

CLEAN SLATE MAINTAINS MOMENTUM

The Clean Slate Campaign in the UK is formally coming to an end, but a momentum has been generated which may continue well into the new millennium. During the past six weeks a number of national press articles, plus television and radio interviews, have carried the message to several million people. The BBC featured it on their website, and it is now a 'Talking Point', to which their website viewers are encouraged to respond.

On December 1, almost half the campaign's 80 patrons assembled in the four regional capitals, linked by telephone; it was historic to have national leaders of six major faiths – plus politicians from both major parties – speaking with one voice.

What many have found so appealing is the simplicity of the idea. It is easy to understand, stays in the mind, and provokes personal response and action. From the many straws-in-the-wind we hear of all the time, it is clear that the 60+ clean slate stories which have been sent in officially (see www.cleanslate.org) represent only a fraction of the personal, private decisions taken by individuals.

The campaign's success is hard to evaluate. Some of its strengths (its non-prescriptive and non-institutional nature, for example) are also its weaknesses (sometimes not controversial or challenging enough, and hard to follow up).

In so far as the campaign was largely MRA-inspired and -driven, it has shown that when we have a well worked out message, we can make ourselves heard and enlist heavyweight support. The campaign made an impact out of proportion to the minimal human and financial resources applied to it. It has also taken us more into the media than we have been for a long time. Are we ready to build on this, and accept the challenges that go with being in the public eye?

The idea of the campaign grew out of a fresh, transforming experience of personal change. As we each seek to live in daily touch with God, ready for both the pain and the joy of receiving fresh revelations about ourselves and the world, who knows what far-reaching inspiration may be given to any one of us?

Edward Peters

WIPED FROM THE SLATE

Who has been wiped from the slate this year?
Which tribe,
Which people,
Which persons?

Dealt a deal
Their future to seal
Their voice to conceal
Wounded, unable to heal.

It is the way
We all would like it.
Out of the way
Out of the psyche.
Thus we'd be free
Released – even carefree.

But what if they're loved ones
Who behave so uncomesome
Who disturb to distraction
And provoke pained reaction?

Then out of the way
Is no way at all.
In fact we're confounded
Completely dumbfounded....
What is the way?
Who is to say?

Liz de Pous-Davey

OREGON VIDEO PREMIERED IN VIRGINIA

Last month 320 people, including Virginia's Lieutenant Governor, attended the fourth annual Metropolitan Richmond Day breakfast, organized by Hope in the Cities (HIC) and co-sponsored by a dozen other local organizations. A 24-minute video of Oregon's Day of Acknowledgment was projected on a giant screen. Oregon State Representative Anitra Rasmussen told of the work that led to this event last April, the first of its kind by a state government in the USA. In response, Viola Baskerville of Virginia's House of Delegates said that it was now time for the State of Virginia to undertake its own day of acknowledgment.

Forty-one people from ten US cities and two Canadian cities took part in the breakfast as part of an intensive four-day training. The training saw deep changes in the lives of individuals, including decisions to make costly apologies and to move towards former enemies.

Copies of the Day of Acknowledgment video are available from the Richmond HIC office.

Rob Corcoran

SHAPING THE FUTURE IN AUSTRALIA

In Sydney on 3 December, the first of the 283 participants in the *Sharing our Hope* conference were arriving, charged with anticipation. None could have anticipated that, hours before Sir Conrad Hunte was due to give the keynote speech,

he would collapse and die from a massive heart attack.

At the opening dinner, Jim Coulter read from the speech Conrad had prepared. Through cricket, he had written, he had risen from poverty to privilege. Through MRA, 'I received a commission to demonstrate God's power to heal the poor, raise the down-trodden, encourage the faint-hearted, and convict the intellectual.'

As Gatjil Djerrkura, then Chairman of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, began his remarks he motioned to the empty seat at his table. 'I rely on people like Conrad who have made a tremendous contribution in bringing justice and reconciliation to Indigenous people and to nations,' he said.

Welcoming the overseas visitors, especially those from East Timor and Somalia, Djerrkura said, 'We feel your pain. We, the Aboriginal people of Australia, want to play our part in healing, so that we can all go forward to a better future.'

The conference brought together many who are committed to shaping that future, including the heads of multicultural affairs in Queensland and New South Wales. Sir Ronald Wilson, whose report on the 'stolen generations' of Aboriginal children has provoked huge national debate, made a passionate plea for the nation to heal this tragic episode. Also speaking were prominent Aboriginal spokesperson Professor Jackie Huggins, and Tony Reynolds, former Executive Director of Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Cabinet Minister Philip Ruddock stayed long after the session, talking with the speakers.

It was a memorable conference, made more so by the presence of a group of 28 from Papua New Guinea's Milne Bay Province and by the participation of young people who facilitated sharing groups, filled the meetings with music and led plenaries. An 8-page pictorial report is now available.

Following the Sydney conference, 20 participants went to Canberra, where they met a wide range of diplomats, senior officials and parliamentarians. In the Main Committee Room of Parliament, Senators and Members were among those who heard Yusuf Al-Azhari, Tony Reynolds, Ratu Meli Vesikula and Mona Marzouk speak on 'What price reconciliation?' Two Canberra radio programs have since asked to broadcast the speeches.

Mike Brown, John Bond

"CHANGER-INTERNATIONAL"

This is the new name which the MRA Association of France chose at an extraordinary General Meeting on December 4 during which our Articles of Constitution were updated. The name 'Réarmement moral' remains. 'Changer-international' will be the commonly used name.

The decision was taken after a consultation with the MRA team across France and the French-speaking

world which began in February this year. Many names were suggested, of which 'Changer-international' was the most widely accepted.

When we met this month, a final discussion confirmed our conviction for a new name. This was voted into the first paragraph of article 1 of our Constitution which now reads: 'The Association called "Association for Moral Re-Armament", or "Changer-international" was founded in 1952 etc.'

The name chosen is the one which seems most appropriate to make of MRA a movement anchored in the concept of change, deliberately open to the outside world, and recognizing the international character of its calling.

A public launching of the new name will take place in the course of the year 2000.

*Jean Fayet, Antoine Jaulmes,
Frédéric Chavanne, Philippe Lasserre*

FFF SEMINAR IN POLAND

On December 11-12 ten young people took part in a Foundations for Freedom seminar in Czechowka near Krakow, Poland. Mike Lowe from Oxford and Jelena Vranjesevic from Belgrade helped as facilitators. We looked at some of the topics of the 'Time of Discovery' course in Tirley Garth. The imaginative presentations sparked a lot of questions and discussion. This led us to discuss the character of our MRA work in Poland, evoking a sometimes painful but searching exchange of opinions. The two days were an extremely enjoyable learning experience. We are grateful for all that our guests offered us in knowledge, good spirits and friendship.

Marta Dabrowska

NEW ABOUT THE NEXT CONSULTATION

Something new at the Panchgani Global Consultation (February 4-11): seven countries will be represented for the first time!

And something else that is new: from this Consultation on we will be asking all participants to commit themselves to some follow-up reporting.

Also noteworthy is the generous offer by the Indian team to carry the accommodation costs at Asia Plateau of any participants who need that help.

To prepare for the Consultation, may we ask participants to consult with their teams on the following questions:

- 1) What are the current priorities of MRA in your country and region?
- 2) What are the issues in your country and region that you feel are not being addressed but may be meant to be?
- 3) How can MRA become a more cohesive global community? By what means and through what joint action could this come about?

By 15 January could all who wish to contribute send

a page or less on these questions, and could participants send something about themselves and their own commitments to:

IC Secretariat, Amaliastraat 10, 2514JC The Hague, Netherlands or
(IC_Secretariat@compuserve.com)

*Ren-jou Liu and Suresh Khatri (IC)
and the Preparation Team*

TWO CONTRIBUTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

There may be some other angles underlying the topic of the Consultation in India: for instance, the various attitudes of MRA people to the 'establishment' in their society, country or continent, be it rich or poor. To what extent are we motivated by a sense of needing recognition from our 'establishments'? Do we compromise on the MRA basics in search of this recognition? To what extent have we been shown the fundamental needs in a given society, country or continent, and are we praying and intelligently working to address them?

For our Western societies I keenly feel the need to narrow the gap between the ideals professed and the interests pursued. The misdeeds of certain regimes are ignored, while those of others provoke harsh reactions. I believe this lack of consistency in practising our ideals has been and is costly to the world. Is the narrowing of that gap only a Swiss or a European task for MRA? If not, there is a lot of room for a global partnership in this great task.

Christoph Spreng

In last month's WB, Ravindra Rao referred to those from the rich world who have gone to poor countries 'to give'. In 1978 I went to Brazil with MRA, to serve, deeply aware of the injustice within nations and between nations. My years in Latin America changed my concept of who is giving and who is receiving. The hope and faith of people in the shanty towns, and the evidence of moral and social change, have been sources of strength for my faith ever since, not least to my commitment to bring change in the rich world.

The rich world's economic exploitation and materialistic consumption has cost much in terms of environmental destruction and human suffering. Large sections of the world are kept in servitude to the aims of the West. I believe that many of us active in MRA in rich countries resist facing fully the harm caused by the system and mentality from which we benefit. We are concerned about it, but our security and comfort stop us challenging its very foundations. This may also apply to the rich elites of developing countries.

MRA has been instrumental in bringing some change between rich and poor countries. People from colonizing nations have realized the cost of arrogance towards, and exploitation of, former colonies, and have committed their lives to make amends. Should MRA now contribute to rousing this awareness on a global scale?

There are pitfalls. We risk being used politically. Our contribution is moral and spiritual, even if it aims to inspire the creation of just economic and political structures. But MRA is deeply involved in issues of race, the debt burden, the role of business and industry in answering world injustice. That is why I believe that the time may have come for a new stage in our commitment.

Bjorn Øle Austad

CAUSE FOR JUBILATION

'Working for Jubilee 2000 gives meaning to my life,' said one of Norway's leading young theatrical artists in a TV interview recently.

Reading newspapers in different languages, I am struck by the outreach and mobilizing effect of the Jubilee 2000 campaign. The sheer number of those working for international debt alleviation is putting pressure on governments. Changes of policy are coming about, for instance in Germany.

MRA played some part in the initial stages of the campaign. To fulfill its promise, its moral and spiritual dimension needs strengthening. Political pressure is indispensable, but needs reinforcing by the sacrifice and creative vision of those involved. Church groups in some countries are already working to make the campaign network an instrument for more far-reaching changes in the next century.

Let us praise God for all that has happened and continue to give the campaign our best.

Jens J Wilhelmsen

A NEW PAGE FOR 2000

Hate generates hate
revenge takes its toll
on our children and theirs
as years and decades roll
on in a vicious violent circle.

Let us break the chains that atrophy
heart and soul and liberty
release the spirit which longs to soar
above division, border, war.

Let us dare to clean our slate
shed the burden of revenge and hate
may we begin a fresh, clear page
to create a peaceful new age.

Livia Varju

CAUX 2000 UPDATES

The Caux 2000 summer program is at the printers, and as usual, we will have copies just before Christmas. It will also go up on the Caux Web pages. This coming year, all program supplements for the different conferences will be available as .pdf files on the Caux site, and you can download and print them out as needed – a considerable saving in time, energy and money. Please let the

Caux Secretariat know if you would still like to receive hard-copy originals of the supplements. We will send out the same orders as last year of the printed program unless we hear from you to the contrary. Please send any changes or follow-up orders to the Caux Conference Secretariat. Please note that the Conference Secretariat is now in Caux (Mountain House, CH-1824 Caux. E-mail: confsec@caux.ch), and that the Geneva office is no longer handling conference enquiries. We will tell you when the online applications system opens.

PLANNING MEETINGS IN 2000

We decided in the Haguenua meeting last month that the Spring planning meeting for Caux will be from Wednesday, May 10, to Monday, May 15, 2000, in Tirley Garth.

The Autumn meeting has now been fixed – Wednesday, November 22, to Monday, November 27, in the Cartigny Reformed Church retreat centre just outside Geneva.

*Christoph and Mariane Spreng,
Andrew Stallybrass*

SABBATICAL OPPORTUNITY

I am grateful that with the support of a strong team in Minnesota and of the US MRA Board I am able to take a sabbatical year in calendar 2000. There will be study, time with family, some travel, and overall the opportunity to refocus my sense of

calling. I am grateful for Suresh's challenge and the theme of the Consultation at Asia Plateau. I have much to learn from what God is giving all across our world, and about how to bring deeper change to my country.

Steve Dickinson

APYC REPORT AVAILABLE

A 24-page pictorial report in English on the 1999 Asia Pacific Youth Conference In Taiwan is available from MRA Taiwan.

FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

Canada: MRA Canada's new mailing address is: 331 Cooper Street, Suite 403, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0G5. Phone, fax and e-mail remain the same.

France: Alain Tate has a new e-mail address: AlainTate@compuserve.com Messages to Anne-Marie should continue to be sent to: AAMTATE@compuserve.com

Hong Kong: Bekie Chan's new address is: 5G, Block 4, Maywood Court, Kingswood Villas, Tin Shui Wai, N.T. Hong Kong. Home Tel: +852 2189 9190

Fax: +852 2574 4819 Bekie's e-mail address – bekiehk@netvigator.com – remains the same.

United Kingdom: The Embleton/Innes family are now back in Britain: 21 Abingdon Rd, Tubney, OX13 5QQ Tel: +44 1865 390368
E-mail: innes@levels.freemove.co.uk

Calendar of Events

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|----------|-----------------------------|---|----------------|
| DEC '99 | <u>Sydney Australia</u> | A conference to mark the new century | Dec 3 - 7 |
| DEC '99 | <u>Asia Plateau India</u> | 'Challenge of the new millennium : Confrontation or Collaboration?' – four-day leadership program for Trade Union leaders | Dec 15 - 19 |
| DEC '99 | <u>Asia Plateau India</u> | 'Education Today, Society Tomorrow' – leadership program for school teachers | Dec 20 - 24 |
| DEC '99 | <u>Asia Plateau India</u> | Youth Camp to mark the new Century | Dec 28 - Jan 4 |
| FEB 2000 | <u>Asia Plateau India</u> | MRA Global Consultation | Feb 4 - 11 |
| FEB 2000 | <u>Melbourne Australia</u> | Effective Living Course | Feb 6 - Apr 8 |
| MAY 2000 | <u>Tirley Garth</u> | Preparing the Caux conferences | May 10 - 15 |
| MAY 2000 | <u>Kampala Uganda</u> | All Africa conference for Moral Re-Armament | TBA |
| JUN 2000 | <u>Cameroon</u> | Family Forum | Jun 1 - 4 |
| JUL 2000 | <u>Caux Switzerland</u> | Summer conference | Jul 8 - Aug 20 |
| NOV 2000 | <u>Cartigny Switzerland</u> | Caux planning meeting | Nov 22 - 27 |

The deadline for the next Bulletin is Saturday, January 15, 2000

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