

Tokyo, Japan
15 October 1989

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Friends,

The second in a series of Consultations on matters relating to MRA's global operations took place in Japan, October 3-13. This followed a meeting in France last April that addressed MRA's responsibilities to the communist world.

The Mt Fuji Consultation addressed three concerns in particular, namely, aspects of what could be called MRA's corporate culture, the training and development of people, and appropriate strategies and priorities in East Asia and the Pacific.

Six days of intensive discussions, inspired on several days by the grandeur and grace of Mt Fuji's 3776 metres, enabled the 25 of us representing 15 countries and many distinct cultures to come to certain modest conclusions.

(1) MRA has pioneered multi-cultural initiatives, but our processes of consultation and decision-making have failed to draw adequately on the strengths of diverse cultures, faiths and traditions. More conscious efforts are needed to deal with preconceptions, styles of operation, expressions, and assumptions about 'correct' ways of doing things that unintentionally inhibit the full participation of non-Christians, those not fluent in English, people in jobs, and women.

(2) Ways of organising - and not organising - MRA activities in Western cultures are not necessarily appropriate in non-Western societies. Encouragement should be given to committed friends in each country to step out in faith to shape structures, forms of expression, methods of handling financial matters, and the like, that build on the best in their heritage.

(3) Inadequate attention is often given to the rounded development of full-time workers and to the training offered to young and old. Personnel shortages, a trend towards smaller centres, preoccupation with specialised interests, the increasing demands of daily life, and sheer laziness are all factors in this. A conscious decision to take on this aspect of our calling is urgently required by many more of us.

(4) We should not let condemnation of human rights violations in China or of protectionism in Japan and elsewhere divert attention from the essential task of helping Japan and her Asian neighbours discover and develop their destinies as nations with world responsibility,

Other perspectives and recommendations resulting from our discussions are noted in the attached report. Less tangible but no less valuable was the gift of a new confidence not only in one another, but also in God's desire to use the world force of MRA. We came to believe that if we have courage to bring our concerns and puzzlements before God in the presence of committed friends from around the world, He will give us the wisdom we need.

The days together were also valuable personally. "I have learned to be hospitable to contrary thoughts," said one. "This has been a retraining for me in how to search for God's strategy," said another. For yet another, it meant beginning to feel a part of things. "the clouds are lifting," he said. Still another, who came with much "e.cept:.cism and pre-judgement", left "heartened,

encouraged and inspired", but cautioned, "we must go beyond the belief that once we have addressed issues, we have dealt with them. We also need the moral and spiritual will to take action."

For many of us this was the first or second opportunity to experience Japan. Through visits to the exquisite Meiji Shrine and to the headquarters of Canon and Toshiba, through talks with personalities in Japanese education, government and industry, and by participating in cultural expressions as diverse as tea ceremonies and hot baths, we began to appreciate how much we could be enriched by Japanese culture, We hope many others in our world force will have an opportunity to share this privilege,

We trust that each Consultation will be distinctive in some way. The visit to Taize last April introduced a deeper dimension of prayer and contemplation. Japan was more a of a working session though one informed by great cultural diversity, Brazil, where we meet in early April 1990, may be different again.

Finally, may we point out that the observations in this report capture very inadequately the rich texture and colour of our discussions. These matters are delicate and deep and deserve continuing thought and dialogue, Indeed it is our express hope that further discussions will take place in each region as part of our common search. If what follows stimulates some new ideas and stirs a number of us to actions that may enhance our effectiveness as a world force, we will feel our days together were as useful as they were enjoyable.

Yours ever,

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List of Participants in Mt Fuji Consultation

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REPORT ON Mt FUJI CONSULTATION

-----October 1989-----

I. OUR WAYS OF DOING THINGS

Humble acknowledgement that many able and creative individuals have found it difficult to take responsibility, or even to find a place, within the framework of MRA, gave urgency to our discussion of the issues embraced by this subject. Several questions warrant further thought.

- Do we confer on those new to our fellowship freedom to experiment, to make mistakes, or are we overly concerned with doing things 'right'?
- Do we share information generously in order to help others take full responsibility, or do we ration it, perhaps unconsciously, and so keep control in our own hands?
- Do we rely too much on 'shop-worn' expressions borrowed from the inherited lexicon of MRA, or do we seek to fashion new expressions of these truths relevant for a changing world?
- Are our ways of deciding conducive to inclusion or are they overly dependent on close friendships and unstated assumptions and preconceptions'?
- Is our personal and corporate quality of life as attractive as our message?

A. 'Corporate Culture'

Within MRA there are traditional ways of operating, deciding, raising funds, dividing responsibilities, etc, One might call this MRA's "corporate culture". On the whole these traditional ways reflect our origins in Britain and America. Not surprisingly efforts to establish these ways in other cultures encountered resistance, It was sometimes assumed that such resistance reflected moral problems, when in fact the impediments were cultural. To understand this issue more clearly, we reviewed thoroughly the experience of Japanese friends *in* re-building MRA in recent years.

Their experience led to a number of innovations: salaries, company donations, budgets, more formalised decision-making, less reliance on MRA centres, a more central role for those in jobs, and the like. In their process of discovering new forms appropriate in Japan, we discerned not only the hand of God but also great faith and courage. Yukihiisa Fujita's account of this process is available *on* request.

The result was to open all our minds to the reality that radically new ways of doing things can well be of God. At the same time we affirmed our respect for and adherence to more traditional ways unless God shows otherwise.

B. The Expressions of MRA

We need growing sensitivity to different cultures and religions. This should be reflected not only in attitudes of mutual respect and in positive efforts to draw from the deep wells of spiritual insight in all traditions, but also in our individual and public expressions of MRA. In a multi-cultural world we should enunciate MRA without making non-Christians feel this is Just for Christians, or to make them Christian. Our calling involves reaching people of all faiths and of no faith.

(1) Because MRA opens the door to deeper spiritual experience and is, for the individual, a road to travel, the authentic and full expression of ones spiritual experience should be encouraged, not discouraged. This may inevitably involve some use of symbols and language peculiar to a particular tradition. But those of each tradition, and perhaps especially Christians, should seek to use inclusive language, especially in public speeches and documents, resisting the temptation to use religious language to prove anything.

(2) All of us, and especially those from the Protestant Anglo-Saxon heritage out of which MRA grew, should make efforts to identify and avoid expressions which needlessly offend those from other traditions. To say, "God told me...", confuses and misleads most people in Asia and even many (especially Catholic) Christians. To say, "Let's have guidance", instead of "Let's listen or be quiet", seems to imply an arrogant assumption that God will speak on demand. When we say, "My guidance is...", we do not necessarily believe all such thoughts are directly from God, though this is the impression conveyed to outsiders. Our language should reflect more accurately the reality that MRA is a search for God's leading by fallible humans and is in no way a club of the initiated with unique access to God.

(3) Reliance on old slogans reflects, for both English and non-English speakers, in part laziness and in part a failure to go deeper in our own change. Fresh experience should yield fresh expression.

Some slogans that were useful in an earlier day may now be perceived as inaccurate. For example, the idea that human nature can change, if expressed glibly, implies a lack of realism about the persistence of evil tendencies in every heart. A commitment to align our wills with the will of God puts our natures under new management, but does not remove the darker impulses. Similarly, some words, such as 'ideology', have taken on a new meaning and may confuse.

(4) We are often clearer on what MRA is not than on what it is. We considered together its distinctive nature and contribution. One of our number expressed it in the following way:

"In the historical sense MRA was a revelation, a revealing of a new emphasis on age-old, eternal truths, a new emphasis needed for the world, initially a Christian world which had become contemptuous of truth. After 80 years of unfolding and application, its record is one of being equally valid for those of every faith and tradition, including the non-believer.

"Its genius is to build on what the Supreme Being of all humankind has already revealed, rather than advocating a new doctrine or theology of its own. It is difficult to define because its basic aim is to link up an individual and a nation with the Living Spirit of God. MRA can be variously described as a force, a fellowship, a family, a network, an idea, a system of ideas, a programme, a calling, a commitment, a task, a way of life. It stands for a quality of life which, when lived consistently, results in an individual being responsible for the creation and all who dwell in it.

"MRA means aiming to be led in all things by God's Holy Spirit, tested by His unchanging absolutes, and discerned by obedience to His promptings in disciplined times of silence.

"MRA has a facilitating, enabling and at times a leadership role. It is often an ingredient, rarely the whole. Its universality and validity have been measured and tested by some of the great souls, the Mahatmas, of our time and accepted for its soundness. It has been modestly described as normal living but what is unusual is the depth of its demand on oneself, voluntarily accepted, and the width of outreach normally embraced. A feature is its inclusiveness."

(5) There is a difference between being clear and convinced about our calling, and being certain in every detail about how it is meant to be followed. The 'outward face' of MRA often portrays a self-assurance and ability to manage which we do not in fact feel inside. A greater readiness to express our needs, and a more active quest for feedback and constructive criticism, would help many more people feel they had an important part to play.

C. Consultations and decision-making

In the absence of centralised leadership and in light of the increasing and welcome diversity of MRA initiatives worldwide, we sensed that the process that brought us to Japan represented a development in 'collective leadership' that should bring greater cohesion to MRA's global endeavours.

The fact that no such global consultation had taken place in Japan previously confirmed for us the importance of affirmative efforts to assure that we look at the world from many perspectives as well as with the benefit of those from varied cultures. Future meetings should give opportunities to examine the world from diverse viewpoints. The April 1990 meeting will take place near Sao Paulo, Brazil, South America's largest city, where the working languages will be Portuguese and Spanish, Australia is under consideration as a venue for the October 1990 meeting.

More open processes of decision-making have a very beneficial by-product, according to those present who are not full-time workers. They remove some of the mystique about how things are decided, which has had the unintended effect of making committed people in jobs feel they have no ready means to accept greater responsibility.

In this connection we raised the question whether there might be value in developing the concept of a standing, representative group. Its role might be to facilitate cooperation and continuity between Consultations. This idea could be considered at a subsequent meeting.

It was agreed that financial responsibility for these Consultations should be carried globally, All MRA national bodies should be encouraged to contribute for this purpose according to their ability, and the participation of any individual from any country or region should NOT be prevented by lack of resources.

D. Finance

Questions were raised about the relationship between access to financial resources, the ability of individuals to take responsibility, and the exercise of power. Should more efforts be made to make funds available for international travel and communications? A modest travel fund has been set up within the Swiss MRA Foundation. Should other funds be established which could be used

to assist our international co-operation? How should such funds be managed, and by whom? These questions have implications that need careful consideration at a future meeting.

Considerable time was devoted to sharing with one another the financial situations of MRA and of full-time workers in our different countries. We discovered large differences, reflecting differences in national standards of living; government policies on medicine, education, child allowance and pensions; traditions of giving; personal assets of full-time workers; the tax status of MRA bodies, and the like. What seemed to be widely shared in most countries were strong traditions of stewardship, considerable sacrifice on the part of full-time workers, and a growing sense of responsibility by various MRA bodies for the welfare of full-time workers, including in their old age. Our care for one another and our readiness to share are the qualities that bond us together.

These conversations enabled us to pray more specifically and intelligently for the needs of colleagues around the world, and affirmed our faith in God's provision, while recognising that such provision may take different forms in different countries.

II. TRAINING

There was enthusiasm for developing training concepts with fresh coherence, depth and availability. To this end, we identified blockages that make us reluctant to give training, whether in informal contexts or in more formal programmes. These included: "I have too much to do already"; "it would disturb my peace and programme"; "I don't know what to do with him/her/them"; "I can't cope with someone else's doubts or questions, I have enough of my own"; fear of taking risks; afraid to see people disillusioned; fears for the trainee's future, finance; restrictive ideas of perfectionism; lack of confidence in the training we have to offer, and the like.

The effectiveness of longer courses is enhanced by students being at least partially enlisted in the ideas of MRA beforehand. Shorter training courses, such as the proposed Caux intern programme (see below), can be tools of enlistment in themselves.

Sustained, co-ordinated follow-up of course participants is essential.

A. 'Studies In Effective Living'

Partly in the light of this need for follow-up, it was agreed to encourage the Armagh programme co-ordinators to offer the three-month course based in Melbourne, every second year. India might host a course of similar duration and content in the alternate year. Vijaylakshmi Subrahmanyam and Andrew Lancaster will discuss these possibilities with their colleagues before future details can be developed.

In any case, it was acknowledged that if such courses are to continue, considerable extra help from our world force will be required.

B. Caux 'Intern' Programme

As a step in realising the maximum potential of Caux, it is proposed to develop an international student intern/study programme during the summer conferences. Its purposes would be to attract students of leadership quality by offering a stimulating learning environment and to provide energetic support to the practical running of the conference.

Two courses of three weeks each are envisaged involving a maximum of 20-25 students. The programme would include training in specific work areas, seminars on a wide range of issues, personal study, consultations with an assigned counsellor, and participation as fully as possible in the main sessions of the assembly. Participants might also act as aides to those responsible for special delegations. Structuring the daily schedule to ensure a right balance between practical work and intellectual stimulus will present a useful opportunity to find fresh and innovative ways of doing things.

The prospectus would be circulated through our own channels and to various learning institutions. It would state clearly the purposes of Caux and indicate that the Caux process challenges each individual to consider his/her life's purpose in the light of world needs. Selection would be based on quality of candidates regardless of previous experience of MRA. The financial basis of the programme would need to be explored carefully,

Suggested next steps include: (a) Consulting with colleagues responsible for Caux. (b) Finding a director to architect and run the programme, assisted by several co-ordinators/counsellors. The director might well be someone not currently in MRA full-time work. (c) Developing the prospectus outlining the content of the programme. (d) Recruiting faculty.

Rob Corcoran will be a point of reference for those with ideas for this programme.

C. Co-ordination of training and development

It was generally agreed that we should do a better job of matching needs and opportunities with available human resources, and in providing a balanced and diverse experience for those in their first several years of full-time work.

We recommend creation of an identifiable group that could act as a kind of clearing house, charged primarily with the following responsibilities:

- (a) To disseminate to world centres on a regular basis information concerning:
 - (i) opportunities for training, needs for support personnel at our centres and offices, and internships available alongside individuals and in association with various undertakings such as 'For A Change', MRA Productions, etc,
 - (ii) the availability of people who would like experience with MRA, the need or desire of full-time workers for a change in activities and place of work, and the possible availability of individuals in jobs or nearing retirement who might appreciate the chance to serve somewhere in the world.

- (b) To provide facts on the financial resources that would be required to sustain individuals in any given training position or role.

(c) To keep some record of the experiences and responsibilities of fulltime workers during their first five years or so on the road, with an eye to assuring a balanced development.

(d) To seek to obtain feedback from those who receive training about how we could do better.

We recognise that this is a highly sensitive and confidential assignment requiring wisdom and spiritual insight. We also realise that this is already being done informally in each country, However, it was felt that to do likewise on an international scale should enable us to meet the needs of individuals and of the work more effectively.

In addition, we recognised the need to develop clearer ideas about the nature and content of the training those new in full-time work should receive. To this end the proposed co-ordinating group, or another group, could be asked to develop ideas for a comprehensive individual training programme, that might include the following elements:

- (a) study of at least one foreign language.
- (b) required reading.
- (c) correspondence courses designed by committed people with experience in certain areas.
- (d) cultural and recreational activities.
- (e) opportunities for spiritual development through retreats and the like.
- (f) a minimum component of social service.
- (g) practical experience of a variety of specific responsibilities.
- (h) service in at least one culture that is unfamiliar.

D. Other ideas

(a) We should use every opportunity, be it organising a conference, or taking part in overseas actions, to include someone new and provide training.

(b) The example of the Arab-British student exchange programme should be studied as a relevant model for other areas. One proposal was for such an exchange between Japan and the USA, particularly geared to training in the values and working of democracy. Such exchanges could take place under non-MRA umbrellas.

(c) Community based, service-oriented training: There was some discussion of the value of incorporating an element of social service into our training programmes. A proposal of the Stallybrasses in Geneva to set up a small training facility with emphasis on life in a community and including a significant aspect of social service received warm encouragement.

Another more far-reaching concept that would involve setting up a community of several families and individuals, with the central purpose of living out an answer to materialism, is being explored by other friends in Europe. Their proposal received serious consideration in the perspective of a recognition that the materialism of Western society has the potential to undercut movements of the Spirit not only in the industrialised West but equally in Eastern Europe and the Muslim World. We were reminded of the words of a Polish Solidarity leader: "Sometimes I fear that what communism was never able to do - break the faith of the Polish people - Western materialism will be able to do."

(d) Teams in a particular country or situation should seek imaginative ways to offer training to people from other areas. For example, it was suggested that friends in Norway might offer

to set up courses for young Poles in the foundations of democracy. This idea is being pursued.

(e) Accountability: A suggestion of Peter Vickers that the personal development and effectiveness of individual full-time workers would be enhanced by regular self-assessments received a positive response. Friends experienced in personnel matters could help formulate appropriate questions. Our individual answers to these could be reviewed with a trusted colleague, possibly on an annual basis. Peter will be asked to develop this idea further.

(f) Several expressed the need for refresher courses, not only for personal stimulation, but also to help build confidence in our ability to train and relate to younger people.

III. EAST ASIA/PACIFIC STRATEGY

The meeting naturally brought into a sharp focus events in east Asia, especially China and Cambodia. Japanese friends expressed the need to find a national aim relevant to the world, and to work closely with friends across the world, Business leaders should be encouraged to enlarge their global economic responsibility, through moral commitment, to build social relationships which contribute to the health of the world community. Caux Round Table discussions facilitate this objective in a specialised way.

Concentrated media activity in the West about negative aspects of Japanese economic outreach has inspired hesitancy and a lack of confidence in Japan's international relationships. A more positive vision for Japan would touch the springs of deeper responsibility in Japanese industry and society.

Chinese friends appealed for sensitivity in treatment of the issues arising from the Tiananmen incident of June 4. They emphasised the importance of maintaining productive contacts with friends in positions of responsibility in China. Focus should be on the long-term position of China in Asia and the search for creative contact in the development of future relationships. "Many of us can do something for the Chinese students studying abroad," said Ren-Jou Liu - for instance by helping to educate them in the real meaning of democracy. "But don't spoil them," urged Hu Joe-Yang.

An MRA 'youth camp' is planned for July 1990 in Taiwan, and there was keen support for international representation of calibre and scope.

The role of Korea in Asian affairs is of significance. The idea of MRA is implanted in the education system and is a subject for study groups. The MRA conference during the Olympic Games has created a momentum which is throwing up opportunities for closer cooperation.

"I'm getting more convinced that something extraordinary has happened in New Caledonia, and that this may be the situation we are meant to focus on," said Suresh Khatri, In recent years the island has seen animosity and bloodshed. Despite recent killings of two moderate independence leaders by militants, the local population has endorsed an accord with France which anticipates a referendum on independence in nine years time, "So we have time to work out a relationship between Kanaks and French, There is an exportable quality of reconciliation and forgiveness."

In New Zealand, Maori friends have requested help from an international MRA team at the time of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Waitangi (6 February 1990) to assist in rebuilding Maori-Pakeha relations.

This follows the Australian-Pacific meeting in Sydney, December 1-3 1989, which is part of a long-term quest to build a team of friends across the Pacific, especially in the South Pacific island nations, potentially "a lobby of faith in the forum of nations".

Positive consideration was given to a Canadian proposal to hold a 'Pacific rim' conference, possibly in Vancouver, in 1991. It was thought that clarity on the ripeness of such a potentially important gathering might be given at the Sydney meeting.

Alain Tate and David Young gave an account of their aims in a visit to Thailand to assist in the preparation of a proposed action in that country later this year. This action would include a response to Sonn Soubert of Cambodia who has requested an international group to visit Site 2, a large camp of Cambodian refugees, on the border with Thailand. It was noted that an intention of continuance in care for Cambodia on the part of those going was more important than the size of the group.

Actions outside the Asian/Pacific region were noted in the context of appreciating that MRA has the task of sustaining a global approach to world issues, such as in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, South Africa and Latin America.

IV. WORLD DRAMATIC PRODUCTION

From India came news of a working group which met in Panchgani last June to consider the idea of creating a musical show capable of presenting the truth of MRA in a universal *way*. It was seen as part of a major thrust in the world by an international force, thinking especially of events in Eastern Europe, China, the USSR, Central America and the Middle East.

This suggestion prompted a stimulating discussion. Clearly such a move would have major implications in terms of resources and manpower. Although the matter does not yet seem ripe for a decision, all felt to encourage the creative search. Care should be taken not to proceed too rapidly to the writing stage before we have a clearer concept of the central purpose of the production and the fresh people on whom it might be built.

Many felt that the process would be enriched by the participation of members of the working group in events scheduled in Poland, Taiwan and Central America. There may be people from these areas whose talent and experience could help in developing the concept. An organic approach may be helpful. It was suggested that Caux next year might provide the context to take the idea further, since Caux is likely to be more generally accessible than Panchgani.