

Reform, From the Bottom Up

**Reflections on the MRA Consultation Process
1988 - 2002**

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Preface

This is a personal account of a fifteen year period of self-reflection by a movement founded more than a hundred years ago in Oxford. The story tells how a multi-faith, multi-national, spiritual movement set out to create a collective leadership.

My association with this movement began in 1965 with a chance encounter at Oxford University. I was a graduate student and met Brian Boobbyer at a wine and cheese party. Brian was a famous Oxford sportsman who had stunned the sporting world by abandoning the All England rugby team in the midst of its world tour in order to dedicate himself to work with Moral Re-Armament. He and I became friends on the squash court and afterwards at Georges in the Market, a working class cafe, where we rewarded ourselves with fruit crumbles topped with custard and ice cream.

Brian never tried to get me into MRA, but he did want me to discover what I was to do with my life. The best way to do that, he said, was to listen deeply to what was in my heart. I was not a man of faith, but began paying more attention to my inner life. Brian accompanied me on my journey of self-discovery, during which I found new relationships in my family, freedom from a compulsion to please others and a new purpose in life.

I would not be writing this account were it not for Brian.

Between 1988 and 2002, the global movement undertook its first ever sustained reflection on its culture and its way of doing and deciding most everything. That reflection consisted of a complex consultative process that took shape around twenty week-long meetings held in different venues around the world. These involved

hundreds of the movement's activists and led to important changes in the movement's culture and governance.

I was at the heart of this process from the beginning, so the story told here reflects my personal experiences and perspectives. Of course, many other people played critical roles as the process unfolded. I hope some of them will add their recollections in time.

There are two sections of the story that look back at MRA's early history. The first, which focuses on a potentially fatal split in the global work in the 1960s, reflects my attempt to understand the movement's resistance to the proposals to hold global consultations at all. The second, which looks at seminal life experiences of the Founder, Frank Buchman, relates to efforts by the consultations to clarify the core principles of the movement.

The story is not as complete as I would have liked. Much of my relevant personal correspondence and other documentation lies uncatalogued and currently inaccessible in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Other resources and recollections that will without doubt add valuable insights and perspectives have not yet come to light. Finally, there are important parts of the story about which I have little knowledge. This includes the heroic efforts of a small but dedicated communications team that kept the wider network informed about the process described herein and made it possible for everyone in the network to have the information needed to be responsible participants. At the same time, they enabled the impressive work of the network to reach the wider public through the internet. Their labors were almost entirely voluntary.

I have been prompted to tell this story by three things. First, several who played important roles have already passed from the scene. Secondly, close friends asked me to write it. Thirdly, I have a feint and possibly foolish hope that this story of a successful bottom-up reform of a global movement may be useful for future generations.

Reform, From the Bottom Up

Introduction: A Modest Experiment is Undertaken

In the fall of 1988, hundreds of the movement's most committed people came to London for a service of thanksgiving marking the fiftieth anniversary of the launching of Moral Re-Armament (MRA) in 1938. There were good reasons to be thankful. A movement that had emerged in the early 1920s in Oxford now had strong branches in over fifty countries. During World War II it had made significant contributions to better labor-management relations in allied war production facilities. After the war, it had played a remarkable role in the rapid reconciliations between the warring powers in Europe and Asia. In the 1950s, It had helped facilitate the transition of several European colonies in Africa to independence and engaged in efforts to break down racial barriers in the United States. It had also played important roles in resolving a decades long dispute in the Italian Tyrol and in enabling a peaceful transfer of power in Zimbabwe.

Now the movement faced a new challenge. In recent years, there had been a flowering of individual, local and national initiatives that had stretched the movement's human and financial resources and contributed to centrifugal tendencies. New opportunities were opening up in China, Japan, the United States and in Russia and Eastern Europe. With the encouragement of HE Cardinal Franz Koenig, Archbishop of Vienna, who was in London for the celebrations, there were new opportunities for high-level dialogues among influential leaders of different faiths.

How would the movement choose priorities? And who would make those choices?

Many who had come to London for the anniversary occasions carried responsibility for the movement in their countries. Thirty-five of these gathered for two days to consider

these questions. They met in the home of a prominent English journalist in the village of Oxted, south of London. They were clear that the movement was not in a position to respond to all of these opportunities. Choices would have to be made. But how, and by whom? Would those from the non-western world and from different faith traditions be included in the decision-making? Were young people to be at the table? And women?

On the table was a proposal to address such questions through an inclusive consultative process. It would be a two-year experiment, consisting of four week-long meetings each attended by 20-25 people representing the diversity of the movement. Their task included, but was not limited to, the question of priorities. The first consultation would take place in Japan, giving the attendees a chance to see the world from a non-western perspective. Agendas would be shaped by the participants and would reflect the concerns of those most active in the movement. No one knew what issues might surface or where the process would lead. I was asked to convene a small group to get the process started, but the participants themselves would be responsible for the organization, participation, conduct and leadership of the meetings, and for reporting their conclusions to the world fellowship.

The larger question was straightforward. Could a diverse and sprawling global network spanning different cultures and religions find a way to govern itself? Who would provide the leadership, and how would they be chosen? How would its goals be agreed? No one was looking for a single person to lead a work that championed individual initiatives, but there was a genuine quest for more inclusive leadership and for new approaches to finding focus and strategy.

Some recalled that the American founder of the movement, Frank Buchman, had often spoken of collective leadership, of teams “working together like the fingers of one hand.” Was that a model for the future? Was that even possible? Could the governance of a global movement be truly collaborative, with leadership coming from a diverse team? Could a global network of change agents united by little more than a common experience of personal change find the will and trust necessary to work together and

decide critical issues? Was their understanding of the movement's core principles similar enough to generate genuine unity?

Several people in the room had doubts. For one thing, they were aware of previous meetings of the global fellowship that had attempted to address questions about priorities, but to little avail. What would be different this time?

There were other concerns. From its beginning, the movement had resisted structure, organization and hierarchy. Decisions were taken by informal, 'ad hoc' groups that listened in quiet together for the leading of God's spirit, what was generally called 'guidance'. Beyond this, there were no structures nor any identified leadership. During its first eighteen years, for example, there had been no formal structures at all. Even finances were handled informally. The first legal body, The Oxford Group, was set up in England in 1939 to enable the group to receive property. Subsequent legal bodies set up in America, Switzerland and elsewhere for similar reasons thought of themselves as servants of the movement, not its leaders. They existed to facilitate the actions of the movement.

A second concern had to do with preserving the movement's core values. Would a focus on governance deflect attention from 'changing lives'? Would Christian teachings and practices be set aside in deference to respect for other faiths? Would reliance on the leading of God's spirit diminish? Would moral standards that had undergirded the movement from the beginning be watered down? Would managing programs take precedence over care for people? Would the movement come to be defined by what it did, rather than how its followers lived?

In light of such concerns, the meeting proposed that the process be subject to continuous review and that each consultation be firmly anchored in the fundamental principles of the movement. The decision was guarded, even tentative. It was to embark on an experiment. Nothing more. If the experiment did not garner wide support, it would be ended.

On the suggestion of John Wood, an American who had worked closely with Frank Buchman, it was decided that final planning for the first consultation would include several days at Taize, the European center of a spiritual movement that was inspiring tens of thousands of young Europeans to serve the poor around the world. Founded by Brother Roger, who had been touched by contact with the Oxford Group in his native Switzerland, Taize offered space for quiet reflection, simplicity and prayer. It was thought that this would be good preparation for the proposed consultations.

In the end, the initial two year experiment grew into twenty plus consultations in fourteen countries. They took place over a fifteen year period. Cumulatively, hundreds of people committed to MRA's ideas took part. Taken together, this Consultative Process, as it was to be called, was the movement's first ever reflection on itself. The meetings examined every aspect of the movement's life. It was a bottom-up, self-directed process. No one was in charge and no one knew where it would lead. In the end, it provoked transformations in the movement's culture and in its ways of doing and deciding most everything that went far beyond anything that had been imagined by those meeting in Oxted. It even led to a new name. Most surprisingly, the process created a collective leadership with the potential to become what had been envisioned, but never realized, by Buchman.

Background and a brief History

While pleased with the decision to embark on this modest experiment, I was puzzled by the resistance. Why, I wondered, was a movement centered on individual self-reflection and change resistant to reflection on itself? I thought a look at some of the movement's history might shed light.

When Buchman died in August 1961, obituaries appeared in *The New York Times* and in major newspapers worldwide. It was big news. His funeral, held in his hometown of Allentown, Pennsylvania, was a major occasion. Local dignitaries and ordinary folk who had always been curious about the exotic friends of the son of local innkeepers were there in great numbers. A charter plane brought friends and colleagues from Europe. Messages came from around the world, reflecting the variety and breadth of his friendships: the boy who had sat next to him at school, the hall porter in Utrecht, Belgium, to whom he had given a book in 1936, the captain of the ship which took him to Australia in 1956. There were messages from former Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of Germany, former Prime Minister Robert Schuman of France and the King of Morocco.

For forty years Buchman had given his all to build a global team based on the conviction that changes in individuals could affect change in the world. With extraordinary energy, determination, inspiration and an unshakeable confidence in the 'guidance' that he felt came from God, he had created, shaped and led a spiritual movement that spanned the world and had fostered world-changing initiatives. It would not have existed without him. Tens of thousands had responded. Hundreds impacted by encounters with him were taking creative actions across the world. Three nations had decorated him for his service and he had been nominated more than once for the Nobel Peace Prize. So the outpourings of sorrow and affection at his passing were not surprising. What was surprising, even ominous, was what did not happen.

A Curious Omission

Neither at the funeral, nor in the days and months to follow, did any of those who had given leadership alongside him for forty years, attempt to bring together their close colleagues from around the world to consider next steps. I wondered why.

Most of his close colleagues owed their spiritual vitality and direction in life to him. They trusted him and had come to defer to his leadership at important junctures in their own lives and in the work. In consequence, the movement had developed no habit of internal reflection, no tradition of grappling with issues that naturally arose around personality differences, cultural diversity, gender, race, perceived exclusions and the like. Such issues, to the extent they surfaced at all, were seen as personal, even moral, issues. There was a widely shared view that paying attention to such issues was a diversion from the essential work of changing lives: campaigns to run, meetings to prepare, plays to perform, pamphlets to write, teams to mobilize, people to care for. With a world waiting to be changed, one could not afford to waste time.

Ominously, there was another factor. There were underlying tensions. Garth Lean, Buchman's biographer, reported that in his last hours Buchman had expressed to close colleagues in Europe his deep concerns about "my Americans". Lil Wood, an American artist who was in Caux that summer, confirmed that the American leadership was under considerable pressure. Whether the problems were personal, cultural or something else, is hard to know. But it is not hard to imagine that such strong criticism engendered judgmental attitudes among the Europeans towards the Americans, and vice versa?

A Vacuum Filled

As it happened, the consequences of this omission were deferred when Peter Howard, a well-known British journalist who had become one of Buchman's most trusted colleagues, stepped up to fill the vacuum. An energetic, passionate and articulate man,

he was suddenly everywhere all at once, dictating masses of letters, hosting important guests, launching campaigns and directing the movements of hundreds of full time workers. At the same time he was giving speeches and writing plays that took MRA's life-changing message to a wider public. He somehow pulled the divergent tendencies in the movement together, and transcended differences of view and perspective.

He was particularly attentive to the situation in America. The post-war baby boom generation was then landing in American colleges and a ferment was stirring. Many were breaking out from what they felt was a stifling conformity in the America of the 1950s. Among these were student leaders with whom some of the American team had connected. A dozen of these invited Howard to speak at their universities. His speeches attracted hundreds of young people to a conference at MRA's Conference Center on Mackinac Island in Michigan. The theme, Tomorrow's American, resonated. With the inspiration of three talented musicians from Los Angeles, the Colwell Brothers, a musical called "Showboat" was produced. It captured the spirit of the new generation and laid ground for a larger gathering to be held in Mackinac the following summer.

Before that happened, Howard, 56, died suddenly from viral pneumonia in Lima, Peru. It was only 3 1/2 years since Buchman's death. The movement was in shock. Trauma best describes the impact. His dynamic leadership had covered over underlying differences. His death exposed these differences and left an agonizing void.

Another Curious Omission

Howard's funeral was at his beloved Hill Farm in the east of England. It was attended by over a thousand people. In addition to his close teammates from the movement, there were several British politicians and former colleagues from the media. Yet once again there was a curious omission. No global gathering of the movement's leadership was convened. No efforts were made even to mourn his loss together, much less to discern

a way forward. People coped, it seemed, by just continuing to do what they had been doing, almost as if nothing had happened. But of course, it had.

A Movement Fractures

No meaningful steps had been taken to dissolve the distrust that lay beneath the surface in 1961. So it was hardly a surprise that the divisions between British and American leaders rose to the surface in 1965. Teams in both domains circled the wagons. Camps formed. Sides were taken. Exaggerated inferences were drawn about those on the 'other' side. Ludicrously, two leaders in America and Britain diametrically opposed in temperament, vision and conviction made an attempt to patch things up. That predictably failed. So the rift widened. In short order, a **catastrophic split** in the global work occurred.

The consequences were devastating. Teams throughout the world were impacted. Communications between opposing camps virtually ceased. Relationships were shattered. Even some who had taken part in weddings of friends on the other side broke off contact with one another. People on each side imagined those on the other side doing unimaginable things. Many British stalwarts came to believe the Americans had abandoned faith altogether. Many Americans thought the British were hopelessly old-fashioned, blind to the societal changes sweeping the globe. The inferences became unmoored. The two sides went in very different directions.

On the American side, Blanton Belk, perhaps trying to emulate Howard's leadership style, took the reins, becoming 'de facto' chief executive of a fast-growing work. There was no talk of collective leadership around him. The movement turned into a classic American non-profit governed by a dynamic, charismatic CEO, overseen by a compliant, self-perpetuating board. With a flair for articulating visions and a talent for organization, Belk turned the movement's focus to the post war baby boom generation. A conference seeded by Howard's university tour gave birth to a musical extravaganza

called Sing Out. Its positive upbeat message offered a compelling alternative to a more cynical message evident across American campuses. By the summer of 1966, three international casts were crisscrossing the world. Under a new name, *Up With People*, the work re-fashioned itself as an educational charity, and distanced itself from the life-changing focus that had characterized Buchman's work from the beginning. That more traditional work continued under the Moral Re-Armament banner for a time, but was a shadow of its former self. By 1970, a score of valuable properties had been sold, hundreds of full time workers released and outreach to influential sectors of American life abruptly ended. All the eggs, and the finances, were being put in one basket.

Impacts on the British-led side of the divide, which included most of the global movement, were more subtle but no less impactful. Many were confused. Others angry. Confidence cratered. Several full time volunteers drifted away. Caux very nearly closed. The work in several countries fell on hard times. National teams coped as best they could, but efforts became diffuse. There was fragmentation. What had been a cohesive global movement fractured into local and national teams.

Leaders in Britain and elsewhere hunkered down. They upheld MRA's traditional approach of "world-changing through life-changing" and emphasized MRA's Christian roots. Well intentioned efforts to discourage younger full time workers from being drawn into the American orbit became heavy handed. Influential personalities wrote strong letters to persuade followers to tow the line. A tendency to control was evident. There was a discernible loss of freedom and spontaneity, less openness to new ideas.

A silver lining

At the same time, there were unexpected benefits. Many who had been deeply influenced by the movement but had held back from responsibility began to step forward. This was particularly true of those in resident teams who had previously

deferred to full time workers. They recognized that the time had come to rally local teams around common concerns and take action.

The result was a flowering of initiatives. Farmers, teachers, artists, journalists, ordinary workers and business owners reached out to their colleagues. In the United States, for example, a businessman reached out to port workers in Baltimore, a journalist in Washington befriended Members of Congress on opposite sides of the aisle, two retired teachers wrote and promoted a course to develop character in middle school students, the widow of a retired Admiral arranged meetings with senior military leaders, an African American professor connected with prominent leaders of the civil rights movement, a social worker set out to turn his southern town 'upside down.'

All over the world, local teams began to meet, first just to support one another but soon to take action to address shared concerns. Surprising initiatives emerged. Young Europeans created a musical revue called *Anything to Declare?* that challenged their generation's preoccupation with self and called for caring for the whole world. They took their show around the world for the next three years. Equally unexpected actions were taken by favela leaders in Brazil, trade unionists in Britain and indigenous leaders in Australia and New Zealand.

Green shoots emerged

Rajmohan Gandhi, a grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, led a campaign for a strong, clean and united India. A new conference center, Asia Plateau, was constructed in Panchgani, Maharashtra, in 1968, with not a penny paid in bribes. A musical show, *India Arise*, was created and taken around India and then to other countries. In the next decade, thousands from all walks of life found new life and purpose through the diverse conferences at Asia Plateau. There was soon impressive outreach to trade unions, municipal leaders, teachers, the military and businesses. The conference center became a flourishing enterprise.

In Rhodesia, where a civil war was emerging following Prime Minister Ian Smith's unilateral declaration of independence, a few committed friends set out to reach and change influential people on all sides of the conflict. They had in mind Buchman's advice: "the only thing to do in a crisis is change people." Among those finding a new direction in life was Alec Smith, who then was reconciled with his father, the Prime Minister. A black nationalist leader named Arthur Kanodereka seeing that Alec's change was authentic reached out to him. The two of them shared their experience of reconciliation widely. As others responded to their message, an informal 'cabinet of conscience' was formed consisting of influential leaders from all walks of life. They met monthly and set out to inspire leaders in all camps to take personal steps towards peace. Reports of their activities and of the remarkable changes they engendered were circulated around the world.

In the United States a small group set out to re-ignite the work. They rallied a few loyal adherents disenchanted with the exclusive emphasis on youth. Teams emerged in a dozen cities. They turned their attention to what they felt was America's achilles heel, race relations. Soon a strategy emerged. Alec Smith and Arthur Kanodereka came to share their experiences with Members of Congress and other influential people in Washington. Pioneers of reconciliation from Ireland, the Middle East and elsewhere brought their experiences to America.

These 'green shoots' prompted meetings in the early 1980s that attempted to pull together a fragmented but resilient movement.

Precursors

One in 1980 at Nemi, a Christian retreat center near Rome, had brought a meaningful growth in the movement's coherence and unity. Attended by forty-six people from nineteen countries, it strengthened a resolve to put life-changing at the center of our

individual and corporate lives. It also led to fresh thinking about how to reach out to the communist world and how to respond to new opportunities in southern Africa. Daily times of prayer and quiet reflection and a stirring meeting by some of the group with Pope John Paul II strengthened the sense that God had a great purpose for the movement. Pierre Spoerri and Gordon Wise, who together with Michel Sentis had organized the meeting, wrote afterwards: "None of us who came will return home the same. Each saw new truths, each took a leap in faith and expectancy."

A larger gathering in Germany two years later had enhanced the movement's spiritual health and unity. Then in 1984 fifty of the global team met in Haguenau, France. Again, a strong focus on our life-changing call led to a rebirth of confidence. Several re-found a contagious freedom of the spirit. Said the report: "We came expecting to receive guidance together on many issues. We gained instead the promise that the world would be renewed through a renewal in all of us."

These meetings deepened trust and increased confidence. They also put on the table a number of concerns not previously expressed, including about the appropriateness of the name, Moral Re-Armament. But they did not make progress on priorities. One meeting even listed sixty priorities!

I was stirred by the dedication of many participants whom I met for the first time at these meetings. One of these, with professional qualifications that would have assured him a distinguished career, had given most of his life in service to Latin America. Long walks with him and several others deepened my respect and admiration for the selflessness of those called to the work. I wondered whether they were well served by a movement that seemed unable to govern itself effectively. None of the meetings had been structured to reach conclusions. The agendas were too diverse, the number of participants too many and the time-horizons way too short. Nor was there sufficient trust across generations and cultures to tackle sensitive issues. Leadership had come mostly from older

Christian men from Europe who had worked with Buchman. They had impressive experience across the world, but hardly represented the diversity of the movement.

I thought we could do better. Drawing on my experience as a Systems Analyst at the Department of Defense, I thought about more efficient ways of decision-making, of managing a far-flung work. I initiated conversations with selected leaders about my ideas and was pleasantly surprised to find doors and minds open.

Foremost among those whose advice I sought was Gordon Wise, an Australian veteran of World War II who had become Secretary of the Oxford Group in Britain. He shared my critique of large amorphous meetings, and supported my proposal to convene well prepared meetings with limited agendas and fewer participants. I also had important conversations with Bill Jaeger, leader of MRA's impressive work with trade union leaders. He spoke candidly of his failure to challenge patterns in the work during the 1950s that he felt were unhealthy. He faulted himself for not speaking up, and encouraged me not to hold back. He emphasized the value of eliciting contributions from diffident friends who held back in the presence of more self-assured personalities.

Daniel Mottu of Switzerland, with his warmth and sense of perspective, helped me understand the fears of those who had lived through difficult divisions in the work. He also helped me understand the movement's historic suspicion of organization. "Don't judge and don't give up when obstacles arise" was his message.

in the midst of these conversations, new opportunities emerged.

Frits Philips, Chairman of Philips Electric in The Netherlands, and Olivier Giscard D'Estaing of INSEAD in France, rallied their counterparts in Japan, the United States and Europe to address dangerous tensions over trade that had flared between the three economic powerhouses. This led to the *Caux Round Table* that later developed a widely adopted set of business principles to guide business decision making.

Bill Jaeger accepted an invitation to China from a Vice-Chairman of the National People's Congress whom he had befriended in the 1940s at the International Labor Organization. The Chinese wanted to explore potential collaboration with MRA.

In Europe, numerous people were reaching out to those they knew in Eastern Europe and Russia. Opportunities for connection and common action were emerging. How were these to be followed up and coordinated?

All this gave urgency to the search for a new approach to the movement's governance. In March 1988, I suggested that an international working group be set up to discern priorities. Many responded. Then at Caux further discussions helped shape the proposed experiment that was endorsed at the meeting in Oxted that fall.

The Consultative Process - An Overview

Prerequisites

Given the tentativeness of the decision, it was self-evident that agreeing on new ways of governing would only be possible if the wider team felt ownership of the process. It would need to evolve from the bottom up, not come from the top. It would have to be a response to needs widely perceived in the movement and be shaped by the participants themselves.

To that end, a small group was set up to nurture the process. They would find venues, handle logistics, set ground rules, propose methods for selecting participants and suggest agendas. Most important, they would do a lot of listening. Their aim was to discover the needs of the movement and in response shape an effective process.

I was asked to convene this group, later labeled the Support Group, and was joined by six others. Teamwork amongst us became a source of considerable joy as we kept our ears to the ground and sought to discern the movement's appetite for innovation. Ailsa Hamilton, Rob Corcoran and Edward Peters were mainstays and were later joined by Marianne Spreng. Without the dedicated work of this group, the consultations would not have been successful.

A decision to limit each consultation to twenty-five or thirty people made decision-making manageable. Ground rules - strict confidentiality, ample time for quiet, assuring that everyone was heard and that the chairs of each session were respected - kept the process on track and created confidence. Thoughts and questions relating to agendas were solicited from the world fellowship and submissions were made available to all participants. A full report of each consultation was agreed by consensus and circulated widely. Feedback was welcomed and taken into consideration at subsequent meetings.

As the consultations unfolded, the Support Group was surprised by the positive reactions of the world network. We seemed to be pushing on an open door. People were ready for changes in the movement's culture. Our role, we discovered, was to guide the process, not lead it.

Participants felt empowered. "We can do this," said one, speaking for many who had previously felt sidelined by more powerful personalities. Rather quickly they came to believe that they could have a part in shaping MRA's future. Many who did not actually attend meetings felt the same.

The unfamiliar transparency of the process created confidence. Many who carried major responsibility in their home countries had long felt that decisions about the movement's direction were made by a small circle of insiders. Now everything was in the open: nothing hidden and nothing off the table. The concerns of the most reticent were voiced. Most importantly, decisions and recommendations were made by consensus in an open process and communicated to the world fellowship. Many felt this was a new day.

The movement was also ready for the inclusion of women, young people, ethnic minorities, those from diverse spiritual traditions and those from remote regions without resources for travel. People wanted to hear the voices of every race and culture. The entire global network welcomed the informative monthly *World Bulletin* that had been suggested by Andrew Stallybrass and Thomas Breckle at Oxted.

At the insistence of the support group, an open democratic approach was established for the selection of participants. This was new. Though not easily implemented, it was ultimately embraced enthusiastically. Also new was a commitment to make sure that any concerns or misgivings of participants were heard and addressed.

These intangible benefits brought air and light into the movement and made it possible for the consultations to address the main issues on the table.

The twenty plus consultations under consideration here took place over fifteen years. An abbreviated list is in Appendix 1. Discussions took shape mainly around five inter-related themes.

I **Corporate culture.** Given the breadth and diversity of the movement, how was it possible to create an open, transparent and inclusive culture? This was especially challenging given its origins in a Christian evangelical movement in the West.

II **Core principles.** What were these and how could the movement assure that those in the network faithfully applied them in their life and work? This was particularly challenging in a world where societal values were changing rapidly.

III **Training and the Development of People.** How should the movement provide for the continuous growth and development of those giving their full time to work with the movement? And what training programs should be offered to people in varied walks of life that would equip them to become effective change agents within their worlds?

IV **Mission and Goals.** It was not possible to tackle every issue. Priorities would have to be decided. Which issues should be the primary focuses of its activities.

V **Governance.** How would the movement manage its affairs? Could it evolve a collective leadership for the global movement that reflected its rich diversity?

I Corporate Culture

An essential first step was to address the unspoken cultural assumptions that made many from non-western cultures feel marginalized. It would not be possible to address the delicate issues of governance without removing these barriers. The first consultation in Japan tackled these issues head on. The meeting was near Tokyo in 1989 and its unique setting did much to facilitate the discussions. To quote the report: “Gazing in wonder and awe at the grace and grandeur of 3,376 meter Mt. Fuji seen in the distance from our large heated pool in Hakone, the Western participants in this first global consultation outside Europe began to comprehend the depths of Japan’s spiritual heritage.” Participants began to see that the world looked very different from Mt. Fuji than from Caux. They recognized that what seemed to some a rigid formalism was in fact a way of conveying respect. Imperceptible nods confirmed agreement and silence often registered dissent or disagreement. By observing the sensitive ways in which consensus was reached, the participants began to understand why MRA’s Western cultural traditions encountered genuine resistance in a non-Western culture. They recognized, perhaps for the first time, the enormous burden carried by Japanese friends due to the unconscious assumption that “our ways were the correct ways,” that deviations from these revealed moral failing, not cultural diversity.

As the twenty-five conferees experienced the meditative qualities of Japanese tea ceremonies, visited the Meiji Shrine and listened to the wisdom of those steeped in Japan’s ancient traditions, their minds were opened to uniquely Japanese ways of doing and deciding things. It was a revelation, shining a light on a host of assumptions previously thought by many to be incontrovertibly right. It was a belated recognition that things needed to change, that the spiritual movement of which all were proud needed itself to experience a depth of change we previously associated only with individuals.

"I have learned to be hospitable to contrary thoughts," said one participant. "The clouds are lifting", said another. All discovered in themselves an openness to new ways of organizing, new ways of funding, new ways of deciding, perhaps most importantly, new expressions of the spiritual truths embedded in the authentic experiences of friends and colleagues across the world. We no longer wished to perpetuate slogans that grew out of MRA's Christian roots, such as "God told me" or "My guidance is" or "let's have guidance", as if the leading of the spirit could be called up on demand. Such expressions came across as self-assured, even cocky.

In that same spirit, the consultation took to heart a strongly worded submission about gender inequality and male dominance within MRA's leadership. There was much to unpack about this so it became a recurring focus throughout the Consultation Process. There were also strong submissions from several developing nations about their experiences of feeling marginalized and not heard. This provoked an honest look at our notion of "collective leadership". Too often 'the collective' consisted of mostly western, Christian men, often self-selected. This was noted earlier about the meetings in the early 1980s, all of which had been organized and led by older European men. All too often, important decisions had reflected the push and pull of competing powerful personalities within that informal group. Such observations led to a proposal for consideration at future consultations that a standing representative group be created to give leadership to our global operations. Given the movement's historic distrust of structures, the consultation's openness to this proposal represented a profound shift.

Taken together the recommendations that emerged from Tokyo presented a serious challenge to gender, age, cultural and spiritual assumptions that had previously been unrecognized. Fruitful conversations along these lines continued at consultations held in Brazil and Kenya where fully half of the participants came from the developing world. This gave the world fellowship insight into the perspectives of the Global South and opened a path to responsible leadership for many who had previously felt excluded.

At these meetings and at all future consultations, there were ample opportunities to engage with community and national leaders. In this way they provided an immersion into the life and realities of worlds unknown by many in the global network. One result: committed friends in these regions who had felt on the periphery of the movement felt for the first time that they were needed. Said one senior Brazilian, “I see now that responsibility must be taken; it is not given.”

Compassion the Great Healer - Panchgani, India - 1991

Building on insights from Tokyo, a consultation in Asia Plateau explored further the movement’s unconscious bias in favor of Christian images, expressions and traditions. Participants included several Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists, each of whom evidenced a spiritual depth and sensitivity that opened the minds of many to the spiritual truths found in different faith traditions. It was an education of heart and mind, peeling away layers of suspicion, prejudice and simple ignorance. Observed one participant, “Compassion is the great healer.” Intentional efforts, the group concluded, must be made to understand better the Muslim world, its history, its faith, its global reach. Real progress on that came directly through participants at the consultation, and similar new understandings of Hindu traditions came through others. All those present discovered that they had much to learn from one another. One Christian observed: “I have Muslim and Hindu friends who are more Christ-like than I.”

These new understandings of the world’s different faith traditions enabled the movement to respond quickly and appropriately following the events of September 2001. A consultation in the United Kingdom in 2002 addressed this matter and recommended actions grounded in these new understandings.

Finance

Yet another change in the movement’s culture, its way of doing things, was inspired by a consultation on finance. Traditionally, information about the sources and uses of money

had been closely held. The typical response to questions about how the movement was financed was “faith and prayer,” leaving the inquirer more mystified than ever. To unmask the mysteries surrounding money, a consultation was held in Ottawa, Canada, in 1992. The curtain was raised. The different ways by which money was found in different countries and cultures were openly discussed. So also were the varied ways in which full time workers were supported. In some countries, there were regular salaries, in others generous reimbursements for expenses and in still others an expectation that each person would somehow find their own support. While it is not the purpose of this paper to report on the details of these discussions, the main outcomes were that finance would no longer be a no-go area, that the needs of individual full time workers should be carried on the hearts and minds of us all, and that the global network would aim to carry together major, long term needs, such as those for the renovation and maintenance of Caux.

These cultural changes happened almost effortlessly during the first several global consultations. People seemed to be ready. Out of these changes grew the trust, confidence and unity that made possible far-reaching decisions about the movement’s strategic goals and its governance.

II Core Principles

As the consultations unfolded, the participants began to grapple with the wider issues of corporate governance, the strategic focus for the movement and the full development of people, both those giving their full time to work with the movement and those they encountered in the world. These inter-related discussions led rather quickly to a range of proposals that will be discussed in detail in subsequent sections. But an important question hung in the air. Was the wider team ready to accept these proposals? Were those who had come to trust their own leading as the final arbiter of their decisions and actions ready to accept the recommendations of the consultations? Or were the consultations getting a little ahead of the wider team? The Support Group thought it important not to rush.

A first step, they felt, was to confirm commitment to the movement's core principles. These were simple enough: Start With Yourself. Look honestly at your relationships, behaviors and motivations; acknowledge where you fall short; put right what you can. Share your change with others. Listen to your inner voice, whether understood as conscience or the leading of the Spirit of God. Work in teamwork to seek the changes you feel are needed in the world around you.

These derived directly from the experiences of its founder, Frank Buchman. At a Christian convention in the village of Keswick in the Lake District of England, he saw for the first time that in a bitter dispute with six board members of a hostel in Philadelphia where he had worked, he was the seventh wrong man. He wrote each to express heartfelt apologies. When he shared his change with a young man he encountered on a walk, that man found a new direction in his life.

From this, Buchman discovered that starting with himself made all the difference.

He tested this insight during seven years as YMCA Secretary at Penn State College in Pennsylvania. While his bible studies were well attended and widely praised, he made two other important discoveries that became fundamental to his future ministry. First, encouraged by a British Baptist named F.B. Meyer, he began the practice of daily reflection, what he called the quiet time. Secondly, influenced by his friendship with Yale professor Henry B. Wright, he made individual persons the center of his work. Wright's book, *The Will of God and a Man's Lifework*, also convinced him that a person's search for purpose and meaning in life would be more successful if he or she used absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love to guide that search. In a time of quiet, he felt clearly led to befriend three influential people on campus, including the local bootlegger. All three experienced surprising personal changes that soon ricocheted throughout the college community.

Buchman took these lessons to Oxford. Students responded. Loudon Hamilton, a student at Christ Church, Oxford, was the first to drop everything and to work alongside him. Soon other talented young men from Oxford and Cambridge and from elite American universities, where Buchman had worked a decade earlier, joined. As they shared their experiences of personal change with whomever would listen, the movement spread by contagion. Hundreds of unpublished private letters from the period 1927-1930 tell story after story of people finding new life and direction at scores of house parties - the preferred meeting space - around Britain, Europe and beyond. At weekly meetings in Oxford, much merriment was expressed as others joined their ranks. "Going Oxford" became the talk of the town. Before long, there were active groups in more than a dozen countries. Labeled the Oxford Group in 1929 by a train conductor in South Africa, teams came together for annual summer conferences at Oxford colleges that were regularly attended by thousands of people. The international press took note. Buchman was put on the cover of *Time Magazine*. Major articles, some of them critical of the movement, appeared in widely circulated magazines.

In the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1934, for example, Henry Van Dusen, a leading voice of the American spiritual community and later President of the prestigious Union Theological

Seminary in New York, described this “movement of contagious personal religion” as “the most striking spiritual phenomenon of our time.” As evidence he alleged: “Of the fifty ablest younger ministers on the Atlantic seaboard today, somewhere near half were directed in their vocation through his (Buchman’s) influence.” Was this not an example of the power of those simple core principles?

At every consultation, these principles, what some called the heart or spirit of MRA, were integral to the proceedings. At three, they were front and center. In Kenya in 1994, participants focused on the quality of their own lives. Many found fresh insights personally and re-committed themselves to using their lives to bring out the best in those they encountered. Much later, at a consultation in Richmond, Virginia, in 2001, a search for fresh expressions of these core principles set in the context of the issues of the day led to the promulgation of what was called, *The Richmond Affirmations*. These are attached as Appendix 2.

A second step recommended by the Support Group was to allow a two year pause in the Consultation Process. Instead of a regular 1995 consultation, a spiritual retreat for a larger group was organized in England. Called a Jubilee Renewal, it was inspired by Juliet Boobbyer and included a visit to Holy Island in the north of England. It was seen in part as preparation for the fiftieth anniversary of Caux the following year. In 1996, the global team turned its full attention to an impressive range of conferences marking the Caux fiftieth. Among many distinguished guests was the Dalai Lama.

The evidence is that this pause did in fact give the wider team the time it needed to reflect on and absorb what had already happened. When the consultations resumed in 1997, the movement was ready for more radical steps.

III The Development of People

The first consultation following the pause took place in Melbourne in 1997. Its subject was training and the development of people. One thing clear to the participants was that the development of people depended less on the content of specific training programs than on the quality of life of those doing the training. **How** we did everything mattered. The rounded development of people, whether those newly attracted to the movement or those fully committed to it or those loosely connected to one of our programs, was a joint responsibility.

Initial discussions on these subjects had taken place in Tokyo in 1989, where a critical insight was that getting the best out of people takes time and intention. It needed to become a priority for all our teams. Three specific proposals were endorsed. 1) To offer the Australian three month program called 'Studies in Effective Living' at Asia Plateau in India every other year. 2) To develop a Caux Intern Program that could be offered 2 or 3 times each summer for 20-25 students. 3) To set up a responsible group to enhance the training of full-time workers worldwide.

Two years later at the Berlin Consultation, attention turned to two new training programs that, typically for the movement, had grown out of individual initiatives. *Foundations for Freedom* aimed to promote democratic values in Eastern Europe and was part of a wider aim of strengthening the moral and spiritual dimensions of democracy. The *Caux Scholars Program* recently created in the US was designed to equip young people, mostly from global conflict regions, with skills for resolving conflicts. These programs took the movement's core values, such as starting change with oneself and active, empathetic listening, into areas that heretofore had been far beyond the reach of the movement.

In recent years, similar outreach programs had been initiated to address a range of urgent issues. The *International Communications Forum*, initiated by a publisher in

London, set out to restore integrity in the media. *Hope in the Cities*, that emerged from a local team in Richmond, Virginia, addressed the complex challenges of building trust among diverse populations in the world's cities. The *Caux Round Table*, mentioned earlier, promoted principles for business that could ameliorate trade tensions that threatened the global economy. *Clean Election Campaigns* in Asia and Africa aimed to reduce corruption in democratic institutions and inspire individuals in the political maelstrom to match their hopes for their nations with changes in their own lives.

Each of these initiatives sought to inspire others to apply the core principles of integrity, self-reflection and personal change. Rather than aiming to get such partners into a 'movement', the aim was to infuse the values of the movement into different sectors of life. The consultations strongly endorsed this approach.

In a certain way, these efforts were similar to one of the most consequential outgrowths of the Oxford Group. In 1937, two men long active with the Oxford Group in New York City and Akron, Ohio, took what they had learned to people like themselves who had become addicted to alcohol. Drawing on the principles of the OG, especially listening and starting with oneself, they developed the twelve step program. Thus was born a movement that Scott Peck, author of *The Road Less Traveled*, called the most important community of the twentieth Century. Following the example of Alcoholics Anonymous, similar communities emerged in subsequent years initiated by those suffering from different addictions.

In Melbourne the full range of MRA's training programs were carefully reviewed. Recommendations included better coordination among these programs, wider dissemination of their availability, expanded opportunities for field experiences for those involved, practical tools for self-assessment and spiritual retreats for refreshment. These convictions were shared with the world network and impacted the way training programs were conducted in several countries.

The Melbourne consultation also identified values, similar to the core principles previously discussed, that it felt should be incorporated into all training programs.

1. Every person is important
2. Renewal starts with oneself
3. Regular times in silence
4. Values of integrity
5. Restoring for the past
6. Working with others

One further insight emerged from a consultation in India in 2000. Recognizing that it takes time for any individual to discover his or her calling and to integrate moral values into every aspect of life, the consultation endorsed a proposal of the Indian team to offer a year long training program based in Asia Plateau. Like an earlier one called *Action for Life*, also based at Asia Plateau, it would enable individuals in the program to be accompanied by someone of greater experience.

Taken together, these recommendations led to new approaches to the development of people that put individuals, rather than the movement, at the center.

IV Worldwide Goals and Strategic Vision

Defining the movement's strategic vision was seen as a necessary step towards the more challenging task of developing appropriate governance for the movement. It was a way of narrowing the fields of focus. No movement could address everything. So, what were the specific goals appropriate for the movement? This question was taken up at a consultation in Cyprus in 1993.

Cyprus - 1993

Its mandate was to discern priorities amongst a patchwork of promising programs and initiatives. These stretched from Cambodia and Northeast India to Central America and Brazil, and related to issues as varied as the role of women in creating peace and how to encourage democratic institutions in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Given critical shortages of people and money, it was clear to the conferees that not all of these initiatives could be supported in ways that would enable them to flourish. Choices had to be made. But on what basis? This led to a rich discussion about the movement's strengths and weaknesses. Given our history and experience, what overarching goals made most sense? Were there broad themes around which initiatives might be focused and organized?

Joe Montville, a U.S. diplomat with long experience in the Middle East, was one of the participants. He spoke of an analysis being done by Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), about the role that religious actors, whether institutions or individuals, had had in resolving six significant conflicts during the post World War II era. Two of the six case studies highlighted the role of MRA and called attention to its personal approach to building relationships of trust between peoples. Montville had authored a piece some years before in *Foreign Policy* magazine in which

he had described informal citizen engagement in conflict situations as Track II diplomacy. Now in Cyprus he helped representatives of the movement evaluate its unique contributions. He described its role as a kind of lubricant, facilitating the trust between leaders and peoples required to support and sustain new relationships. This was selfless and inconspicuous work, usually done behind the scenes.

The CSIS study was published in the next year under the title, Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft. Edited by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, a chapter authored by Ed Luttwak, a highly reputed Washington strategist, described MRA's "important contribution to one of the greatest achievements in the entire record of modern statecraft: the astonishingly rapid Franco-German reconciliation after 1945."

It became clear that healing the wounds of history was a component of many of these efforts. It was equally clear that the movement's insistence on starting with oneself equipped its people to be catalysts for healing. The conferees readily agreed that healing history should be a major focus of the movement's efforts.

Other themes that fit well with the movement's gifts and history were identified. These included helping to strengthen the moral and spiritual foundations of democracy, as was already being attempted in Eastern Europe, addressing the root causes of despair in the world's cities and fostering a wider sense of social, economic and environmental responsibility among businesses, corporations and the professions.

These insights led to agreement on six worldwide goals around which global initiatives might coalesce. The idea was that initiatives outside these agreed themes would diminish and those within their scope would receive additional support. These are listed below as slightly amended at a subsequent consultation in India:

◆ Healing the wounds of history that sustain cycles of revenge, especially where cultures and civilizations meet.

- ◆ Strengthening the moral and spiritual dimensions of democracy, so challenging selfish interests and corruption.
- ◆ Helping individuals and families to counter the climate of blame and selfishness with a culture of care and personal responsibility.
- ◆ Strengthening the motivation of care and moral commitment in economic life and thinking, in order to create jobs, correct economic and environmental imbalance, and tackle the root causes of poverty.
- ◆ Rebuilding a sense of community and hope in cities, and tackling the causes of racial and communal discrimination.
- ◆ Forging networks among people from different cultures and faiths based on a shared commitment to work for reconciliation, justice and peace.

Over the next few years initiatives took shape around these goals. Many remained informal and limited in scope. Others evolved into defined programs, generally referred to as Named Programs, that became major vehicles for the movement's ongoing work. Some were international in scope, involving coordination among national teams as well as organizations outside the movement; others were primarily national in scope and were carried by national teams. Some embraced ongoing work within the movement, and others broke new ground outside our current efforts.

None of these programs was a substitute for the life-changing work that had always been at the heart of the work. But they did provide a framework for addressing societal issues on the minds of those outside our networks. And they created opportunities for collaboration with a wide range of people and organizations. Passing on our core principles within these new partnerships was to be an ongoing challenge.

At a consultation in South Africa in 1999, the strengths and weaknesses of these 'Named Programs' were further considered. Perhaps for the first time, the movement recognized the unexpected benefits of partnerships outside our orbit. New skills and

ways of doing things could be discovered, as well as fresh ideas for accessing financial resources.

At the same time, the consultation noted possible unintended consequences. New programs put pressure on limited human resources. They had the potential to further fragmentation. They could deflect attention from other needs of the work. They could become ends in themselves. Details about these were described in documents circulated to the world fellowship. The newly created International Council (discussed in the next section) was asked to pay close attention to these Named Programs, encouraging them to stay true to MRA's core values as they reached more deeply into the needs of the world.

Continuing conversations about our strategic goals led finally to a useful tag line that captured well the overall mission of the work:

Building Trust across the World's Divides

V Towards Collective Leadership

Berlin 1991

The first consultation to look at the movement's governance took place in Berlin in 1991. The conferees acknowledged that discerning priorities, the challenge that had given rise to the process in the first place, had hardly been met. At that time, national teams were still doing their own things, following their own leading, with little reference to the larger movement. Nor was there discernible coherence in the wide range of global initiatives that had emerged in recent years. Thus, following vigorous discussion, the Berlin Consultation recommended the movement's first ever international leadership structure, to be called the International Coordination Group (ICG). Its mandate was modest: to help coordinate our international efforts, to foster greater coherence and unity and to help discern priorities. Those serving on the ICG would assimilate information from many sources, consult widely and focus attention on matters that required consideration and decision. They would supplement the informal networks that already existed and help generate timely decisions. But they would have no executive authority.

Reflecting caution based on the movement's long-held suspicion of organization and of any leadership group, the consultation mandated broad-based conversations about the proposal in the coming months, set up elaborate procedures for seeking and approving nominations and deferred a final decision for a year. In the end, this patient approach was rewarded, and the recommendations garnered wide support.

For a movement with a strong heritage of distrusting organization, the willingness to entrust even a modicum of authority to an elected group reflected the new level of trust that the process had generated. Participants now realized that everyone had something to bring to the table, that we could trust one another to shape our institutions, establish mandates and select those who would be asked to provide the selfless leadership. One

participant who was new to the consultations said that he had been praying for just such a group of "care-takers" since Frank Buchman's death over 30 years before, the moment of that curious omission earlier mentioned.

The ICG began to function in 1992. It took them time to grasp the breadth and depth of current initiatives. A lot of listening was required. As they listened, they were surprised to discover serious personal conflicts that lay beneath the surface, even in apparently successful programs. Dealing with these took a lot of their time. Finally, as they began to understand better the challenges facing the network, they made recommendations about how its activities could be better coordinated. However, the ICG made little progress on the vexing issue of priorities.

During the pause in the consultations referred to above, Gordon Wise, noting these difficulties, convened meetings in 1995 to evaluate whether the ICG was meeting the need. The Support Group took part, as did a few other individuals. Gordon raised particularly the issue of leadership and the need for authority. He referenced Buchman's approach to leadership and, while acknowledging that the situation was very different today, suggested that a more affirmative leadership was needed. The ICG itself acknowledged the same concerns. In 1998, this issue of leadership and authority was finally brought to a consultation in Jamaica. This time the movement was ready.

Jamaica, 1998

The global team was in fact getting impatient. There were calls for stronger leadership. The movement was ready to push the envelope, and to address vexing issues about the nature of the leadership that was required and about how to deal with the ever-present danger of dominance by strong personalities. Could a leadership group truly reflect the diversity of the work? Could it work together like the fingers of one hand, as Buchman had envisioned? If so, could it be effective?

John Graham, a former American diplomat leading the *Giraffe Project*, which encourages people to "stick their necks out", reminded all of a Chinese proverb: "It is

dangerous to try to leap a canyon in two bounds.” We need to take risks, he said. Said another, ‘Memories restrict; imagination liberates.’

In the end the participants unanimously decided upon four important steps.

1. **To recommend an International Council (IC)**
2. **To create a Panel of Elders**
3. **To Seek a new Name for the Movement**
4. **To create an association of the national legal bodies of the movement**

The **International Council** was to be a collective leadership, consisting of 7-10 people representing the diversity of the work. It was to begin service in July, 1999. It was the movement’s first identified leadership group.

Their mandate was to:

- * encourage a shared global vision
- * empower committed teams at every level
- * nurture the spiritual life of our world family, and fostering the development of people
- * discern opportunities, developing strategies and recommend priorities
- * set agendas for the annual consultations
- * stimulate efforts to reach the public square
- * oversee the schedule of MRA’s international events
- * be the reference point for initiatives that affect MRA’s international standing

The Consultation developed a careful and open process for selecting those to serve on the IC. It set up terms and a rotation of membership and created a Secretariat to assist their operations. The Council was to be accountable to the annual Global Consultation, which was to remain the primary policy forum for the global movement.

The purpose of the **Panel of Elders** was to relieve the International Council of responsibility for resolving internal conflicts like those that had preoccupied the previous

International Coordination Group. Former members of the ICG would be among those asked to serve and selection of other members was developed carefully.

The recommendation to explore a **New Name** arose from evidence that Moral Re-Armament was seen as anachronistic in some countries and impossible to translate in others. Concerns had been first expressed in the 1980s and more definitively at the Cyprus Consultation in 1993, but no deliberate discussions on the subject had taken place. A committee was asked to canvass the network for suggestions. Small groups met around the world to discuss possibilities and ideas were forwarded to the committee. Two names received most support, namely *Initiatives For Change* and *Change International*. The Support Group, prompted by an inspired insight of Ailsa Hamilton, suggested *Initiatives of Change*, rather than Initiatives for Change. They felt this connoted that lasting change needed to grow out of change in people. The two proposals went forward to a special consultation in Caux in 2001. Forty people were selected to attend. Some preferred the corporate feel of Change International. Others preferred the more modest alternative of Initiatives of Change. There was vigorous discussion and several times of quiet. Initially the forty were equally divided, 20-20. Someone commented wryly that this implied perfect vision. Following a good laugh and a further time of reflection, two votes shifted and a decision was taken in favor of Initiatives of Change (IofC). It was announced on August 14, 2001.

Initiatives of Change International

The recommendation to form an association of legal bodies was not entirely unexpected. There had been Informal meetings of National Societies in Caux in recent years that had been helpful. There were new teams in countries where the movement had only recently been active and it made sense to create frameworks where these new teams could learn from more established bodies. Then there was the realization that bringing together bodies from countries with different faith traditions would be helpful in confirming the multi-faith character of the movement. Also the participants were aware of increasing interactions that different teams were having with international organizations. Might these be facilitated by an international association?

Each legal body was independent and operated under the laws and traditions of its nation. Each had a different way of choosing its governing body, managing its affairs and raising funds. Several owned at least one residential property, in most cases the result of a legacy, and a few had significant endowments. A few were largely dependent on MRA societies and individuals outside their countries.

At a meeting the following summer, the national Boards endorsed this recommendation and set in motion the creation of a constitution for the new organization. David Forbes, an American lawyer based in Switzerland with experience in creating international organizations, drafted the constitution. Nine individuals who had been intimately involved with the consultation process, including several who had served on the International Council, reviewed and amended the proposed constitution. To assure that the new association would uphold fully the movement's core values, Peter Thwaites of Australia drafted a Preamble for the Association that stated clearly the fundamental principles of the movement. The preamble and constitution were unanimously agreed. A copy of the Preamble is attached as Appendix 3.

Six purposes of the Association were spelled out in the Articles of Association: to

1. Promote the principles and purposes of the Initiatives of Change Movement, as described in the Preamble.
2. Represent the universality and multi-faith character of the Movement and safeguard its standards, values and basic ideas;
3. Define and regulate the ownership and international use of the name "Initiatives of Change" and the acronym "MRA" and the name "Moral Re- Armament" as trade names, corporate names, logos, emblems or otherwise as any form of intellectual property;
4. Provide a common point of reference for National Societies to establish agreed standards and guidelines;
5. Define and regulate the admission of new Members and Associates; and

6. Facilitate the global operations of the Movement and its relationships with international institutions and organizations.

The Association was not intended to replace the International Council, which would continue to retain overall responsibility for nurturing the worldwide movement. However, to encourage close cooperation between the two bodies, at least four of the nine members of the Executive Committee of the Association would come from members of the International Council at the time of their election.

The new International Association, Initiatives of Change - International, was formally founded in April, 2002. The following individuals incorporated the Association and relinquished their voting privileges at the conclusion of the ordinary annual meeting following the admission of 12 National Societies as Members of the Association.

- Rajmohan Gandhi, India;
- Ailsa Hamilton, UK ;
- James Hore-Ruthven, UK;
- Pieter Horn, South Africa;
- Philippe Lasserre, France;
- Ashwin Patel, Kenya;
- Richard Ruffin, USA;
- Cornelio Sommaruga, Switzerland;
- Peter Thwaites, Australia;
- Richard Weeks, Canada.

The first General Assembly was convened on August 4, 2002.

Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the Caux Foundation and former President of the International Committee Of the Red Cross, was elected as the Association's first President. Under his leadership, the movement engaged more actively with the United Nations. He arranged opportunities for those in the movement with experience in conflict zones to meet with senior UN leaders and Ambassadors connected with those conflicts. Offices were opened in New York and Geneva. IofC-International applied for and was granted standing as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in relationship with the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

This new Association and the International Council were the first international bodies with responsibility for the governance of the worldwide movement. Together with the Panel of Elders, these gave the Initiatives of Change movement a light institutional structure that it was hoped would better enable it to meet the challenges of the coming century.

With this, the main tasks of the consultations were accomplished

Conclusions

How should we think about, understand and evaluate this fifteen year Consultation Process?

From the beginning, each consultation had been convened to address a specific need. The process was bottom up. The first in Tokyo, for example, was a response to a need to include people from non-western cultures in the leadership of the movement. The meeting in Berlin in 1991 was prompted by a need for greater coordination among initiatives around the world. Two meetings addressed a need to widen responsibility for Caux. The meeting in Canada in 1992 aimed to bring transparency to the movement's heretofore opaque financial affairs. And a meeting in Cyprus the next year was a direct response to a strongly felt need to clarify the movement's worldwide goals.

Along the way, other agendas arose and were discussed. But the focus was always to respond to specific needs. While the Support Group played a pivotal role in identifying needs and determining when and where they could be addressed, the consultation was charged to find solutions and communicate these to the entire world network.

The consultations can be likened to an ongoing constitutional convention. Whenever an issue arose that needed to be addressed, a consultation would be selected and empowered to address that need. Participation varied but consisted of people chosen in open processes who were entrusted to come up with solutions. If experience showed that proposed solutions needed amendment or were just unworkable, a subsequent consultation would make adjustments. Thus, for example, the Consultation in Jamaica in 1998 recognized that the International Coordination Group set up in Berlin five years earlier no longer met the need for better governance of the movement and therefore created the International Council.

This 'constitutional' process depended on at least three intangibles, all related to trust:

1. The participants would embrace their responsibilities and trust that they would be shown how best to meet them.
2. The world network would trust the participants to serve humbly and selflessly.
3. The Support Group would be trusted to set ground rules that assured a fair process and outcomes that reflected the consensus of the meeting.

It was not an infallible process, but it accomplished important objectives.

1. It brought a large number of the movement's most ardent activists into broad responsibility for the movement's health and strength.
2. It broke down cultural barriers to leadership within the movement.
3. It generated greater understanding across differences of religion, culture and ethnicity.
4. It generated confidence that solutions could be found to new challenges.
5. It created an agreed process for resolving disputes within the movement.
6. It created light governing structures that facilitated better management of the movement.
7. It created an Association that brought together into one body the varied national societies that had responsibility in each country.
8. It facilitated relations with the United Nations and other international organizations with whom the movement shared goals and objectives.
9. It agreed on a new name for the movement.

All this was done without compromising the core principles of the movement.

Remaining Challenges

At the end of 2002, there were still challenges to be addressed by future consultations.

Foremost was how to bring together the role and functions of the International Council with the role and functions of the International Association. To what extent would the

responsibilities of the Executive Committee of the Association overlap with those of the International Council? How would different interpretations be resolved?

What was expected of the Presidency? Did the movement want him or her to provide overall leadership and direction to the movement, or was the role more to be the public face of the movement and to represent the movement in international forums?

Given the broad responsibilities of the IC to nurture the global movement and oversee its wide ranging programs, how was the IC to find the necessary funds? Would the IC need to become more pro-active in fund raising?

To what extent should the International Association seek to work in partnership with the UN and its agencies? How would such interactions be financed? Equally, if the Association wished to undertake other initiatives that would advance the movement's mission and goals, how would these be funded?

What would be the right relationship between the independent National Societies and the International Association? Was the model of the relationship between the International Committee of the Red Cross, which our first President had led, and the various National Red Cross societies a model for us?

How would the larger and wealthier National Societies support the growth and development of other less resourced and experienced National Societies?

How would challenges to the movement's core principles presented by ever more intrusive technologies be met? How would the movement's distinct focus on the individual be maintained in a culture increasingly dominated by social media?

A more fundamental question related to leadership. Did the movement want and need stronger leadership from the top or did it want only more effective management of the initiatives that grew up from the grass roots?

No doubt, there will be other challenges that cannot be foreseen now. Will the Consultation Process prove adequate to address these new challenges?

I do not know. However, the fifteen year experiment described herein does give me confidence that the movement can evolve whatever new processes may be required. The only requirements are that those in the movement continue to trust one another and to trust that an open and honest search for the best ways forward will reveal next steps in the ongoing adventure of governing a diverse global movement.

Consultations Timeline

- 1. Chantilly, France, April 8-13, 1989; Taize, April 13-17**
 - a. Participation: 29 in Chantilly; 20 at Taize
 - b. Main agenda: MRA's approach to the communist world**

- 2. Tokyo, October 3-13, 1989 (near Mt. Fuji)**
 - a. 25 participants from 15 countries
 - b. MRA's Corporate Culture; Training and Development; Asian Strategy**

- 3. Schoenstatt, nr. Sao Paulo, and at Siteo, Petropolis, Brazil, April 1-10, 1990**
 - a. 25 participants from 18 countries
 - b. Full engagement of Latin Americans** in responsibility for MRA

- 4. Dingy en Vache, France, September, 1990**
 - a. 33 participants
 - b. How to widen and deepen international responsibility for Caux**

- 5. Asia Plateau, India, February 16-22, 1991**
 - a. 24 participants from 14 countries: Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist
 - b. Making A.P. a home for the world**

- 6. Berlin (Ferch), August 29 - Sept 4, 1991**
 - a. 31 participants, including 6 from Germany
 - b. Decision to propose International Coordination Group (ICG).**

- 1992 - Meetings to refine proposal for ICG and agree first members**

- 7. Ottawa, October 1992**
 - a. 25 from 14 countries
 - b. Unprecedented transparency about finances**

- 8. Cyprus, November 12-16, 1993**
 - a. 33 participants; 18 countries
 - b. Agreement on six worldwide goals**
 - c. Call for stronger collective leadership: transparent, inclusive and trustworthy**

- 9. Nairobi, Kenya, October 27 - November 3, 1994**
 - a. 24 from 16 countries. Half from developing world
 - b. Focus on quality of life: Life-Changing; Team Life; Moral Standards**

1995 - Meeting to evaluate Consultation Process after 5 years. Gordon Wise calls for stronger leadership and a more mature way of handling the work.

10. Jubilee Renewal, Tirley Garth, UK, October 1995

- a. 50 from 18 countries
- b. Holy Island, arranged by Juliet Boobbyer

1996 - No formal consultation. Focus on Caux 50th.

11. Melbourne, Australia, April 19 - 26, 1997

- a. 33 from 21 countries; 12 under 35.
- b. Focus on development of people.

12. Jamaica, April 23-30, 1998

- a. 38 from 22 countries; Sir Howard Cooke, Governor General in attendance.
- b. Recommended **International Council** with mandate to provide leadership.
- c. **Drafted Universal Statement on MRA for the Internet.**
- d. Considered formation of an **international MRA Association.**
- e. Recommended **Council of Elders**
- f. Proposed **working group** to consider a name change

1998 - Meetings in Caux choose members of ICG

13. South Africa, March 5-12, 1999

- a. 37 from 22 countries
- b. **Approved the Jamaica proposals re IC and Elders**
- c. **Evaluation of Named Programs**, noting possible unintended consequences.

14. Panchgani, February 4-11, 2000

- a. 38 from 27 countries
- b. Fresh look at **MRA's priorities from a non-Western perspective**
- c. Decision for global HoHo, Dec 30, 2001 - January 20, 2002

15. Richmond, March 4-12, 2001

- a. 36 from 19 countries
- b. **Initiatives of Change and Change International as possible new names,**
- c. Agreed **Richmond Affirmations**

16. Caux Consultation on New Name for MRA, August 6-7, 2001

- a. 40 attending, mostly same as in Richmond
- b. **Press release of August 14 announces new name.**

17. Americas Consultation, November 13-14, 2001, Petropolis, Brazil

- a. Draft declaration of Common Vision for IC-Americas Work

18. Global Hoho - December 30, 2001 - January 20, 2002

- a. 200 at its peak from 35 countries
- b. Decision of Africans to launch continent wide Clean Elections Campaign**

19. Initiatives of Change - International founded on April 1, 2002. First General Assembly August 4, 2002, attended by reps of 22 National Societies

20. Tirley Garth, UK, October 17-24, 2002

- a. 38 from 21 countries
- b. Expand engagement with UN through IC office in NY.**

Appendix 2

Richmond Affirmations

As an international fellowship open to people of all cultures, nationalities, religions and beliefs, we affirm:

That in this era of globalization,

An *individual* can be a powerful agent for positive change in society

That in this age characterized by an overabundance of information,

Listening in silence – to God, to the Inner Voice, or to conscience – is an essential source of inner freedom, discernment and direction

That in this age where pressures on our life and time lead us to live on the surface of our being,

Change on a personal and global scale starts with the ongoing process of *self-discovery*

That in this climate of moral relativism,

Honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love offer benchmarks against which to measure our individual and collective behavior

That in this time when profits and results are made paramount,

Genuine *care* for and by individuals is at the heart of any effort toward lasting change in society

That in this time of communal tension,

All people should be valued equally: every person has a story to tell and a part to play

That in this time when cycles of hatred and resentment are perpetuated,

Acknowledgement of past wrongs, forgiveness, and restoration are means by which the human spirit is liberated and history is healed

That in a society that is quick to assign blame,

***Honest conversations* can unite people for action across barriers that have historically divided them**

That in a world marked by divisions and self-interest,

***Communities of dedicated people* can unite to serve as models of a more just and compassionate society**

Appendix 3

PREAMBLE to the INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Fundamental Principles and History of the Movement

Initiatives of Change is a world-wide network of people of diverse races, nations, creeds and backgrounds, who are committed to transformation in society based on change in individuals, starting with themselves.

It proposes standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love as guidelines to private and public conduct.

It affirms that there is a divine purpose for the world and each person in it.

It encourages people to seek this purpose through listening to their inner voice and to their conscience and through making what they know of God and eternal moral values central in their lives.

These ideas when lived out spread from person to person. They have given rise to the international movement which since 1946 has held world conferences in Caux, Switzerland, and generates initiatives on every continent to address such fundamental challenges as:

- Bringing reconciliation and healing where there is conflict;
- Tackling the root causes of corruption, poverty and social exclusion;
- Strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations of democracy.

Initiatives of Change is based on the work built up by Frank Buchman (1878 -1961), a Lutheran minister from Pennsylvania, USA. It has been known since 1938 as Moral Re-Armament (MRA). In 1932 in Geneva, Buchman defined the essence of his thinking: "The international problems of today are, at bottom, personal problems of selfishness and fear. Lives must be changed if problems are to be solved. Peace in the world can only spring from peace in the hearts of people. A dynamic experience of God's free Spirit is the answer to regional antagonism, economic depression, racial conflict and international strife."

Later, he expressed the role of MRA as bringing "the full dimension of change: economic change; social change; national change; international change; all based on personal change" (1949). Such a work, he believed, offered a "good road...upon which all can unite...." Christian, Jew, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Confucianist – "all find they can change, where needed, and travel along this good road together" (1948), implicitly referring to all major faith traditions.