

G Ashman

FRANK BUCHMAN was born in this house in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, on 4 June, 1878. A hundred years later people met on every continent to confront the issues facing their nations in the light of his message. In this issue we report on occasions in the United States and Britain; next week NWN will feature the international assembly in Freudenstadt.

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'WE CANNOT BE SATISFIED'

IN A MAJOR ARTICLE in *The Times* on 5 June, Garth Lean speaks of the 'informal, international leadership' of the work of Moral Re-Armament that has evolved 'slowly, and sometimes painfully' since the death of Frank Buchman in 1961.

'The absence of a dominant personality has forced people to find their security in a deeper dependence on God instead of on any person,' he writes, 'something Buchman fought for, but did not always achieve, in his lifetime.'

The *Christian World* in a full-page article quotes Gordon Wise: 'Now that a corporate leadership has evolved, MRA is a mature and solidly-based force in the world.'

'Today,' writes WD Laird in *The Scotsman*, 'Buchman's work is still at the frontiers of Christian action for reconciliation and renewal in Africa, Asia, and many parts of the world.'

Growing relevance

The many events taking place across the world on the first weekend in June gave substance to these evaluations. On every continent, and in many different ways, Buchman's challenge has been given afresh.

One such event was a sermon by Rev RW Wilson, a close associate of Buchman, in a small Methodist chapel in Keswick. It was here that, in the words of the *Church Times*, 'a proud and tortured Frank Buchman had gone, 70 years before, into a little lakeside chapel and listened to a woman speaking about the Cross'.

The *Methodist Recorder* in a centenary tribute by Rev Leslie Marsh, speaks of his experience there, and of its effect on the world. 'My atheist Cambridge history professor hated John Wesley yet saw him as the giant of his century,' he writes. 'To help us understand Wesley's work he compared him with Frank Buchman (whom he equally loathed!). It is, of course, too early for historians to say how far such a comparison can be taken, but certainly the relevance of Buchman's thinking seems to grow with the years, as it did with Wesley.'

The relevance was emphasised by Kenneth Belden at the Westminster Theatre on 4 June, and we print his speech in this issue. He was the opening speaker in a day conference to which 600 people came from all over Britain. At lunch every corner of the building was filled—and many spilled out into the nearby park. It was possible to serve a full meal to everyone because 20 housewives, cooks and casual helpers had given their services to prepare it.

Youngest trio

In the dining room a stock exchange researcher, who a few months ago described himself as 'propagating hatred among the races', worked alongside a South Sudanese student. In the Sanderson Room a Northern Sudanese worked with a London physiotherapist.

Perhaps of those present the one who first knew Buchman was John Vinall, a junior porter at Brown's Hotel when Buchman came there in 1922. When he retired as Head Porter, he came to work without salary as a doorman at the Westminster Theatre. 'I have tried to follow Dr Buchman in looking after everybody,' he said. 'I did it for 50 years in a hotel where people from all parts of the world used to come to see me. I'm looking to the younger generation to carry on.'

The youngest generation was there in the shape of a trio aged 12 or less, who sang a song illustrating a basic principle of MRA: 'When I point my finger at my neighbour, there are three more pointing back at me.'

Ugly

Ivan Menzies, formerly a principal with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, recalled Buchman's love of the theatre and music. 'He saw what old rascals like me could give to the world if they really changed,' he said, introducing a song he had written.

Alan Thornhill, co-author of the play *Sentenced to Life* running at the Westminster Theatre, emphasised Buchman's conviction about theatre. 'The first time I met him he

spoke to me about theatre. "Think what a force in the nation it could be," he said. I didn't understand a word he was saying.'

But 12 years later Thornhill had written a play, *The Forgotten Factor*, which has played on every continent in many languages. Describing Buchman's conviction to keep presenting plays which challenge and give hope to nations, he pointed out how *Sentenced to Life* is doing this. 'And we've got to go on—so that things that are vital to our age, about liberation, about redemption, about life and about death, go not just to a theatre, but to a world.'

The need for entirely fresh attitudes in Britain was underlined by John Richards, who came to this country 16 years ago from Jamaica. Describing the ugly way he had been treated that week, he said, 'If you in your developed society can still have some of the failures we see, you can understand why there are immigrants who go astray.'

'MRA is a dedication to building a better world, starting in your own family and going on to the family of nations. Until we have widened the whole idea of what a family is, we cannot be satisfied that our job is done.'

As relevant today

A Fleet Street journalist, Geoffrey Lean, made a similar point from the perspective of his specialisation—the environment and world resources. 'I am not pessimistic about our chances of answering the problems ahead,' he said. 'But we must approach them with an unselfish frame of mind and with a concept of stewardship of the world's resources. Knowing of MRA, I know of case after case where this has been done, and where it can be done.'

As Lawson Wood, who was Buchman's secretary for several years, pointed out in an interview on London's radio station, LBC, the same afternoon, Buchman's challenge is as relevant today as ever. 'MRA's purpose is still the same,' Garth Lean ends his article in *The Times*, 'radically to change the motivation of men, starting with themselves, by a submission of their lives to God.' JCB

Power to shift the world

Kenneth Belden speaking at the Westminster Theatre on 4 June

FRANK BUCHMAN always probed ahead. His mind was like radar, searching out what lay beyond but could not yet be seen. If he were here today, it is the next hundred years rather than the last that would claim his attention.

Familiarity sometimes makes us forget how original much of his truth was at the time he formulated it.

For instance: 'Suppose everybody cared enough, everybody shared enough, wouldn't everybody have enough? There is enough in the world for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed.' It was a completely novel thought in 1938, and we still haven't caught up with it—though there are signs of movement in the right direction now. Think about it in the context of the modern world: Resources? Energy? Rice, wheat? Oil? Cobalt? Enough for our need, but not for our greed? This might involve the full dimension of change Frank Buchman talked about: 'Economic change. Social change. National change. International change. Based on personal change.'

Unrealistic

And then the whole issue of ideology. His speech, 'The war of ideas', in 1943 was an historic statement. 'We are fighting a war of ideas as well as a war of arms. Unless America recovers her rightful ideology, nothing but chaos awaits us.' We were in the midst of war, but he pointed to the greater struggle—whether the materialist ideologies or the ideology of God would win the millions of the world in the post-war years. It is still going on. Anyone who thinks it is dying down is unrealistic.

And five years later: 'What is the missing factor in the planning and statesmanship of the world today? It is our lack of an ideology for democracy.... That is why democracy fails. Only a passion can cure a passion. And only a superior world-arching ideology can cure a world divided by warring ideologies.'

Light years ahead

It wasn't popular. It was ten years ahead of the statesmen's thinking. It was 20 years ahead of the churchmen's thinking—some have not got there yet. It was light years ahead of the complacency of most ordinary people like ourselves.

And then change. Buchman was a great realist. He knew that profession of faith without inner change got you nowhere.

Many people nowadays talk about personal change. Some want more of it—at a very personal level. Others say it's no good, it's too slow to affect events. But Buchman thought in a different dimension: 'Until we deal with human nature thoroughly and drastically on a national scale, nations must still follow their historic road to violence and destruction.'

European community

His thinking was in a different league from what most people think of as Christian work. 'Life-changing on a colossal scale' was Buchman's idea. We still have to achieve it.

But then Frank Buchman had a tremendous concept of what God could do—in men, in nations. Nothing irked him more than people who talked about God but lived as if He didn't exist, or was impotent if He did. 'The Holy Spirit is the strongest force in the world today.'

Some timid or sceptical souls sometimes thought he overstated what God could do, but nevertheless the Governments of France and Germany decorated him for his contribution to better understanding between their two countries; leaders in Tunisia, Morocco and Cameroon attributed to him in no small measure their countries' peaceful transition to independence; historians point out his influence behind the Schuman Plan for the European Coal and Steel Community which was the first great step in the European community; and many observers believe that it was his work in the Ruhr coalfields after the war that saved Western Germany from Communism and strengthened its democratic resolve—to say nothing of comparable events in SE Asia and Latin America, in Japan and the Philippines, in Cyprus, in many other countries of Africa. To Buchman this was not him at work. It was God at work.

No lone-star

There are so many original thrusts one could mention—the concept of strategy for instance: 'Unless you have a strategy you damn your nation'; no other leader, religious or political, had any such idea through these past 20 or 30 years, or remotely understood its implications as Buchman did. Or his belief in what every man, woman and child could do: 'God takes the needs of nations and answers them with men.' Think what hot water the Archbishop of Canterbury got into last year for saying that everyone had a part.

Above all, perhaps, we owe to Frank Buchman what you might call the global outlook. Talk to anyone in MRA—any housewife, any teacher, any farmer, any factory worker—and you will find their thinking is world-wide. Talk to most Cabinet Ministers in most countries and you will find them heavily concentrated on their departments and their own careers. 'I want you to think in continents,' Buchman was telling his team in Oxford in the nineteen twenties. 'The outstretched arms on the Cross are for everyone,' he used to say. 'Any idea that



Frank Buchman

A Strong

keeps anybody out is too small for this age.'

As a result, for 50 years Buchman *did* what was in some ways the most original thing of all—he built a force. You have got to have a force if you are going to have a strategy for nations.

He was no lone-star evangelist, though he could have been. His idea was to train a team. 'Train ten men to do your job better than you can do it yourself.'

He was a master in making profound truth available to the ordinary man. So many people nowadays talk about the guidance of God. But Buchman was the first person who came forward to tell us how to get it: how everyone could have this historic experience of the Christian faith—and indeed, how anyone of any faith or of none, could find his own touch with the living God, because there is only one Reality behind the universe, and as we listen to Him we have a point of unity with everyone else who does the same.

Backbone

Perhaps the greatest single reason for the expansion of his work across the globe has been all those in many lands who have accepted the daily discipline of that morning quiet time, the hour given to listening to the living God and then obeying what He tells us.

He also made plain that Christianity has a moral backbone, and that made him even more unpopular. Some people took one look at the absolute moral standards he stressed and attacked him ever after. But Buchman knew that no faith would have power to shift the world if it were not lived in the deepest and costliest places of the lives of the men and women who proclaimed it.

Survival kit

Now—what does this truth mean in the vast battles that are coming in the next decades?

The coming century seems to be opening with what has been called 'a crisis more sudden, more global, more inescapable and more bewildering than any ever encountered by the human species'. This is the combined crisis of the world's rapidly diminishing resources, especially energy, of population and poverty; of how to feed and house mankind; of pollution; of how to make life worth living in a world of mounting conflict.

It is going to call for immense changes in attitude and standard of living, for great

inventiveness and industry, for creative planning on a global scale.

Perhaps Frank Buchman's greatest contribution to the next century is the thousands of people across the continents who understand change, who have accepted change themselves. 'The best place to start is with yourself' was a totally new thought when Buchman first announced it. It still is, but now it is part of our survival kit for the human race, that and the daily experience of the guidance of God.

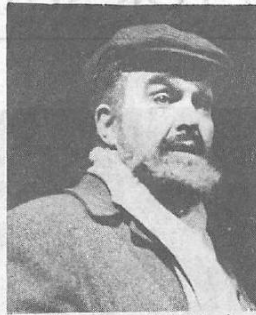
These are the two keys to building unity and to finding readiness for new and unexpected action, where people are not bound by tradition or by ambition, by personal prejudice or preference—but are ready for the changes that are needed to build a viable society in the twenty-first century. These are the people who have already placed all their resources in the hands of God, who have been ready to share them or use them, ready to revolutionise their own lifestyles and who plan for all their resources in terms of other people's needs, not just their own.

Completely different

So it is with considerable expectancy that we look ahead on this centenary. Frank Buchman, I think, would expect us all to change so much that vast areas of the world will be left permanently different as a result.

For the foreseeable future, our task, as he foresaw, is going to be nothing less than the remaking of the world, literally, down to the very last detail of how men and nations conduct their life together. And 'remaking' means making completely different, not just enabling the old to stagger on a little better. Buchman's philosophy, as he once said himself, is nothing less than the preview of a new world order—and we have the privilege of carrying that task into the next hundred years, armed with the timeless truth he minted for us.

One thousand needed



Don Simpson as Keir Hardie.

IN THE SAME YEAR that Frank Buchman was born 100 years ago, a young Scottish miner was finding a Christian experience. His name was James Keir Hardie, and his conversion was to set him on a course that changed British history.

The first Independent Labour Member of Parliament, Keir Hardie was to be known as the 'father of the British labour movement'. His fight gave socialism in Britain its Christian roots, in contrast to its growth in other parts of Europe.

'Think of the debt England and the world owe socially and economically to Keir Hardie,' said Frank Buchman, addressing the National Trade Union Club in 1938. 'British labour was cradled in a spiritual awakening.'

As part of the Buchman centenary celebrations, Hardie's spiritual heirs, trade unionists from Scotland, Wales and England, presented a dramatised reading of Henry Macnicol's play, *Keir Hardie—The Man They Could Not Buy*, at the Westminster Theatre.

'As a trade unionist, I want to get the British labour movement back to the vision of its early pioneers so it can go forward to the challenge Buchman gave us: "Workers unite the world",' said Patrick O'Kane introducing the play.

Bert Allen, formerly a District President of

the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW) and Chairman of the AUEW Appeals Court, travelled from Birmingham to take part in the play. In an interview on LBC later that evening, he stressed the importance for today of Keir Hardie's rejection of class war.

In 34 years as an AUEW convenor in a Birmingham engineering factory, Bert Allen has had experience that this approach can still be effective. Negotiating while keeping production going, he achieved some of the highest wages in the area for the men. When he retired earlier this year, the company was expanding—at a time when other companies in the area were laying men off. Another member of the cast from Birmingham was Jim Purvis, who is a Manager in a heavy engineering firm.

'I am convinced of the importance of theatre,' said Margaret McVicar, a teacher who had come from Scotland to play Keir Hardie's wife. 'I was an atheist when I saw a play which set me on the road to finding a faith.'

999 to go

Requests for presentations of the play have come from Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Yorkshire, Liverpool and Coventry. On Sunday two of the audience—one of them a senior trade union official from South Wales, the other a Londoner—invited the play to their areas.

One of the audience came to the platform and told how he had been close to death in hospital. He had recovered after a deep spiritual experience. 'I believe I have been spared for a reason,' he said. 'Seeing this play has helped me to find that reason.' Referring to a speech by Don Simpson, who played the part of Keir Hardie, he continued, 'You said we need a thousand Keir Hardies in Britain today. I want to commit myself to be one of them. Now you only need 999.'

Others said...

KRISTINA NELSON
is a psychiatric nurse from Sweden:

MY PARENTS' MARRIAGE was about to break up. Moral Re-Armament brought total change. It gave them a purpose and the family a new unity. It changed the way they brought their children up.

We got to know the simple idea of listening to God. We have battles in our family. There are many times when we have to be honest—which is painful. We now know that God's guidance does make a family work.

We are four children. My brother works in the Volvo factory in Gothenburg, my younger sister is in Malta and my other sister is a housewife in Sweden. All of us are committed to bring these ideas wherever they are needed.

I worked with drug addicts and alcoholics. Then I felt that I wanted to give my life to prevent people from getting into that situation. For the last seven years I have given my time to the work of Moral Re-Armament. I want to see this idea spread to every single home and to industry across the world.

FRANK COONEY
of Australia was unemployed when he met Moral Re-Armament in the 'thirties. He later became Vice-President of the Tramway Workers' Union in Melbourne. He has just been in India where he took part in Alan Thornhill's industrial play, 'The Forgotten Factor'.

I RETIRED FROM WORK on 6 January. A few days later a cable came asking if I could possibly join the international cast in India. Three weeks later my wife and I were there.

It was a tremendous experience to be part of a family and a force which was moulding

history.

After the plays we went down in the audience and spoke with the people. It was obvious that the power of God had touched a nerve far deeper than a sense of appreciation. It was a hunger for great living.

One man who came up with tears in his eyes said, hanging on to my hand, 'I am a trade unionist.' In broken English he said, 'I understand this, I understand this.' You had this response right across the country.

I think with gratitude of what Frank Buchman told us—that MRA is the ordinary man's opportunity to remake the world.

NATHALIE O'NEILL
from France studied languages in Paris:

I WANT TO EXPRESS my gratitude for the freshness of his message. Through him morality has lost any sense of oppression or frustration. It is, instead, a door open to world responsibility for anyone.

TIME FOR REASSESSMENT

IN PENNSBURG and Allentown, Pennsylvania, where Frank Buchman was born and grew up, Americans, including Members of Congress from both Republican and Democratic Parties, paid tribute to him on the centennial of his birth.

A committee of citizens from these two towns initiated several occasions, including a dinner in Allentown where the Buchman house is preserved by the Lehigh County Historical Society, and a one-day retreat to study his life and ideas. In Pennsburg there was a special ecumenical church service and a ceremony of commitment and rededication at the house where Buchman was born.

The Governor of Pennsylvania, Milton J Shapp, proclaimed 4 June as 'Dr Frank Buchman Day' and urged 'all Pennsylvanians to join with the Borough of Pennsburg residents in paying tribute to the memory of this outstanding Pennsylvanian'.

The President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Walter Scheel, sent a message of greetings to the Mayor of Pennsburg through the Consul General in New York, Dr Werner Ungerer. The message reminds the Mayor that 'the Federal Republic honoured Dr Buchman by investing him with the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit in recognition of his contribution to Germany's post-war policy of reconciliation with all nations. On behalf of the President, I extend to you and to the Pennsburg Borough Council the gratitude of the Federal Republic of Germany for putting in orbit the great ideas for which Dr Buchman, this outstanding man, stood and lived.'

Congress comments

Democratic Representative Charles R Bennett from Florida, who has been 26 years in the US Congress and is Chairman of the Sea Power Committee, speaking at the Allentown dinner, told of his friendship with Dr Buchman. 'The great thing about Frank Buchman,' he said, 'lay in his warmth and concern for his fellow men. He had a power of friendship. He was not a theologian but a lover of mankind.' The Congressman, who is second ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee, added that Buchman's real concern was that people should care, and that this was the surest way to end war.

The Republican Representative in Congress from the Allentown area, Richard T Schulze, paid his own tribute to Dr Buchman as 'one of Pennsylvania's and America's greatest sons'. He told the 110 people gathered from as far as Florida, California



Congressman Charles Bennett at the Centennial Dinner, Allentown.

and Massachusetts, that 'Frank Buchman was not one to pay lip service to great ideas. He took his beliefs and made them a reality. He went to where the people worked and lived and taught them a new way of living. He taught us that people, individuals, make up nations and the only way to change the direction of the world to peace is through people.'

Dramatic shift

David K Bausch, the Lehigh County Executive, read messages from other friends, including a letter from C Scoville Wishard who worked with Dr Buchman many years and who could not be present because of his health. 'He was convinced that God's love at work in the hearts of men could create a spaciousness of spirit and a breadth of thought to transcend the division he said was the hallmark of our age,' wrote Wishard.

On Sunday, 4 June, following the special service of thanksgiving in the church where Buchman had been confirmed, the congregation crossed the road and stood in the open by the house in which he was born in 1878. Surrounded by the green rolling hills and fields of Pennsylvania, they heard Dr Mahlon Hellerich, a former President of the Lehigh County Historical Society, tell them that Buchman's birthdays while he lived were always a time of reassessment and rededication. 'Where to from here?' he asked. He hoped that there would now be a closer relationship between the communities of Pennsburg and Allentown and the force of Moral Re-Armament, and that people would go from this area into the world arena.

The Mayor of Pennsburg, James E Mullen (one of the Frank Buchman Centennial

Committee), then called on a young couple from New York City, Robert and Betsy Lancaster. 'I never met Frank Buchman, but my wife and I are two of hundreds of our generation around the world who are committed fully to the work Frank Buchman started,' said Robert Lancaster. 'Letting God have the final say in all we do and finding His unique part and plan for each of us is the most fascinating adventure that any of us can embark on.'

His wife Betsy said, 'Dr Buchman's challenge was that he was ordinary and he expected us ordinary Americans—not only the militant, the influential, the vocal—to put our lives under God's direction to create a new world.'

Mrs Lancaster said she had spent one third of her life overseas and saw how the world watches the people of America. 'Nothing less than a dramatic shift from our blind selfishness to sacrificial care will be adequate. It begins with absolute honesty between my husband and me and a love which demands nothing. With this commitment to God's plan, we have something bigger than ourselves to live for which carries us through the rough and the smooth.'

She invited those there to join them at the Moral Re-Armament World Assembly in Caux, Switzerland, this summer. 'Much has been said of Frank Buchman and his life,' she concluded, 'but what is important is the way we each choose to live our lives.'

Crowning blow

Television in Pennsylvania carried two programmes on Frank Buchman, and articles appeared in the local press. In a broadcast from Pennsburg, Dr Thomas Persing, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Superintendent of Schools, explained why he felt it necessary to reaffirm Buchman's message today. 'The crowning blow in this country was the Watergate scandal,' he said. 'Here young people saw for the first time a President and the people around him brought down in disgrace. In State governments in the last five years there have been more scandals than we had for a long time. I find students don't have the same respect for authority that they once had.'

'If ever there was a man that was capable of stimulating the ethical and moral principles in this country, it was Frank Buchman. And if there was ever a time for us to say, "Now, we must stand up as leaders in government, education and business", and "We are going to reaffirm these ethics and morality", it is now.' **GA**