian Jesuit priest based in Lebanon, Mona Marzouk, an Egyptian pediatrician working in Liverpool and Adjahn Sumedho, Abbot of the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in Britain, will be opening up for us, between us, in front of us, new avenues and new perspectives.

BUT, a pilgrimage will plunge us into far-off history and will bring us back to Caux by another path...

A time to (re)discover the pain and wonder of our first calling and to pave the way to a future that is insecure, yet mysterious and full of promise.

Who will be the privileged ones to share those new discoveries?

Will you be one of them?

In order to get a good welcome at the LIFE, FAITH, FELLOWSHIP week, please register by July 1st.

*Annejet Campbell, Anne-Marie & Alain Tate,
Jean Piguet, Lotty Wolverkamp*

DAYS OF TALK AND REFLECTION

From May 22-25 a dozen men and women from the Arts met at Alnäs in Stockholm. We had gathered out of a sense of need to explore the answers to these and other questions:

1. What is the purpose of the arts in the world, and does MRA have a part to play?
2. What is the purpose of MRA in the world, and do the arts have a part in it?

The wish was expressed that 'the role of the arts in remaking the world' might be included on an agenda of a forthcoming MRA World Consultation. We left rededicated to the hope that our work would be a source of inspiration to people world-wide. A complete overview of what took place is available from Gunnar Söderlund in Stockholm.

John Burrows and Gunnar Söderlund

STATEMENT ON MRA FOR THE INTERNET

Since the Jamaica consultation, there have been a few very minor alterations in the 'universal statement on MRA for the Internet'. Could anyone wanting to re-print this text please be in touch with me in Geneva, and get the FINAL version? We hope that local/national Web pages can provide material on regional activities, with a local 'feel', and provide the links to the main world MRA sites, Caux and London. Otherwise the surfer going from site to site is put off by finding the same material again and again!

Andrew Stallybrass

CAUX SCHOLARS UPDATE

The Caux Scholars Program gets underway on July 15 and there has been a flurry of activity in recent weeks as packets of advance reading and information are sent out to participants, visa letters are written, grant proposals are prepared and photocopying is done. We have 22 wonderful students signed on from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, former Yugoslavia, Nigeria, Algeria, Liberia, Somalia, Argentina, Brazil and the US! Some are still a bit uncertain, as they struggle to raise funds for their tuition or face hurdles securing a Swiss visa. We have been very grateful for the periodic help of Hatti Morrow, a May graduate of Johns Hopkins who will be an intern this summer; Patrick McNamara, a '96 scholar and '97 intern who graduated from George Mason in May; and Patience Emeni, a '98 scholar and current graduate student at American University. We are also grateful for those who have contributed to the program, bringing us \$22,000 to date. We ask your prayers for those of us who lead the program, for the students and for the remaining financial needs.

Randy Ruffin and Kathy Aquilina

HELP OUR COMMUNICATIONS

The *World Bulletin* is the one regular global organ of information and communication for the world MRA

community. Though it appears in English, other language areas graciously use it, either in English or after translating it. However, it is obvious that the distribution of it needs to be reviewed at regular intervals so that all who should get it, do so.

Following the Jamaica Consultation, the International Coordination Group has asked the three of us to review the distribution of the WB. With this in mind we are asking regional distributors about their distribution policies. May we ask all of you to send us your ideas on this subject? Please help us to improve our communication with each other, and to ensure that it is inclusive of all who reckon to carry this world work forward.

Suresh Khatri, Bryan Hamlin & Andrew Lancaster

ICG NOMINATIONS MEETING IN CAUX

Over 24/25 July, during the special week at Caux, a consultation will be held to select replacements for those who are stepping down from the International Coordination Group (ICG). Amina Dikedi, Jens Wilhelmsen and Suresh Khatri continue to serve their term but need reinforcement.

Everyone in the world fellowship has had a chance to send in their nominations. From these names a short list is being finalised, of people who feel called and willing to serve on the ICG if selected. Over the two days in Caux, the consultation participants will seek to discern God's leading on which nominees are meant to serve. Representation at this gathering will be determined in the usual way, ensuring a geographical balance. Those who are ready to attend should make this known to Alan Weeks (who has been co-opted by us) in Melbourne (Fax: +61 3 9822 6871 or e-mail: AB_Weeks@compuserve.com) before 5 July.

**Rob Corcoran, John Mills, Edward Peters,
Marianne Spreng on behalf of
the Consultation Support Group.**

FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

United Kingdom: Laura Trevelyan and Christine Karrer have just moved to a new address: 85 The Phelps, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 1TL. Tel: +44 1865 377 105. E-mail: laura@mraoxon.demon.co.uk and chkarrer@compuserve.com
Ann and Roddy Edwards' new e-mail address is: furrowsed@aol.com

Calendar of Events

JUN '98	<u>Odawara Japan</u>	National MRA conference: 'Seeking a really meaningful life - how should we live and what role should we play?'	Jun	6 - 7
JUN '98	<u>Moldova</u>	15th FFF Visiting Course	Jun	25 - July 5
JUL '98	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	Caux summer conference preparation and warm-up week	Jul	3 - 10
JUL '98	<u>Melbourne Australia</u>	'Life Matters' course for young adults	Jul	3 - 12
JUL '98	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	'A Learning Community - a Swiss contribution'	Jul	11 - 13
JUL '98	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	Caux Conference for Business and Industry	Jul	13 - 18
JUL '98	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	Life, Faith, Fellowship - special week	Jul	23 - 30
JUL '98	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	'Dialogue of Discovery'	Jul	31 - Aug 7
AUG '98	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	'Agenda for Reconciliation - Healing the Past, Forging the Future'	Aug	9 - 16
AUG '98	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	'A conversation on Aims and Values for the next Century'	Aug	18 - 23
SEP '98	<u>Tirley Garth UK</u>	FFF International Course (prospectus available)	Sep	3 - 22

The deadline for the next Bulletin is Tuesday, September 15, 1998

John Bond
151 Kent Street
Hughes ACT 2605
Australia

Andrew Lancaster
10 Dooley Place
Curtin ACT 2605
Australia

Tel: +61 2 6281 0940 - Fax: +61 2 6285 3616 - Tel: +61 2 6281 2107
e-mail: 100035.3123@compuserve.com

Those named below have been asked to distribute this in their area: Asia: South - C Iralu; Malaysia - Santa Maria; Philippines - Calma; Japan, Rest - Nagano; Australia - A Lancaster; Pacific - Annette Porteous; Africa: East - Patel; South - Euvrard; Zimbabwe - Sibare; Nigeria, Rest - Agbih; N. America: Canada - Weeks; USA - Ruffin; Latin America: Brazil, Rest - Puig; Caribbean - Fiona Edwards; Europe: France - Lasserre; Germany - Bräckle; Denmark - Jørgensen; Finland - Koponen; Norway - Eskeland; Sweden - Söderlund; Switzerland - Mottu; UK - C Evans; Austria - Vock; Netherlands, Belgium - J de Pous; Rest of Europe - E Peters; Middle East: - Christodoulides