

**Methodist Guest House
Oloitokitok Road
Nairobi, Kenya**

8 November 1994

Dear Friends,

Jambo!

These have been tremendously rich days here in Kenya. We feel greatly blessed and supported by all your prayers. Attached to this letter is our report of the consultation.

It has been a rare privilege to experience the warmth, vibrancy and challenge of this land. "Especially because of the people we have met, I will never think of Africa in the same way again", said one of the participants.

In Nairobi twelve university students stayed with us for four days at the Methodist Guest House. Our exchanges over meals, sharing quiet times, and sessions to relate stories in depth meant we learned much from one another. This conference atmosphere, where we were joined at times by teachers, farmers and professionals, led to an important breakthrough of the spirit among the students - overcoming a serious obstacle to realising their vision for East Africa.

Another special moment was when Professor Washington Jalango Okumu came to meet with us. It was his remarkable intervention in April that broke the bottleneck and allowed South Africa's election to take place peacefully. Professor Okumu gave us an extraordinary insight into the operation of divine guidance at the highest levels of diplomacy, such as few people are privileged to hear. Called "the African option" by Henry Kissinger, one wonders if this is the approach that the world needs everywhere.

Consultation participants gave further support in Tanzania, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Eritrea, Ethiopia and up country Kenya.

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to the magnificent team here who have taken such good care of us.

Asante Sana!

With every good wish,

Alice Cardel

Steve Dickinson

Amina Dikedi

Peter Thwaites

REPORT ON THE KENYA CONSULTATION

October 27 - November 3, 1994

Moral Re-Armament (MRA) is an initiative for world change based on personal change and a quality of life. It means *being* as well as *doing*.

At the Kenya Consultation we took time to reflect on the kind of life we live together and the life we offer to the world. We talked in plenary and in three working groups that considered our way of living from particular angles: personal and family life; team life; and the life of outreach and strategy. It was not always easy to know how to handle subjects which, although vital, can at first seem amorphous. They are also far-reaching, and we felt we could only begin to raise a few of the elements that were most on the minds of so many of us around the world.

We came with different concerns - an urgent sense of need for the renewal of our work, also realising that MRA has an important heritage that the world needs. We are most grateful to have been able to talk in a spirit of honesty, freedom and the search for the positive. In our frankness there was some pain, and also healing.

An Honest Exploration

Twenty-four of us from all continents met at Masinga Lodge under the eye of Mount Kenya rising into the vast African sky, and overlooking the breathtaking panorama of Masinga Reservoir. Our Kenyan and African hosts asked our help in their seeking an inspired strategy for their continent as part of our honest exploration of "the way of life MRA stands for - now and into the next century".

We came from sixteen countries, half of us from the developing world. Eleven were people presently or in the past in salaried jobs, eight were women and three were non-Christian. This diversity brought a valuable quality to our interactions and discussions. With our Hindu friends we celebrated Divali, the festival of light.

We were encouraged and empowered by the thoughtfulness in 115 submissions from seventeen countries, which were available in full to everyone and often drawn on in our deliberations. In all of this we sensed a growing confidence worldwide in the significance of MRA's work, and we felt a key purpose of this consultation was to encourage MRA's many teams around the world and all our committed individuals to continue the search for more effective living and expression.

New Leadership

Africa is a continent in agony, said one of our African friends on our first evening. Conscious of this we prayed together for decisive negotiations taking place the same day in Somalia. In his welcoming remarks Julius Khakula, chair of the MRA legal body in Kenya, said, "One third of the delegates here are Africans. We view this as very significant - a turning point in our work. There may be the need to create stronger leadership for the entire work, to propel it forcefully into the next century. Moral Re-Armament has come of age. It should be put forward confidently as a proven weapon given by God to give fresh hope to human civilization".

The honest sharing by the Africans among us revealed one of the key threads of our time together - the need to answer all forms of "**dependency syndrome**". This relying on others for initiative and responsibility, and the unhealthy relationship that can develop between donor and recipient, exists in all our countries, and in our fellowship. For people to take responsibility for themselves and their situations, a spiritual transformation is needed that builds the dignity of the individual. Our friends described the self-sustaining educational, industrial and farming projects they have initiated that build on African leadership and responsibility.

We explored the questions of vision and strategy, of life-changing, of spiritual and moral disciplines, of answering fears that may hold us back. As we sought to draw out new understandings we grouped these under the following headings, which form the main sections of this report:

What do we mean by Life-changing?

Team Life

Moral Standards

Outreach and Strategy

Consultation Process

Caux 1996

Conclusion

A valuable feature of our meetings was moments of depth in sharing our hopes and hurts. We had laughter, tears and sober reflections. At times it was not clear how our conversation related to our agenda, but always it threw light on the questions of our life which we met to consider.

What do we mean by Life-changing?

Both from submissions and from conversations in Kenya it was confirmed that life-changing remains central to MRA. However it must be more than a glib phrase. It is not a technique. We are not squishing people through a process but, out of love for them, offering new life. The most powerful tool for life-changing is a changed life, ours. We must be ready to open up to others if we expect them to open up to us. **Our experiences of change need to be freshly minted.**

There can also be assumptions surrounding life-changing. A sense of superiority and human effort can creep in. We acknowledge that **only the Almighty changes a person**. We would do well to balance our emphasis on "the sinfulness of people" with the recognition that "the body is a temple of God". We need to look for God at work in each person. Then the words "life-changing" lose the implication that I am doing it.

Insights can turn to judgment and lead us to write off people. We must not play God in another person's life. The Hindu scripture, Bhagavad Gita, says, "Do your duty and leave the fruits to God". Pope John Paul II said that **we either love people or we use them.**

What God can do with an obedient person is beyond-our imagination. Life-changing is not a duty or a task but a privilege to be a partner with our Creator to be approached with humility, with love and without a timetable or demand. Whether we call it life-changing or not we are meant to pass on something of what we have been given, our deepest conviction. MRA remains the lake where the gazelle can wade and the hippopotamus swim. Everyone brings something to the table and everyone's gifts are appreciated.

Team Life

Together with our commitment and aim it is the quality of friendship and love we offer one another that attracts people to want to make this way of life their own. Our fellowship depends on:

- genuine honesty with each other, without moralising but saying what we feel
- more open communication between older and younger age groups
- frank admission of mistakes that have been made
- making more use of the power of apology and forgiveness within our fellowship.

We encourage growth in team life that:

1) makes full responsibility for the work of MRA as accessible to those in jobs as to those who are full-time. **Full-time commitment is a universal quality**; full-time availability is a particular calling. Could people in jobs consider taking some months leave, for example, to spend time at Caux and perhaps visit other countries? Would some take early retirement in order to participate in wider work with MRA?

2) searches more creatively for ways to help **new people find their** distinctive part - especially when they return home from a conference - and to help individuals mature beyond support roles so they can stand on their own. Honestly feeling we need each other, and greater evaluation of people's talents or encouragement to develop a new talent, are parts of this.

3) tests itself by how we treat the oldest and the youngest; and the person taking most responsibility. In our **spirit of caring for each other**, we would like full-time workers to take regular time off, especially when working in centres. We believe that those carrying specific responsibilities should be enabled, if so led, to consider sabbatical leave to work in a different situation. We should give more support to each other's initiatives - perhaps even postponing or changing our own agenda for this. Having fun and recreation together is an important and natural expression of team life.

4) **expects women to be equal partners** in all aspects of the leadership of our work. Some women have not always felt so regarded in the life of MRA. We noted progress in the consultation process with one-third of those here being women from five continents.

5) recognises the enrichment and possibility of expansion that grows out of the "multi-faith dimension of MRA's action in the world". There is still a need in each one of us to enlarge our knowledge of, sensitivity to, and experiences with people of faiths other than our own. Caux should be regarded as a home for people of all faiths, where it is possible, when appropriate, to express freely the link between our experience of change and our faith in simplest and deepest terms. This will lead, we believe, to **full ownership of the work of MRA by men and women of different faiths**. Meanwhile the search goes on to find the best way to express this important dimension of our work.

Moral Standards

In examining this topic a number of important points emerged. Young people do not take for granted received values and ideas; they rightly expect to examine them and explore the motives behind them. In many countries there is a serious lack of reference points that used to be supplied by home, religion and school.

We looked at ways in which we have applied and at times misapplied the standards of honesty love, purity and unselfishness in the past and where we believe we can do better in the future. We need a new openness with each other, regarding no subjects as "no go" areas.

1) We encourage more natural and speedy acknowledgement of places where relationships within MRA have been difficult or have broken down. We will never be immune to such differences; **our strength is in our process** for dealing with them. We reaffirmed the importance of confidentiality and of discussions directly between the persons with differences, with mediation of friends if necessary. Gossip is destructive.

2) Honesty requires that we neither **exaggerate nor undervalue** the stories and experiences that transmit so much of our message. We acknowledged that the temptation for both exists and stressed our commitment to the highest standards of research and homework as well as objectivity in reporting, as typified by Garth Lean's biography of Frank Buchman.

3) MRA with its standard of absolute purity has an important message for the world at this time. We talked about this subject more openly than has perhaps ever happened in such a forum of our work. In recent years the sexual morality of much of the world has moved with incredible speed away from time-honored traditional values. Now the explosion of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and the widespread destruction of family life, has helped underline the urgent need to re-evaluate these values.

Purity relates to more than sex. It refers to all our motives and relationships. Other powerful urges in our nature can become addictions, blocking our openness to God - forces like power, fear, and money. To pray for purity is to pray for freedom to be directed by God in all these areas.

With politically motivated ethnic conflicts, widespread abuses of money and power, and syndicated crime networks that threaten to corrupt national governments, purity takes on a dimension that is more than just personal or religious. There is a desperate need

for societies as well as individuals **to experience God-given purity** that heals inner conflicts and turns away from exploitation for gain.

To be able to live and express the message we believe MRA is called to give, we felt the need for free discussion to clarify any matters where there has been uncertainty or confusion. One such matter for some has been the question of sexual relationship within marriage. While we affirm that this is a matter of the couple's convictions in light of their faith and commitment, our open discussion indicated that the actual experiences of people within MRA vary widely. For many, perhaps most, the issue has never arisen. Others have suffered deeply, some from a lack of enough open discussion with other friends before marriage and children, some from felt pressures of unwritten rules, and some from judgmental remarks. We shared where in our own experiences the sense of group expectations had replaced the **freedom to obey God** which should be the hallmark of purity.

We concluded with these points:

- 1) We need open dialogue on absolute purity with all generations in our teams worldwide and healing of the past within the individual and within the world family.
- 2) Young people have been left too alone on this issue.
- 3) Each of us needs a deeper personal touch with God or the divine, so that it is not just for my sake, or another's sake, but for God's sake that I will live absolute purity.
- 4) Setting rules of behaviour (e.g. in our centres) must be accompanied by real care for people. This is especially important at Caux where we often find conflicting values - western permissiveness, the morality of more intact cultures, and our inherited ways of doing things.

From the quiet time of one of the participants came these lines:

Dans l'amour du prochain,
Dans la pureté des mobiles,
Dans la lutte contre l'égoïsme,
Grâce à l'honnêteté avec soi-même,
Chacun peut trouver une vie
de plénitude et de service.

With love for every person,
With purity of motives,
With struggle against selfishness,
In honesty with oneself,
Everyone can find a life
of fullness and service

Outreach and Strategy

MRA at its best is both a spiritual and transforming movement and a "value-adding" networker of many groups working for world transformation. The two concepts are complementary and we must learn how to advance both.

1) How can we become more deliberate and bold in our work?

We ask that all of us individually and in teams pray for an increase in our vision and strategic thinking as was requested in several submissions. There is also the "need for greater focusing" of our efforts, (see the Cyprus Consultation report). "Doing big things

together" is still valid. More creative thought and professionalism is also needed in our training programmes for outreach skills and the basics of our work.

2) What are we asking people to commit themselves to?

From the beginning MRA has looked beyond personal change. In 1921 Frank Buchman said that his was a programme of life that issued in social, national and international change, all based on personal change. In the following decades the concept of "remaking the world" was the universal expression of MRA's goal. In recent years that phrase seems to have lost its appeal for some, and often we are not adequately expressing the task we are asking people to take on. For instance, the Africans present reminded us that for MRA to advance it must be seen to be at grips with basic needs for food, water, housing, work, freedom and justice.

The state of the post-Berlin Wall world shows that the building of relationships particularly in areas of ethnic and religious difference is more needed than ever. The linkages between personal morality and public policy and the ability of the individual to change society are clearer than ever before. With our practice of beginning change in ourselves we also can help the world rediscover who is the "enemy"; it is not some other person or group but rather evil in all its forms.

3) How can the most effective expression of our message be developed in each country and situation, and in different languages?

During World War II and more particularly during the cold war we developed a language and metaphors that were appropriate for the times. In some parts of the world these are still acceptable but in others the images of task forces or battlefronts tend to put off more people than they attract. We need to convey the militancy of the battle between good and evil and the new tasks we face with fresh expressions. We endorse a flexible approach where each country and culture has the freedom to develop language and methods most effective for them.

4) Who will care for the heart of the world work?

The more the outreach of MRA the clearer we need to be on our central aim. The more we work in coalition with others on specific tasks the more we need to develop people who are responsible for the whole. The work of associated bodies like the Caux Round Table, Hope in the Cities, the International Communications Forum, and the focussed sessions such as *Regions in Crisis* and *Creators of Peace*, as well as the teamwork with different organisations, including United Nations - related conferences, are developments to be welcomed. In such work we must, of course, be sure that we mirror in our own lives the qualities of MRA and that while working with others on common concerns we keep in mind everyone's moral and spiritual growth.

There is a risk with the multiplication of organisations inspired by MRA or loosely associated with us, and often depending on our ideas, initiatives, and sometimes money and facilities, that the link is vague and even a source of confusion. We need to be known for what we do, not for the sake of getting credit but for the faith and encouragement of others. And we must be sure there are people to tend **the heart of our work, the spiritual nurture, communication, organisation and service that keeps us whole as a fellowship.**

Consultation Process

We looked at the responses to the Cyprus Consultation report and recalled the two working sessions in Caux in August 1994. Though we agreed that the statement 'MRA: An Initiative for Change' is neither perfect nor an unalterable document of MRA for the '90s and beyond, we did not feel it necessarily needed to undergo periodic rewriting. The committee set up in Caux to be recipients of comments on the statement should continue its work, not with a view to amend the Cyprus statement, but as a resource for future statements, related also to Caux 1996.

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We did not feel we should make further recommendations now about changing MRA's name. With more and more initiatives stemming from MRA, the name remains the common visible link between them. Different names or variations may be appropriate in certain countries and language groups, and in any consideration of a new name we must always take into account how it will work in other languages. We expressed the hope that a universal logo, statement and possibly name might emerge in time for Caux 1996.

We suggest that the themes for the 1995 consultation appear in the April issue of **World Bulletin**, to give more time for responses and preparation. We recommend that the Support Group organise two post-Kenya meetings in Caux during the summer of 1995 to assess responses to this consultation and to discuss the designated themes for the 1995 consultation. We also suggest that submissions be no longer than 2 pages. We welcome them in any language. Offers to host the next consultation have come so far from Australia, from Britain, at Tirley Garth, from El Salvador, and from Zimbabwe, at Colmoreen.

We underlined the importance of the **World Bulletin** and its swift and inexpensive distribution to every person who wishes to be responsible for MRA. Great gratitude was expressed for its Australian editors. They have been asked to make the presentation and lay-out more striking and readable, highlighting the most important matters for our work.

The Coordination Group made their 1994 report available. They gave an account of the demands and developments of the group's work since 1992. Two of the present group, Luis Puig and Vijayalakshmi Subrahmanyam will end their service at the end of 1994. Five will continue to serve. Our world team will now have to start the process of nominations for the renewal of the group. Information will come through the **World Bulletin**. The 1995 consultation will review the CG's functioning, membership and continuation.

Caux 1996

We registered strong support for the Swiss and international teams already preparing this event and the process before and after it. We endorsed three priorities:

1) to develop the biggest possible concept which will give Caux and MRA the distinctive place in world affairs for which its history and experience have prepared it. One

element in this will be the Caux jubilee lectures (see WB, October 1994), and the opportunities these will offer to organise parallel events in other locations around the world on key topics presented by prophetic voices for our time.

2) to make this possible we must pray and work for the gift of a deep renewal of our force, something that goes far beyond self-effort or duty, which will restore energy and enthusiasm to the readiness already there in many to work and serve.

3) to undergird the Swiss in their determination to use the next eighteen months until Caux 96 to deepen and strengthen the roots of MRA in Switzerland.

We discussed concrete tasks to be tackled in connection with Caux 1996:

The active participation of many of our teams in the Caux 1996 Council (see the report attached to WB, September 1994.) The next preparatory session will be in Caux January 10 -11,1995.

The invitation to people in public, cultural and economic life in our countries who have a commitment to MRA, to join the **Caux 50th Anniversary Committee.**

Convening those who have creative skills for music, theatre, video, and other aspects of the arts.

Conclusion

One of the expectations at the start of the consultation was that we would discover and communicate **a process to explore** the issue of MRA's way of life. We hoped we would find the confidence to talk honestly about any aspect of our work, review it. and allow God to help us renew it. Change and renewal is the rule for the continuance of MRA, like any other organism.

The search for truth, inclusiveness; and for the gift of grace and spiritual insight is never ending, and we want to continue following this road with our friends around the world.

Kathy Beenen - USA; Alice Cardel - Philippines; **Jacqui Daukes** - UK;
Johannes de Pous - Netherlands; **Steve Dickinson** - USA; **Amina Dikedi** - Nigeria;
***Yukihisa Fujita** - Japan; ***Michael Henderson** - USA/UK; **Stephen Kada** - Zimbabwe;
Julius Khakula - Kenya; **Suresh Khatri** - Fiji; **Helga Landmark** - Norway;
***Philippe Lasserre** - France; **Cornelius Marivate** - South Africa;
***Chris Mayor** - Australia; **Jane Mills** - Australia; **Stephen Muriu** - Kenya;
Ashwin Patel - Kenya; ***Luis Puig** - Brazil; **Tabitha Seii** - Kenya;
Steven Sibare - Zimbabwe; **Pierre Spoerri** - Switzerland;
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Copies of this report are available as well from the distributors of the ***World Bulletin***.