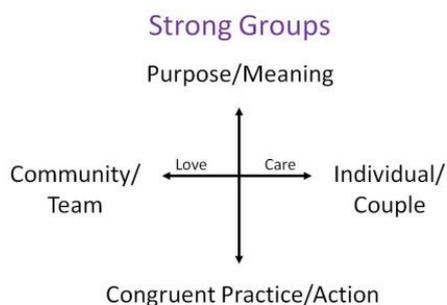


What is the Teams Movement?

Penny and Peter Cahalan

During the year we in South Australia completed an interesting exercise. It began as a planning day for the future of Teams, but quickly became a discussion on the identity of the Teams Movement. We used as our starting place the formal definition of what the Movement is. A very lively discussion then took place, which left Peter and I reflecting for a few months on who we are and what we are trying to do, and related to that, on what makes a strong group or Team.

We came up with this model. Strong groups have a clearly defined purpose or meaning and, following along that axis, a practice or action that is clearly related. They also have cohesive bonds of care for the individuals in the group as well as for the group as a whole. These bonds help to cement the relationships in the group so as to give the whole strength.



The care for the group and the individual axis we will take as a clearly understood given - if we do not have this, then we don't have a Team. But what is our meaning and then our congruent practice?

We can turn to the official definition and the Endeavours as an answer, and for some this would hold true. But most of us don't use the words "married spirituality" in regular speech and the Endeavours, in our experience, are referred to as ideals but challenging to practice in full. We need a way of speaking about Teams that reflect our lived experience not ideals - however good those ideals are.

So we asked our own Team to tell us what Teams means to them. We emphasised that there are no right or wrong answers, just simply what the Teams experience has meant to each person present. We continued by asking everyone to tell the group what practise had sustained them in Teams over the years.

These were some of the answers: *The Team is closer than my blood family. Meeting regularly and sharing to the depths of our heart means that God is close to our heart. I feel that I belong. I feel that I just am. I have a valued place. I don't feel any less or any*

more than others. There's a shared commitment to relationships. There are not many places where you can share at depth. It's the place where you can talk and be listened to and as such Teams has no equal.

The practice we valued the most was sharing: We have a practice and are dogged about the discipline of the monthly update about the 'real'. The norm is that we update each other – but about what is real. I experience God in moments of inspiration in the Team – and it can be something ordinary but the way the person speaks about it lifts my spirit and gives me the privilege of seeing the defining core of a person.

This meeting was one of the most powerful we have had for some time. We were able to talk to each other about our real understanding of Teams in simple, clear and powerful language – the language of our stories.

We all need to communicate about the experience of being in Teams in the language of story, not the language of holiness or officialdom. If we do, we are following a great role model – Jesus! After all, He taught using the medium of parables or stories.

We found these questions the basis of a great topic. You might like to try this yourselves.

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The Year in Review 2013

*Faye and Kevin Noonan
Oceania Super-Regional Couple*

One of the underlying strengths of the Teams movement is its clarity of focus on the individual couple and the team that supports them. This is an important aspect of the Teams movement and something that pervades everything we do. But it is also worth taking a moment to reflect on how this approach has created a very different type of movement. It has been a philosophy that values the individual couple and diversity that has remained with the movement from the early days of one team in pre-war France to today's worldwide organisation with more than 130,000 members. This reality was discussed very clearly at the international College meeting we attended in July, but perhaps with a little tongue in cheek:

"The College is a fruit salad, not a jam." (ie There are many cultures in the mix, but each retains its own flavour.)"

The comment raised a laugh but on reflection it is a profound comment expressing the essence of the Teams Movement.

Teams is proving to be a positive force in the world, bridging cultural differences

through support and acceptance of others. This includes supporting cross-cultural marriages, and building stronger support for the status of women in some cultures. The Teams approach is not to judge but to encourage couples to be open and frank in sharing about personal hopes and aspirations.

In Oceania, too, there is clear evidence that embracing diversity is paying big dividends.

A diversity of cultures.....

New Sydney Sector

Teams in Sydney has had a long history of growing through diversity. For many years there has been a French-speaking Team with members drawn from different countries around the world. We are now pleased to announce that a new Sector was inaugurated in Sydney on Sunday 18 August. The Sector Couple, Gisele and Najy Kerbage, and Sector Team were commissioned. There are now seven Teams in the Sector, with a number of members from the Maronite community. The clergy and religious are very supportive of Teams and its continued growth in Sydney.

The Philippines

Teams continues to be strongly supported by its members in the Philippines. A relationship is being fostered between the Sandhurst Diocese in Victoria and the Cebu Teams, through the training of priests and group visits. A group of Australian teachers and a priest (also a Teams Spiritual Counsellor) visited the Philippines recently, and experienced the warm hospitality of the Cebu Teams members.

In Darwin

Sister Eufemia Lacerda (a Canossian nun) from Darwin, attended the QLD Retreat and Crossroads event after an invitation from Sue and Bren Milsom, who met with her in Darwin. Sr Eufemia, who works as a pastoral leader in the Timorese expat community, expressed the need for formation among couples and families she worked with. Sue and Bren explained to her the type of formation that Teams could provide for a weekend retreat. Attending the Brisbane gathering was a positive experience, allowing Sr Eufemia and the Qld Team members to learn from each other.

At this stage Sr Eufemia is proposing to organise a weekend retreat in Darwin using Teams

principles, with an opportunity for input by Teams couples.

A diversity of ideas.....

New Regional Couples

To allow regular renewal, Teams promotes change of leadership after set terms of service. This allows for new ideas and new perspectives to be brought to the movement.

After a process of discernment, we have found new Regional Couples for Vic East and ACT/NSW/Philippines Regions. The new couples, Angela and Ron Waanders and Anna and Tony Di Pietro, will commence their role on 1 January 2014. We are greatly encouraged by their willingness to accept this call to service. Both couples have had a long commitment to the Movement and have served in various roles. We are also very appreciative of the enormous work done by the current Regional Couples.

Response to the survey for the Extraordinary Synod on the Family in 2014

Despite a short timeframe, we were delighted with the level of response from Team members around the Regions. We received responses from a number of individuals, couples and Teams.

Some Teams made a special effort to meet specifically for this purpose. Using this information as well as earlier surveys of members, we were able to put together a submission that was as representative as possible of Teams members' views.

A diversity of initiatives.....

Oceania Conference

Planning is well underway for the Oceania Conference, "Marriage Alive: Blessed and Challenged" on 5-6 April 2014. We are very grateful to the efforts of the planning Team from Vic East and Vic West. This event is a wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth, exposure to new ideas, and experiencing the warm hospitality that is synonymous with Teams.

Technology update

The new website is up and running with new features for sharing information. Teams Oceania is now on Facebook to bring people together in new ways.

Five Year Plans:

VIC EAST: An outcome of the Vic East Five Year Plan set up in 2012 was the formation of a Spirituality group. This group has been meeting regularly and organised a gathering for the region on 20

October to explore and discuss: "What do we mean when we say *Marriage is a Sacrament?*"

SA/WA/NT: The Regional Team, in consultation with team members in the Region, is in the process of setting up a Five-Year Plan to stimulate growth and energy. They have decided on two key areas of focus in 2013-2014:

- 1) Promotion of Teams
- 2) Establishing new Teams.

Introduction of an Oceania Formation Retreat

After a period of more than a year of discernment and discussion, the Oceania Team has decided to hold a 3-day weekend retreat in August 2014 in Melbourne. This retreat will be for representative couples from each Region who are presently actively engaged in their community of Teams, Parish or local school. There is a separate article with some more details following.

Fostering links at an international level

Visit by Trans-Atlantic Super-Regional Couple

Early in 2013, Janet and Antony Denman visited Australia and New Zealand. They were able to combine a holiday and family visit

with the opportunity to meet and share with a number of Team members.

Representation on International Satellite Teams

We are pleased that two couples from Oceania will be involved in two of the International Satellite Teams.

- Vee and Rene Pols are members of the 'Christian Training Team'

- Peter and Penny Cahalan are members of the reflection Group on the 'Theology of Sexuality'

While corresponding members, their wisdom and experience will bring another perspective to these Teams.

Fostering links in the Australian Church

Attendance at the Catholic Society for Marriage Education (CSME) National Conference

We attended this event on 4 October, with Joan and John Freeman (Teams representatives on the Executive Committee). There were about 60 representatives from various agencies and programmes, offering pre-marriage and marriage education, and counselling. We made a number of

contacts with those working in the field of marriage education.

National Catholic Lay Movements Gathering

Our thanks to Carol and John Laslett who represented Teams at the National Catholic Lay Movements Gathering in Sydney in July. During the day there was an opportunity to outline the mission and work of Teams, and discuss in a group forum how Teams nurtures members within the movement as well as reaching out to others beyond.

As our second year draws to an end, we can reflect on many positive developments. We continue to be encouraged and inspired by the wonderful support we receive from the Oceania Team and associated Office Holders; and thank you all for your commitment, energy and efforts to build up your Regions.

As we look back on the year that has passed, we give thanks for the many blessings and support we have received from the wider movement. Let us all continue to 'walk together and see' where God will lead us in 2014.

We wish you a blessed and peace-filled Christmas, celebrated with those you love.

Cebu Philippines

Jimmy Suico

Chair, Documentary Committee

Newly installed
Teams
Philippines
Sector Couple,
Yengyeng &
Junjun



Sarigumba, with the tutelage of former Sector Couple Muyen & Edlin de Los Reyes, started early in 2013 with the planning of the year's activities and seeing to its successful implementation.

Instead of the previous year's scheme of assigning each scheduled activity to a certain Team, this year committees were formed and members volunteered for which of the 5 committees (Religious, Documentation, Special Events, Finance & Expansion) they wish to share their time and talent.

New Developments

Yengyeng & Junjun Sarigumba, Sector Couple with the help of their brilliant son, Jan-jan, made a Facebook Page for Teams Cebu where members can share news and photos as well as information on coming meetings and activities.

Monthly mass sponsorship in the Piarist Fathers Escolapios chapel was also made permanent

by assigning each second Sunday 9 am mass as a Team sponsored mass where the readings and offerings are assigned to a different Team, with each Team taking turns monthly. Other Teams members are encouraged to participate as well.

Planned Activities

The year's activities started with a Lenten recollection held in Stella Maris House of Prayer run by the Franciscan Nuns in Guadalupe, Cebu City.



Br. Ale Aguspina , an eloquent and charismatic lay leader, duly authorized and endorsed by the Archdiocese of Cebu, was the recollection speaker. Confession and mass was officiated by Teams-Cebu Philippines spiritual advisor-the very supportive Fr. Francis Mosende. It was held on Palm Sunday, 24 March 2013.

Summer for the Teams was made more eventful with the Family day held in the idyllic

Pangea Beach Resort in Liloan, Cebu last May 5, 2013. It was a day of games, swimming, napping on the cozy lounges, catching up with news of each other and of course, food and picture taking. It was made more fun and memorable as the place was made exclusive for the Cebu Teams. Ahhh! To own a corner of paradise for a day is heaven on earth!



The Charter mass and celebration last September 8, 2013 was also fun-filled. We, the couples and our children, came to mass in our newly printed green T-shirts giving the Escolapios Chapel an aura of nature freshness.



The program that ensued, planned and superbly executed by the youthful Team 5, was invigorating and elicited roars of laughter. And what is a gathering without food? The wives of course, outdid each other with their special recipes and brought their offerings for a hearty brunch. Rosette and Kelvyn Vaz, Teams Members from India, who are now residing in Cebu for some months, graced the affair.

The visit of the teachers from the Sandhurst Diocese on 23 September was again memorable. The Aussie teachers were very participative, energetic and communicative. They danced, sang and played games with the Teams Members and the Piarist Fathers' seminarians headed by Fr. Francis Mosende and Fr. Raju Antony.



The program was hosted by a very talented seminarian JM and Team 5's Rachel. The lunch that followed was sumptuous and

mouth-watering as, aside from the Teams wives' master recipes, it featured the famous Cebu Lechon (suckling pig roasted to perfection) which a French Chef declared the best pig in the world. The Piarist community was so touched and grateful for the monetary donation given by the benevolent teachers. The amount will certainly go a long way in terms of more community children being given training and workshops as well as moulding their core Christian values.

Community Involvement

The Teams, through the Piarist Fathers, have now regularly taken part in community events. We coordinated the "Way of the Cross" during Lent for two Fridays, (Way of the Cross is held for four Fridays of Lent). The religious committee members requested home owners along the designated way of the Cross to host one "station" each, in which they adorn and light an altar at their home's entrance where the station image is placed. Participation from Teams members was in full capacity as we acted as the facilitator of the event.

Teams also sponsored the church flower decorations for the Piarist Fathers new priest ordinations held twice this year, in

June and August. It was a picturesque sight seeing Teams couples with some of their children coming up with flower arrangements that, though not as beautiful as those made by professional arrangers, were certainly more sincerely and lovingly made.

Still Hopeful

Despite the recent strong earthquake of 7.2 magnitude that rocked Bohol and Cebu and other Visayas islands, Teams Cebu is still hopeful that the rest of the year will bring manifold blessings. In fact the rest of the activities for the year, like the Advent Recollection and the possibility of couple retreat, are already planned.

An Addendum.....

*Sue and Adrian Fordham
Liaison Couple (The Philippines)*

Since Jimmy Suico's article was written, the strong faith and hope of our Cebu friends has continued to be tested by the forces of nature.

Cebu Team members and their families are filled with great sadness due to the widespread devastation caused by Typhoon Hayain in November, especially after experiencing the 7.1

earthquake only a month previously that caused much destruction in Cebu City. Although Typhoon Haiyan did not cause major damage in Cebu City itself, friends, family and fellow Filipinos living in Leyte, Samar, and Northern Cebu were greatly affected. Cebu Team members' immediate concerns were to locate relatives and check on their safety. Now they are actively involved in helping distribute relief and restore essential services in the worst affected areas. We acknowledge the strength and commitment the Cebu Team members are showing in assisting their country men and women face the many difficulties of getting their lives back in some semblance of order as the Christmas season approaches. We are sure that Jimmy's positive comment following the October earthquake continues to apply despite the typhoon they have just experienced.

The Cebu Sector has requested prayers for their country and we feel confident that their request will not go unanswered by Team members. You may also wish to consider donating to one of the many organisations supporting the Filipinos in their most urgent need – need which is

likely to continue for many, many years.

May God bless all our Cebu Team members, their families and friends and all Filipinos affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

Queensland Highlights

Barb & Cor de Regt

Regional Couple

Qld.N.NSW&NZ

The highlight of our year was when we gathered as Teams and reflected on the Sacramentality of our Lives.

On Sunday 21 July, 45 members of Teams including some of the QLD Teams' spiritual counsellors, gathered at Iona College for a day of retreat and reflection lead by Sr Mary Franzmann PBVM. The theme for the day was, "The Sacramentality of Life - One Sacred Community "

The Teams community was joined by Srs Eufemia and Jucelina from the Canossian Order in Darwin and Timor Leste. Sister Eufemia hopes to facilitate a spirituality day for married couples in Darwin with the help of Teams and their model for retreats for couples.



Bren and Sue Milsom with Srs Eufemia & Jucelina

Sister Mary began the day with morning prayer out in the beautiful sunshine encompassing the North, South, East and West of our world.



The day was divided into three sessions which explored:

1. A review of the lives of those present over the past year.
2. How they live their lives as one sacred community
3. How they share in the Paschal Mystery through painful memories (Calvary), the 'in-between times (keeping vigil at the tomb) and new beginnings (Resurrection)

The message that the Teams' participants took home from the day was that we are called,

sometimes daily, to let go of that which has passed or which has died; to let be - to live (rest) in the places of 'awkward in-betweens', where something has ended but nothing new is happening; to let grow - to attend to the places of new life- no matter how unexpected. Each session was punctuated by some time outside in the College grounds to reflect and pray about its content.

The spirit filled day concluded with Mass in the Iona College Chapel celebrated by Father David Pascoe. The liturgy ended with the Teams hymn composed by Michael Mangan, "Together with Christ in Love".



Noela and Bill McHugh

South Australia

*Chris and John Dighton
Regional Couple SA/NT/WA*

Enriching marriage in a changing world.... was the theme of this year's Teams Annual Gathering Day held on 27 October in the Hectorville Parish Centre. We gathered for Mass with the Parish community and then Teams people joined for a shared lunch. The Gathering had three sessions where guest speakers shared their story and their wisdom about marriage, relationships and change.



Christine and John Haddrick (Regional Couple VicWest) travelled from their Region and talked about the changes that had occurred over the 31 years that they have been married. Their story included insight into how they have dealt with challenges and how being in a Team for the last 15 years has enriched their life.

Keiren Hughes (Team 42) shared her story of being widowed

3 years ago when husband Mike died after a long illness. During this time Keiren has been supported by the Team and shared how it was to be a single in a group of couples.



Our third speakers, Claire and Greg Bowyer (Team 38), gave us some very practical strategies for enriching marriage and challenged us to look at the importance of maintaining passion together with commitment in a long term relationship. They showed a video which presented some key ways couples could nurture their relationship.

The event was attended by many Teams people as well as twelve people from the local Parish who are not in a Team but interested to find out more. They have since attended an Information Meeting and indicated they are keen to join a new Team in piloting in early 2014. A Children's Program, catering for the children of those attending the

gathering Day was provided for 23 children.

VicEast Spirituality Day

Maureen Parker

The VicEast Spirituality Day was held on Sunday 20 October from 1.30 till 5.00 pm. The afternoon commenced with a prayer on marriage. Rose Marie Prosser led the afternoon, introducing some interesting speakers and stimulating enthusiastic feedback from group discussions.

Joe Delaney, the first presenter, took us back to our childhood views of God and Church. He then told us that God is unveiled through science. In his later life he had looked at the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and done some reflecting on the cosmos and evolution, which led him to a deeper relationship with the Church and young people.

In the book ***Emergence for life, not fall from Grace***, Kevin Treston makes sense of the Jesus story in the light of evolution. Different topics like the Genesis Story, Views of God, Death, the World, Creation and Salvation were viewed in the old pre-Vatican 2 style and compared with the evolutionary view. He left us pondering the Universal Challenge – “How to receive love and how to

give love” and reminded us that if you can’t receive love you can’t give it.

This was followed by discussion in small groups and everyone was pleased with the idea of finding God in evolution.

Anne and Kevin Taylor gave a short presentation on marriage as a Sacrament. They look at marriage as an intimate partnership of life and love. We have to see God in all things and allow him to find us – allow him to be present in the marriage. They thought Faith is about ‘loving’, which is risking one’s life for another and in marriage the way we do that shows God in the union. One example they gave was if one of the partners is down, the remaining partner automatically assumes control and fills in the role temporarily forsaken by their spouse. They reminded us that “great marriages are contagious” and if you want one you surround yourself with couples who have one.

Kath and Bob Dixon entertained us with a role play following a wedding they had attended, to find Sacrament in the marriage. In the ceremony they looked for visible signs of God in the marriage. Marriage is a symbol of Faith, Hope and Love. Bob and Kathy talked about the body being

the place where the soul showed itself. There was also mention of the fact that relationships went through various stages of development before being ready for a Sacramental Marriage.

Both couples clearly illustrated that the Sacrament of marriage was visible by the everyday ways in which the couple showed their love for one another.

More enthusiastic discussion in small groups followed. The afternoon finished at around 5.00 pm with everyone having enjoyed themselves and eager to pursue finding God in evolution.



VicWest region: Cross Roads and Oven Bake

*Christine and John Haddrick
Regional Couple, VicWest*

As what seems now to be tradition, Wodonga and Wangaratta gather together at Noriel Park in Albury. The Albury council have set up a great area

with a large wood fired oven, seating and tables and a great guy, Michael, who does all the meat cooking.

We start at 6:30pm with a chat and catch up together with drinks and nibbles. As many don't see each other from year to year there is much discussion and exchanges of news good or bad, happy or sad but we are there to share and support.



About 7:15pm we come together for a liturgy. Wangaratta Teams take it in turn to organise this as Wodonga Teams do the salads and plum pudding. This year John and Christine H shared an adapted liturgy that had been put together by Faye and Kevin Noonan who presented it to the international meeting and again at the Oceania meeting in Bendigo. So it had gone through all levels of Teams giving the evening a wonderful inclusive feel.

Michael then says the word and we line up to fill our plates.

Over the years Fr Paul has made the most amazing Plum Puddings with all the trimmings but having retired last year, Maureen Lonergan kindly took on the mantle, for this year at least! More conversation and sharing are enjoyed before we begin the slow pack up and wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe new year and head to our respective homes.



John and I would like to thank all the Teams in Vic West for the ongoing support and we look forward to catching up with as many of you as possible at the National Conference

Bendigo Crossroads
Kerri and Frank Egan

Over the 23 years we have been involved in Teams we have encountered many wonderful experiences of Crossroads. We feel it is an important part of the Teams experience to engage and

socialize with other Teams members outside our own team and build and establish a sense of community and belonging to the wider movement of Teams.

For most Crossroads we have joined with another Team in their home or used a parish hall for a meeting and a sit down meal. Several years ago we had one crossroads meeting for the whole Bendigo area. All the Teams gathered together with a guest speaker and small group discussion. While this worked well it was not as personal as joining with one or two other Teams in a more intimate environment.

This year our Team (13) met up with Team 15. We shared a beautiful and reflective liturgy which was enhanced by the wonderful music played by David Brennan on his mandolin. This was followed by a scrumptious meal and sharing of our experiences and involvement in Teams.

We feel we share a common bond and faith with one another and it is comforting to know that in Bendigo, Australia and all over the world other couples and single people are meeting just like us.

Teams Oceania Formation Retreat 2014

Oceania Super-Regional Team

“Let us walk together and see”

After a period of more than a year of discernment and discussion, the Oceania Team has decided to hold a 3-day weekend retreat in August 2014 in Melbourne. This retreat will be for representative couples from each Region who are presently actively engaged in their community of Teams, Parish or local school.

The retreat will be guided by the words of Fr. Henri Caffarel – “Let us walk together and see”. It will allow for personal spiritual enrichment and an equally important opportunity to meet with other couples and discuss the grace and unique flavour of Teams from each Region in Oceania.

This will also be a unique time to take part in discussions about contemporary issues for marriage and the Teams Movement. In a retreat setting, you will hear about what is happening in Oceania and around the world, and you will be able to contribute directly with your thoughts and ideas.

As the profile of Teams changes in our community it is time to look at the richness that the Movement offers to couples.

In early 2014 we will be contacting all Regions, Sectors and Teams to invite nominations of couples to attend this retreat.

Welcome to the new Zone Liaison Couple

Paul and Helena McCluskey

“Just come to one meeting, to see if you like it.” This was a regular invitation to us when we moved



parishes some 18 years ago. The couple in question did not give up but kept on asking us after every Sunday Mass. But why would we want to join Teams? We had managed perfectly happily for over 15 years of marriage and didn't see the point. However, we had to stop this couple pestering us. So we decided to go to a meeting and then say we didn't feel it was for us. As a result of that decision, we find ourselves on the International Leading Team; something we could not possibly have imagined all those years ago. Our official title is Eurasia Zone Liaison Couple and we have two distinct functions. The first, with the rest of

the leading team, is to discern the signs of the times and plan a path for the Movement over the six years of our responsibility. The second is to support existing teams in the countries of our zone (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Malawi, India, Trinidad & Tobago, Ireland and Great Britain) and to spread the good news of Teams into other areas; in particular to Asia). To us, all this seems a daunting task but we have confidence in the Lord and we rely on the support and prayers of other teams members.

We are an ordinary Teams couple just like the rest of you and experience the usual ups and downs of married life. Our family consists of two married daughters, two grandchildren and our “third daughter”, a niece whose parents were divorced some years ago and whose mother died aged 49 years. We live in Cheltenham in the SW of England where, apart from our Teams life, we are also heavily involved in local politics. Our team consists of four couples, two of whom are retired, one has grown-up children and the other has children still at school. For some time we have been without a spiritual counsellor but a local priest came to our meeting last month and we pray that he will join us on our journey of faith

together. We thank God for the opportunity of joining the Teams movement and although we still struggle to be faithful to the Endeavours we always come back from our team meetings with renewed enthusiasm.

One of our first official duties is to write the ERI letter due out on 1 April 2014. This is the third in a four-part series based on Pope Francis’ first encyclical, *Lumen Fidei* (the one written mainly by Pope Benedict). We view our new responsibility with excitement and some trepidation. Our first long haul overseas trip will be to attend the Oceania gathering in April. We look forward to meeting you all and learning about how Teams are developing “down under”. Please keep us in your prayers.

The Teams Movement and its Beginnings in Australia.

Max and Stephanie Charlesworth in consultation with Greg Armstrong

First contacts

The Equipes Notre Dame (Teams of Our Lady) movement began just before the Second World War in France. The Abbé Henri Caffarel, who had been much absorbed in an apostolate to young people, realised their particular spiritual needs when they were arriving at

the age of marriage. He began thinking and discussing the development of a spirituality for married couples. On 25 February 1939 in one of their homes a group of young couples asked him specifically for help on this topic although it was not until 1947 that the Equipes Notre-Dame was formally launched. From this small beginning the seeds of what was to become a worldwide movement were sown.

Our (the Charlesworths) first contact with the Teams of Our Lady came about almost by accident. Jeanne and Joseph Legrand, who had accompanied Abbé Caffarel to Rome to see the Pope during earlier difficulties with the Flemish bishops, were our neighbours when we were living in Louvain in Belgium. We got to know them about 1954 when they observed us as a young foreign couple, coping with one, then two babies, in a small apartment opposite their house. They helped us in many practical ways then, and still remain life-long friends. The Legrands had mentioned the Teams in passing, but being young and foolish at the time we did not take much notice. It was only in 1956 after we had moved to New Zealand that the Legrands sent us some literature on Teams by Correspondence,

which, at that stage, had just been started. They also suggested that we might be interested in becoming members of these Teams as we were once more strangers in a foreign land.

This time the idea struck us as being very important, and we became members of one of these Teams. It consisted of French-speaking couples who were spread around the world in faraway places. One couple was in Upper Volta in Africa, another in the United States, another in Tahiti and two others in remote parts of Normandy. Our chaplain was a fiercely patriotic Breton, an ardent rugby player and parish priest of a small country town in France. We conducted our meetings entirely by letter. So we would write out our response to the study theme as well as our 'spontaneous prayer' and our sharing and reporting on the Obligations (Endeavours). Then we would send it off to circulate among the couples, the liaison couple and the chaplain, like a sort of round robin. The chaplain would offer Mass for us and add his comments and prayers to the individual couple letters, which would then be circulated again. Looking back, it is extraordinary how we could share spirituality and such a very deep friendship

with those couples all round the world. Indeed some of the friendships we formed then are still alive fifty years later. We have stayed with two of the families (as have our children) a number of times when we have visited France. The Chaplain and one of the couples stayed with us in Belgium in 1972, and we still ring each other from time to time.

During our Auckland period from 1956 to 1957, we had spoken about the Teams and made an effort to get one going there, but the idea never aroused much interest. However, by 1958 we had a small group of couples who met regularly for study and discussion, and who helped and supported each other. But there was a strong resistance to joining a 'foreign' movement, and we found it best to play down the Teams.

In the meantime, Greg and Judy Armstrong had come into contact with the Teams while they were in England and had joined the first English-speaking Team, which was started by Clotilde and Harry Meigh in Cheltenham. When they returned to Melbourne, they brought the idea of the Teams with them.

The idea of establishing Teams in Australia thus came from these two couples, both of

whom had had overseas experience of the movement. As Greg Armstrong and Stephanie Charlesworth were brother and sister, contact and discussion was easy and on going.

Concerning the Armstrong's early Team experience, Greg writes:

'The movement consisted of groups of five to eight married couples, each called a Team, who wished to develop their spiritual lives through their marriages, as distinct from through their professions or through an association with a particular religious order or through some other focus. Apart from attending the monthly meetings, there was also a series of 'Obligations' that individual members were required to take on. One was mutual help between the couples in a Team, but our distance from the rest of our Team meant that we could give or receive little of it. Two others were more significant to us. The first was the quaintly named 'Sitting down', a requirement that a couple should, at a pre-arranged time once each month and in a situation where they could give each other their full attention, spend at least an hour discussing some matter of concern. This could be a decision that needed to be made jointly, such as where we

should send our child to school or whether should we move house or whether we should make a big outlay from our family funds on a new car or on orthodontics for a child. Or the matter to be discussed could be some dissatisfaction one partner felt with the other or with their life together. There was no limit on what topics could be discussed, as long as at least one partner felt that the matter was serious and both were committed to listening carefully to, and thoughtfully considering, what the other had to say. This obligation was very valuable to us, at least in the first part of our marriage. It seems to me that it would be of almost equal value to a completely secular couple who had shared ideals regarding their marriage. Commitment in advance to a monthly sit-down avoids the sometimes-endless wait for the right moment to arrive to raise a difficult topic.

'The other significant obligation to us was the requirement for daily "Conjugal prayer" i.e. that a husband and wife should each day pray aloud together and that at least some part of this should be individual and extempore. (There was also an obligation for daily family prayer in which children would be

involved too, but that had no application to us at that time.) The idea of a personal and impromptu prayer said aloud in the company of others, which was involved in the prayer at Team meetings as well as in conjugal prayer, was a new one to me. I knew of it in theory, but my own experience of Catholic worship was entirely of set prayers. In my Newman Society group back in Melbourne, a short formal prayer had been said together by those present, or by our Chaplain alone, at the beginning and the end of our meeting, but there was no letting down of personal barriers. Now, however, I found myself bound by the rules of a group I had voluntarily joined to engage in personal (if, perhaps, a little one-sided) discourse with God. My perspective began to change, to move from black and white to something warmer, and the change became permanent.'

Australian beginnings

The Charlesworths had left Auckland for Melbourne at the end of 1958. At that time, we were very absorbed by our lives as members of the Teams by Correspondence, and we spoke of this to our Parish Priest in Glen Iris, Father Bernard O'Connor, and some of our friends. There was a

lot of enthusiasm about the idea at that time, as forming common interest groups among Catholic married couples was 'in the air' so to speak. These new trends were met with complete non-comprehension by older couples, the grandparent generation, so to speak, who were used to the idea of separate-sex sodalities and gatherings. In their view, parents, (mothers mainly), met to help and support their children, but not in their role as spouses. We can recall a parish priest in the Western suburbs of Melbourne who expressed dismay at the idea of a mixed-sex group meeting on a regular basis! Margaret Cody recalls that their Parish priest saw other difficulties in the concept of Teams insofar as smaller groups within a parish might be too elitist.

By 1959 some of the couples in our Correspondence Team had returned to France and joined regular Teams, or else they had started new Teams where they lived. We often discussed in our letters, and with our liaison couple in France, the advantages and disadvantages of transferring from our known and loved Correspondence Team to one in our locality that could meet in person. Generally it was agreed that this was a desirable thing to do. However, at the time, we did

not mention actually forming a Team with the group of our Australian friends who had begun to meet regularly but informally, to share our spiritual and everyday concerns.

The group decided it wanted more structure and direction and looked in turn at some of movements for married couples that were around. In any event, we decided to form a Team and approached the Paris headquarters, which appointed a French couple for us to contact. Their names were Sylvie and Jean.

In March 1961, after the term began, we addressed the Parents and Friends meeting in the parish about the Teams. We had two or three information preliminary meetings with up to a dozen couples. Up to eight or nine wanted to continue in a group, and there were comings and goings among these. We ourselves continued to be members of the Correspondence Team during this period.

We had a lot of correspondence and discussion with a couple appointed by the Leading Team in Paris, from early in 1961. At some point Marc and Francoise Everleigh became our pilot couple and H el ene and Andr e Caffort our first liaison couple. Our Team now consisted of Peter and

Barbara Wertheim and Kevin and Ruth O'Hagen, from our original study group, and Jeanne and Frank Johnstone, Carmel and John Brennan, Jack and Pat Krohn, Ed and Kath Curmi from the Parish. The parish priest, Father O'Connor became our Chaplain. A little later, Vic and Francoise Koenig from Mauritius joined us. The latter had been in the Teams Movement in Mauritius, and had written to Paris, asking for the names of an Australian Team. Their practical experience as active Team members was invaluable, as we were starting out only with the experience of long distance written contact between the members of our Team. We still have a photo of all eight couples in Team 1 and their children, at a beach picnic towards the end of 1961.

Meanwhile Greg and Judy Armstrong also had returned to Melbourne. By May 1961 they had written to Paris about starting a Team in Melbourne. They then ran several information nights and soon established a committed group who wanted to go ahead. Members of this team were Joan and John Thomas, Peter and Margaret Gill, Albert and Mary Spangaro, Jim and Joan Bowler, Harold and Helga Rowe, Barbara and Peter Jenkins. On the advice

of Father Golden SJ, from Newman College, Greg approached a young assistant priest at the Cathedral, Father Frank Little, and persuaded him to take on the job of chaplain, at least on a temporary basis.

Greg writes:

'He (Father Little) left us later when he became a bishop, and later, the Archbishop of Melbourne. But we always stayed in touch with him and after his retirement many years later, he returned to our Team.'

The Armstrongs applied to the Leading Team in Paris for formal affiliation in November, after 3 trial meetings starting in August 1961.

In his memoirs Greg writes:

'Forty-three years later, I remain a member of that same Team. Perhaps because I have lived both my professional life and my social life surrounded by people who were either indifferent to or hostile to my metaphysical convictions, my Team had been my life's only real experience of a Christian community.'

None of us in Team 1 can remember exactly when we applied to become a Team, but it must have been after the Armstrong's group applied. The latter had to give the existing Teams numbers and decided that,

since the Charlesworth group had formed first, though had not become an official Team, they should be given the title of Melbourne 1. Owen and Julie Potter recall that as soon as they formed in 1962, they got the number 4 for their Team.

Before we got going Father O'Connor urged us to seek the approval of Archbishop Mannix. We recall the meeting well. The Archbishop received us very graciously, listened attentively to what we had to say, and then said, "I am sure that it can do no harm!" After his death in 1963, Archbishop Simmonds was not so accommodating. He was uneasy not only about the 'foreignness' of the movement but also the idea of it being an unsupervised lay body. He insisted that the chaplains should be diocesan clergy and not members of religious orders, (whom he saw as loose cannons!) We cannot recall if his direction made much impact. From the outset, we had been heavily reliant on the Jesuits, Pallottines, MSCs, Passionists, Franciscans, and later the Dominicans, to supply chaplains, and we do not think that any of them were actually changed to meet the Archbishop's proscription.

The next Archbishop, Cardinal Knox, became a strong

supporter of the Teams, no doubt influenced by Fr Frank Little. The Cardinal read the literature, and said Mass for the Teams in the Cathedral (at which he preached on the topic of married life in Team terms). He attended our picnic in the Treasury Gardens and some other team gatherings later. We recall he was impressed by the size of our families! Not unexpectedly, we also had strong support during the period when Frank Little was Archbishop.

Teams 1 and 2 worked closely together at this stage and together found other interested couples to round out these Teams, pilot them into existence, and to act as liaison couples. The latter role was quite onerous in those days, as all members had to prepare a written response to the study theme ahead of time, send it to the Responsible Couple in the team, who then met with the chaplain ahead of the meeting and prepared an agenda for the discussion. After the meeting these written responses, and the summary of the discussion, would go to the liaison couple who sent back a written comment, answered questions and made suggestions, all before the next meeting. Usually each liaison couple would be looking after three teams! In spite of the

demands, there were positives as well, since this detailed correspondence and contact was a great source of support. We all grew to know and care about each other on quite a deep level. These early Teams also ran the first of the annual Team conferences. Joe Delaney recalls that the first conference was held in 1965 or 66. 'The theme was "Conjugal spirituality" (a concept totally novel to most of us) led by Wally Sylvester SAC at St Vincent de Paul's Orphanage in South Melbourne. It was then at Sacré Coeur in Glen Iris for a number of years.

Inevitably, some of the couples and Chaplains moved interstate during the next few years, and it was thanks to the Peter and Barbara Wertheim that the Teams started in **Queensland**, and Ruth and Kevin O'Hagen in Bendigo and then Wangaratta. The Bowlers started the first team in **Canberra**. Veronica and John McKinnon moved to **Sydney** in the mid-sixties, and started three Teams, in 1965, 1966, and 1973. Sydney 1 lasted for 13 years. The McKinnons were also responsible for starting two Teams in **Nowra**, in 1972, mainly of naval personnel. The McKinnons' experience of Sydney views on movements starting outside the Diocese, echo

the Flemish - Walloon divide in Belgium a decade earlier! They write: 'Clergy were wary and we had to write to the Cardinal informing him about the Teams. He gave permission for us to meet for 12 months after which time Fr Alphonse, a Pallotine and our Chaplain, had to report personally to him'.

Meanwhile, Father Golden, who had moved to **Adelaide** University, suggested the idea of the Teams there to an already existing group of couples, (the Sunday night group) who became the first Team in Adelaide. This included Helen and Peter Praetz and Kevin and Margaret Magarey. They formed the first team in South Australia and the movement flourished so that they soon became a Sector in their own right. A little later Father McGinley, who had been moved to Perth, started the first team there.

Australian Teams and the worldwide movement

As younger couples came on the scene, the Australian Teams movement was able to contribute to the international movement very directly through having a significant presence at overseas gatherings. But the movement in Australia is, at the same time, more autonomous. There is a lot

of confidence in the way Teams operate in their local setting, and interest in the different home grown styles which have developed. The Australian newsletter has been written here for a long time, and has not been just a translation of the French version for at least thirty years. We can recall one of the French-English translators who stayed with us here in Melbourne nearly 30 years ago found one of the Australian newsletters. He was visibly shocked by its independence, and 'reported' us to Paris - although, as far as we know, no action eventuated!

It is worthwhile mentioning some the couples who have taken on leadership of the Australian teams, over the years, in the light of their enormous contribution to this development. After the Armstrongs, who took the major responsibility until about 1968, the O'Sullivan's took over. The latter selected their own Sector Team which included the Westons. Max and Frances Weston stepped in to take over the Sector after the O'Sullivan's and went on to attend the Rome pilgrimage. Helen and Peter Praetz took over from the Westons and, while they were Sector Couple, formed the first Regional Team, dividing the existing Sector into two in 1974

(by then there were then 34 Teams in Australia). Sector leaders at that stage were Mary and Jeff Scarfe and John and Margaret Cody. The Codys went to the international gathering in 1976. Of this Margaret writes 'I have never forgotten the experience, and would like to say that Marie Françoise and Michel Bechetoille of Annonay, who were in our team which met daily during the pilgrimage, are still my friends nearly 40 years later.

Olga-Mary and Hayden Savage followed the Praetz's as Regional Couple, then John and Veronica McKinnon took over, followed by Frank and Pauline Niall, and Rosemary and Bob Prosser. Pat and Marguerite Goggin followed the Prossers. The Goggins were the first Regional Couple from Australia to form part of the Leading International Team. Australia was then joined with Oceania to form a Super-Region with considerably expanded responsibilities. The Super-Regional Team looks after all the Australian states as well as Fiji, New Caledonia, Hong Kong, New Zealand and the Philippines.

Thus, under the successive leadership of these couples the Australian Teams movement has become a Super-Region (of Oceania) with five Regions of its

own and today Australian Team leaders play a significant role on the International Leading Team (ERI). The College, which consists of the ERI and the Super-Regional Couples, met in Australia in 2002.

Reflections on the development of the Teams in Australia

Looking back on our experience of the Teams movement as a whole, we are amazed and impressed by the way it has evolved. It has not gradually disappeared from the scene as some of the other married couple organisations have done and its basic structure, aims and ideals have stayed constant. Perhaps this is partly due to the very individual nature of each Team and how it adapts to the needs of the particular couples who are its members. But it must also have a great deal to do with the hitherto unmet need for a specific spirituality for married couples.

We have commented on the apparent top/down nature of the movement, but a long term problem has also been getting movement in the opposite direction, i.e. getting couples to go from down to up, so to speak. This is not just an Australian tendency. For instance, neither the Belgian nor the American teams to which we belonged had any significant

contact with their liaison couple. Incidentally, this did not stop them being great teams for their own members. We are still closely in touch with our Belgian Team after 35 years! They highly value their own Team, but that is as far as it goes. We have the impression that, thanks to our Regional and Super Regional connection with the International Team, this is far less the case in Australia today. The strong influence of the French origins of the movement has also become less marked and the Team movement is now characterized by a strong sense of being international.

The existence of an International Leading Team is, in itself, a key to the great changes in the whole movement. While the French have become heavily outnumbered by the Spanish-speakers, the French invention and their long and generous administration of Team affairs will keep their traditions alive. There is little doubt in our minds that the Team movement would have been unlikely to develop in any other setting.

Inevitably, the recent history of the Church in countries where there is a strong Team presence will influence the outlook of the Teams there. Sheer numbers and local ways of doing things have led

to completely independent local newsletters, and in many cases, study themes as well. However the opposite danger to too much centralisation is that of dispersion, dilution and dropping out. The way to prevent this trend is for individual Teams to try and strengthen their ties with other Teams and to be generous with the time and energy they give to their local movement. Our impression of the new generation of Team members at the gatherings we have attended is that this is just what is happening.

One of the discoveries we made, when we were asking early Team members about their experience of the beginnings of the Australian Teams, was just how strong and enduring these links remained even with those who had not seen each other for decades. Perhaps this is partly due to the very individual nature of each Team, which we have already mentioned, and how it adapts to the needs of the particular couples who are its members.

In spite of the contrasts in national and regional Team approaches, we have the impression from our experience as members of Australian, French, Belgian, English, Canadian and American Teams, over the years,

that the differences between individual Teams are far greater than those between Teams in different countries. At the governing level, of course any National Team administration does reflect the local Catholic culture, and there are always entrenched differences, that you cannot argue about. But Australia has achieved an autonomy which we could not have imagined in the early days. While today's Teams reflect the difference between contemporary Christian married life and that which prevailed forty years ago, the amount of generous concern for others, both inside and outside the individual teams, does not seem to have diminished in any way!

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