

MOUNTAIN HOUSE · CAUX

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

NEWSLETTER 7

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Dear friends,

The last lap, and the bell has rung. The house is filling up fast, to the 400 mark and beyond. By Tuesday we'll be at the highest house-count of the summer - around 480. We still have space for you on bunk beds in the Chalet Repos, but front rooms, with bathrooms and view, for senior industrial couples, for the use of, are at a premium! Today the round table of senior Japanese, American and European industrialists opens, and tomorrow it is the turn of the industrial session proper. So we claim our last reserves of energy and fresh enthusiasm for what looks like being a last high-point of the summer.

As I look back and start trying to evaluate the summer, getting some picture of the whole, I realise that silence has played such an important part, and that so many have decided to take regular times of listening. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who have shared brave and painful decisions, and returned home, and encouragingly there are some letters and 'phone calls from them - the new life goes on.

A Polish journalist, a Solidarity leader, now in exile, spoke before he left of his decision to have a daily time of listening. 'In Caux, you feel hope, you breathe encouragement,' he said, 'and that's what I want to pass on to my compatriots through my coming articles. The Poles need to know more about the experience of Moral Re-Armament, because it is spiritual force, it is moral force, that will further change our country so that we can enjoy greater freedom.'

His wife noted that hope and encouragement were the key words that summed up their stay here. 'I rediscovered inner peace because I rediscovered hope for the future,' she said. The last years had been hard for her, her family and for all Poles. Most of her friends had chosen exile, like them, and had left behind the heavy weight of political and ideological materialism. Now they were living in a free and democratic country, where materialism is rampant, with the frenetic pursuit of money, and atheism on the increase. 'I've often felt alone, lonely and even ridiculous,' she said, 'but I've learnt here that we are never alone.' There was always God, and there was also this great force from so many nations and every possible background.

Throughout the week, to the end of the gathering of the continents, the meetings have featured two travellers, one Indian (Rahul Kapadia), the other African (Richard Zesooli), who have added humour and life, as well as giving precious wisdom! The young Nigerians, with the help of other Africans, put on extracts from their

play 'The next phase' one evening. A senior Tanzanian diplomat commented afterwards, 'This is just what my country needs.' Speaking a couple of days later, she said that she had been thinking about quiet times and listening. 'I feel very oppressed; I feel I am at the end of the world and there's nowhere I can go; I'm lost, at the end of me. But I have to try to work on this and practice these quiet times in the morning,' she said. She invited to Caux and welcomed for an afternoon the entire staff of the diplomatic mission from Geneva - six adults and twelve children.

Another African, a poet and media personality from South Africa added, 'I want to start living like a Christian, not just to be called a Christian. For many years I've told God what I wanted Him to do for me, but now I'll listen to Him to find what He wants me to do.'

Now, as we end the meeting of continents on the printed programme, an impressive delegation from Thailand, including senior army men and university professors, has arrived, as well as a group of 5 Cambodians, led by a Buddhist monk from a refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border.

'We lost our country, our culture, our identity, everything. There are now 200'000 refugees along the border,' said the monk. 'We lost hope, but MRA did not forget us.' He went on to quote Christ: 'Man can not live by bread alone.' 'If we have bread alone but no morality, the world cannot survive,' he said. He gave a telling image of meditation - we are agitated water, carrying in it much dirt. We need to be still for a long time for the dirt to settle, then you can use the clear, clean water, for drinking or washing, and throw the dirt away.

A Finnish student spoke before leaving after a week in Caux. He had seen that his will was the centre of his life. He had handed over his life and his will to God, and signed a contract before witnesses. He wasn't sure where it would lead, but he thought that it would transform relationships at home, in his studies and work, and would also lead him to think for his country and other nations. 'The contract will be valid till my death,' he concluded. A Chilean trade union leader told of a letter of apology written to a sister from whom she'd been estranged for two years. There has been a real sense of the Holy Spirit at work in people's lives.

We have also found time in the rush and flow of Caux to meet and look ahead to next year and beyond, to search for God's leading for the future development of this work, but it is hard as yet to give any clear conclusions. But we do have a sense that we are on the brink of great advances. I hope to follow through the idea of a document for use with the media, to mark the 50th anniversary of MRA, bringing together all the different actions planned for next year. So please keep me posted about any ideas for actions in your part of the world.

With grateful greetings from Caux,

Andrew Stallybrass

P.S. I've resisted talking about the weather till now. We've had lovely days, but the last 48 hours have seen more torrential downpours!