

MOUNTAIN HOUSE · CAUX

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

NEWSLETTER 5

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Dear friends,

We are just coming to the end of a week that has seen the house ringing to the distinctive accents of the USA, and Québécois French, and Latin-American Spanish - 'a different accent', to quote the title of Michael Henderson's recent book. And here I am starting my fifth letter already - how time flies!

The summer's wild flowers came late, and now they are lingering on past their departure date, unwilling to leave before they meet the autumn colours that are already touching the first leaves. My walks and runs up the mountain reveal no raspberries - they clearly didn't enjoy the wet spring and cold summer. But there are lovely, large, juicy wild strawberries winking and making eyes out of the thick green carpet beside the paths. The nights are noticeably lengthening again, and the autumn is not yet noticeably bringing us warmer or sunnier weather. I'm sorry to make you all jealous, but it has also brought us the thrill of 'FOR A CHANGE', which was launched yesterday to an eager and excited public, the first copies having arrived by car from Britain on Saturday night, 'by special courier' (Hugh and John Nowell).

John Williams, Ellen Ostero, Michaels Lowe and Henderson and Edward Peters all spoke, Ellen in a splendid Central American Indian outfit matching the colour photograph she took on the cover of the first issue. Locust hordes descended on the two large tables on either side of the hall at the end of the meeting, and now most of those you meet in the house seem to have a copy in their hands.

We all need to take the time to think out our own use of it. Our address books, with the people we've been meeting and trying to pass something on to for the last twenty years, are our starting point, said one friend. Michael Henderson told us how he'd made a positive use of hours spent in front of the TV set watching the Iran/Contra hearings in Washington, and writing more than 400 letters to friends, suggesting that they subscribe! We heard how Ian Sharp in Liverpool, whose creative flair has played an important part in the design, had sold six subscriptions to friends and colleagues on the strength of the colour proofs.

There is no doubt that this magazine can help the growing sense of unity in our world force, and help us to unitedly aim for certain targets - to strive to move the terms of public debate, and inspire many who are discouraged by the normal diet of despair with hope and faith, and the evidence of God's life-changing, world-changing power.

It is amazing what we can get through in a week here; rich and varied experiences hurry by, and it's hard to seize and fix on paper any more than a few highlights. Just a week ago, before the afternoon launching of the Americas-hosted session, we had a morning filled with an hour and a half on China with Ueli Gautschi, a senior manager with

Swissair, who now often goes there on business, followed by a fascinating and original time with the 'theatre people'.

Then at the opening afternoon meeting of the new session, we heard from a Colombian couple. The wife, a teacher, spoke of the importance of relationships with the US. 'We have very strong feelings, we feel that we're unfairly dependent and kept in a state of under-development,' she said. But she expressed the faith that this relationship could move from being one of confrontation to being one of love. Her husband, a cardiologist, noted the need for moral values. 'We blame everyone except ourselves,' he said, 'either the US or Communism.' The young Argentine war veteran who has been with us for some time spoke of his own change, and expressed his desire to work to heal the relationships with Britain and the United States.

One morning's theme of 'The trap of cover-up or the liberation of honesty' was followed by an afternoon seminar, with a host of questions and comments, on the political brouhaha in Washington. Another day it was 'The treadmill of retaliation or the springboard of forgiveness' followed in the afternoon by 'a chance to meet Alan Thorhill'. There has been a rich diet of humour and simplicity and depth.

Edith-Anne Campbell and John Gardiner who play opposite each other in the present production of 'Skeletons' announcing their engagement; Austrians talking about the crisis in their relationship with the Americans, and of the need to face the shadows of their own past; a tall Sudanese law student from the South telling us the Dinka swear words that he's decided to no longer throw at his brother. The latter went on, 'No change can be made in human nature by hatred, violence and avoidance. Temporary changes can be made by threats, but when the threat disappears, the change disappears too! We can all help to bring change to our nations, so I've decided to let God use me to bring a new relationship between the Muslims and the Christians in Sudan.' He had learnt here to seek God's guidance. 'I am taking this back as part of my daily practice,' he concluded.

We had a magical evening of music in the theatre, with 'Songs of the North' from Alison Hutchinson and Sylvie Söderlund. They brought the audience to their feet at the end, in prolonged applause. Another evening, a 'Youth with a Mission' Christian dance group presented a stirring version of the Lord's Prayer, with a black-sack-burdened group of dancers beating the Christ figure down, but the two loveable clown-heros accepting to be freed at the end of their clinging burdens.

We have also been taking the time to search ahead for what is meant to happen over the next year (and beyond) with the many young people who are finding a commitment and a faith. We have a growing sense of excitement that we are at the beginning of something great, without being able as yet to see clearly what. But we feel that if we are faithful to all those that we have been lead to, and to each other, that this still nebulous 'thing' will continue to grow. We long to learn better how to give another generation a training adequate to carry a lifetime's calling.

With autumnal greetings from Caux,

Andrew Stallybrass