

# NEW WORLD NEWS

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AUSTRALIA AND  
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M Brown

Aboriginal leaders Margaret Tucker (centre right) and Elizabeth Hoffman talk to local farmers on the banks of the River Murray.

## CARAVANNING TO AUSTRALIA'S HEART

Since firecrackers are illegal, popping paper bags had to do. So honouring a Chinese custom, a ragged volley of paper explosions heralded the departure from Melbourne of the first contingent of the 'Caravan Cavalcade'—a group from Australia and overseas setting out with caravans to bring 'a healing, hopeful force' into the lives of rural communities in Australia. Now, 5,000 km later, MICHAEL BROWN reports from Broken Hill of their first two and a half months.

'I'M A PROFESSIONAL DOLE-BLUDGER,' was the apology Rodney gave by way of introduction. Dressed like a cowboy, he would like to have made a million singing country-and-western music; but he hasn't. Instead he lives on social security payments which, taking into account a wife and four children, are as much as he might earn in a job.

The professional dole-bludger, along with a district dog-catcher, an electrician, a schoolteacher, a fruit-grower, a burly unionist, an Aboriginal community leader, a Federal Member of Parliament and a local artist, have become part of our lives in the past two months. Not just people we have met. But hopes and struggles we have entered into as we have talked and listened for hours. And each, in his or her own way, has responded to the vision that any of us can live a quality of life and faith which confronts the tide of cynical and selfish living sweeping across Australia.

The idea of the 'Caravan Cavalcade' evolved from a thought that a small, mobile team of us should go on the road to support those we knew who were working for God's new order across a country where there is much affluence but also frustration and disillusionment. Any community, we felt, was a microcosm of Australia; and any community could tackle the problems of Australia, rather than just waiting for government.

For my wife and me, with two young children, it was something of a leap in faith. With some money we had inherited, doubled by a generous interest-free loan offered out of the blue by friends from our church in Canberra, we bought a second-hand caravan and set it up for travel. Towing it, we found, was rather like having your house on your back. So we nicknamed it Murtle the Turtle. Someone gave us a card captioned: 'The turtle only makes progress when it sticks its neck out.' So we did—and others began to join us. ▶

**'What changes man's future—what changes the world—is always the big idea,' said Sridath Ramphal, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, in a recent interview on New Zealand TV. 'And if the big idea comes out of a small country, it remains a big idea.' New Zealanders who take this challenge seriously met recently at an MRA conference at Waikanae near Wellington. See pages 4-5.**



New Zealand and Australian participants in the Waikanae conference

Some were young people who had been through the 'Studies in Effective Living' course conducted by Moral Re-Armament in Melbourne. A senior surgeon and his wife lent us a second caravan and promised to come when they could. Other vans were loaned. Gifts of cash started to come in, reinforcing our own limited resources.

We started in the Goulburn Valley, rich irrigated farming land 200 km north of Melbourne. Two school-teaching couples invited 15 of us to base in the small town of Numurkah, in a willowy green caravan park that was white with frost most mornings. We were welcomed into homes and schools, churches and clubs, to sing and to share our 'particular vision of faith at work in the world', as one minister put it.

## Barbecue

Such communities are criticised for being parochial. So we were surprised to meet a dairy farmer who had given the last 13 years to development schemes in India. The two Asian members of our party, Chan Fung Ming from Hong Kong and Hiroshi Oki from Japan, received a quick response. At a church service in a small town, Hiroshi shared honestly his feelings of superiority as a Japanese, and humbly admitted the wrongs of World War II. With many 'soldier settlers' dotted through the congregation, there was a hushed silence. Afterwards one elder said he wanted to shake Hiroshi's hand: 'I couldn't understand all he said, but I understood exactly what he felt.' Another elder admitted that he had not been able to cure the antagonism caused during his years as a POW on the Burma railway. Later we were able to pray with him for healing.

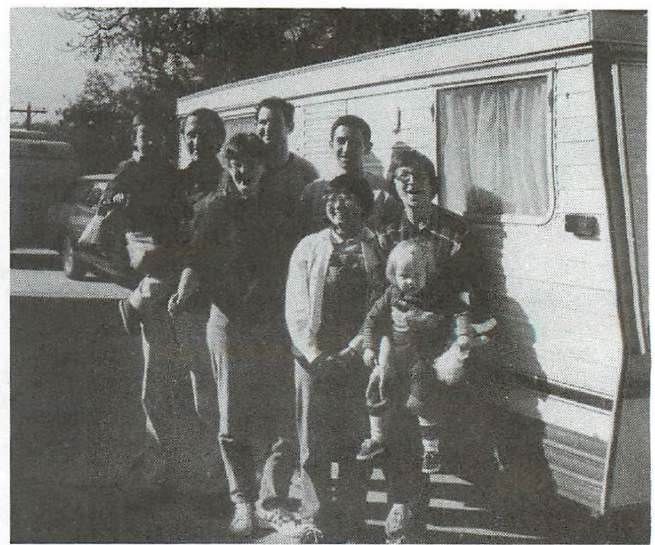
Without a doubt, the highlight of our three weeks in the area was a barbecue with some 60 folk, mostly dairy farmers and their families, on the banks of the River Murray.

## Wild corroboree

For 80-year-old Aboriginal Margaret Tucker, who came especially from Melbourne for the event, it must have been a poignant experience. Sitting beneath the massive, gnarled red gums that line the steep banks of the river, she told us how as a child she had fished and hunted wild duck in this forest with her people, the Ulupna tribe, of whom she is an elder. A mile downstream lay what is left of Cumberagunga, the Aboriginal 'mission' where, as a 13-year-old, she and her sister were forcibly taken by a policeman from their mother and sent for nine years to Sydney to be domestic servants. Her legs are still scarred from beatings received at that time. Painful memories of hunger and loneliness still remain. But not the bitterness.

'We have all been hurt, but we have learned from our sufferings and mistakes,' she said. 'And we are still learning as we are still making mistakes. Whatever colour you are—black, white or brindle—right is right and wrong is wrong. If I'm wrong, please tell me. I need your help.'

The area was also significant to the farmers present, as it is under claim by Aboriginals pending State Land Rights Legislation. As a State forest, it has been leased to farmers for grazing cattle and it has become a symbol of an emotional campaign against the Land Rights movement. In her unconsciously disarming way, Marge Tucker broke through the barriers: 'This land means so much to me, and I love it just as you all do.' Sometimes, when she remembers the past, she still gets angry and is tempted to do the 'wild



About to set out—cavalcaders (left to right) Adam and Mike Brown, Anne Harding, Mervyn Herd, Hiroshi Oki, Chan Fung Ming, Jean and Anjuli Brown

corroboree'. But, she said, 'Australia is not ours. It is God's own country and we have to build it up together.'

With Marge Tucker was Elizabeth Hoffman, who represents her State on national Aboriginal bodies and who has returned to Cumberagunga to help rebuild the community. Two days before, she and her people had received titles to 4,000 acres of land on the other side of the river. Admitting that changes of attitude were needed on both sides, she asked people of the area to understand that having land meant survival to Aboriginal peoples as a group. It was not just a matter of better conditions.

Everyone joined in singing the song, 'What Colour is God's Skin?'. Then Marge Tucker was surrounded by people, as she answered their questions and autographed copies of her book, *If Everyone Cared\**. The local newspaper, *The Numurkah Leader*, in reporting her coming, called her 'a great human being'. In a situation where quick judgements reinforce prejudices, that day built a bridge of understanding.

## Searchparty

The River Murray means wealth and produce to this part of the country. Across the border in South Australia, 400 kms downstream at our second base in Berri, it is even more of a lifeline to otherwise marginal farming land. Its banks are lined with vast stretches of lush green orchards. Here too, in another Aboriginal community struggling to rebuild itself, that 'healing, hopeful force' seemed to be operating.

Our guide, a community worker, walked us around the settlement, relating with some feeling the frustrations they faced and the injustices still felt from the past. For an hour we stood by the side of the road, sharing how God had deeply transformed our own attitudes and living. A few days later she and her husband joined us at a weekend gathering of local residents. Our visit, she said, had brought faith back into her life. 'When we walk down memory lane, we must be sure to take Jesus with us,' was her response when one of our party apologised for earlier callous indifference. As she left she invited one of her white neighbours into her home for the first time. They talked and another bridge was built.

We described the weekend gathering she came to as a

'searchparty' into 'the roots and the fruits of the answer'. The nearby orchards and vineyards reminded us of many biblical parables on that theme but what stood out, without the need of parable, was that for many effective faith began with simple moral choices:

- There was Sharon, who had taken unemployment benefits while earning good money in a casual grape-picking job. She pursued the Social Security department for a year till they accepted the several hundred dollars she felt she must repay. It was the start of obedience to God, which has led her now into community health work.
- Frank's story was similar. Forty years before, during the Depression, his first step of faith had been to repay the railways for free travel while 'jumping the rattler' around the country as an unemployed wanderer. Handing over his life to God had not immediately produced a job; but he had become a new man.
- For Mervyn, a sports-loving young carpenter, a 'typical Aussie', churchgoing had been a cover. Then last year he faced absolute moral standards—ending wrong relationships, finding the humility to be honest with his parents, and squaring up with the taxation department to the tune of \$9,000. He is spending this year with the Cavalcade, 'working on' his Christianity.

## Whole way

As these experiences were shared, others faced decisions involving relationships. A teacher was amazed at the clear thought he felt God gave him on how to approach a difficult student. A young couple who had come to Australia to escape from their in-laws resolved to return to their country and sort out their relationship. Another couple spent a week writing letters and sorting out relationships personally, starting with some apologies between the two of them. A third couple, both social workers, went 'the whole way' and gave their lives and jobs to God.

All these people began finding practical direction from 'quiet-times', periods of prayerful meditation to seek for God's will. One of them wrote later that 6.30 am was not early enough, that he was now getting up at 6 am as 'the Lord is saying so much to me each morning.... It is giving a new strength to my faith and a renewed peace'.

## Community hub

The social impact of such decisions is hard to predict. But we got a glimpse of what could happen during our week in the Barossa Valley, an area known for its wine-making and Germanic heritage. There we heard about a chemist, Arthur Reusch, who died one year ago. During the war years he had found new motivation through Moral Re-Armament and had begun to meet with a number of citizens of Nuriootpa each morning at 6.15 am, to share their concerns for the community, to pray and to seek God's guidance. His chemist shop became the hub of planning for the town, resulting in such voluntary work projects as building a kindergarten, a swimming pool, establishing a community hotel and a retirement village. The heritage of his practical compassion was still evident in the work we saw being done for young unemployed.

We were reminded of what Neil Andrew, Federal Member of Parliament for the Barossa and South Australian 'Riverland', told us in Canberra earlier this year: that Australia could not be changed by legislation as much as by



D Mayor

Margaret Tucker presented a copy of her autobiography 'If Everyone Cared' to Hazel Hawke, wife of the Australian Prime Minister, at a recent Book Fair in Melbourne. Mrs Hawke opened the Fair, which was organised by the Children's Book Council of Australia.

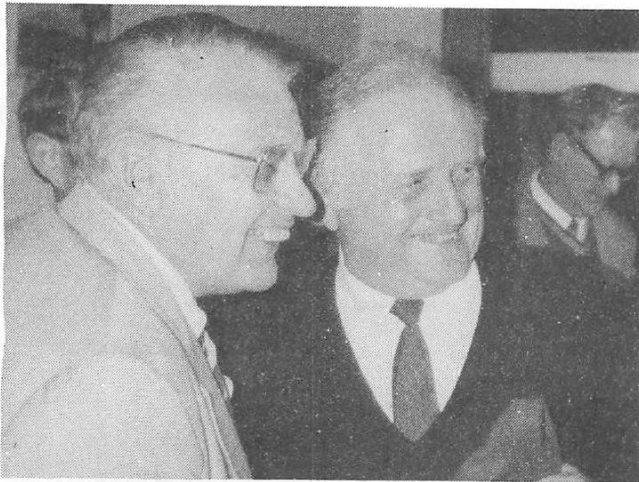
changing the attitudes and living of people in communities. At a civic reception in the River Murray town of Waikerie, Mr Andrew echoed that conviction and stressed the importance of the work being done by Moral Re-Armament. 'There has been more sense spoken in this chamber in the last hour than for many years,' said Mr Andrew at the end of our presentation to Mayor Don Elliot and his guests. Mr Andrew was himself a councillor before entering Parliament.

Traditionally it has been said that 'Australia rides on the sheep's back'. The vast majority of coastal-dwelling Australians live well on the sweat and exports of our primary producers and, more recently, the wealth of minerals dug from the ground. But in those vast inland stretches, we have been privileged to glimpse as well an emerging network of families, who could become part of an infrastructure of integrity and sanity, without which our wealth may mean little.

\*Available from Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Rd, London SW18 3JJ, £5.13 including postage; 21 Dorcas St, South Melbourne, Vic 3205, paperback \$6.95.

'AS I HAVE FOUND a faith in God so I have found a faith in hope,' said a young woman after completing the 1984 Studies in Effective Living course in Melbourne. 'I was entirely negative and therefore destructive. With faith and hope I know that I can be productive now.'

One hundred and thirty-three people from 21 nations have taken part in the courses since they started in 1977. They have come from backgrounds as varied as remote Pacific islands and high temped Los Angeles. Discussions and talks with personalities ranged across the political, economic and social spectrum have been an important feature. The next course begins on 20 January 1985 and runs for 12 weeks.



Allan Griffith (left), foreign affairs advisor to former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, and the West German Ambassador to New Zealand, Dr H A Steger, at the conference

## IN THE DIMENSION OF TOMORROW

Allan Griffith, speaking at the Waikanae conference

NEW ZEALAND IS FACING a major moment of history. What ideas are going to shape the future of the Pacific? What Pacific countries are going to shape those ideas?

During this century the world has seen a vast challenge to the privileged. But while challenging privileged societies, we haven't yet been able to establish a global distribution of free societies. That is what is important about New Zealand—it has challenged privilege, and it is still a free society.

Marx was concerned that the labourer receive the rewards of his labour. In Russia an effort to realise his ideal instead created a power elite. It has been perpetuated in a totalitarian form. It lost its appeal when the truth began to emerge about the cruelty and coercion of that society.

Now there is a transition of leadership in the Soviet Union. The big question is whether the younger men now coming forward really want that kind of society for their own country, let alone for the rest of the world.

In the late 1940s, as a young Australian, I read with genuine excitement about the new German leadership who, through applying what they found at Caux, MRA's world assembly centre in Switzerland, were giving a marvelous beginning to the rebuilding of Europe.

Then I had a part to play in rebuilding my own country's relationship with Japan. Recently a former Ambassador of Japan to Australia said, 'You cannot understand the reconciliation between Japan and Australia after the war unless you understand the work of MRA.'

These two countries, Germany and Japan, are central to the world of the Eighties and its economic situation. And we see the people of East and West Germany making important efforts to find a new relationship on a basis which emphasises human priorities.

Also, people are now coming to Caux from many parts of Europe, East and West; so that emanating from there is a ferment of ideas, reaching into that very fluid situation.

We need to live today in the dimension of preparing for tomorrow. Often we are just trying to get through today. Then we lose that sense of expectation—that what is

## PURPOSE FOR NEW

THE PACIFIC is becoming a new centre of gravity in the world—and a new centre of attention.

America, the USSR and China border its shores. It includes Japan and some of Asia's industrialising lands. It touches Canada and Latin America, and contains a host of island countries large and small, including Australia and New Zealand.

New Zealand's Prime Minister, David Lange, speaking a few days before the election which brought his Labour Party to power, said, 'New Zealand is a Pacific nation. Our perspective on the world is a Pacific perspective. Within the Pacific, the island nations of the South Pacific hold a special call upon our loyalty.' On foreign policy he has said, 'What is morally right is likely to be politically right.'

At the end of the week in which Mr Lange's government took office, a Moral Re-Armament conference took place at Waikanae just north of the capital, Wellington. Gathered there were farmers, Maori leaders, senior public servants, educators and young people.

Amongst those who addressed the conference were the West German Ambassador to New Zealand, Dr H A Steger, and Australian Allan Griffith, who was personal advisor on

happening today is but preparation for tomorrow. When we lose expectation, we lose the sense of purpose in our lives. We become small-minded and egocentric.

There is a Power beyond man, a Voice beyond man, from which we can draw strength and insights and understanding. That is the heart of Moral Re-Armament. What is happening around us at the present time becomes timeless where God's hand is at work. ■

## FARMING FOR CHANGE

SIXTY-NINE PER CENT of New Zealand's foreign earnings come from agriculture—the highest proportion for any 'developed' country. The meat industry accounts for half of this figure.

At an MRA conference Garfield Hayes and Keith Hanning, neighbouring farmers in Otago, South Island, decided that they should meet the people, including management and union leaders, who dealt with the animals from their farms. So recently they called on one of the main freezing works in the Otago area. Three of the union officials said that it was only the second time they could remember farmers taking the trouble to come and talk over the industry's problems with them.

Mr Hayes was last year's President of the North Otago provincial region of Federated Farmers, the national farmers' organisation, and has been a National Council member. He says, 'I am a fourth-generation farmer. We bought our land over a century ago. I have a Maori friend who comes from the Waikato (North Island) where the land wars were fought. It was all right for me to say in the twentieth century, "I'm OK, I'm not responsible for taking

# ZEALAND'S PEOPLES

foreign affairs and defence to former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser. Dr Steger, who also represents Germany in Western Samoa, Fiji and Tonga, spoke of the rapid economic growth of the Pacific region. America and Canada were now trading more with the Pacific countries than with Europe, he said, and the economic weight in the United States was shifting from the East to the West Coast. He urged New Zealanders not just to concentrate on economic 'lamb and butter' issues in their relationship with Europe, but to inform Europe about New Zealand's place in the Pacific and the interests of Pacific nations. 'Our world ends in Singapore. Your people must talk to our leaders about your part of the world,' said Dr Steger.

Mr Griffith said, 'The Pacific peoples respect Australia but they trust New Zealand. This is, I think, an important clue to one of the direct responsibilities that seems to be thrust on New Zealand, a country which unites two people, the Maoris and the Europeans. Together these two peoples could be a brother to the Pacific nations. That is part of New Zealand's destiny. Our duty is to support you in that, but I don't believe the job will be done properly and well unless New Zealand does it.'



**CANON WI TE TAN HUATA AND HIS WIFE YBELLE** at the Waikanae conference. 'When the Maori takes a slab of wood he carves the right side first and then carves the left side to balance this,' said Canon Huata. 'The Maori and pakeha balance each other in their characteristics. The pakeha's strong point is his individuality, to stand up for what is right. We Maoris have a great gift in our ability to work together and in our sense of communion with each other. The pakeha is best at the long distance while the Maori is best in the short sprint. We must use these gifts for the Pacific.' Canon Huata, who was chaplain to the 28th Maori Battalion in Italy in World War II, said that New Zealand was 'morally and spiritually flat'.

Mrs Huata, a court visitor assisting in the care of young offenders, said that the conference had helped her to find peace of heart after the death of their son. 'For the first time I've been able to laugh out loud. I feel that I can go back and do something positive for the kids I'm trying to help.' ■

## Schools must rethink

**Joan Holland**, Principal of St Cuthbert's College, Auckland

THE GREATEST NEED as far as young people are concerned is to send them out into the world skilled in the art of reconciliation. Clearly, I have not got anything to offer them unless I do something to put right any relationship that I leave in a raw state. Simple, sincere apology is the only way to bring in the healing of the Holy Spirit and give everyone a chance to change.

On my heart is the failure to provide Maori people with an education that is satisfying and successful. The problems we are seeing in non-achievement at school certificate level and the lack of a desire to stay on at school for further studies arise because we want Maoris to do things our way. Also, the legal system is totally pakeha-orientated. Even the church is basically pakeha-orientated. I feel very much in need of forgiveness for my blindness in not appreciating the tremendous hurdles that Maori people have in our education pattern. I want to work in these next years with those who are concerned about Maori education to seek how we pakehas can restore for our insensitivity and how we can do better. ■

the land," but I felt a conviction from God that I was as responsible as my ancestors—and that if I was to see things put right in my country, I first must begin putting things right myself.

'At a church service I took the chance to express my sorrow publicly to my friend's people and family for the attitude of many farm families who tend to be more concerned for their own well-being than for those to whom the land belonged in the past. I undertook to work with people like him to see that such a thing never happened again and that change is brought to our country.'

Having lived in India Mr Hayes has recently been concerned about the Federated Farmers' proposed withdrawal from the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, which includes farmers from many developing countries who want freer trade. After attending the IFAP's conference in Delhi and meeting Indian personalities on Mr Hayes's initiative, the President of the Federated Farmers said that he had changed his opinion about New Zealand's membership. 'We cannot afford to be isolated or to appear isolationist,' he said. The organisation has since decided to remain in the IFAP. Only three other developed nations belong.

Mr Hanning, who is Junior Vice-President of the North Otago provincial region of Federated Farmers, said at a recent MRA conference, 'We farmers make more money out of barley for beer than cereals—but that doesn't feed people.' His colleague, Wensley Jackson, who farms in South Canterbury and is a former President of the Vegetable and Produce Growers' Federation, added, 'Much of the time we grow food for the greedy but not for the needy. Somehow we must grow food for the millions out there in the world starving. Our commitment to wealth is ensuring their hunger and poverty—the modern equivalent of the slave system. Feeding the world will flow from changed attitudes in the country.' ■

# BUILDING BLOCK FOR EXPANDING AUSTRALIA

Four million people from 120 countries have come to live in Australia since World War II and the total population has doubled to 15,500,000. A quarter of last year's migrants came from Asia. This has been widely welcomed, as a step towards setting right the old 'white Australia' policy, officially abandoned in the 1960s. But suspicion, fear and bigotry still exist and the debate has become heated in recent months.

An article in the 'Melbourne Age' about Collingwood Education Centre, a multicultural school in inner-city Melbourne, recently commented, 'East and West are meeting and the results are pleasing to those involved.' LANCE VERTIGAN has been Deputy Principal since 1979:

COLLINGWOOD EDUCATION CENTRE is a large, modern red-brick complex set in an area of high density industry, high-rise State housing and high unemployment and poverty. In 1979 Collingwood rated the highest index of social dysfunction in the city. 80 per cent of our 800-900 students come from homes where English is not the first language.

Collingwood has the reputation of being rough and tough. Some people are filled with a kind of awe when they learn you teach there. On entering the school for the first time I found that its reputation was ill-deserved; the students were and are among the most friendly and natural that I have ever taught. But, with their frequently unstable and violent backgrounds, they are capable of some extreme behaviour.

The school combines the functions of primary and secondary schools. We have to grapple with the language problems of new arrivals in Australia as well as the learning difficulties of students who have lacked continuity in their schooling or come to us convinced that they are failures.

## Belonging

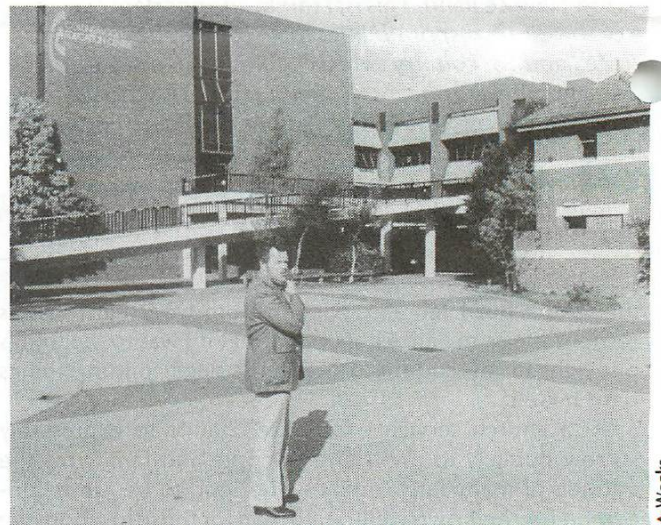
The year I arrived we received our first students from the Indo-Chinese refugees in Australia. By 1984 they made up 30 per cent of our school population. Like each new wave of immigrants, they have had to adjust to the Australian climate, customs and language. What distinguishes them from previous groups is the large number—one third of those at our school—who have either lost their parents or had to leave them behind in Vietnam, Cambodia or Laos. Many who have come from zones of heavy conflict have had virtually no schooling. They are subject to immense pressures. In the light of all this, our school presents a fertile breeding ground for conflict. Moreover the area where our students live is no stranger to violence and overt displays of racial bigotry.

Despite its environment, there have been very few outbreaks of racial intolerance within the school. Of course there are underlying tensions. But teachers have been successful in reducing the chances of conflict by the exercise of 'quiet common sense', as one Melbourne newspaper put it. Teachers and students are expected to show each other courtesy and respect. Most students

respond to an approach which is uncompromising towards poor behaviour but at the same time challenges them to see themselves as worthy members of the human race.

The school is subdivided into mini-schools, each with a degree of autonomy. This builds trust between teachers and students and gives the student a chance to develop a sense of belonging and, with that, a sense of identity and family. In many cases fruitful relationships have grown between teachers and the families of their students. These contribute to the spirit of goodwill at school.

Nonetheless there are times when an individual cuts loose. Then much depends on whether the teacher has the presence of mind not to respond in a personal way to extreme provocation. It helps to have taken a hard look at your own nature. If you come to terms with your own imperfections and refuse to yield to self-importance and self-righteousness, you have more chance of exercising a calming influence on a child.



Lance Vertigan at Collingwood Education Centre

As Deputy Principal I was convinced of my importance in the school. On one occasion the Physical Education teacher brought a Vietnamese student to my office, who he said had tried to trip him up during an exercise. The student was accompanied by another Vietnamese student, who said I had come to act as his friend's representative. This offended my sense of authority and I curtly told him to go back to his class. The initial problem quickly resolved itself, as the teacher and student settled their differences, but I then discovered that the student I had dismissed had been deeply hurt and had gone home. I began to understand how, in my self-importance, I had made no allowance for the leadership and support he had shown towards his friend, who was a recent arrival at the school. I sent for him and apologised for my attitude. He responded in like vein and a friendship was established.

An Aboriginal girl was part of a unit who did a project on China—for a week they built kites, put up maps, time-lines and charts about Chinese history. It was a magnificent job, but she clearly did not like it. The next week she wanted Aboriginal culture dealt with, and nothing else. I happened to catch her on two occasions kicking someone and had to talk to her. She made a flippant remark and I replied sharply. This sparked something off in her and she started to shout at me, with her face only six inches from mine. And I had four guests in the next room waiting to talk about multiculturalism!

'Something positive has to come out of this!' I thought. So I just waited. It took about 20 minutes for her to stop shouting, and all the hates and resentments were coming out. Then another teacher came in and we began to chat more quietly. I surprised the girl by talking about some Aboriginal friends whom she knew. Later she agreed to help fashion a multicultural course in one of our units. I was grateful that I had not jumped down her throat and tried to win the argument by confrontation.

These lessons have stood me in good stead when there have been outbreaks of resentment and bitterness in the school. I have been able to help bring about marked changes in behaviour. They have also helped me to understand that our school can be one of the building blocks of a soundly based multicultural society. ■

## WORKING FOR MY PEOPLE

*REG BLOW* advises the Victorian Government on Aboriginal issues and is also the President of the Aboriginal Advancement League. He spoke at a public meeting in Melbourne:



A Weeks

I AM AN ABORIGINAL in a senior Government position. One look at history will show you that no State Government has been kind to Aboriginal people. So I am in an area of conflict all the time. The Government has expectations, and so have my people. How can I be effective?

I come from the grassroots. I was a truck driver in Melbourne. I became a union delegate. It gave me great pleasure to use that bit of power I had. I could effectively tie up some of the bosses where I was employed.

Then I was introduced to MRA. I couldn't grasp MRA's idea of living by absolute moral standards—that was me in reverse! But I wondered what held all these different people together. Everything I touched seemed to turn to conflict.

I went out of curiosity to an MRA conference in New Zealand—making clear I was going under my own steam. I didn't want to feel obliged to anyone. There I met people of similar background to myself—Canadian Indians, Maoris—who, through following the principles of MRA, were able to work through their problems.

I realised then that I was knocking around with a small group of people looking inward, not outward. I came back to Australia intending to do something about this.

When I look back, I was a fairly shallow person. Sure, I used to work three jobs, providing for my family of four. My wife was managing a hostel and I was counselling the

boys—a fairly good fellow doing my bit. But Moral Re-Armament kept on nagging at me—was I really doing my best? I knew I could do more, but I made all the excuses in the world. Gradually it came over me that I must do something for my people. Some of the boys in the hostel needed real assistance, not just the piecemeal stuff I was providing—accommodation and a bit of advice on Sunday.

So I then took an active interest in Aboriginal affairs, and was instrumental in getting an Aboriginal co-operative going, which we developed to a staff of ten. I ended up getting the boot because of a conflict within the ranks.

By this time I was starting to take an extra bit of time in the morning to let my thoughts run wild over what was planned for me for the day. One person described it as little fish in the water, which you've got to grab before they get away. I really look forward to trying to catch these thoughts.

My wife is an advisor on Aboriginal affairs to the Uniting Church. She's busy. I'm busy. We need that time in the morning. We don't talk about heavy stuff. We just communicate. In my job I must be an effective communicator. This practice has helped me.

When one door shuts, another one opens. That is the pattern of life. If you had said to me five years ago that I'd be in this position today, I'd have said you were crazy.

I see MRA as a challenge developing me to my fullest capacity. People who've known me for some time will notice a difference in me. I'm positive in my outlook now. Before it was easy to sit back and blame the 'gabbas'—the Aboriginal term for white people—for our problems, never looking towards ourselves as part of that problem. That's one thing I hope to do now—to have our people examine what role we have to play in the community.

I'm involved in many different efforts to help Aboriginal people. But I feel that perhaps my greatest contribution is that people seeing me now know that I am not the person I was 10 years ago. I was fairly anti-social, I wanted my own way. I'm glad those days are over. ■

## Industrialist's response

*TOM RAMSAY*, a senior manager with BHP Petroleum, spoke next. BHP is Australia's largest company:

THREE YEARS AGO I went with Reg to an MRA conference in India. There I learnt more about the Aboriginal history of Australia than I had in the 50 years I'd lived here. We resolved to keep in touch, and try to create understanding between the spheres of activity in which we are involved.

In Australian industry there are people who think that as soon as you want to dig a hole or drill an oil-well the Aboriginals proclaim it a sacred site. It's a complete misunderstanding, and often a lack of intention to understand anything that might cross what you want to do.

I believe that God has put the minerals in the ground, and He means all of us involved, black and white, to find the way they are meant to be used for the benefit of the world, not just for an individual nation or clique within a nation.

Recently I arranged for Reg to address our professional petroleum association. One man said that it was the first time he had met an Aboriginal. That is a measure of the gulf we must bridge. ■

# Riches in retirement

Chris Lancaster, retired doctor living near Melbourne

AFTER MY RETIREMENT my wife and I moved to a new area 90 minutes' drive from the city. We knew no one. We had only been in our new home a fortnight when I had my third coronary, which meant three spells in hospital over the next two months. Clearly we needed a wisdom greater than our own to help us live at a different pace and in a new situation. We are grateful that in the early years of our marriage we learnt about Moral Re-Armament and the idea of seeking guidance from God every day. Despite my physical limitations, promptly obeying the smallest whispers that may come from God adds an extraordinary richness to life.

For instance, although I do not practise medicine any longer, I have had insights, from time to time, about the health of some of our newly-made friends. One had open-heart surgery as a result and his health and mobility were transformed. Another decided to have investigation and treatment he had previously resisted.



Chris and Lilian Lancaster with Maria

We have sometimes felt that God wanted us to visit some particular friend and found that we have arrived just when we were needed. Once we called on a couple who live some distance away to find the wife alone and worried about her husband. She talked very openly with us. As a result she began to ask God to tell her what to do about her marriage, her attitudes and several difficult relationships in the welfare group with which she is involved.

My wife recently dropped in on an acquaintance, whose husband was out playing golf. The woman welcomed her in, put a match to the fire and was making tea when she suddenly spilled over with tears. She had just received news of a much-loved brother's death and was deeply grieved and afraid of losing control at the funeral next day. She had felt the victim of her emotions ever since the death of a son

in a plane disaster in Papua New Guinea many years before. She was grateful to talk about it all and for Lilian's assurance of our prayers next day. A few days later her husband thanked Lilian for her visit and said that it had made all the difference to his wife's peace of mind then and during the service. ■

## Home thoughts from abroad

by Sarah Mayor



WHEN I CAME TO EUROPE, I was so proud to be Australian and I thought I was something special. I was sure that everyone had heard of our amazing victories in the Americas Cup and the Davis Cup. When I realised that Britain was busy talking about her own problems such as the strikes, the EEC and the European Parliament elections, I began to feel bitter. I thought that Britain should stop being so concerned with itself and look out to the rest of the world. But when I stopped and thought about it, I realised that I did the same thing. How could I expect others to be excited over our sporting victories if I didn't even know that a European Parliament existed or understand the economic significance of the EEC.

I see Australia as a child in the family of nations. It has an abundance of vitality and willingness to 'buck the system' in favour of new ways. Perhaps Australia could help Europe to refind the enthusiasm and openness of youth. This would help arrest the trend of apathy and cynicism which is slowly deadening the world's senses. In practical terms this means a new honesty in leadership and a willingness for politicians to admit to confusion and ask for help.

The temptation is strong to turn my time in Europe into a trip to prove how well-travelled I am. It is all too easy to take from a country as a tourist but not to give anything back. That is why I am so grateful for the worldwide network of friends which MRA has created. I have been able to be included as family in various homes and get to know a country through its people rather than just seeing the sights. My impression of the world and my country has been enriched by understanding other nations' views. I have learned how much my faith means to me and taken some major decisions involving the four absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, which have become a valid and practical part of my everyday life. ■

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