

Philip Brownell

## **Gestalt Therapists Explore Their Roots in Rome: Report on the Roots III Conference Rome, April 2007**

The Roots conferences were designed originally to explore the European theoretical foundations of gestalt therapy. Prior to Roots III, the first Roots conference took place in Paris in 2003. That was followed by Roots II in Antwerp in 2005. Roots III took place in Rome, and the city of Rome proved a compelling attraction, if not a competition to the conference itself. Chairpersons for the conference were Seán Gaffney and Edwin Nevis. Conference hosts were Anna Ravenna and Paolo Quattrini, of the Gestalt Institute of Florence and Rome.

The format of the Roots conferences is small group, which offers more time to consider and discuss the issues presented. The presentations are short, followed by questions and discussion, and that provides for rich exploration of the issues. The theme of the Roots III conference was “Social Change: Gestalt Perspectives and Practices.” This theme was selected in response to the enthusiasm for the topic and the ensuing discussion at Roots II in Antwerp.

Presenters explored various aspects of the theme in divergent ways: Philip Brownell (Bermuda), “The Acting Person: Karol Wojtyła, Gestaltist;” Seán Gaffney (Ireland/Sweden), “Working from a Gestalt Perspective in Influencing Social Change;” Susan Gregory (USA), “Speaking Up! Aspects of Voice Use in Group Identity;” Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb (Italy), “Ego, Hunger and Aggression: Do We Bite Now as We Did Then?”; Edwin C. Nevis (USA), “Intervening in Interdependent Social Systems;” Brian O’Neill (Australia), “Social and Political Impact of New Family Laws in Australia — A Gestalt Perspective;” Giovanni Paolo Quattrini (Italy), “What Modern Mythologies Can a Gestaltist Support?”; Anna Ravenna (Italy), “Gestalt Principles as Ground for a New Intercultural Reality in Italy and Elsewhere;” Raymond Saner (Switzerland), “Jacob Moreno in End-of-Empire Vienna 1910–1925 Social Experiments, Performing Arts, Socio-psychological The-