

BEYOND BORDERS

Initiatives of Change in Quebec

DISCOVER WITHIN

... personal experiences, commitment, information

... Initiatives of Change

... an international network open to people of all cultures, nationalities, religions and beliefs, who work towards change, locally and globally, by starting with change in their own lives.

Life experiences compiled by Laurent Gagnon

BEYOND BORDERS

Initiatives of Change in Quebec

Foreword by Cornelio Sommaruga

English text and translations revised and edited by
Richard Weeks



CAUX BOOKS

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PREFACE

The idea of writing a book about the experiences of people whose lives have been enriched, even transformed, by their encounter with the philosophy and life principles of Initiatives of Change, has been maturing for several years. But it was only in 2004 that *Témoins sans frontières (Beyond Borders)* took root and bore fruit, thanks to the enthusiastic response of those who were approached and asked to contribute.

To the initial concept of providing a bridge between the pioneers and the new generation, was added the determination to make this international movement better known by providing a glimpse into its history and development. This assignment called for memory and perspective, linking the heritage with the succession. The front cover illustrates this well, depicting the initiator, Frank Buchman, and the new multicultural generations looking to the future.

The purpose and global experience represented by the title *Beyond Borders* permeate the texts which give practical expression to the intuition of Frank Buchman, founder of what was called The Oxford Group, then Moral Re-Armament (MRA) and now, since 2001, Initiatives of Change (IoC). While the heart of the message, 'remaking the world', may sound like a wonderful dream or utopia, thousands of people have found in this movement a source of inspiration, a journey of discovery, a place of commitment and fulfillment. The approach is that of 'gardeners', if you like, 'sowing' ideas and experiences, rather than 'firefighters' out to resolve crises at any cost. Hundreds have committed themselves as full-time

workers for sixty years, forty years, ten years, with the profound assurance that 'where God guides, God provides'.

The focus on experiences from Quebec is the result of two particular circumstances. It is an historical fact that the movement began its Canadian activities in Montreal in 1931, and it was also there that the idea for such a book was first conceived, with the encouragement of the IofC Montreal regional committee. Far from wanting to limit the implications and activities to Quebec, involvement and support from outside is recalled with gratitude and serves as an inspiration for future action.

The aims of this movement appeal, at the deepest level, to the latent generosity in each person, which seeks to express itself in response to a challenge like: 'Changing the world is up to you'. There have always been, and there always will be, idealistic, border-crossing men and women, driven by a stubborn faith and an urge to go to their limits and meet the challenges of their time for the benefit of future generations. They are motivated by a sense of global responsibility and solidarity.

The following pages will not only provide memories and facts. They are above all a celebration, an expression of gratitude for the pioneers and those who are working today for this spiritual movement with its social calling. Holding to the vision of a world renewed from the inside is a first step. There is a lifestyle coupled with a commitment to facilitate the creation of spaces for justice and peace. Frontiers of the heart and mind must be crossed so that the words 'humanity' and 'fraternity' mean something again despite the divisions within and between peoples.

Some readers may have difficulty with the religious language used in some of the texts. The personal stories are

shared according to each person's own experience of faith, just as others are free to express their secular point of view. While remaining open, IofC continues to affirm a spiritual reality and its own multi-faith character, not with any intention to proselytize but simply to remain true to founding principles.

After reading the various experiences, you will know more about the basic ideas of Initiatives of Change, its major objectives, its programs of action, its documentary resources. The relationship between the personal, community-based and international dimensions is constantly affirmed, because IofC takes into consideration all aspects of a person and of society.

Among the names and expressions frequently cited in the text, two deserve a brief explanation. First of all, two international centres have had a particular impact on the history of IofC: they are the centres at Mackinac Island in the USA and Caux, Switzerland. The first served from 1942 to 1965 as a conference and training centre for thousands of people from around the world. The second, in operation since 1946, which currently can accommodate up to 450 people, continues to play an indispensable role, mainly through the summer months, as a place of gathering, inspiration and global outreach. There is also frequent reference to 'full-time workers' (now referred to as 'fieldworkers' in Canada) or people working 'full time' since the nineteen thirties. These are volunteers who freely give a number of years, or their whole lives, to enhance the effectiveness of the movement, according to their calling and their particular gifts.

Dr. Cornelio Sommaruga was invited to write the foreword as President of Initiatives of Change-International, since the creation in 2002 of this federation of national legal bodies. Before assuming this position, he was President of the International Committee of the Red Cross from 1987 to 1999, and then President of the Swiss Foundation Caux-Initiatives of

Change. But over and above these titles, Cornelio Sommaruga is a passionately committed individual.

This book is not intended in any way to defend the successes of the outreach and impact of the movement. It is simply a sharing of the experiences and development of individuals and teams. Much remains to be done in order to realize the founding vision, but we are confident that the future is already being written through new commitments and initiatives. We count on you, the readers, to help us carry out more effectively the mission entrusted to us. Each one has a contribution to make in solidarity with other 'gardeners' in this world of profound change.

Laurent Gagnon

INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

This book was published in French in July, 2005, with the title *Témoins sans frontières*, and it was the intention, from the outset, that it also be made available in English. To this end, it has been an honour and a pleasure for me to work on bringing it to English readers, as I know most of the writers personally and was closely associated with many of the events described, particularly from 1972 to 1981, when I lived in Quebec.

After we were married in 1973, my wife Rosalind returned with me to Montreal, and two of our three sons were born there. It was an exhilarating, if turbulent, time to be in Quebec, arriving as I did, little more than a year after the October crisis, living through intense struggles in the labour movement, the celebration of the Montreal Olympics, the election of the first Parti Québécois government and the 1980 sovereignty referendum. I loved the warm hospitality, the vibrant culture and even the passionate debates. I am now working at the Initiatives of Change Canadian office in Ottawa and happy that *la belle province* is only just across the river.

I am referred to in the book as coming from England. That is true, but it is not the whole truth. My father was born in Winnipeg, where my grandfather spent seven years as a Minister in the Congregational Church. I myself came to Canada at the age of five, when my family moved from England to live in Alberta. Two years later, however, my father's work took us back to Europe, where an English school erased my Canadian accent, but I still had a Canadian passport, which I hung onto in case I might one day have the chance to return.

It was while I was spending a few months in France with Moral Re-Armament (MRA) in 1971, that it was suggested that I accompany two colleagues, Michel Sentis and Michel Bielak, to attend an MRA conference being held in Cap-de-la Madeleine, close to Trois-Rivières, over the New Year of 1972. I felt this was the chance I had been waiting for to become reacquainted with Canada and get to know Quebec. So I came, and stayed through until the summer, as part of an international team. I then travelled with a Quebec delegation to Ireland and Caux, before returning to Trois-Rivières in the fall for my second energizing Quebec winter. Jacqueline Pellerin, about whom you will read, used to call me *l'oiseau rare*, and I admit I was something of a 'rare bird' in those parts!

My wife, Rosalind, is from the Republic of Ireland and her family has had a long association with IofC, as has my own. I first met her parents when they came to Quebec in 1973 with a group of Catholics and Protestants from Ireland. They presented a play reading in which my father-in-law-to-be, a Church of Ireland (Anglican) Dean in real life, played the part of a Catholic priest! He had always been a pioneer in ecumenism.

I sincerely hope that the genuine aspirations of the Quebec people, often viewed by others as a threat, can, with 'generosity of spirit' all round, be respected in a way that enriches us all. Starting from the fall of 2005, Initiatives of Change is inviting people to engage in a journey, 'Towards a community of communities – from solitudes to partnership', on which the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City, first permanent French settlement in North America, will be a significant landmark. This book can make a real contribution to this journey, as it introduces readers to a cross section of Quebecers, through their personal stories. More than that, it introduces them to ideas that can be the basis for a dialogue and partnership that is not politically charged.

I would like to thank all those who have played a part in bringing you this English edition. These include those who worked on translation: Stuart Brown, Roger Gilbert, Michel Pérusse, Anne Morris; and those who have edited and reviewed the text, notably my wife Rosalind, Maura Beecher, Jack Freebury, Henry Heald and, of course, Laurent and Lise Gagnon who have worked hard to ensure that the spirit and intent of the original is respected.

Richard Weeks
Ottawa

FOREWORD

The President of Initiatives of Change-International can only rejoice at the publication of a book like *Beyond Borders*, which our friends in Quebec have produced for us with their well-known enthusiasm: enthusiasm for the basic principles of Initiatives of Change, formerly Moral Re-Armament, and a willingness to use their historical account to emphasize the philosophy of this universal Movement. The admirable enthusiasm of the authors is demonstrated by the care with which they have linked the Quebec experiences with collective and individual activities in the rest of Canada and especially on the international stage.

We rejoice at finding here the echo of these extraordinary meeting places, Caux and Panchgani, places of reflection, meditation, dialogue and especially of looking to the future in promoting the change that is so necessary for our society in these early years of the 21st century.

The individual commitment evident in the book is the legacy of the pioneers of the Movement, who, ever since The Oxford Group, have accepted the grand vision of Frank Buchman and met the successive challenges of more than seven very turbulent decades.

Passing on messages and convictions in the form of testimony – which constitutes the great moments of the meetings at Caux – is doubtless of primary importance, but it is certainly not everything. This book goes beyond the reality of the testimonies and assumes a dynamic of propositions for

the future. It is a stimulating work for anyone familiar with Initiatives of Change, but also a very informative book for all those who want to discover this Movement, sometimes mysterious, with its obvious interest in opening 'beyond borders' to the world to which it wishes to transmit its ethical values, and in which it would inspire changes towards greater spirituality, solidarity and respect for human dignity.

Having had the opportunity to spend a few days in Montreal in 2002 with the friends of Initiatives of Change whose vitality I admired, I am not surprised by the creativity and the originality of this work! I know Canada well, and I have been there and given speeches in several provinces. I have met many ministers in successive Federal Governments and collaborated with the Canadian Red Cross. I have survived many encounters with the Canadian media and mingled a great deal with Canadians, both anglophone and francophone. Now I feel that my friendship and esteem for all Canadians has been confirmed after such a long appreciation of their humanitarian involvement, which was so helpful to me during my decades in diplomacy.

The book is precious to me for all I can learn from it. It has also encouraged me to persevere in my personal mission.

As I congratulate the authors and Caux Books for this publication in French and English, I would also express the hope that this work will be widely read in Canada and around the world. In its pages and across the generations, we find the true way for humanity, with the help of the Almighty, to become ever more just, serene and happy!

Cornelio Sommaruga, Geneva
President, Initiatives of Change-International

I PIONEERS PREPARE
THE WAY



*Eleanor Forde
Newton*

SHE ALWAYS WANTED ADVENTURE

By Geraldine Hughes

Eleanor (Ellie) Forde was born in Montreal in 1899. She had a happy childhood with an older sister and younger brother and she loved the Canadian winters. In the summer her father would take the family to his fishing camp in the Quebec wilderness. Then came the outbreak of World War I and her father's business in Montreal collapsed. Things were so bad financially that in 1918 her mother, with Ellie and her younger brother, moved to New York to live with her family.

Her aunt offered to send her to university to finish the degree she had begun at McGill University in Montreal, but Ellie decided to take a secretarial course and eventually became secretary to four professors at New York University. Her family in New York were all believers, in the sense that their faith was in their lives, not just in their minds.

Finding an answer

Ellie wanted to live a real Christian life, but didn't know how. On the Wednesday before Easter, 1922, she gave God an ultimatum – "You must tell me what I am to do with my life, today!" The amazing thing is that at the noon-day Church service that same day she heard Rev. Sam Shoemaker preach. He had met Frank Buchman some years before while on a two-year assignment in China from Princeton University and this encounter had led to a profound change in Shoemaker's life. He later became Rector of Calvary Church in New York. It

was at this church that Ellie heard him speak and that she linked up with a dynamic group of young people who called themselves 'A First Century Christian Fellowship', based on Buchman's ideas. They were committed to living by absolute moral standards – honesty, purity, unselfishness and love – and to actively seeking God's guidance for their lives daily. Ellie made a commitment herself, asking God to guide her each day and to use her to help other people find His plan for their lives.

Not long after this, their little group went to a small uptown restaurant to meet Buchman, who had just returned from India. Ellie had a feeling that he was wondering whether she was there for the message or for the boys, but when she spoke about the steps she had taken, he seemed to understand she was serious. Ellie saw quite a lot of Buchman after that, as one of the young men and women he was training to take the message of the Oxford Group to the world. She remembered his telling her that she must always let him know when she thought he was wrong. She always did. It helped them both.

In 1927, Frank Buchman wrote from England to invite Ellie to come and work with him in Oxford, to help young women who were looking for a new start in their lives. She was the very first woman to work full-time with what would come to be known as The Oxford Group. She spent the last years of the 1920's in Britain and Europe, running training courses and trying to help people find their way to God. During those years, she wrote a booklet, *The Guidance of God*, which is still in circulation today.

In 1929, Ellie was part of a large group that visited South Africa, and it was there that they were dubbed 'The Oxford Group'. The response was so great that people had to sit on the window-sills in the crowded halls where they spoke. Over the years, Ellie received countless letters from people who had turned to God at that time. One couple wrote, "Your coming

helped to change our lives". Those who worked with The Oxford Group received no pay, living completely on 'faith and prayer' and relying on people's gifts and hospitality.

The Oxford Group comes to Canada

Each year, during the long summer vacation, an international conference was held in Oxford. Afterwards, the Group would plan where to focus their activities next. In 1931, Ellie had the courage to suggest that they should go to Canada. Buchman not only agreed, but sent her back across the Atlantic to organize the campaign!

It was amazing how it all unfolded. One of her best friends from McGill University days was married with two children and living in Montreal. One of the first things Ellie did when she got there was to go to see her. Her friend was in a bad state emotionally and was on the verge of walking out of the marriage because of her critical feelings towards her husband. Ellie was able to help her see that she herself could change, and she became very different. Her father, a journalist in the Maritimes, was so thrilled about his daughter's change that he immediately travelled to New York to find out more about the Oxford Group. He started proclaiming the news of their work in articles he wrote for weekly newspapers across Canada. He also enlisted leading Canadians to add their names to the official invitation which went to Dr. Buchman. In October, 1932, Buchman arrived in Montreal with a team of thirty-two people from several countries - and the campaign began. After one of their first meetings, an industrialist decided to pay \$12,200 in undeclared customs duties to the National Revenue Department. The story was carried in national newspapers, and interest in the Oxford Group spread. In the next years Buchman and his team crossed the country twice.

Out of these first meetings in Montreal and Ottawa developed a group of people committed to finding God's will

in their lives and living it out. It included government officials, businessmen, ambassadors, professional people and others. Buchman and his team then went to city after city on a westward journey across Canada. On one Sunday in 1933, according to *The Vancouver News*, 30,000 people came to hear Oxford Group speakers in different churches and halls in Vancouver. Many people became deeply affected.

Another of Ellie's friends from McGill, Grace Young, lived in Winnipeg. Grace and her husband were inspired to start a Christian boys' boarding school. It later became amalgamated with another and is now an outstanding school in Winnipeg. Grace, widowed when her husband was killed at Dieppe, devoted herself, along with two of her three daughters, to work full-time with The Oxford Group and MRA.

Impact on American cities

In the late 1930's Ellie returned to New York, and was based at Calvary House, the U.S. headquarters of the Oxford Group. One day a young colleague called Jim Newton came into her office. "You're going out to lunch on Wednesday with Mrs. Thomas Edison," he announced. "Who said?" Ellie asked. "I said," replied Jim. She laughed. Ellie went to meet Mrs. Edison and they had a wonderful time. It turned out that Jim was a friend of Thomas Edison. He also knew Henry Ford and had been right-hand man to Harvey Firestone, of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, before working full-time with the Oxford Group.

Shortly before the outbreak of World War II, a campaign for Moral Re-Armament was organized in different cities across the United States. Mrs. Edison took part, and it was arranged that Ellie would accompany her on the train journey to California. Mrs. Edison spoke eloquently at breakfasts, luncheons, teas and dinners all the way down the coast to Los

Angeles. Louis B. Mayer, head of MGM Studios in Hollywood, gave a luncheon for Mrs. Edison and two hundred guests. Throughout the trip, Jim took care of all their travel arrangements. The culmination of the campaign was a huge meeting in the Hollywood Bowl. It was packed with 30,000 people and the newspapers reported that 15,000 had been unable to get in. Many found a new direction for their lives, which affected their communities and even nations.

In 1942 Jim Newton and Eleanor Forde were married. By then Jim was an army officer, and the small wedding took place during his weekend leave. Ellie's sister Roberta was her matron of honour and the famous aviator, Charles Lindbergh, who was another close friend of Jim's, was his best man. Jim and Ellie were both independent people, in their late thirties and early forties, for whom marriage meant a considerable change of life. There were inevitable tensions. They set up home in a small apartment in Petersburg, Virginia where Jim was in charge of weapons training for the army base and under immense pressure. In addition, he felt torn between his commitment to his family and the commitment to his new wife, while Ellie felt cut off from the satisfying friendships she was accustomed to.

One Sunday morning, in a moment of despair, Ellie said to God, "Who is right and who is wrong?" Just one thought came to her, "My grace is sufficient for thee." She said to herself, "I didn't ask for a text from the Bible." She asked again, "Who is right and who is wrong?" Back came the same thought. "My grace is sufficient for thee." And again she said, "What I want is an answer to my question." But the same thought returned. Then Ellie realized that this was the answer God was giving her. And with that, all the demands in her heart disappeared.

After the war, Jim and Ellie resumed their full-time voluntary work with Moral Re-Armament. The Newtons spent

two years in the Caribbean and a year in Pakistan and India. Between these missions they would return to the MRA conference centres at Mackinac Island, Michigan, or at Caux in Switzerland, bringing delegates with them.

In the mid-1960s the Newtons woke up to the fact that they were entering an unpopular human condition known as 'advancing years'. They had given themselves unreservedly to God's work of 'remaking the world' without salary. Now they remembered the example of the apostle Paul who made tents while spreading the good news, so as not to be a burden to the younger people who were carrying the faith forward. So they moved to Fort Myers Beach where Jim had worked in property development as a young man, and they set up a small real estate business. Over the next years the area suddenly exploded into one of the fastest-growing in the country. Jim's philosophy was 'real estate is people, not only property'.

While he was still working out of a cubby-hole with no office, equipment, files or secretary, Jim was asked to be President and a Director of the Florida Board of Realtors. One by one, people came and asked if they could work with the company because, they said, they liked the way Jim cared for people. Within five years the business had grown into a team of twenty associates with four branch offices; eventually they had 130 associates and fifteen offices. Ellie got her real estate license at the age of seventy-one, so that she could take an active part.

Alongside the business, the Newtons carried on doing their best for each of the people God sent their way. One day a young business associate came and told Ellie that she was so unhappy that she wanted to leave her husband. 'Before you do that, let's get on our knees and pray,' Ellie said. The woman committed her life to God with faith that He would give her a new marriage. They became one of the most trusted couples in their community.

Bitterness faced and dissolved

Ellie's story began with her decision, at age nineteen, to give her life to Christ. Many years later she had an experience which was another 'touchstone' in her life. She was greatly troubled at the time because of a deep division that had developed between her and some of her closest friends and colleagues. There was bitterness in Ellie's heart. She had prayed about it, but it was still there. Jim and Ellie had just arrived in Rome, after a business trip to France, when Jim was called back to the United States on urgent business. Ellie elected to stay on in Rome and continue exploring. She was particularly keen to see the Scala Santa, the marble steps brought to Rome from the Tower of Antonio in Jerusalem by the mother of the first Christian emperor, Constantine. It is said that Christ walked up these steps to meet Pilate. Ellie found that the original steps had been worn away by centuries of use by popes, beggars, kings – people of all sorts from all lands – and were now protected with wooden treads. She climbed them, praying on her knees, as they had all done.

It dawned on her with dissolving poignancy that Jesus had climbed those steps not to judge but to be judged; that it was man's sin of judgement and pride-of-knowing which had brought Him there. Jesus was there for all people, to have His arms stretched out to take in the whole world. So Ellie went up on her knees and she wept. She gave Him her bitterness and asked Him to forgive her. And, as she stood there where Jesus had stood, God took it all away.

In March 1998, Eleanor Forde Newton was presented with an Outstanding Women's Achievement Award by Florida's Secretary of State, Sandra B. Morthan, "for her great accomplishments in Florida and around the world, her valuable friendships that have benefitted thousands, and her spirit which would continue to inspire young people for many years."

At the age of one hundred and two, Ellie read in the newspaper that volunteers were needed for the Christmas collection kettles which were set up on sidewalks by the Salvation Army. She decided that this was something she could volunteer to do. So she sat in her wheel-chair and rang the traditional bell for this fund-raising event. The newspaper took her photograph and published it. This triggered a large increase in the number of volunteers.

Ellie & Jim Newton lived in the town of Fort Myers Beach, Florida, for almost thirty years. During that time they hosted many people from other countries, including Cardinal Franz König of Vienna whom they had met at an MRA conference in Switzerland. Elderly and in poor health, he needed to spend the winter in a warm climate. Therefore, the Newtons invited him to spend the winters in Fort Myers Beach as their guest. As a result Jim and Ellie got to know the local Catholic priest very well.

Eleanor Forde Newton died on July 26, 2003 at the age of 104. It is significant that, although the funeral service for Ellie was held in the Methodist Church, it was preceded by a candle-lighting ceremony conducted by clergy of all the denominations, including the Catholic priest. Among those who gave tributes during the funeral service were a State Senator, the ex-President of Fort Myers College, and the youngest daughter of Charles Lindbergh. All of the speakers mentioned the important part Ellie had played in helping them find change in their lives.

This biographical information has been compiled by Geraldine Hughes of Oakville, Ontario, who heard Eleanor Forde speak in Toronto, Ontario, in 1933. Geraldine was a teacher who became a full-time worker with Moral Re-Armament for twenty years and then moved on to being a

College professor. She and Ellie had become friends and, on retirement, she would drive from Canada each winter to team up with the Newtons at Fort Myers Beach.

In the early 1990's, Geraldine spent twelve months compiling Ellie's life-long collection of letters, speeches, and news accounts to be deposited in the Historical Archives of Yale University where her husband's collection had previously been sent. Also, Geraldine assisted Ellie Newton in writing her autobiography; published in a booklet entitled 'I Always Wanted Adventure'.

"Moral Re-Armament is needed both by the frustrated terrorist and by the peaceful, law-abiding citizen who has long since forgotten what the soul is."

Grigory Pomerants, Russian philosopher



Bernard Hallward

BUSINESSMAN WITH A HEART

by Jack Freebury

The odds that Bernard Hallward would become a successful businessman were slim, given the humble circumstances of his family while growing up in England. His father was a country parson and with eleven children in the family there was little left over for more than the basics. Later in life, Bernard would tell about his embarrassment as a child at having to wear shoes handed down from an older sister. His circumstances changed, however, when he won a scholarship to Winchester College, rated as one of England's 'public' schools that are hardest to get into. Bernard went to Oxford University from there, but was unable to finish as he ran out of money.

After leaving Oxford in 1905, Bernard went to Russia as a tutor for various Russian families. Having become fluent in Russian, he served with distinction in the British Army as an Intelligence officer during World War I and was awarded a DSO (second only to the Victoria Cross). After the war, he began his business career in Poland managing a soft drink plant and then, in 1920, was sent by a British textile firm to Canada. He soon married and Montreal became his permanent home.

Bernard's wife Alice was the daughter of Lord Atholstan, founder of *The Montreal Star*. After their marriage, Lord Atholstan appointed Bernard to manage two of the paper mills owned by *The Montreal Star* in the province of Quebec. Alice's parents built a house on Mountain Street as a wedding gift for

Alice and Bernard. It is now the headquarters for the Dean of the Medical School at McGill University.

Bernard and Alice were among the first Canadians to meet Frank Buchman and his Oxford Group team of thirty-two people, when they arrived in Montreal in the fall of 1932. Garth Lean, Buchman's biographer, described this event in his book *Frank Buchman: a life*. "After the first public meeting in Montreal, a dignified grey-haired man got hold of Holme (Reginald Holme was one of the young Oxford graduates travelling with Buchman). He asked how to have a 'quiet time' and, when he tried it, wrote down the one word 'Customs'." This encounter was a turning point in Bernard Hallward's life. According to Lean, when Buchman and his team reached Ottawa, "they were greeted by an eight-column headline bearing the news that he [Hallward] had paid \$12,200 to the National Revenue Department for undeclared goods brought through from Europe." This news spread across the country and helped draw large crowds in every city Buchman and his team visited. For the Hallwards, their decision to be open to God's leading impacted every facet of their lives.

International outreach

A story which illustrates how Bernard and Alice Hallward cared for people in simple ways and opened their home to the world is told by Sylvia Cust from Australia who was living with them at the time. "When India's independence was nearing fulfilment, two Indian business men came to Canada to buy newsprint. One of them, Devadas Gandhi, was editor of the *Hindustan Times*. He was also the son of the Mahatma. These men were having trouble finding newsprint, even in Scandinavia where they had previously bought it. After a superb curry dinner, which Alice had served to them in her home, and a gift of maple syrup for the Mahatma, culled from their trees in North Hatley, Quebec, the visitors left for India

with a promise that a thousand tons of paper would be supplied to them at a far lower cost than that prevailing on the open market. Bernard Hallward also took the further step of getting other companies to do likewise."

In the years immediately following the Second World War, Hallward travelled across the Atlantic fifteen times to help bring Moral Re-Armament to the European countries. Because he spoke from experience, both employers and union leaders in the heart of Germany's Ruhr industrial area listened to him. In 1949 he was one of the spokesmen at a meeting of works council leaders and company executives. He said to them, "What has created injustices in the western world is selfishness and moral compromise in men like me. I can see how the hard-boiled materialism of the right wing is reflected in the bitterness of the left wing." He also said, "If you see your face reflected in a mirror and don't like the look of it, it is no use throwing stones at the mirror. If you change your own appearance there is a good chance that the reflection in the mirror will also change." Hallward, with many humorous touches, told the story of his own change, and carried everyone with him. The meeting lasted four hours; when it broke up, all were agreed to meet again.

Home and industry

Bernard was admired for his warm hearted and sensitive nature and keen sense of humour. While he enjoyed the simple things in life like home and family, he insisted on certain things – lights must be turned off when not in use and tea, to be up to standard, must be made with water that 'is' boiling and not with water that 'was' boiling. Over the years he and Alice gave generously, both in their care for individual people and in their financial support for many of the international initiatives of MRA. Their home in Montreal was used greatly for MRA gatherings and youth programs often took place during the

summer at their place in North Hatley. Bernard was known to be straightforward and to the point about basic principles for running a business. He often spoke with conviction about the need to put people before profits and about the fact that good will without love creates mistrust.

When speaking to the Toronto Board of Trade on January 19th, 1942 about the lessons he was learning as a business executive, Bernard said, "I am responsible for the policies of a paper-making company in the Province of Quebec (St. Raymond Paper Company). I think it is above all in the field of industry that the English-speaking population of the Province can do most to give a real meaning to the phrase, the *bonne entente*, for there, capital and management are mainly English, labour mainly French. You have been hearing a good deal lately about unity in the Province. Here is where our deeds may come to the rescue of our words."

Hallward's deeds did come to the rescue of his words. The following story about his relationship with union leader Alfred Charpentier, found in a document on file in the IofC Ottawa office, gives evidence of this.

"When there were differences to settle at one of his mills he took the opportunity to get to know Alfred Charpentier, President of the Canadian Catholic Confederation of Labour, an organization of 70,000 workers. Hallward took the trouble to speak Charpentier's language, talked with him over a meal instead of at him across an office desk, treated him not as an opponent but as an equal and a friend, and invited him and his wife to his home.

"Charpentier was especially impressed by Hallward's action in discontinuing all Sunday work, contrary to the practice of other mills, although this meant fewer profits. In 1944 Hallward invited Charpentier to come with him to the

Training Centre for MRA at Mackinac Island, Michigan, where they would meet other employers and labour leaders who wished to develop industrial teamwork and see further what they could do together in Canada. Charpentier came for five days and stayed for twelve. He said later that he was surprised to find how much he could learn outside his own people about the fundamentals of teamwork in home and industry.

“He said also that he got a larger concept of the function of the Catholic unions of which he was head. Through personal contacts he saw the fight that sound men in other labour groups were putting up for moral standards and teamwork, principles on which his own organization was founded. If, first of all, they were true to their own principles themselves, they would give a lead to the whole labour movement.

“In September 1944 Charpentier spoke strongly along these lines at the national conference of the Catholic unions. From that time on, he took every opportunity to bring to the leadership of his organization the conviction that had been brought home to him at Mackinac.

“When the industrial drama *The Forgotten Factor* was first presented in Montreal, he arranged the meeting of the national executive so that they would be able to attend. After the performance they were all invited to Hallward’s home. Very few of these men had ever been entertained in an English-speaking employer’s house, but Charpentier and Hallward as joint hosts made everyone feel at home. After words of welcome from Hallward, Charpentier told them frankly and fully what he had seen of Moral Re-Armament at Mackinac. He stressed how he had proceeded with caution, because the people he had met were a complete contradiction of his ideas of English-speaking Canadians and Protestants. Yet all his Christian training led him to believe that he and they were fighting the same battle against materialism in the world. He

spoke of the revolution in his thinking that his visit to Mackinac had started. It was not enough to champion the rights of one race, of one province or of one group such as organized labour, but he had to have a heart and mind big enough to think and care for the whole country, English and French, Catholic and Protestant, labour and management.”

Public and private honesty

Rather than preaching to people about their need to be different, Hallward learned it was more effective to share about his own mistakes in life and the change he had experienced. The following excerpts from a public speech he made illustrate this and reveal the vision he had for industry and the nation.

“We should all like to see great changes in the headlines of today. Headlines represent people and many of the headlines would change if certain people changed. In my own case what I used to miss out on was that: if I were to change, there might come a change in some of the people whom I found it so very hard to get along with. It is much less embarrassing to talk about changes in institutions than to get to work on change in yourself.

“Did you ever think what an idea like honesty might do for us? ... You discover a lot of things about honesty as soon as you make a start at it. I remember so well how greatly concerned I used to be about dishonesty in public life and how my wife and I used to come back from trips to Europe, open up the trunks without saying a word and see them chalked without saying a word, knowing all the time that the customs man knew that we knew that he knew we had stuff to declare. You will note that by saying nothing we shirked our taxes and encouraged him to fall down on his job. And there was me all the time looking very churchwarden-like, if I do say so myself.

“All very trivial, you may say. Yes, perhaps so, but we have to start somewhere and I know this: when I decided to stop

robbing the government and to figure out what I owed them, I not only had a substantial cheque to make out, but for the first time I saw clearly that honesty in public life can stem only from honesty in private life, and that compromise is one of our most insidious diseases. It spotlighted for me not only the public implications of our private acts, but also our wonderful capacity for rationalizing our pet sins.

“We have so much to learn of the art of living together. We need the union of hearts and minds in industry just as we do in the home. In neither can we hope to survive the strains and stresses of life with the help of cold justice and reason alone. And so we come back to this business of caring for people.

“Canadian statesmanship will be hobbled until the relations between the French and the English are on a basis of confidence. Until labour and management reach a basis of confidence, our economic life will be bedevilled. That is why industry in my province of Quebec has such a special responsibility. Confidence between labour and capital means confidence between French and English. That is why Montreal must be the heart of Canadian unity. But wherever there is effective teamwork between management and labour, there is statesmanship in industry.”

This biographical sketch of Bernard Hallward has been compiled by Jack Freebury, from Alberta, with input from the Hallward family and friends and various books and publications. Jack took part in the construction and administration of the MRA international conference centre at Mackinac Island, Michigan, during the 1950s and 60s. It was during that time that he first met the Hallwards, who not only participated in the conferences but also provided major financial support for the centre. He was impressed by their care for the delegates from all backgrounds and continents. Jack was also moved by the fact that in 1960, when there was little public interest in

Canada's aboriginal people, the Hallwards provided the funding for the historic world journey of Chief Walking Buffalo (Nukoda/Stoney Nation) and the David Crowchild family (Sarcee/Tsuu T'ina Nation). This colourful group of eight, due to the Hallwards' vision, was able to share its message of change and reconciliation across Europe, New Zealand, Australia and Africa. Bernard Hallward died in 1977 at the age of ninety-five.

Having spent eighteen years as a labour relations policy analyst with the Alberta government, Jack is convinced that the story about Bernard Hallward's change of attitude toward his employees and his work to create a positive spirit in industry is most relevant for today.



*Mina and
Andrew Webster*

THE WEBSTER FAMILY FROM 1933 ONWARDS

by Mina Webster King

In the early 1930s my parents Andrew and Mina Webster were a young Montreal couple with three very small children. My father was a businessman and amateur singer, and my mother was a concert singer. Both were deeply involved in the musical scene of Montreal. As I recall, our home rang out with music, and everyone played an instrument, even the youngest.

One day a request came for hospitality for some visitors to Montreal. The visitors were from the USA and Britain representing The Oxford Group. My parents invited an American couple, Ken and Marian Twitchell, to our home, and this visit changed the whole course of their lives. As a result, my parents learned how to listen to God for daily direction and to be part of a force that was bringing something new to a world on the verge of war. My father, challenged by the standard of absolute honesty, wrote a letter of apology to Canada Customs, admitting to some previously undeclared items. He received a wonderful letter in reply, thanking him for his honesty.

Taking up the challenge

From across Montreal others, both French and English, took up the challenge that the Oxford Group brought on their early visits. A small team from across the city began to meet regularly in the home of Bernard and Alice Hallward in downtown Montreal. Bernard was a well known industrialist in our city, who in subsequent years opened his home to hundreds of

people from dozens of countries, all united in their commitment 'to build a new world under God'. The Montreal team began to plan for the city and the country along with the new team in Ontario.

World War II came in 1939. The Montreal and Ontario teams, along with help from some Americans, wrote a musical revue *Pull Together Canada*, which toured Quebec, Ontario and Atlantic Canada at the request of the provincial leaders. The play brought the message of hope, through change both personal and national. My parents played leading roles, and took time away from business and home to do so. In the coal mining area of Nova Scotia, the cast all lived with the miners in their homes. As a result, many families were remade, and a major coal strike, critical to the war, was averted.

In the years just after the war, although my mother had died some years earlier, my father carried on this work, especially in the area of labour and management. I remember many evenings in our home where labour leaders would meet with their employers, and try and break down the walls on the basis, not of who, but of what, was right. Countless other meetings were held in our home after the war, and to one of these came Ted and Audrey Porter, both just back from war time services.

A turning point

In 1953 my father took my brother and me to the international conference in Caux. There, for the first time, I saw the global impact of MRA - French hatred towards the Germans, due to the war, being healed through humble apology and honesty. As well, hardened communist coal miners were changing and finding a greater ideology than communism to remake the world.

That summer I accepted the challenge to give my life with this international force. For me, change meant two difficult

steps. The first was an apology to my father from whom I'd been divided for some years. This brought a new unity to our family. The next step was giving up music college and my dreams of a career in music as a pianist. Within a week, I found myself more involved than ever in music. As a full-time worker with MRA, I became involved in the international chorus, wrote songs for a play, toured as a pianist with a German play, and finally took part in two big musicals: *The Vanishing Island*, which we performed through Asia and Africa, and *The Crowning Experience* which played a major part in bringing racial unity to the southern states of the USA.

Margaret Miller Manson, from an old Montreal family, played a large part in the *Pull Together Canada* story. I can remember songs from the play being rehearsed in our home under the direction of Margie, my mother, and Frances Roots Hadden from the USA. Margie went on to direct and act in MRA plays all over the world together with her husband, Matt Manson, for the next twenty years.

Simone Vuignier was a young seamstress in Montreal who came to see *Pull Together Canada* in 1942 by chance, and it changed the whole course of her life. Simone will tell her own story, but just to say, she went on to design and make costumes on a world stage for the many plays and musicals that MRA produced after the war.

A next step

To conclude my story, in the following years I married Stan King, a medical doctor from Calgary, Alberta, where we raised our children. Stan's parents also met the early Oxford Group when they went across Canada. This is also an amazing story which one day, I hope, the westerners will tell.

Presently we are living in Ottawa, where Stan is retired from being a medical officer with Canada Pension Plan, and I

am teaching music. We participate in IofC activities whenever possible, and remain forever grateful for the faith, the enduring values and the global vision given through the years with MRA.

Mina Webster King
Ottawa.

“Confusion comes from compromise. Clarity comes from change. The moral change that illuminates the darkest motives and mobilises the latent powers.”

Frank Buchman, 4 June 1953

II ELDERS TELL THEIR STORIES



Roger Paul Gilbert

AN EXPERIENCE THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

What act of Providence had me cross paths with Laurent Gagnon? He was in Quebec city, or rather at Neuville, the vacation home of our friends the Wojciechowskis, Jerzy, a philosopher, and his wife Cécile Cloutier, a poetess, whose daughter Eve has been working for three years with Initiatives of Change in Oxford, England, as a web designer and programmer of IofC's international web sites. At dinner, also attended by my own sister Françoise, a resident of Neuville, the conversation turned to Moral Re-Armament. My sister reminded me that I had once been at the MRA centre in Caux, back in 1948.

Recollections

Laurent Gagnon expressed a wish to be better acquainted, and soon we were sitting together in a café on Nuns' Island, a residential suburb on the St. Lawrence River, facing Montreal. At this pleasant get-together, while sipping coffee, a whole reel of early recollections flashed before me: memories of Bernard Hallward, a leading personality in the pulp and paper industry and the press, and industrialist Andrew Webster, and their ability to bring people together in Montreal and Quebec society under the MRA umbrella; memories of Cecil Harvest, a wealthy Briton, who had a big part in organizing the tour of a French theatre group who presented *The Forgotten Factor* (*L'Élément oublié*) in Montreal's historic theatre *Le Monument National*.

Cecil Harvest recruited some walk-ons for the play; a rare chance for me to step on stage at age sixteen with other Montrealers from all walks of life. We had to play an angry mob threatening the home of a factory manager. At a key moment, the play reaches a climax: reconciliation takes place thanks to the manager's recognition of his past errors and his firm commitment to make amends. From this emerges mutual forgiveness in his family life as well as in his relations with his company workers.

In this way I met a good number of people like Gaston Lévesque, a labour-union man; Jacques Désormeaux, a student; Louise Côté; Peter Budzik, a future chemical engineer; and especially Frank Turner, an accountant and banker who gave himself body and soul to MRA. The summer of 1948 would be a turning point, for some of us would travel to Caux with Cecil Harvest and Dorothea McDermott, and others to Mackinac Island with Frank Turner and his future wife Penny. Regular meetings in Montreal brought together adherents and friends in the home of Bernard Hallward or that of Andrew Webster, where I met his young daughter Mina, a pianist with a zest for life.

A unique experience

The experience of Caux would mark me for the rest of my life. Travelling in Europe (England, France and Switzerland) was a dream-come-true for a sixteen-year-old high school student, on whom were placed high hopes for a future at the heart of MRA. Moreover, observing the summer program at Caux-sur-Montreux in the splendid Swiss Alps was a rare opportunity in those days, especially when it included brief visits to London and Paris, and to some beautiful cities of Normandy and Champagne.

At Caux, students as well as other participants and guests kept busy for a few hours a day with administrative and other

chores before the morning and afternoon meetings in the great hall. Sorting letters at the post office, singing in the chorus, serving at table for official meals or as a dishwasher in the cafeteria - these were all opportunities to meet people, in which I participated joyfully. Not to forget the dance group that played in the farm scene of *The Good Road*, a musical which was produced in full by the MRA international cast during that 1948 summer.

At that time, Europe was emerging painfully from the grave trials of the Second World War. Germans, French and other Europeans who met at Caux forgave each other for crimes committed in the anger and mutual hate caused by the scourge of war. Naturally, at sixteen, I did not understand the full dimension of these events, but I was able to see in some representatives of European labour and management the benefit of reconciliation in the spirit of MRA.

Young people at Caux reflected on existential questions, flowing from their quiet times, lamenting a world threatened with the rise of Communism in Eastern Europe and in a number of Western European countries such as the Balkans, Greece, Italy and France. The class struggle had to be replaced by better understanding between peoples and the need for change we all believed in.

Reconciling divergent views

Of course, Catholic movements such as JEC (Catholic Student Youth) and JOC (Catholic Working Youth) also faced the same struggles. Guided by directives from Rome, they tended to cool our interest in the ecumenical spirit of MRA. Catholic priests, such as Father Bernard Gingras of the University of Montreal and other Church dignitaries interested themselves in the quiet work of MRA but reservations formulated at this time did little to encourage Catholics to involve themselves more fully in the movement.

These reservations apart, one could not fail to notice the constructive spirit, rare at the time, of Bernard Hallward, for whom reconciliation between anglophone managers and francophone labour unions in Quebec was essential to reconciliation among all Canadians. This is an objective that remains a priority for our society because, in my view, despite the benefits of the Quiet Revolution, distrust between anglophone and francophone Canadians still lingers.

To-day, after a lengthy period of diplomatic wandering, accompanied by an intellectual curiosity which pushed me to express – through two books and three plays – my concerns around Quebec and Canadian identity, I thank Providence for bringing me once again into contact with Initiatives of Change, thus allowing me, in the autumn of my life, to express my gratitude in a modest way.

Roger Paul Gilbert
Montreal



Simone Vuignier

THEATRE AS A MEDIUM FOR CHANGE

Born on October 10, 1919, I will be eighty-seven years old this year. I grew up in the Gaspé, one of the most beautiful regions of Québec, in a small village of the lovely Matapedia valley. My parents were of Swiss origin. My mother came to Canada in 1910 when she was fourteen with her younger sister and her youngest brother, in order to join the family in Manitoba, near Winnipeg. My father Jean Vuignier, also of Swiss origin, married my mother when she was only sixteen.

My parents moved to Montreal with my mother's family and that was where my brother was born. At that time it was very hard to find work in Montreal, so the family decided to apply to the Quebec Government for 'settlement land' located some four and a half miles from the village of Sainte-Florence. My father, my grandfather and my uncle set out to build a log house and we moved from Montreal as soon as it was ready for winter. My father worked at the village saw mill. The doctor lived a long way from us and sometimes had to come by horse-drawn sleigh when there were births and medical problems. Imagine this in the middle of winter with snow storms and all that. But I was born in the village and, fortunately, the doctor arrived on time by train from Amqui.

My father died of tuberculosis at thirty-two. My widowed mother had to return to Montreal to find work, while we stayed

in the country with my grandmother. When I was seven, we settled in Montreal with my brother and my grandmother. My mother had saved enough money for a small dwelling and it was then that we began our schooling. At sixteen, I completed primary school and went to work in a factory where my mother had risen to the level of forewoman. I earned \$2.50 a week! Little by little, I learned my trade as a seamstress, which I liked and always put to good use.

Meeting MRA

In 1942, during the War, I met Moral Re-Armament, while attending a performance of a musical play with a friend whose boss had given her a pair of tickets. This industrialist was Andrew Webster, father of Drew Webster who is a member of Initiatives of Change in Montreal. The play was given in English and was called *Pull Together Canada*. I didn't understand it all, because it was in English, but I was captivated by its *joie de vivre*, the radiant faces of the actors, the music and the beautiful and interesting songs. I was equally captivated by the ideas which sketched a portrait of the principles of the movement: honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. At the end of the play, they all sang our national anthem 'O Canada' in French with an atrocious accent! This gesture touched me very much, coming as it did from English Canadians and others from the United States and Scotland.

A few days later, they told me that we all had a role to play in life. I replied, "I don't know how to make speeches and I don't know how to act. Sewing is the only thing I know how to do." Laughing, they told me, "We need costumes and we don't know how to sew." So, after work I would go and help them during rehearsals. More than anything, it was their way of living which interested me. They put their words into practice.

I was invited to an MRA conference on Mackinac Island, Michigan during my holidays. I was able to see, and try for

myself, this life based on values. I quickly realized that as a good Catholic I knew those values but that I did not really live by them all the time. I went to Mass on Sundays, but I lived rather selfishly for the rest of the week. When I returned home, I tried to live differently with my parents, my friends and even at the workshop.

Since those people who moved with the plays were all volunteers, they were invited to stay in homes. At the time when I began with the movement, we invited two young girls who were travelling with the play to stay with us. One was Greta Cowan of Ottawa who later married Dick Stollery from the west of Canada, and another was Nora Baldwin from Toronto, who later became the wife of Sam Reid from Scotland. Thanks to the two of them, I learned about the meaning of quiet times of listening and how to apply this idea in my work.

Many other people came to our home and met my family and friends. The first time an MRA meeting took place in French in Montreal was in our home. Among those present were some Swiss people who had just come from a conference at Mackinac and had decided to create a centre for peace in Switzerland, to help Europe after the war. What I saw in these people, I tried to apply in my own life.

Choosing celibacy

One of the crucial decisions of my life presented itself to me one evening as I was waiting for the bus. It was early on in my commitment. I was twenty-one and had just received a proposal of marriage. I turned it down because I felt that he was not the right person for me. But I found it very hard and I cried. Then suddenly, I felt as if someone was touching me on the shoulder and saying, "What I have for you is much bigger than anything you can hope for or imagine. Follow me." And so, for me, this was the decisive moment to give my life to bring a new

philosophy of life in families and in the world. A Lenten retreat at Notre-Dame Church, a little earlier, had prepared my heart for this important step.

On the road at twenty-one

I asked my boss for a leave of absence, so I could go with the MRA group across Canada. It was in wartime and we didn't have a lot of work to do. He replied: "By all means, go. We don't have much work. The spirit you have brought here should go to every industry in the country. When you want to come back, your job will be here for you." It was a marvellous experience to travel across one's country by train at age twenty-one and, after each evening's performance, to meet people. They were very open and hospitable.

It was quite difficult for my parents to accept my departure for Europe, after the war, to join up with a group of some hundred people, at the invitation of Frank Buchman. My mother was not at all in agreement, but my stepfather told me, "If that is your conviction, then go, because France and Germany need to be reconciled." He was of French origin. He added, "If it doesn't seem to be working out, you can come back home." So I left for London in April of 1946. Three days after our arrival, we were ready to put on the play. The theatre was always full. People wept. They had suffered a great deal and these plays gave them hope again. To see all these ruins made a big impression. Everything had to be rebuilt!

Then, on June 4, 1946, the first conference began at Caux, this place which the Swiss had found to serve as a centre to bring unity to Europe. This former hotel was in a very poor state and everything had to be cleaned up. For its part, a production team was putting everything in place for a first performance. The ballroom was turned into a theatre. The first plays that were put on were those which had already been done

in Canada, *Pull Together Canada*, and in the USA, *You Can Defend America*. These plays were composed of short scenes on themes such as: family life, management/labour relations, how different people could come together in order to rebuild their country. We also had other plays, and an international chorus.

The power of theatre

In early 1940, at the beginning of the war, Frank Buchman gathered his team at Lake Tahoe in Nevada in order to weld it together and to see how to respond to a world at war and tearing itself apart. In this, theatre became an effective means for reaching large audiences. Several members of his team were actors who had played in Hollywood films. People such as Bob and Marian Anderson, Phyllis and Bunny Austin and a number of others made their acting talent completely available to this new form of theatre.

At Mackinac Island, in 1958, the musical play *The Crowning Experience* was created with Muriel Smith, a renowned African-American singer. This play told the story of Mary McLeod Bethune, daughter of slaves and founder of one of the first colleges for African Americans. The group toured the US, playing in Atlanta, Washington and New York on Broadway. This play was then taken on a world tour and later made into a film.

I was thus very committed to working with the MRA plays, making costumes and training young people in the principles of the movement while we worked together. This took us to Paris, where I lived in the large MRA house and learned a lot; to India, Japan and several other countries. I particularly remember the Philippines, where we put on the play *The Vanishing Island*. That country had suffered so much under Japanese occupation during the War. On this particular evening,

the theatre was packed and one of those invited was a representative of the Japanese government. After the play, she went up onto the stage, in her traditional Japanese costume, with her interpreter. We were afraid that a riot might break out, remembering the depth of the suffering. Instead, this Japanese lady apologized for all the wrongs which her country had inflicted on the Filipino people. The silence in the hall was such that you could hear a pin drop. Afterwards, members of the audience talked with her. It was a moment of special significance; and for me, it was one of those unforgettable experiences.

Working with Buchman

One summer, after the Caux conferences, I was invited to help prepare the play *The Forgotten Factor*, as translated into Italian. We were in Milan, where Frank Buchman was passing through on his way to Rome and the United States. Cardinal Archbishop Montini, the future Pope Paul VI, invited Frank and all of us to attend Mass at the cathedral on New Year's Day, 1956. After Mass, the Cardinal received us, and Buchman asked him, "What can we do for you and for the reconstruction of Italy?" The archbishop replied, "If you could do something for the workers of Sesto San Giovanni, a small working class suburb of Milan, it would be wonderful, because Communism seems to have a real hold there." Frank replied, "We shall try. We are preparing a play which we will put on for them."

There was a young American with us who came from a well-to-do family. One morning, he had the thought to meet with the owner and chief editor of the local newspaper, known for his Communist convictions. His thought was to apologise to him, as an American, for his selfishness and his arrogance towards Italians and their country. He invited the editor and his wife to come and see the play which was being put on that same evening. The editor's worst enemy, the mayor, as well as the priest, were sitting in the front row. After the play, these digni-

taries went up onto the stage to thank the cast. Suddenly, the newspaper editor got up, joined the others on stage, shook hands with the mayor and the priest and said, "From today, we will work together." Everyone stood and began to applaud. This marked the beginning of a new spirit in that community. Later, the newspaper editor and his wife, as well as others who had seen the play, went to Washington to take part in an MRA conference.

People first

For myself, I found that I could identify with people of every colour and belief, because we all needed the spirit of MRA. We needed its principles in order to face our human nature. It was the problems in our families and in our countries that united us. And that was how this philosophy of life spread. There were great moments which touched me a lot during my commitment to this life, but it is people more than anything that interested me; and that remains true today at the age of eighty-six.

To those who are just beginning with Initiatives of Change, I recommend making a point of listening to others. Life isn't easy for young people; parents are not always there for them. With young people, a lot of patience is needed. There are more possible approaches than was the case in the past. They must be offered something which will inspire them. I am confident. Reaching young people is a priority in all countries, but we must love them first. It was different for me at twenty-one, because we were in the middle of a war and making money was not my first preoccupation.

Conclusion and thanks

Without MRA, my family and I would never have met personalities like Bernard and Alice Hallward. Bernard spoke excellent French as well as German and Russian. He had

worked a great deal in Germany with MRA, meeting the miners of the Ruhr Valley who had never seen a changed employer!

I celebrated my twenty-first birthday in their home and they had invited my parents. It was the first time that we had gone to such a large house, with servants; a very different world from our own. But that English Canadian family won our hearts through their openness and simplicity. A few years later, when my mother fell ill, they found the surgeon who operated on her. They took care of the cost of her hospitalization, which in those days was more than my parents could afford. That experience always remained with me.

My commitment took me out of Quebec for thirty years. I should like, however, to mention many faithful personal friends in the movement in Quebec during those years. Among them, Margaret Miller-Manson, who died in India at much too early an age, Dr. Paul Campbell from Western Canada, who was Frank Buchman's personal physician and his wife Annejet, a Dutch lady with whom I worked a lot on theatre costumes, as she had taken a course in *haute couture* in Paris. I had the joy of being a bridesmaid at her wedding. I think also of Marie Lussier from Montreal, with whom I teamed up in Paris and in Canada; not forgetting Diane Paré, her enduring commitment and constant friendship; as well as Drew and Shelagh Webster, Ted and Audrey Porter, and their families.

Throughout this life journey, I am grateful to have been so well guided and supported. I have no hesitation in encouraging others to commit themselves in this spirit of service.

Simone Vuignier
Montreal



Diane Paré

STAYING FAITHFUL, NO MATTER WHAT

I am very grateful that people thought of asking me to share my story in this book. It's a very simple story, but it's mine. I was born in Montreal in 1936, into a working class family. My father was a carpenter and at one point worked on the roof of St. Joseph's Oratory. I was the eldest of six children. During the war, we lived on a farm in Boucherville in a big house close to the St. Lawrence River. My father worked in an aircraft factory, and although he had only three years of primary schooling, when there were problems with the planes, they called him!

My childhood was not at all easy. Despite only having a grade four education, I managed to make my way in life. At fifteen, I had to get a permit to work. I started in a bakery and for six months I worked seven days a week, with two days a month off. There was a dress factory nearby where I would have loved to work. So, one day, I went ahead and asked for a job, because clothing and fashion interested me a lot. I was hired. "Bring a pair of scissors", they said. That dressmaker owned twenty big stores across Canada. After six years, I was put in charge of purchasing fabrics, buttons and patterns. I would often travel with my boss to New York and I also participated in fashion shows as a model.

Around 1965, the relationship with my boss became very difficult. I was asking myself some questions and, deep inside,

I was unhappy with my work as well as with my family. I was looking for another way of life. Seeing me like this, a relative who knew about Moral Re-Armament and had seen the play *El Condor*, encouraged me to go to Caux. I have to admit that my life was a mess in many ways, especially in relation to purity, as I had been living with a married man for several years.

Sorting things out at Caux

So, I accepted to go to Caux in 1965. But, when I told my boss, he said to me in English (because almost everything was done in English at the time) that he didn't like the idea at all. He had heard about MRA and believed that if I went, I would not be the same when I returned and he didn't want that. On my arrival in Caux at Christmas, I found that my roommate was Cathy Young from Ottawa. Once there, what surprised me most was to see how happy people were. There was peace in their eyes. One day, I was invited to a meeting where Irène Laure was the speaker. She told the story of what she had suffered. Coming from a country that had not experienced the war, I was really captivated. It was this meeting that touched me the most and encouraged me to make decisions for my life.

There was a big Christmas tree. Each person was invited to make a wish and to light a candle on the tree. My deep desire was to return to Montreal and to find my family united. It was then that I saw Simone Vuignier again, and I attended a performance of the play *Through the Garden Wall*, which touched me with its realism about life's problems.

After ten days, I returned to Montreal with one decision, among others, to live purity and the three other moral values. My boss was not happy. I still kept my job, but it was like being in hell. Six months later, I left. During a good-bye party, his wife hugged me and said, "I admire your courage and your decisions." All the employees came to wish me good luck.

Later on, I started working in a shop in Old Montreal where I learned a lot. I met Simone Vuignier again and she encouraged me to return to Caux in the summer of 1971. At that time, I was thirty-five years old.

My years in Europe

My plane ticket was valid for forty-eight days, but I stayed three and a half years. I got to know Dorothy Phillips of Winnipeg, a full time worker with MRA, who invited me to work on the costumes for the plays. I had hesitated to bring my scissors, because I didn't want to have anything more to do with that profession. But there were needs for the play *The Vanishing Island*. It took me three days before finally agreeing to help. What touched me most was the team work and the care people had for each other.

From Caux, I went to Britain for seven months to join the Canadian delegation, among whom was Jacqueline Pellerin from Trois-Rivières, who had done a lot for the poor area where she lived. I was asked to be her translator. I remember how scared she was in Northern Ireland in 1972. I said to her, "Madame Pellerin, with all your faith, how come you are still scared?" The following year, in Switzerland, I became ill and was taken care of by the Garin family in Rolle. They were very good to me. When I left, they planted a maple tree near their house; for them, I was like an adopted daughter from Quebec.

A Swiss friend, Amie Zysset, invited me to visit the people of the Swiss Jura, who were at the time fighting for their independence from Berne. Since we travelled a lot around the country, I had the idea of obtaining a Swiss driver's license, even though some tried to dissuade me as there was no car available. Not long after, Amie gladly announced to me that a pharmacist friend, Vreni Gysin, was giving us her car as a gift. A real miracle! I was sure that this gift would be coming. Since

my life changing decision in 1965, so many special things have happened in my life and around me!

One day at Caux, I received a letter from my aunt in Montreal, who thought I was going way too far with this commitment, and that I should go back to work at the shop in Montreal. She also announced that she would be coming to Caux. I reacted strongly and it was a month before I could reply to her, to say sorry for where I had wronged her. When I finally mailed that letter, I felt a great weight was lifted from my shoulders, a bit like what happened with Irène Laure.

In 1973, I returned to Montreal with Amie Zysset. My first challenge was to face this aunt who, in 1965, had pressured me so much to go to Caux in the first place. When we met, she took me in her arms and kissed me. All was forgiven, though not forgotten. We were reconciled and I returned to Caux, not only for the conferences, but also to give my support to the team that was living there year round, and to help with the situation in the Jura.

Service in Montreal

I returned to Montreal in 1976, as hostess for the Canadian MRA centre, where Richard and Rosalind Weeks had already been living since its opening in 1974. Laurent and Lise Gagnon had also been there, but had moved to Quebec City in 1979. The Weekses moved in 1977 to an apartment with their baby but continued to help at the centre until they left for Ottawa, in 1981. A lot of people from other countries came to help us spread the spirit of MRA in Montreal. For instance there were Alain and Anne-Marie Tate from France; Serge and Regula Borel and Vreni Gysin from Switzerland; Paul and Annejet Campbell, Laurie and Elsa Vogel, and Ann Corcoran from Britain; Vendela Lofgren from Sweden. Many are those who benefited from their experiences. On the Canadian side,

there was Helen Berry, who was the 'handyman' of the centre, and a real troubleshooter, while Reta Moran took care of the finances. Francine Gagnon was there for three years. Many people attended the meetings: clergy, people engaged in politics, others like François and Denise Lessard, a group of young people and Chief David Crowchild from Alberta, who would come often with other chiefs. The house was buzzing with people and activities.

In July 1976, the musical review *Song of Asia* came to Quebec. I was involved with the cast's stay in the Kahnawake Indian Reserve, where they were a tremendous help, trying to build bridges between the different groups and especially between individuals. They did this by sharing their personal stories, by caring for people, by friendship and, above all, through attentive listening. After that, either alone or with others, I made many visits to the community. I visited Mrs. Two-Axe-Early, Michael and Cindy Diabo, the Two-Rivers parents, who invited us to their 50th wedding anniversary, and their son Billy, the wrestler. How to help them believe enough in their own inner riches and wisdom that they could use them for others? There is a special need for that in Canada and in Quebec. I also accompanied the cast to Alma, where we had to find beds for these young people and those who accompanied them; thirty in all. Our hosts were very warm in their welcome. It was a great adventure in faith.

A new phase

Then in 1984, I felt that I should move on to a new phase in my life. While I was at Caux, I had the thought that one day my profession would be useful to me and that it would again be my means of support. In 1987, the Montreal centre closed in favour of a large apartment, where Audrey Porter lived until 2001. I lived there with her for a couple of months. I have to admit that leaving the centre was a great loss for me, because

the rhythm of life became very different. Therefore, I decided to go back to my family, since my brother was living alone with my mother. It was a very difficult experience.

Later on, I bought myself a little house. It was a real miracle. I have some good advisors – real guardian angels, among whom are Lisette and Simone, who live close by and have always been faithful. I have many clients in my *haute couture* business. I've learned to assert myself and to make my way in my profession. I have two big dogs that also help me, since they force me to walk a lot!

Yes, I wanted to live my commitment in another way than as a full time worker, but without losing my deepest convictions for Moral Re-Armament. In time, harmony and peace returned to my family. Without the way of life of this movement, I would never have been able to get through these different phases, some of which were very painful. Forty years have gone by since I made my life changing decision and fifty-five since I began my profession as a stylist and dressmaker. I am now able to share my convictions with young people, and others who want to be involved, so that they can find a lasting inner peace. Change occurs step by step and keeps us free.

I have to say that I didn't like the name being changed. I have not yet been able to adapt myself to Initiatives of Change. It's a name that sounds much less significant than Moral and Spiritual Re-Armament. Deep personal experiences are the key to this life journey. I am continuing with my commitment as faithfully as possible because it is very precious to me, for the world, and for the people with whom I live and share my activities. I realize that God has always been very good to me.

Diane Paré
Montréal



Audrey Porter

WELCOMING THE WORLD

My twin sister, Dorothy, and I were born in Montreal in 1921. My father was a chartered accountant who studied in Edinburgh, Scotland. My mother came from Lachute, Quebec, and her family roots were Scottish and English. As we grew up, figure skating became a big part of life for Dorothy and me. From the age of fifteen to sixteen, we participated in skating exhibitions across Canada and in California.

Following my childhood dream, I became a nurse in 1943. My mother had also been a nurse, so I was following in her footsteps. After graduating in Public Health Nursing from McGill University, I worked for three years as Senior Nurse at the Foster Home Centre. We had a thousand children to place in homes, either for foster care or through adoption. During my nursing career, I also worked at the Montreal General Hospital and during World War II, was a nursing sister in the Navy in St. John's, Newfoundland and Halifax, Nova Scotia. When on board ship, due to the danger of attack from German submarines, we would sleep in our clothes, with the life-boats ready for launching.

Another dimension

I met MRA in 1945 at a gathering in the home of Bernard Hallward, a Montreal industrialist, thanks to my mother who suggested I attend. I was very impressed. It so happened that Ted Porter, whom I later married, was also at that first meeting

and was the one who opened the door to welcome me when I arrived. Ted had met MRA a number of years earlier in Fredericton, New Brunswick, where he came from.

When I first met MRA, I felt that it was what I was looking for. The main point that interested me was the thought that God could talk to you in the silence of your heart and that you could do what He wanted you to do. This was very new for me as were, also, the four standards. I really felt that the people I met at these gatherings were absolutely convinced about what they were doing. Without MRA my whole life would have been very different. It gave another and more important dimension to my life, my work, my family. It called for a deeper commitment and a heart open to the whole world.

My family and I were always members of the Baptist Church, which was a very important part of my life. However, my family sometimes had difficulty understanding the multi-faith character of MRA which often resulted in my working with non-Christians. For me, I found it inspiring that all of us from different backgrounds could work together for God. MRA had a unique role to play in the world and helped me to put my faith into practice.

There was a very lively fellowship among the Montreal team back in those years. Andrew Webster (Mina and Drew's father), and his family were good friends and I was often invited to play the violin in their home. Since Andrew had a lovely voice, he sang 'The Lord's Prayer' at our wedding.

I met Frank Buchman, the initiator of MRA, at Mackinac Island, Michigan, during a conference there. I liked the way he lived his faith and what he said. He had the gift of understanding and reaching for the deepest thing in people's hearts. He was a very sincere and caring person. He cared for the person next to him and for the whole world.

Marriage and Family

Some years after that first meeting in Bernard Hallward's home in 1945, Ted Porter and I became engaged to be married. It happened one day when Ted invited me for a picnic at Dorval, in Montreal's West Island. In proposing to me he opened his quiet time notebook and, after sharing his love for me, read out his thought that we should get married. I had had the same thought two years earlier! So we were married in Montreal in 1950.

Ted and I went to Jamaica for our honeymoon. Louis Byles, the famous singer in the MRA film *The Crowning Experience*, made all the reservations and cared for us well. Years later we continued to keep his country in our hearts. We often helped to raise money in Canada for various projects of the Jamaican MRA team and for the purchase of a car.

The fact that our relationship was based on our commitment to seek God's direction, as individuals and as a couple, provided the basis for a happy and stable family life. Of course we had much to learn about how to find unity and help each other change when needed. Soon after our marriage, Ted's job with the Bank of Montreal took us to New York. Three of our four children were born in the US, the fourth in Montreal. We had two boys - Don and John, and two girls, Sandra and Susan, all of whom are now professionals working in Ontario, British Columbia and England. They are now all married and I am seven times a proud grandmother. My daughter Sandra and her husband Alan have been to Caux several times.

Open home

Over the years, people from all continents who were working with MRA came to our home for meals and accommodation. Among them were people like Paul Campbell and Bill Jaeger, both of whom had worked closely with Buchman.

Marianne Brandt of Switzerland stayed with us also, when she was secretary to Dr. Campbell. But of course we also had the four children, so Marianne would use the kitchen table to do office work during the day and when the children came home from school, she would move to her room or the basement.

These interesting guests came from a wide variety of backgrounds. An example was the international cricket champion from Barbados, Conrad Hunte. A lot happened in our home with, and for, MRA. All the visitors cared a great deal for our children. Using our home was one way to contribute toward this work. It is important for people to feel they can have a part in different ways.

Partnership with Ted

Ted had a quiet and effective way of caring for people which drew the best out of them. Serving in England in the Air Force during the war gave him the opportunity to get to know many of the MRA team living in England and to learn from their experiences. While there he often went to Peter Howard's farm to help. Peter, who later became the world leader after Buchman's death, appreciated Ted's qualities and once wrote, "Ted has a big heart." It was a gift for me to have him as a partner in marriage and in our calling to care for people.

In 1968, Ted went to the new MRA centre in Panchgani, India with a number of Canadians, including Jim and Kay Cock and Irmgarde Westerman from Ontario, and Raymond and Carmen Vanasse from Sorel, Quebec. As a result, we started raising money for what became known as 'The Canadian dining room', dedicated to another Montrealer, Margaret Miller Manson. The centre was founded by a grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Rajmohan Gandhi, who worked with Buchman during the 1950's and since then has given leadership to the work in many parts of the world.

Ted and I went to Caux, Switzerland, several times. Once, as I was sitting at a table with Peter Howard's widow, I said to her, "My doctor told me that since I was nearly deaf in my left ear, I should have the less important people sit on that side." Doë replied quickly, "Audrey, there are no unimportant people in the world." I remembered that!

We thought a lot about Canada's role in the world as a rich country. There is a lot of reconciliation needed today here and in the world. People are so divided. Peace-making is a key for our country; and Ted and I tried to relate everything we did to the world's needs. I am the fifth generation of my family in Quebec and I feel very much at home here. I made sure that I learned to speak French and this has been a great help in our numerous contacts with the *Québécois*. I truly believed that here we can pioneer something important as an answer to many nations.

Ted and I had the privilege of helping with some of the major campaigns in Quebec throughout the years. In the 1950s and 1960s there was the showing in Montreal's commercial cinemas of *The Crowning Experience* and *Freedom. El Condor*, the South American play, was in Montreal and across Quebec in 1963-1964. These were great opportunities for outreach and a good number of people from many lands came to help us.

New beginnings

Ted died in 1984. One year later I sold the house and moved into the Canadian Centre at 387 Côte Ste-Catherine, Montreal, to work alongside Diane Paré. She was an excellent hostess and a marvellous cook. This centre had been officially opened in 1974 by Frederik Philips, head of Philips International and Jean Cournoyer, then Quebec Minister of Labour. Richard and Rosalind Weeks, newly married, were the first hosts of this home and centre from 1974 to 1977. They were wonderful in that role and much appreciated. I enjoyed

helping to host '387' for five years. I remember Humphrey Madden of Vancouver, a retired airline pilot, who drove all the way to Montreal to build a new kitchen. He was helped by Garnet Freebury from Edmonton, and the renovated kitchen was dedicated to Garnet's late wife, Della. Humphrey contributed to MRA with his skilful hands and open heart. He also helped in Australia, Britain and Zimbabwe. Ross Wiens, a retired executive, often came to help us when needs arose at '387' and afterwards at the IofC condo. It was his way of participating. In 1990 the centre at '387' was replaced by a large apartment, where I served for some years, during which time many people came for meetings and often for a meal.

One day at '387', Prof. Dale Thompson of McGill University and his wife came for dinner, but on the wrong evening! So we had to work hard to prepare the meal and then have a second dinner for some of us! We were lucky then to have the help of Francine Gagnon who was working full time with MRA. Personalities such as Maurice Sauvé, husband of Governor General Jeanne Sauvé, and Marc Lalonde, a Minister in the cabinet of Pierre Trudeau, came for meals, as well as many others. They were invited by Paul Campbell, originally from Alberta, who had been Frank Buchman's physician for many years. He, along with his wife Annejet and daughters Edith-Anne and Digna, were often with us.

Marie Lussier, who for some years had worked with MRA full-time, helped us look after overseas guests. She was a great tour guide and a good translator. Her mother, Françoise, was a great help managing the sale of MRA books and magazines for a period. I also think of Angelo and Marie-Paule Forte who were friends for years and were a great help. Angelo had been a vice-president of the CSN (CNTU) union in Montreal's textile industry.

I still remember the prayer vigil we had in Montreal in 1994 on the eve of the important South African election when

Nelson Mandela was elected. This was largely organized by our young friend from Ivory Coast, Amah Assiama, who was studying law in Montreal at the time. Amah and I visited the Vice-Consul in Montreal to include him in our plans. He collaborated very helpfully. We invited people of all faiths to the downtown Montreal Meditation Centre where the prayer vigil was carried on throughout the night. We received messages from former Prime Minister F.W. de Klerk and Archbishop Desmond Tutu which were read to the participants. Thank God, the election was successful. Amah Assiama is now working in Congo for the UN High Commission for Refugees after having been in Rwanda, Ethiopia and Burundi.

Along with other pioneers

I met and worked with so many fine people throughout the years. I would like to mention some of them with gratitude. Kate Cross of Montreal was Buchman's cook for many years. She wrote a book, *Cooking around the World*. One day, one of my sons said to her, "Where did you learn to make French toast?" She was a great friend and often looked after the children when Ted and I were away. Dorothy Keddie, also from Montreal, was a committed MRA worker for many years. She was my first roommate at the MRA Mackinac Island training centre and my bridesmaid. Grace Young of Ottawa, sister-in-law of Lester B. Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada, often cared for our young children and was a good friend. Margaret Miller worked in personnel at Eaton's. She had many contacts among Montreal church leaders and brought numerous people to see the MRA plays. Later, she married Matt Manson of Scotland, and twenty-three years later their daughter, Marion, spent some time with us at the centre in Montreal.

Lessons for life

Serving is one of the best 'schools' to learn about the world and about ourselves. And I owe much to my late husband

Ted for helping me learn that. He was daily concerned by events in the world, in Canada, our province and community. He was concerned not so much for his own sake but rather for the well being of the future generations' souls and character. In closing, I would like to quote something one of his English friends said about him at a London memorial service, "Ted brought honour to the Almighty by his care for people."

Audrey Porter
Montreal

"What is Moral Re-Armament? It is not a sect; it is a leaven or a seed. Those in whom the seed has been sown are changed from within. They have seen evidence of the light of the absolute and moved by this evidence, they become capable of overthrowing the barriers which separate them from themselves and from each other. At the same time these men and women become radiant and even in a certain sense radioactive. Anyone who has come in direct contact with them is immediately aware of this."

Gabriel Marcel, Le Figaro, January 28, 1956



Jean Richard

MORAL RE-ARMAMENT AND ECUMENISM

I was born in Switzerland on October 4, 1918. My wife Mina was also born in Switzerland, but to Italian parents. We celebrated our sixty-fifth wedding anniversary on July 4, 2004. We have one daughter, who has been living in Ontario until recently. We left Switzerland in 1952 to establish ourselves on a fruit farm in London, Ontario, and moved to Quebec in 1961. I am a nurseryman by profession and devoted myself to organic farming soon after I came to Quebec. In this field, as in my work as a pastor, I had to struggle, but I held firm by obedience to God and for the sake of a better future for all.

My first contacts

I got to know Moral Re-Armament through Rev. Charles Pelletier, of the United Church in Trois-Rivières, and his wife Aileen. He looked after the English-speaking congregation while I looked after the French-speaking. I have very pleasant memories of those ten years working together, beginning in 1966. Now and then, we had differences of opinion about child baptisms and on a number of other subjects, but that never kept us from working together. While I was working as a pastor, I also had a farm in Champlain, close to Trois-Rivières, where I did a lot of research and experimented on vegetables and fruit trees. Because of this, I was regarded as a pioneer in organic agriculture. I praise the Lord that I was inspired in such a way.

The tragic death of Pastor Pelletier, in 1978, saddened me very much. I found his wife, Aileen, very brave when she asked

me to preach at his funeral. I was particularly moved, because I myself had just come out of hospital and was really the one who should have died. During the homily, as I was facing my colleague's coffin, I personally committed myself to work for reconciliation, especially between the churches.

I have often been in hospital to undergo surgery or for other medical needs. At these times, I received many cards and letters from MRA friends in Switzerland, France, Ireland, the United States and other places. The care of this large worldwide family touched me deeply.

Listening and taking action

I have written seven books, two of which are of a more spiritual nature. In the book *Toi, suis-moi (Follow me)*, I talk a lot about this text from St. John's Gospel (10, 27): 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me'. Faith comes from what we hear. Scripture does not say 'from what we see', but 'from what we hear'. But what good is listening if we do not put 'the word' we hear into practice? All who make a practice, as one does in MRA, of taking time each morning with a pencil and a note pad to write down the thoughts that the Spirit can give and then making a point of obeying them, are in the right school for themselves and for the world.

The philosophy and the approach of this movement are needed very much in our day to accomplish what God would do Himself if He were among us. What Frank Buchman did was inspiring, because he was a man of God. What really touched me was the experience he had in a little church in England, where there were seventeen people and a woman preaching about the Cross. He was really gripped by the message. Rediscovering the true meaning of the cross and the sin of his own bitterness towards six men on the Board of a Philadelphia orphanage, who had destroyed his work with the children of the

orphanage when he was a young pastor, he decided there and then to obey. This meant writing a letter of apology to each of the men. It was at considerable cost to his pride, but he experienced a great liberation that made possible, later on, his worldwide mission. None of these six men responded to his letter, but he had done his part, which was to obey. The rest was between them and God.

It reminds me of the time I was studying at the Evangelical Bible College of Lennoxville, near Sherbrooke, in 1956, when we were having problems with the director. He had been taught to be strict with the students. At the end of my studies, I went to see this director in his office. I could see at once that he was angry. Usually when people are angry they go red, but he didn't go red, he went white. He said to me in a loud voice, "Monsieur Richard, I will be brief." I then simply answered him, "If you only knew how much I cared for you. I care enough to come to you and tell you what a lot of people say behind your back. Why don't you want to listen?" So, instead of arguing for thirty minutes, he got up and shook my hand and said, "Brother Richard, you are a servant of God." I was deeply touched to see the power of love. After this experience, he totally changed his attitude towards me.

Some people, when confronted with the four values proposed by Moral Re-Armament, will say that they are impossible to live. A philosopher, talking about the movement, once said that they are like the Pole star, a fixed point on which we can always rely. It is always like that with absolute values. We never attain them perfectly, but we commit ourselves on the path in all possible sincerity.

These four values, as well as meditation, are absolutely necessary in order to have a clear vision of the way we are being asked to live and what we are asked to do on this earth. If we have ears to hear and we can listen when Jesus says, "My

sheep hear my voice, and I know them", we will be guided. He said that he was the Way, the Truth and the Life. It is either true or it is not. What counts is the experience. At the age of seventeen, in Switzerland, I was already trying to understand these things. I felt as if the Lord was telling me, "If you really want to hear my voice, then stop talking." And that is how, to give an example, it became clear to me that I should leave my country and come to Canada.

Planting seeds of dialogue

The ecumenical aspect is very important and I have worked quite a lot on it. It is for God to guide us in our religions, in what we can do and even must do together. He has a plan for me and for each of us. There is great strength in combining the best of what God has revealed to us. I remember the day that we had forty-two guests from Moral Re-Armament at our farm, 'the Oasis', in Champlain. There were militant Catholics and Protestants from Ireland; there were Swiss, French and others. Father Rainville, the parish priest, was there. He said, "We have heard that the Richards want to sell their farm and leave Champlain. We don't know if it's only a matter of money, but if so, we are going to raise some funds for them, to make sure they don't leave us." I remember that, after their visit, the Irish were telling everyone, "In Canada, there is a lone Protestant family, living in the middle of a Catholic parish, and the local people want to raise the money needed to make sure they don't leave!" They took it very seriously and saw it as a witness. I have often preached in Catholic churches, especially in the month of January during the week of prayer for Christian unity.

If Moral Re-Armament wishes to have activities in our building, there is a large room which can be used. My wife and I, and others, could invite people to see a film and to share. At my age, I can't get around much, I no longer have a car, but I

believe deeply that if a growing number of people, especially the young, apply themselves to listen to their inner voice, great things will happen.

Jean Richard
Champlain

“As we take time every day to listen and to write down our thoughts, we find we are beginning to think more clearly than before. Whenever self interest is mastered we are free to consider other people and national issues with a perspective previously denied.”

Dr Paul Campbell



Aileen Pelletier

FAITH IN ACTION OVER SEVEN DECADES

I grew up in Toronto, but I was born in Fergus, Ontario, on August 21, 1913, where my grandmother lived and where my mother had gone to be near her for my birth. I attended St. Joseph's Convent until the age of eleven. Later, I went to North Toronto Collegiate and, following my graduation, I took a business course, after which I was employed at the Manufacturers Life Insurance Company in Toronto for about fourteen years.

Making a commitment

We attended Bloor United Church and it was there in 1933, at nineteen years of age, that I first met The Oxford Group. At that first meeting, I was struck by two things. Those who spoke were so happy, and they had a very real purpose in life. They were out to remake the world. I knew I wanted this quality of life and finally, on Good Friday, I made a very deep decision. I went down on my knees and gave my life to God. I shall never forget that moment of commitment.

Later, I was challenged to measure my life by four absolute moral standards – absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love. I did this, and was honest with a friend about where I had been failing to live this way. I found a tremendous peace. I then learned about the practice of having a quiet time every morning, to listen to God and to obey what He told me to do. That was seventy-one years ago, and I still value that special time every morning.

I was convinced of this new way of life and felt that it was the answer for all that was wrong in the world. I resigned from my job in Toronto and spent several months working with the MRA teams on Mackinac Island in Michigan and later in Florida. Through MRA friends I had met Charles (Charlie) Pelletier, a young French Canadian from the Province of Quebec, and was quite taken with him. I again met Charlie at a conference on Mackinac Island and we travelled back to Toronto together, when we got to know each other better. Charlie was himself committed to the way of life of MRA and had the unexpected strong conviction to become a United Church minister. He was ordained in the summer of 1949.

Several months later, Charlie proposed, and we were married on December 12, 1949, in Toronto. We established a home in Quebec and a year later welcomed our son, David, and in 1952, our second son, Peter, was born. As a United Church minister, Charlie served in St. Hyacinthe, Valleyfield, and Trois-Rivières in the Province of Quebec. As an English-speaking woman from Toronto, I must say that I was deeply touched by the people of Quebec. I immediately took lessons to learn the French language, which I enjoyed, and in Trois-Rivières we formed many close friendships with our French-speaking neighbours.

Fascinating years in Trois-Rivières

In 1971, a number of full time colleagues came from abroad, and spent several months in Trois-Rivières to help us with the work of MRA. It was a very inspiring time. When we were praying together for guidance on how they could be used by God in Trois-Rivières, they were given the thought to consult Monsignor Denis Clément, the Vicar General of the diocese. He suggested that they start "in the poor and difficult area of Hertel where Madame Pellerin is trying to change things." God has a way of leading those who listen and obey to people with conviction; people who are deeply engaged in projects but are some-

times somewhat alone with their vision, as was Jacqueline Pellerin. This is how a partnership of service often starts and bears fruit for a community, a school, a country.

Hertel is an inner-city area of Trois-Rivières which was very run down, with unemployment at thirty-nine percent and a major crime problem. About three hundred and fifty families lived in the area surrounded by the port, a textile factory and a paper mill, the prison and the cathedral, a convent and City Hall. In 1970 the city authorities produced a plan to raze the entire area, creating a site for a more lucrative development. It would have meant that families who had lived in the area for generations would have to move out and find other accommodation. The local people were deeply opposed to the plan, and Jacqueline Pellerin, a mother of four with very little formal education, became their leader. A social action committee (CASH – *Comité d'Action Sociale Hertel*) was set up, with her as President, to oppose the city's plans and she herself addressed the City Council. The city authorities found in Madame Pellerin a formidable adversary.

But then something changed in her approach. She went to Northern Ireland on a visit arranged by friends with MRA. The men and women of Northern Ireland, Catholic and Protestant, were generous in their hospitality and in sharing their faith and their experiences with their Canadian guest. She then travelled on to the world centre for MRA in Switzerland where she experienced a deep change. On her return, her new attitude and spirit surprised the city authorities, and contributed to the credibility of her community's proposals when they were studied by the provincial and federal governments. These plans were finally accepted by the authorities, funds were made available and housing units were tailor-made for individual families. Day care for the children was established, and some leisure facilities. Unemployment and crime began to decline and the community learned to care for its own. All through this adventure, Mayor

Beudoïn and the Member of Parliament, Guy Bacon, became real friends.

Through the years, many people came from Northern Ireland, Brazil and other countries to witness what happened in this area of Hertel, spending time with Jacqueline and with her very fine family; they were inspired by this experience. I remember how a Protestant Pastor Jean Richard, and his wife Mina, from the village of Champlain near Trois-Rivières, cared for Jacqueline with gifts of vegetables from their farm and, of course, with their prayers.

My husband Charlie had taken an active part in helping Madame Pellerin to understand and apply the ideas of MRA in her personal life and in her work. At Charlie's death, she arranged for a memorial plaque in his honour to be installed on the exterior wall of the newly-built retirement home in her community. The plaque reads: *En mémoire du Rév. W. Charles Pelletier, 1912-1978 pour son message: Honnêteté, Pureté, Désintéressement, Amour.* (In memory of Rev W. Charles Pelletier, 1912-1978, for his message: Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness, Love.)

Many people from overseas - Paul Campbell, Bill Jaeger, Irène Laure and innumerable others, from ten different countries - who were giving their full time to the work of MRA - came to our home and stayed for various periods. I should mention Chief David Crowchild of the Sarcee, whom we were also privileged to welcome. As a team, we met daily for prayer and guidance and many people found change. Over the years thousands of meals were served in our home to these visitors and to the people of Trois-Rivières. I directed two of the life-changing MRA plays, *The Ladder* and *He Was Not There*, with people from our own church and others from around the city.

In those days much happened, as people were able to talk about the deepest things in their hearts and minds. They were

listened to and prayed with and consequently many found new moral and spiritual direction for their lives. Although at that time more people were Church-goers, the way of life of those in MRA attracted many because of their dynamic approach to Christianity. They were different; they had something that I had not seen in people in the Church. It was a revolutionary idea that 'when people listen, God speaks'. The challenge was a commitment of one's life and will to God, and the change that the application of absolute moral standards brings into the lives of men and women of faith. As a result, large numbers of people responded and had their faith restored or found new faith in God.

One special person who came to our home during that time was Laurent Gagnon, a young francophone Quebecer who was teaching in Trois-Rivières. He came from a large family in the Gaspé Peninsula. Laurent was invited to an MRA meeting at the University of Trois-Rivières in 1971 and was intrigued with the way of life that was presented. He was the only young person who came to the occasion although a good number were invited. He met with several team members who were working in Trois-Rivières including Serge Borel from Switzerland, Eric Turpin from Northern Ireland, Anne and Betsy Almond from the USA, Bryan Hamlin and Richard Weeks from England, and others. Laurent discovered MRA to be what God was calling him to, and in June 1972 he went to Caux, Switzerland. At age twenty-six he began working full-time and remains fully committed to this world-wide work now known as Initiatives of Change. I am so grateful that it was at our home that he started his training and had some experiences of change. My husband, Charlie, used to tease him because of his moustache and long hair!

During this exciting time in Trois-Rivières, the vibrant young Englishman, Bryan Hamlin, and lovely Anne Almond from the United States, who were part of the MRA team, fell in love. On their daily walks up the hill to our home, from the places where they were staying, they got to know each other, and one

day announced their engagement! They were married on October 20, 1973 in her hometown in the USA.

Through tragedy to a new start

From Trois-Rivières we moved to Quebec City and later when Charlie retired we moved to the South Shore of the capital. Less than one year after our retirement together, Charlie was accidentally killed by a motor-cyclist on May 6, 1978, at age sixty-six. This was a tragic and shocking experience for me and my family, and also for many friends around the world who had worked with Charlie and me. At the hospital, the doctor, who told me that Charlie had died instantly and had not suffered, asked me if I wished to see him and I went in and kissed him good-bye in tears.

On my return to the house, and as I stood in my tiny kitchen, alone and in a state of complete disbelief, I suddenly felt Charlie's presence. It was an unforgettable experience. God gave me great peace and at that moment I lost all fear of death. I knew that Charlie lived on and that he was happy in the world just beyond the veil.

In 1985, I moved to Toronto, Ontario, to be near my family and became, and still am, a part of the Toronto team. I am encouraged today, at age ninety-two, by the many young people who are taking responsibility around the world and sharing the message. I think that the priority for the next years should be real life changing. There should be weekly meetings of all who have committed their lives to God, to bring the needed change in countries where Initiatives of Change operates. I respect and support our outreach to people of all faiths and cultures, but for me, as a Christian, Jesus remains central in my life.

Aileen Pelletier
Toronto



Drew Webster

APPRENTICESHIP FOR LIFE: PERSPECTIVE OF A BUSINESSMAN

Montreal was my birthplace on May 20, 1935. It was also the birthplace of my older brother and sister and of our parents. My wife was born in Toronto but we met in a Montreal church choir in 1963, the same choir in which my parents met forty years earlier. Shelagh and I were married in 1966 and we have four children – two girls and two boys. Often I speak of a fifth child. He and I first met when he was in his early twenties, shortly after his arrival in Montreal as a student. He is from Benin and has spent many hours in our family. Today he is making his career in the Quebec civil service.

All our children are married and have gifted us with six grandchildren. Each of the children has chosen a different line of work. Our elder son enables and encrypts computer communication; our elder daughter is the sales representative of a major health food supplier; our younger daughter works for Air Canada and our younger son works for me in the family business. My wife is very active in the community and forms part of a committee that advises the Federal government on environmental issues. She is a vigorous supporter of pesticide free agriculture. She also manages the office of an Internet service provider co-owned by our elder son.

Second generation MRA

When I tell people my parents met MRA before I was born, it is not long before someone, who obviously does not

know me very well, will quip, "so, you don't need to change; you were born changed?" Growing up in an atmosphere of 'quiet times' and the four absolute moral standards (honesty, purity, unselfishness and love) is not without a number of challenges. I remember the turquoise stickers, which featured these four pillars of MRA. I licked them and stuck them just about everywhere in the house, on the walls, windows, cupboards and even the refrigerator. Finally my parents removed my source of supply. Some years later, when I was able to understand the difference between sticking stickers on a window and making a conscious decision with respect to absolute standards, I would find myself dealing with feelings of inadequacy and jealousy as people who had just met MRA recounted sensational experiences of change, sometimes very moving, while my own experience seemed very ordinary. It went so far as wishing my parents had not met MRA when they did, so that my initial experience could have been my own, uncoloured by theirs.

How did this all come about? In 1933, my mother and father attended a gathering at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Montreal when Frank Buchman and a team were crossing Canada with the message of The Oxford Group. I remember my father telling me of this encounter. He was struck by the words of a very 'high class' lady who spoke of recognizing and coming to grips with dishonesty in her life. He was initially shocked and later, when he had retired for the night, he could not sleep. He felt challenged as he remembered items he had neglected to declare to customs upon returning from a European honeymoon. With the full support of his wife, my father decided to deal with this matter. He got in touch with Canada Customs and eventually wrote them a cheque. My parents became involved in the work of MRA wholeheartedly. In 1942 my mother travelled with a musical revue called *Pull Together Canada* as it toured Eastern Canada promoting unity and patriotism. Her glorious mezzo-soprano voice had soared in jubilation in Westminster Abbey at the Coronation of George VI

a few years earlier and it was now touching the hearts of the Cape Breton coal miners and their families. However, the travelling meant giving up family time and she was not at home as often as she might have wished. I was eight years old when she died. My memory of her may be weak but not so my admiration of her commitment and willingness to sacrifice.

My father and an older brother were partners in a business started by my grandfather. My uncle was president and my father, vice-president. My uncle did not take kindly to my father's involvement with MRA. He thought it prevented my father from spending enough time on the business. This came to a head in 1955-56, when my father took time off to travel in Asia and Europe with a musical play, *The Vanishing Island*. A frosty relationship took hold between the two brothers. It became unwise to speak of MRA in my uncle's presence.

After my mother died, my father needed the support of friends. Fortunately he was able to find a quality of friendship that enabled him to navigate some very deep waters. It came in large measure from Howard Reynolds, Bernard Hallward and Oblate Father Valérien Gaudet. I remember Father Gaudet's contagious humour. From time to time he would sleep at our house and one morning I told him of an impending Latin exam that had me worried. "No problem", he responded, "I will pray for you at Mass this morning." Surprised and overjoyed, I obtained an excellent result! Father Gaudet did not shy from confrontation if the cause was just. While in Latin America for a number of years, he circulated a monthly letter to his friends in Canada. Irony of ironies, it was the secretary of my uncle who was responsible for the mailing.

Opening my heart

In 1953, I lived in Switzerland with the Piguet family of Clarens, while studying at Lausanne University. The following

summer was spent in Caux. Then it was to McGill in Montreal for a B.A. degree. In my final year I won a scholarship to study at a German university of my choice, offered by the German Government's academic exchange service (DAAD). I chose Bonn. Having studied the history of the First World War from a British perspective at McGill, I was curious to see what I could learn of the German perspective.

In September 1957 I was in Bonn, looking for a place to stay from a list five addresses given to me by the university. In response to my knock, a voice would question me through a crack in the door, "*Sind Sie Amerikaner?*" (Are you an American?). Not until my Canadian citizenship was clearly established would the door open wide enough to allow me in. American bombs had destroyed much of Bonn and, twelve years after the end of the war, the memory was still fresh in the minds of many. For a young and somewhat naive Canadian, this was a shock.

Bonn was the capital city of West Germany at the time and the location of an MRA centre. From time to time I would be invited to help with a mailing or in welcoming a foreign visitor. My contact with MRA was superficial. One day I was in the University library reading the British weekly *The Economist*. An article about the battle of Dien Bien Phu (1954) that ended the war of Indo-China got under my skin. It forced me to come face to face with questions I was trying to ignore, namely, is it possible to live in such a way that massacres and useless blood-letting can be avoided? Even if it is only remotely possible (remember, I was studying the history of the First World War), is it not worth making the effort?

That's when I made a decision. Alone in a corner of the library, at the same university where Karl Marx studied in 1835, I decided to open my heart. That meant taking a good look at the spiritual message I had grown up with. I cannot

explain where the strength to say 'yes' came from. But it was a wholehearted 'yes'. I was clear on that. In the silence that followed, one of my first thoughts was to offer thanks in a church, then to tell my colleagues of my decision, and finally to consult a doctor about the pain in my side. A short time after seeing the doctor, I found myself in the university clinic, shorn of my appendix. After speaking with my colleagues, the thought came to me to be responsible for repairing the shoes of the full time people living in the MRA centre and I did as much of this as they would permit.

The Catholic Church that stands in the shadow of the university dates back to the Middle Ages. One day I felt the urge to enter and express my thanks. I sat down, quite apart from the few other worshippers, and started praying. Then I noticed a young person of my age seated four or five rows in front of me. I felt 'pushed' to join him and we started to talk. I do not know what language we spoke. He was interested to hear why I was in church. I told him I needed to give thanks for the strength, the grace that had been extended to me. We agreed to meet again but that never happened. I do not know what became of him.

At about that time, I sat the written exam of the Canadian diplomatic corps at the Canadian Embassy in Bonn. This was followed by an interview at the Embassy in Paris, where there were about ten people seated around a large, oval table. I was asked all kinds of questions in English. I thought it strange that no French was spoken. Looking at the cultural attaché who was French speaking, I ventured to express my astonishment. While few, if any of the others, understood what I was saying, I expressed regret for my haughty, Quebec Anglophone attitude of effortless superiority. I asked forgiveness and for a chance to institute change. The smile on his face told me he was willing to give me that chance. It encouraged me to finish what I had to say and then to repeat it in English for the benefit of the

others who did not seem to be following. This time I did not see many smiles. A veil of misunderstanding was in place. How I longed to be able to share my open hearted freedom. Later, I received a letter from the Embassy in Paris stating that I had not been selected as a candidate this year and encouraging me to try again next year.

On the film crew at Mackinac

After my year in Bonn, I spent part of the summer in Caux and was then invited by MRA to go to Mackinac to help with filming *The Crowning Experience*. I worked on the 'rushes' which involved putting together picture and sound of all scenes shot on a particular day and 'rushed' back from the developing lab. The film was projected on a large theatre screen so that decisions could be made as to which 'takes' to use in the final version.

The appeal of MRA for me is in its world vision, its invitation to participate in remaking the world. Unlike my father and sister, I did not have the opportunity to converse with Frank Buchman. My sister was more often in his presence as she used to sing in the chorus that was always an integral part of plenary sessions. From my observation, when Buchman was not leading a meeting, he was often at the back of the hall in his wheelchair keeping silent. Rather than being an eloquent speaker, I would say he was an amazing communicator. Uncomplicated, he really listened to needs and therefore provided a unifying type of leadership. He knew how to put his finger on people's needs. I do not think it was anything he did for me personally that engaged my spirit but rather his great vision of a world at peace and the essential role that everyone is invited to play in its change and development.

I was full-time with MRA from 1958 until 1962. With the work on *The Crowning Experience* nearly completed, I joined

the construction crew of the Mackinac film studio in the winter of 1958-59. We built an ultra modern, double shell sound studio and then from 1959 to 1962, made a series of films – films by coal miners from the German Ruhr and by militant students from Peru; films written by Peter Howard featuring actors from London and films about Africa featuring the glorious voice of Muriel Smith. With the expertise of Hollywood to call on, this was a stimulating period of apprenticeship in MRA. It enabled me to feel I had an important part in reshaping the thinking of the world. For someone who liked action rather than meetings, the years were full, often exciting and gave visual evidence of bearing fruit.

Joining the business

After these years, full of interesting experiences and much personal satisfaction, I returned to Montreal in 1962 to work with the family business. I had never fully abandoned the idea of working at my father's side. I saw him aging and I felt it was time to act in order to provide continuity. In 1913, my grandfather on my father's side started a small business supplying materials to Montreal building contractors. His two sons carried it on when he died in 1920. They expanded the operation to include five cities serving clients in the Eastern half of Canada and providing employment for three hundred people. Bricks and masonry items, foundry and insulation materials made up the product line. They also operated two manufacturing divisions and a contracting division. Today the scale of the company is much smaller. We employ fewer than thirty people in two cities. The product range has changed too with the addition of industrial and dental plasters, liquid rubbers, silica sands, window wells, reclaimed brick and metallic surfacing materials. And yet, one quarter of total sales still comes from masonry products such as clay brick and concrete blocks.

In 1962 I started working in one of the company's manufacturing divisions. With the death of my uncle three years

later, my father became president and I was made vice-president. Four short years after that my father died. Seven years had passed since my return from Mackinac. It is worth recalling that in 1969 Canada and Quebec levied estate taxes and succession duties. The legislation was unfriendly to the idea of a family business continuing from one generation to the next. We paid our taxes, but not without considerable restructuring and a bit of luck. The luck came from a change in federal legislation that permitted the tax to be paid over five years instead of in ninety days in one lump sum.

When difficulties occur, there is nothing quite like having a place to go for support. I recall a situation in the early 1990s when Montreal was going through a depression in construction. The company was badly positioned to meet the crisis, partly because of a lack of wisdom on my part and partly because of a lawsuit, which we were going to lose in spite of our innocence. We faced bankruptcy. Our bank would no longer accept our figures, forcing us to employ a consultant approved by them and costing us a lot of money. The company's shares showed a negative value on the books. Technically we were broke. However, the bank was not about to force us to liquidate until autumn sales had lowered the level of our inventories and thereby reduced the level of their risk.

At this time, as fate would have it, I was attending a weekend meeting of MRA in Victoria, BC. On the Sunday night I was invited to speak about my situation and what I was going through. I was moved to be really listened to by the people in the room. Several of the older women suggested a moment of prayer, specifically for me and for the business. They asked if I would agree to a laying-on of hands. Never having experienced this kind of thing before and having absolutely nothing to lose, I agreed. In the weeks and months that followed, the business crisis abated and the company's situation improved. I will always be grateful for the care that I was given at that meeting.

There is nothing magic about this. If you are sincere and do your best, God listens and does the rest.

I do not care for speeches and try to avoid meetings as much as possible. I would rather undertake concrete projects and work on them in teamwork, taking whatever time is needed. It seems to me the best way to prepare for the future is to provide training that incorporates sharing experiences while working on specific, adequately planned projects.

Taking time to listen is a vital part of my life. I see guidance as the thread that joins the thinking of my inner self with the different segments of my life. I am aware of six such segments: my personal life, my family, my work, my Rotary life, my church life and MRA. Sometimes these segments, each with a different priority, do not communicate well with each other. It is in sorting things out that guidance becomes essential. It opens understanding of the really important issues.

Responsibilities

I have been privileged to serve on the US Board of Initiatives of Change (IoC) for five years and recently embarked on a further three year mandate. I do not have a lot to say in the Board meetings but I am happy to do this work. What could be more important for Canada's foreign policy than the state of mind of our large neighbour? I am amazed at the amount of work accomplished by my American colleagues, some of whom are very involved locally and in a number of countries around the world. I support wholeheartedly the work that is going on in the United States.

In Canada, I served on the Council of Management of IoC for twenty-eight years and was Chairman from 1987-2002. As I think back on it, I am reminded of an event I would like to share with you. John Bocock of Alberta had been

Chairman for thirteen years. He had just stepped down and I had succeeded him. During his chairmanship I had served as Secretary-Treasurer from 1974-1987. I still remember the day he met me at the airport in Victoria, BC and wasted no time expressing his political opinions in very strong terms. I 'blew a fuse' and wanted to get back on the plane and return to Montreal. We were supposed to chair the MRA meeting in a few hours. After a time of quiet, the extreme emotions calmed down. John apologized to me. Later on as we talked, I was struck by the fact that he was apologizing not just for 50% of the blame but for all of it. His apology was not conditional on mine. Since then, John has not let me forget that he feels he was one hundred percent wrong. He is more than generous. How can you put a value on this quality of friendship?

Next steps

At a recent meeting of the Montreal chapter of IofC, my friend from Burundi, Simba Pierre, proposed a workshop theme that interests me very much. It concerns helping Africans adapt to life in Montreal. Several others also show interest in this theme. I think there is material for a video, a training tool for IofC. Interviewing people in government in Ottawa and Quebec could be part of it. Learning together and developing as a group is part of the work that lies ahead. I see it as something we could undertake with a team of young people. Obviously, there would be no salaries involved and it would take a commitment to bring a message of hope rather than merely highlighting a problem. I would like to use my knowledge of film and video to bring communities and cultures closer together in Montreal and elsewhere.

Conclusion

Recently I was in a church, filming stained glass windows that had been crafted by Tiffany over 100 years ago. Someone suggested I touch the surface of the stained glass. In a flash I

understood how this world class artist was able to achieve such variety and depth of colour. It happened in a millisecond as I felt the peaks and valleys of the glass. In a similar way, saying 'yes' to God with all my heart opens a level of deeper understanding of the people with whom I am in contact. It is the wisdom of the heart that completes the intelligence of the brain. One without the other is insufficient. Moments of truth gifted by the Infinite are gifts of grace and they require that a decision be made: move forward or move backward. A better world lies with the decision to move forward. By the grace of God, my choice is made. *En avant!*

Drew Webster
Montreal

"If everybody cared enough, and everybody shared enough, everybody would have enough. There's enough in the world for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed."
Frank Buchman, London, May 1938



*Jean and Marie-Thérèse
de Lavallée*

SERVICE IN FRANCE AND CANADA

I am French, born in Lyon in 1924. My father was from one of those very old families of Corrèze whose origins go back to the 8th century and the time of Charlemagne. My mother's ancestors came from Gallic Brittany (Rennes-Saint-Malo), the home of Chateaubriand and Jacques Cartier.

I attended the secondary school run by the Dominican sisters of the Roman Union in Neuilly, very near to Paris. I spent the four years of the war in Paris and, like all the French, endured the German occupation. For my part, it was the food rationing, which made me lose weight, and the curfew, which prevented me from going out at night, that affected me most. Besides, I lived in a neighbourhood that was rather far from downtown, where we hardly even met any of the occupying troops.

As I was a cub leader, I was asked to take care of welcoming the returning prisoners and people who had been deported to the camps. For this, we had specialized centres, like the Gaumont Palace, a huge cinema which was used for the prisoners, and the Lutetia Hotel for people returning from Auschwitz or Dachau. This is where I began to discover the horrors of the war, for the survivors needed to talk about the hell they had lived through. This is probably where I learned to listen attentively to the people I spend time with.

First contacts with MRA

In January 1950 I married Jean de Lavallée, a manufacturing engineer with a diploma from the *École centrale de Paris*. He was also born into a very old Breton family. I will allow myself to make one small remark here; that a rather original aspect of my husband's family is that they had lived in the ancestral manor since 1370, in a succession that passed entirely through women!

It was because of my marriage that I discovered Moral Re-Armament, through the friendship of charming people and everything that Jean told me about it, for he had become a 'convert' during his captivity. In 1942, when he had been transferred to a reprisal camp in Ukraine after a failed escape, a friend gave him a book entitled *For Sinners Only*, which was, at the time, the basic text for MRA. He was very interested, and was able to get other books and magazines from friends in Switzerland. (The Germans allowed this, because Switzerland was a neutral country.) Jean subscribed with his whole heart to the principle of listening to God every day, with the help of the four values, lived in a manner which aspired to the absolute: honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. That gave purpose to his life. "God," he said, "has a plan for me, however humble it may be." For, "when [people] listen, God speaks and when [people] obey, God acts," is a key saying of Frank Buchman.

At the time, Jean decided to take leave from his unit whenever he could, to go and meet teams of young people in the STO (obligatory work parties) which were part of Catholic Action, of which he was an eager supporter and counsellor. In wartime Germany, it was not easy. I am not going to dwell on the numerous incidents, arrests or other imprisonments, which Jean endured and eventually survived. At the end of May, 1945, he came back to France after being liberated by the Americans, in the last convoy from a deportation camp afflicted with typhus, where he gave devoted service as a nurse.

As soon as he was home in Gaumont, before I could see him and even before receiving his papers and civilian clothes, he set off to ring the doorbell of the minister's office, where he had a friend from MRA, a former resistance worker named Maurice Nosley. Jean wanted to be a full-time worker, to give his time as a volunteer, but Maurice advised him to go first to find his family in Brittany and rest, then to complete his graduate studies which had been interrupted by the war. At the end of these studies, he could devote all his time to MRA.

In 1947, Maurice and Jean went to the Constituent Assembly to see the socialist member and former resistance leader, Irène Laure, in order to persuade her to come to the MRA centre at Caux in Switzerland, so she could meet Frank Buchman and other international personalities. This was not an easy decision, but she finally went. We know what happened. Thanks to her change, her unconditional forgiveness, her conviction that a united Europe was impossible without the Germans, she has been one of the powerful engines of Franco-German reconciliation.

Meeting the Founder

At the beginning of 1950, one of our English friends, David Hind, came to Paris to drive us to Caux in his car. (Cars were still rather uncommon.) I was going to spend only three days there with Jean, since he had started to earn his living as an engineer. As for me, it was my first visit to Caux. I stayed for the three months of summer instead of the three days I had expected. In those years, the Caux centre could accommodate more than a thousand participants, because Frank Buchman's charisma attracted big crowds.

These three months represented a great moment in my life, when everything was 'in tune'. The welcome was so warm that I understood the meaning of 'unselfishness' as the basis for

loving others. Each person was considered, according to Frank Buchman's expression, as a 'royal soul', whatever their social position. There were Africans, still rare in Europe, anti-Nazi Germans, workers, and trade unionists, who could speak freely of their problems with their bosses and find a consideration to which they were unaccustomed. Caux opened my eyes to an awareness of the dignity of each one. There is in every person a dignity which must be respected and developed. This is truly the practice of the fourth value (love).

Especially at Caux, but also in the teams in each country, there is a very great openness to the world. Whatever may be a person's religion, education or race, everyone is welcomed in the same way: with warmth and friendship. This strikes all who come. Thus, Caux opened my heart to the whole world, which I had not had a chance to know before. Thanks to MRA, I met Japanese people who had trained to become kamikazes, Papuan head-hunters, Maoris from New Zealand, Koreans, Americans, dockers from Brazil, Indians, South Africans and many more. Once accepted, this extraordinary openness sets the heart free.

At Caux, I met the founder of MRA, Frank Buchman, a man who was already old since he was born in 1878 in Pennsylvania. Buchman had a deep spirituality, but kept his feet on the ground. It was not easy for me to converse with him because of his strong American accent and his inability to speak more than two words of French: *mauvais garçon*. He had a dry and caustic sense of humour. Along with several others, he spoke often with Jean and me, calling us 'descendants of Joan of Arc' because he had learned that Jean's family had been related to the family of Joan of Arc.

Many personalities came to consult him, trusting his fundamental honesty, his objectivity and his discernment, as well as his interest in world affairs. I am thinking of Mahatma Gandhi, of President Magsaysay of the Philippines, of the

Prime Minister of Japan, of King Michael of Rumania. All this did not prevent him from having very good contacts with the dockers in Rio, textile workers in France or miners in the Ruhr region of Germany.

Becoming involved

I remember the world tour which Frank Buchman undertook with the musical play *The Vanishing Island* in 1955-56. Aircrafts were made available in a miraculous way to transport the international team of more than two hundred people and their equipment. Performances were given in each country where they were invited. Jean and I became involved in January 1956 when the show stayed a month in Paris. During its European tour, we travelled with the group.

From Switzerland, where everyone had gathered for the summer session, Frank Buchman invited us to join him in the United States to work directly with him. As it happened, only Jean travelled with the team, while I remained at the MRA centre in the large, wealthy suburb of New York called Mount Kisko, in a beautiful big house lent by an American friend. This allowed me to meet many very interesting people and to live out, in a team context, the ideal we were hoping to attain. Our son Jehan-Henri who, at the age of five, was ready to go to school, had come with us and thus met his 'Uncle Frank', who liked to tell him fine stories; the two of them got on very well. Frank Buchman died in Freudenstadt, in the Black Forest of Germany, in 1961. This was the same place where, in 1938, he had given his movement the name of Moral and Spiritual Re-Armament, as an alternative to the intensive re-armament which Hitler was preparing in order to unleash the war.

When my father died in 1956, we went home from America, and were invited to live at the MRA centre in Paris. A few months later, after some intense discussion with our

friends, we were able to follow our deep conviction to resume an ordinary life. It was in this spirit that Jean entered the service of the UN and lived some twenty-five years in Africa, living in practically all the francophone countries of this immense continent, promoting the development of small and medium sized enterprises. At this time, our second son, Louis-Charles, was born in Tunis, where Jean was stationed for two years.

Then the time came for retirement. In 1974, we settled near Cannes. As everywhere else, the ties with our friends in MRA were strengthened through many contacts. Obviously, during these twenty years and more, we had spent some time in Caux. I saw Irène Laure many times in her villa in La Ciotat near Toulon, as well as many other friends.

Coming to Canada

In 1981, we had the idea of exploring Canada, given that we had many friends from Quebec, such as Professor Louis O'Neill, whom we had met in Rwanda at the time of the opening of the University of Butare. The university's founder and first rector had been a Dominican from Quebec, Father Georges-Henri Lévesque. We had spent five years in Rwanda and had been friends with several professors. We had kept in touch with some of them and wanted to see them again.

In the joy of finding each other again, we fell in love with Quebec. Since we had accepted God's plan through listening and obeying, we agreed with our friends to settle in this beautiful city. That was more than twenty-two years ago, when our children were already grown up and of an age to look after themselves. Upon our arrival in Quebec, in 1982, we contacted the leaders of the Quebec team. Bit by bit, we brought our contribution to the many activities organized by MRA. We were also very much involved with Jean Vanier's teams of *L'Arche* and *Faith and Sharing*, as well as with several organizations in Lower Town helping the underprivileged.

Then, one fine day, July 25, 1997, after much suffering and a full life rich in struggles, given for others, my husband Jean, God's servant, passed into the Light. He had followed the ideal which he had discovered in a freight car by reading St. John's gospel while escaping from a German prison during the war. Since then, I have continued my involvement, although a little differently. Among other things, I am a member of the Quebec Regional Committee of Initiatives of Change, which cares for the team that is growing in the spirit of Frank Buchman.

Conclusion

Why follow so long in the wake of Moral Re-Armament / Initiatives of Change? Perhaps because I understood that through this movement God has a plan for me, that he loves me. To get his message across, I have to become a simple person once again, acknowledge my mistakes, my weaknesses, my failings, but also my qualities and my talents, by giving my whole person to his service. My husband used to say: "We are already anticipating the Kingdom while we are on earth, before we discover it fully in the afterlife."

In Quebec City, I live just opposite the parish church of the Dominican convent. Having begun my life with the Dominican sisters, I will finish it, if God allows, in the shadow of the steeple of St. Dominic's Church.

Marie-Thérèse de Lavallée
Quebec City

“The movement of the Spirit which radiates from a small place above Lake Geneva, and which is known the world over as Moral Re-Armament, is one of the most significant and promising developments of our time.”

Cardinal Franz König, Caux 1979

“You cannot feel hatred or disrespect for your guru, so you cannot learn tolerance and forgiveness from him. You can only learn these things from your enemy. When you meet him, that is the golden opportunity to test how much you practise what you believe.”

The Dalai Lama, Caux, 1983

“There is no way to change the world without changing human hearts. That is what has been happening here at Caux for fifty years. When we listen with the listening that comes from the heart and we speak with the words that come from the heart, then there takes place the great conversation in which, beneath the words, we hear the music of the Divine Presence. Then a miraculous thing happens. We begin to change.”

Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Caux, 1996

III TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE



Karen Bambonye

AN EXPERIENCE OF GROWTH

I was born in 1977 in Bujumbura, Burundi, to a mother who is French-Canadian and Italian and to a father who is from Burundi. From a very young age I was raised in Canada, primarily in Montreal, but I have also lived for a short period of time in Quebec City and Ottawa. I completed a Bachelor's degree in psychology and a Master's in education. Over the years, while studying or during summer vacations, I held various positions, in a clothing import company, a hospital and a children's day camp.

A long journey begins

I had my first contact with Initiatives of Change (IofC) in 2003, while visiting my father in South Australia, where his work had taken him a year earlier. My father had met Laurent Gagnon on a few occasions in Montreal during different activities with the Burundian community and he urged my father to make contact with Mike and Jean Brown in Adelaide. We were graciously invited to their home for lunch and they mentioned an upcoming conference that IofC was organizing in Sydney. I read the conference brochure and was greatly interested in the reconciliation and peace building initiatives being undertaken by IofC around the world. Without knowing more about the organization, the relevant information in the pamphlets was enough to make me want to attend the conference. I will never forget this experience and it marked the beginning of a long inner journey.

I think that during this first contact in Australia, I was unconsciously searching for a renewed sense of moral values. I was in a period of personal growth, attending church occasionally. Although my parents had instilled moral values in me, I was looking for a deeper spiritual connection.

The speakers at the conference were from many countries and from diverse faiths. They spoke openly about the challenges and conflicts they saw around them and how they were taking responsibility in bringing about positive change in their own lives and in the lives of the people around them. One couldn't help being personally affected by the stories they told. It was the beginning of a journey of personal growth in my life.

Each person I met helped me gain a better understanding of IofC, its purpose, the absolute moral values it proposes and the importance of quiet times. I had many deep conversations on different subjects such as religion, life struggles, family issues, education and many more.

Finding my role

During the following year, since I was already travelling round the world, I joined up with IofC teams in Australia, Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, and in Canada. This gave me insights into the many problems affecting each country and the different initiatives being taken to resolve the existing conflicts. Back in Montreal, after an internship in Caux, I found it important to focus on starting a career and finding employment. It became harder for me to participate regularly in IofC activities. I have to make a conscious effort to have quiet times, to ensure that my life is going in the right direction, but it is sometimes difficult with work and activities in this fast moving world.

All the same, I have decided to continue my journey with IofC, by engaging myself in the many activities organized in

Montreal, such as the *Open Homes - Listening Hearts* activity and the African Great Lakes reconciliation workshop. I am part of a dynamic team as secretary of the Montreal Regional Committee, which organizes activities and events. I have been recently entrusted with responsibility in Canada for *Creators of Peace – a Women's Initiative*. I truly enjoy my involvement, as it allows me to lead a life that is honest and authentic.

A challenging way of life

Love, honesty, unselfishness and purity are values that I believe everyone can identify as important to living a fulfilling life. Unfortunately in today's world where violence, war, corruption and divorce are all too common, one needs to be reminded of the absolute moral values that can be found in all religions. I believe these values are stepping-stones in eliminating numerous problems that exist in this world.

The Montreal Regional Committee has often discussed the point that commitment and involvement depend on each person's availability and personal definition of what it means 'to be involved in an organization'. Involvement for different ones may mean participating in certain activities and meetings, helping to organize an upcoming activity, offering computer skills, translation, driving people to events or hosting participants in their homes. Other individuals, who have more time available and who believe in IofC's mission, can offer their time and services in support of conferences in Caux or with different teams around the world, or even work full time with IofC for a certain length of time.

The future of IofC is difficult to foresee, because it depends quite a lot on the fulltime fieldworkers. The problem of attracting the younger generation to be available for more than a few weeks at a time is a serious concern for the future of IofC. Work, personal and family obligations make it difficult for many to offer their services for a long duration. For young

adults, short-term commitments, such as the Caux intern program can be a good way to interest them and give them an experience of IofC. Bringing young people to an active involvement for longer periods of time will be a serious challenge in the next few years.

A promising future

The new impetus given by the creation of the Montreal Regional Committee in March 2004 has been well received. People are interested to find out more about this philosophy and way of life and it appears to be giving a new face to our association. More support is being given to the regional coordinator to implement the various initiatives. However, I believe there is still a lot to accomplish in Montreal as well as nationally and internationally; for example, in reaching younger people and facilitating a greater participation of local English speaking people in activities.

I would like to congratulate the older generation for keeping the IofC mission and Frank Buchman's message alive. However, I believe IofC can offer so much more, if only more individuals knew about, and made known this group, through examples from the recent past such as; the *Sorry Day* in Australia, relating to the Aboriginal people; the story of Madame Irène Laure, still so pertinent and challenging, and the *Clean Election Campaign* in Kenya.

Still more people need to hear Frank Buchman's message, as well as to be reminded of the four moral values, efforts to eliminate wars and religious and personal conflicts. Perhaps IofC could contribute even more to reducing the number of current conflicts.

The one dream I hold for IofC in Montreal, Canada and in the world is to bring together serious younger people, who have

values and who are interested in making a positive change in the world. We are the future and it is time we assumed responsibility for the future of the world. Is there a better way than IofC? I would like to make this a personal priority for the coming year, with the help of a committee working towards the same goal.

Karen Bambonye
Montréal

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”
Mahatma Gandhi



Alain Marchildon

BUSINESS ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE

Born in 1960 in Montreal, into a family of three children, I have been greatly blessed in life. I grew up in a family where I was surrounded by love, in a fairly comfortable home, far from any anguish afflicting our beautiful planet. I obtained a diploma in Computer Science, at *Collège Bois de Boulogne* in Montreal. Later, through night school, I added certificates in Administration from *Université du Québec à Montréal* (UQAM).

On the family front, life has also been good to me. Today, at forty-three, I can be proud of the loving relationship with my wife and of the happiness which comes to us from our combined family with three children in their late teens.

Chance meeting

I first met IofC during the summer of 1994, by a strange coincidence, while touring France and Switzerland. From my hotel room in the small Swiss mountain village of Les Avants, I could see Caux's 'Mountain House'. The following day, my wife and I decided to venture in that direction, intending only to see the landscape of the area from that angle and maybe take a closer look at this 'beautiful hotel'.

When we arrived, the parking lot was full, but to our surprise a space became free just by the main entrance. My instinct told me that we should seize the opportunity. After

visiting the garden we entered the hall. An elderly lady approached us, seeing that we were not participants, and invited us to see a short film on the history of Caux and Moral Re-Armament. Following this showing which I found challenging, she invited us into a small bookshop, where literature about the movement, and other books on personal development were available. I bought two books: *Frank Buchman's Secret* and *For the Love of Tomorrow*.

Reading these books revealed something I had been seeking for a long time: a way to live my spirituality which offered the opportunity for personal transformation in order to bring change to the world. An enthusiastic believer since I was very young, I had, since adolescence, resisted a Church directed by men. It weighed on me to see all the hatred and conflicts which had been created by religions, or rather by the men at the head of those religions.

For me, MRA represented a source of inspiration and hope. I had been impressed by the four absolute values, common denominator of all religions. What if those four values were the source of a potential lasting world peace?

First Steps

A few days after the visit to Caux, I met my father at Roannes in France. He was a fervent practising Christian and a man of great faith. I explained to him what I had just discovered and we discussed it at length. Knowing him to be quite conservative in the way he lived his spirituality, I expected him to question MRA. Instead he was rather enthusiastic on learning that I had finally found 'my way' of living my faith. We discussed the four absolute values, drawing parallels with the Ten Commandments.

Returning to daily routine after the holidays meant that I began to forget the valuable lessons I had received. Then my

father died in the spring of 1995, and all was put on hold until September 11, 2001. The events of that day, which changed the course of history, challenged me a lot. The following Saturday, I re-read the book about Frank Buchman. On Sunday morning, I wrote an open letter, expressing my convictions, which I sent to several of my friends, to *La Presse* newspaper and to Caux. On Monday morning at 8 a.m., my cell phone rang and Laurent Gagnon, who had been sent my co-ordinates from Caux, called to make contact, and invited me to a showing of the film *For the Love of Tomorrow*. Long live the Internet, and the faith of individuals like Laurent!

Personal involvement

Since September 2001, I have become a more active participant. For me the first step was to go through an apprenticeship. In 2001, I had the privilege of leading a series of studies on the book *Dynamic out of Silence* by Théophile Spoerri, about the life and actions of Frank Buchman. This enabled me to take time better to integrate the four great values into my life. Since then I try to live by them but I realize that it is not easy, and that I am still learning. Initiatives of Change has various hope-giving programs. Those which speak to me most are: *Caux Initiatives for Business*, *Hope in the Cities* and reconciliation in the African Great Lakes region.

At this stage of life, considering the realities of my situation, commitment with IofC is rather difficult. I believe that such a commitment has to be compatible with one's situation in life and that this could be a clue to attracting people of all ages. In my case, in my early forties, an executive in a public company where performance criteria are very demanding, not much time is left for IofC activities. So, as in business, one has to identify actions which require minimum effort for maximum benefit. This is why I am identifying initiatives of change needed within my company and my entourage. I try to apply lessons

I have learned about the ethical leadership of companies from the *Caux Initiatives for Business* and I want to share with others the results of the working groups. Many of these concepts can be applied within the company where I work.

Needs to be met

I can say that I am encouraged by recent developments and by the new dynamism in the Quebec IofC network. In the spring of 2004, a new governance model was set up. It seems to me that IofC would do well to concentrate its activities around three poles: the sensitization and development of individuals; action and change in society; communication to make successful experiences better known and attract new people.

In order for our movement to run smoothly, it needs members who take an active part. For the moment, I involve myself especially by means of e-mail communication with those who are responsible, concerning discernment on directions and decisions to be taken. Despite my many trips to Asia, I am delighted to take part from time to time in lunches or public meetings in Montreal and Quebec City. How can the movement adjust itself to the realities of life today, where family and work take so much of our time? It is first of all by respecting the rhythm of each one, which our coordinator does well. On our side we must be sure to express our particular contribution so that he feels that we are not only consumers, but are active at our level.

For my part, I hope to find ways to encourage the involvement of the next generation, something which is in preparation through interns in Montreal and in the West of Canada. It is very good that the will is expressed to make a priority of reaching young people. In my language of business, I would say that it is a good investment for the future.

Dream of a new world

Phenomena such as the rise of fundamentalism, exploitation, racism and the lack of corporate ethics are not new. These phenomena have deep roots. To tackle them, I believe firmly that the values and teachings of Frank Buchman can be applied today, using contemporary language and means. We will never find a durable peace unless, in every corner of the globe, we learn to live together as children of God. Healing the deep wounds from which the free world suffers must start in our hearts and our lives. We must take an honest look at our past, identify the true reasons behind our actions and then work for change without any thought of personal profit or ambition. This way of being applies to us as citizens, as it does to all companies and governments of this world. A new quality of men and women is needed, freed from selfishness, able to lead humanity towards its survival.

To conclude, I would like to thank those of preceding generations. Thank you for what you have taught us and for your commitment, which serves as a model for the next generation. I have observed the wisdom transmitted by the 'elders'; they have come a long way and it shows! Moreover, my encounter with Laurent Gagnon has also showed me the truth of the saying that 'the individual can be a powerful agent of change in society and that personal and world change must start with a process of deeper self-knowledge'. It can be a reality; it is not just a dream.

Alain Marchildon
Montreal



*Jean and Céline
Breton*

A COMMON CALLING

By rights, there was nothing that should have united us in marriage on August 30, 1969: neither our origins, one coming from a rural environment and the other from a working class neighbourhood, nor family background, there being twelve children in Jean's family and Céline being an only child. A common commitment brought us together, *Catholic Action*, a movement within the Church which was very active at the time, regrouping its members according to social situation and age, providing them with continuous training and inviting them to come to a commitment. Our two children, and four grand-children are the joy of our lives.

Céline was born on March 18, 1943 in Lévis. Following classical studies, she became a nurse and worked in that field for thirty-two years. As for Jean, he was born on September 24, 1941 in Saint-Gervais de Bellechasse. After working for a few years on the family farm, he studied forestry and had a career of some thirty years with the Canadian Forest Service. We are now retired and have lived in the Quebec City area since 1969.

Discovering the other

Our first encounter with Moral Re-Armament occurred in 1986. A friend invited us to attend the blessing of Laurent and Lise Gagnon's new home. We must admit that we went out of curiosity and were somewhat apprehensive about that encounter. The presence of Catholic priests was reassuring.

There was Valérien Gaudet, an Oblate father who had been very active with MRA since the 1950's. There was also a *Saint-Sacrement* father, Maurice Brouard, and Marc Bouchard, priest in the diocese of Quebec.

We knew no one there. There were some black Africans, and a few English speaking people. We were wondering what we had let ourselves into. Was it a sect? We nevertheless agreed to attend a second meeting. Maybe we needed some change? Up until then we had met only Catholics like ourselves, and we were afraid of anything that was different. We were attracted by ecumenism, but had little opportunity to experience it. Both of us wanted to open the borders of our hearts.

Jean and Marie-Thérèse de Lavallée, a couple who had come from France to live in Quebec City, caught our attention by their listening skills and their warmth during MRA meetings. They took an interest in us and made us feel welcome. We should mention that a few years before, we had gone through a terrible financial disaster and a radical questioning of our life as a couple. Our coming back to God and faith set us back on the road to love. MRA, with its challenge to growth and the team life that we found there, came at the right time! Isn't it always so when one starts listening to God?

A firm foundation

We decided to look into this further. For Jean, active listening to God, leading to action with the help of the Spirit, was and remains his main motivation for being involved in IofC. As for Céline, the four values constantly urge her to revise her way of living, and are the motor of her commitment. Far from taking us away from our Catholic faith, meeting friends from other denominations and faiths has anchored us more deeply in it, enabling us to live all its richness, while discovering and admiring the faith of others.

Together we became more and more committed and faithful to a common call. It wasn't always easy, for this type of commitment of one's self requires much purification of motive and of action. But what an adventure! Initiatives of Change (as it is now called) fits well in our life journey, inviting us constantly to challenge ourselves. We have this same approach in the Bible study and prayer groups we attend, in the marriage preparation meetings with which we help at the request of the diocese, in the reflection and sharing group inspired by the book *How to find your Personal Mission* by psychologist Jean Monbourquette.

These common commitments in our family and social life constantly drive us towards a deeper and deeper reconciliation with ourselves, with others and with God. Our world seems to be losing its values. Everything is becoming relative. We have an increasing need for anchor points and solid moral and spiritual references. These points of reference, at once Christian and universal, challenge everyone, without exception, to change. IofC helps individuals and peoples to be responsible in the face of the challenges of the modern world. We are convinced that a world living in harmony through love is possible. IofC has brought us in touch, here in Canada and in Europe, with some great witnesses whose convictions have helped to change their environment and sometimes even their countries. They have shown us that love can be revived in very difficult human situations.

Oratorio for our Time

We think with gratitude of the *Oratorio for our Time*, which for thirty years has been generating real changes in people and was a wonderful spiritual and musical experience for many in Quebec over a ten-year period.

This production was created out of the experiences of conversion of two people in France: one of them, Félix

Lisiecki, a music teacher, found his faith again through MRA. Then came the deep conviction to write a musical work that would proclaim to all, "God is alive and is at work in the world, transforming the hearts of those who listen and obey."

The other, Françoise Chauchat, a horticultural engineer and an atheist, converted to Catholicism at age twenty-five. She had worked with MRA in different countries. Back in France to look after her parents, until their deaths, she was reconciled with them. Inhabited by a deep desire to give hope to a world in distress, she agreed to write the libretto for the *Oratorio*, to acknowledge her gratitude to God who had come to her and had given her back the joy of living.

Once created, the *Oratorio* toured many countries before being performed in Quebec. Lise and Laurent Gagnon, Paule Charbonneau and the two of us were convinced that this production should come here. We needed it. Indeed, the characters represented by the 'self-sufficient' man, the woman who denies her values, and the suicidal child, recall the deep wounds of our society. Its message of hope, of inner healing and of true love is a response to the signs of the times.

Its North American première was in Quebec City in 1990, under the patronage of Monsignor Maurice Couture, the then Archbishop of the Quebec diocese. Father Xavier Vandermeerchen directed the ninety voice choir from fourteen parishes and twenty musicians from the Quebec Symphony Orchestra. The *Oratorio* attracted fifteen hundred people to two performances, which profoundly touched the audiences. Following one performance a priest testified to having found again the meaning of his vocation, and a woman decided not to divorce her husband. We were amazed.

A young twenty-eight year old choir conductor, Audrey Bouliane, from Lévis, directed all the other presentations of the

Oratorio in Canada. Whether in Lévis, Donnacona, Saint-Casimir, Saint-Hyacinthe, Beauceville, or Saint-Joseph de Beauce, the message was fruitful. Neither do we forget the ecumenical presentation in Ottawa, with a choir ninety strong, four soloists and twenty musicians from the Quebec region, singing in French in the Anglican cathedral, under the copatronage of the Catholic and Anglican archbishops. What an experience! Thanks go to Richard and Rosalind Weeks, full time workers with IofC in Ottawa, for having had the courage to follow through with their convictions.

Let us add here that both authors of the *Oratorio* and their spouses were always present with us at the performances, encouraging us. In addition, each one of the final seven presentations in Quebec was under the patronage of the auxiliary bishops of the Quebec diocese. We keep open to God's guidance concerning other possibilities for this work in the future, because this experience had a deep effect on us.

A call to hope

Thinking about Irène Laure in the film *For the Love of Tomorrow* with her powerful message of forgiveness in Europe in 1947, about our two weeks in Caux, about the journey of discovery with numerous friends in Europe, particularly Fernand and Lette Maton from Belgium, about what we are experiencing in the province, everything calls us to hope. Let us be prophets of hope.

The friendship, renewal, and forgiveness we have experienced with Lise and Laurent Gagnon, have led us, over the years, to greater openness to life. There is a promising future within Quebec. Drawing on the example of our elders, we want to build a better world. Many new immigrants come to enrich our communities. They bring us a new vision of our world. Working with them, we will become better equipped to build an

open and caring society. Our country is becoming increasingly multicultural. We must make room for others, while meeting the challenge to be truly ourselves.

We are comfortable with the present orientation of IofC here in Quebec. We now need a good dose of open-mindedness to respect others in their convictions and their ways. We remain convinced, as Frank Buchman said that, 'When [people] listen, God speaks; when [people] obey, God acts'. The best program and action plan, we believe, is the one that God outlines for us every day through events, people and signs which mark our lives.

Jean and Céline Breton
Quebec City



Yvon Matte

RENEWING MY SENSE OF MISSION

Fifth in a family of ten children, I was born in 1947 at Sainte-Agnès de Donnacona. My eldest sister died at the age of two and a brother died before he was born. My parents lived through the pain of these losses without giving in to self pity. As a couple, they knew how to start over and allow life to find expression in joy, solidarity, prayer, forgiveness and hope. That is the legacy we received from our parents.

My life as an educator

In 1969, my degree in education opened the door to teaching. I began my calling among young people of twelve to sixteen years of age, labelled as delinquents. For eight years, these young people were like a beacon on my road, illuminating my interest in further training. I recall that when my father learned that I was to work with young people with behavioural difficulties, he had told me, "Be good to the children." This is a mission and a legacy, which I have tried to live out and which I want to pursue until the end of my earthly pilgrimage.

I have always been interested in further education. I studied part time for a diploma in special education, and other courses guided my work among young people. In this way, I am discovering that flexibility, availability and humour are ways to express my deepest being. After these first seven years with young people with behavioural problems, I joined the Portneuf School Board as a teacher. Together, they and I discovered, with

wonder, the pleasure of learning. For sixteen years, I was with young people who had learning difficulties.

Finally, I learned more through receiving, as a gift, the challenge of teaching a split grade class (ten and eleven). Each time I have had to meet a new challenge, I have learned that 'the children are really our teachers', as Julie Chamot put it so well in her book about quiet times and listening with children, published by *Éditions de Caux* (1982). What helped me sustain my passion for work was the need, on a regular basis, to apologise to the students for my changes in mood or my unreceptive attitude. I recently retired in June 2004, after thirty-five years of service. For me, the classroom was a place of commitment, fulfilment, conviction and passion.

The difficult lessons of illness

But this last year has been marked by illness. I learned that I had intestinal cancer. A profound upheaval in my being put everything in doubt. But the faith I inherited from my parents allowed me to welcome the illness as a path to growth. After the operation, I underwent radiation and chemo-therapy. For forty-eight days, I was given the grace to accept these treatments like a solo crossing of the Atlantic.

All along I have told the sick people whom I have visited not to allow darkness and pessimism to enter their lives, but to offer their suffering as a gift to the world. This approach, which I had not yet experienced myself, allowed me to understand that it can work not only for others but also for me. We are never ready to live through situations of suffering and illness. On the contrary, they bring a form of apprenticeship and availability, which is an invitation to live one day at a time, while never losing sight of hope. This reminds me that I never knew my father in good health, but he always said with a smile: "After the rain comes the good weather." It seems to me that as time

passes, I will have much more to say about suffering and illness.

At the age of thirty, I chose to remain celibate and at thirty-five, in 1982, I was ordained a deacon for the service of charity, word and liturgy, in the Catholic Church. A phrase of Jean-Luc Hétu, in his book *Les options de Jésus*, comes to mind, "One day, what will count most for you will not be making a living, but serving life." I cannot overlook the four years I spent as the supervisor of the *Café Chrétien* in Donnacona. I became aware that my whole commitment as a celibate was becoming sacred. I always remember the question put to me by a friend, "Have you ever thought that your work among young people is your primary commitment as a deacon?" I have known the extremes of life through my work with youth and people who are dependent on others.

New tools for the task

In January 1990, Paule Charbonneau, a colleague in education, invited me to participate in a Moral Re-Armament meeting on the theme of education. This could not have come at a better time, as I was going through a crisis in growth in the field of education. My heart was cold and I was surrounded by uncommitted people. On the other hand, when I got into the car to go to the meeting, I remember saying to Paule that I was going because she asked me to and that nothing much would change in my life. But the opposite happened. In an evening of two hours, I discovered afresh my sense of mission in education and, from then on, the wounds received in that milieu became a springboard from which to go forward.

My first reaction to IofC was one of amazement. At last I had found a group which was concerned about daily life at the same time as touching the universal. The bonds created have been a passage into life for me. I have changed my mentality from defeatism to a genuine welcoming of events as a way to

growth, which has allowed me to have a new perspective on today's world. The book *Dynamic out of Silence* by Théophile Spoerri, on the life and work of Frank Buchman, has become my companion on the journey and has also helped others to an experience of healing and commitment.

I have been challenged by the four standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, 'the four absolutes of the gospel'. These qualities of life have disturbed my comfort and replaced it with effective action. I try to live these principles while telling myself I still have much to learn. The absolute will only take on its full dimension in the heart of God.

There is also the video *For the Love of Tomorrow*, which recalls the passage from hatred to healing by way of forgiveness. For me this video is still a lesson to be shared, and I regularly offer it to people who have a desire to grow. It is a document which should not be watched alone, because it is an invitation to sharing, commitment and forgiveness. IofC is a place which allows life to express itself in words of commitment, solidarity and forgiveness. Finally, having a quiet time is difficult for me, because I have never had the natural instinct of listening to life as it passes through the heart of the Creator.

Riches to share

I really like the universal dynamic of IofC, which draws solutions out of situations which seem impossible. It has become second nature for me to build bridges across the river of life. My involvement with IofC is through a listening approach, suggesting silence, a personal journal and recommending the book *Dynamic out of Silence* and the video *For the Love of Tomorrow*. These tools fire the passion in me to create ways to allow life to flow freely. In helping people grow, this movement today is a candle, which illuminates my commitment, and provokes helpful questioning in the minds of others.

IofC represents inward challenge leading to outward involvement. The unconscious works on the conscious. Since my first contacts with the association, I have been discovering my second nature. Excluding people is very difficult for me to accept and I do everything I can to facilitate friendships. The approach practised by IofC is a continual updating of the values of justice, peace and forgiveness. Giving oneself freely at every moment is one of its strengths.

Speaking with those who have fashioned IofC is a confirmation of the work achieved with such energy, boldness and determination. It takes life as a road to follow, revealing the values which lie hidden in the human being. Each person carries within all the resources necessary for living, but these are to be shared and put at the service of humanity, beginning with those who are nearest. The hope for a better world passes through this dynamic, which calls on people of goodwill to draw on the well-spring of riches within them and to pass them on, while remaining receptive to others. I am aware of my limits. As time goes on, I am learning to overcome them. However, I am unable to do it alone, and need others in order to grow.

In recent years, IofC has taken an important new direction, full of humanity. Is it not the mission of all to live their humanity to the full? In so doing, they will touch the divine, and we will resemble the One who still gives LIFE, allowing miracles to happen.

We have to give legs to our dreams, and I wish to close with an Indian proverb: "The longest journey begins with a small step." Taking the pathway of 'small steps' is to use our talents to the fullest, putting them at the service of life and humanity.

Yvon Matte
Donnacona



Paule
Charbonneau

PEOPLE BEFORE PERFORMANCE

I was born in Montreal in 1941, the eldest of eight children. Married to Royal Charbonneau, a Franco-Ontarian, and mother of four children, my family numbers nineteen in all. As each of our children has at least two children of their own, family life is particularly stimulating. Our grandchildren range in age from one month to eighteen years. I live in Donnacona, near Quebec City.

A Master's degree in Education from Laval University is the foundation of a training which is constantly renewed through work experience and community involvement. I have worked for the Montreal School Board, a Teacher Training College and the Science Faculty of the University of Sherbrooke. I also served in pastoral work in Abidjan, Ivory Coast and finally, spent twenty-two years working for the Portneuf School Board.

Since my retirement, five years ago, I have been facilitating group discussion on the ideas and approach of psychologist Jean Monbourquette, as expressed in his book *How to Find your Personal Mission*. I also continue to participate in different committed groups, including Initiatives of Change, Anima Portneuf, the Women's Christian Movement.

Introduction to IofC

The decisive moment in my contact with IofC, which enabled me to write a new and beautiful page in my life, came

on October 5, 1986 at Beauport, near Quebec City. At an event marking the *Day of the Family*, Moral Re-Armament welcomed visitors to its exhibit and live animation stand. One person caught my attention, Jean de Lavallée, a member of the team that was there to make IofC better known. I often reminded Jean of his godfatherly role in my introduction to IofC. In fact, I already knew Jean from our earlier association with *Faith and Sharing*, a movement founded by Jean Vanier.

I told myself that day, "If Jean de Lavallée is a member of MRA, it must be good, because he is so marvellous in his presence and participation with *Faith and Sharing*! Therefore, I can trust his word." Gradually I became more involved with IofC. I participated in meetings and I even collaborated in projects with those responsible in Quebec City. In fact, I told myself, "If two quantities are equal to a same third quantity, they are equal to each other." Because of Jean, IofC took on as much importance for me as *Faith and Sharing*.

First impressions

In IofC I have found people who are looking for coherence and quality in social and community involvement. In their respect for other people's development, those responsible within IofC have offered resources and opportunities to question, to shed light on daily life and to invite change. At a personal level, I was able to accept the four absolute standards offered by IofC to assess our choices and actions. I appreciate the acceptance shown by those responsible; for them, the person is more important than the performance.

Three principles have always sustained my relationship with IofC: each individual represents a link between the personal and the universal; society needs change and this begins with personal change; the expression of convictions is possible, despite ideological, political and religious differences.

In this world network, I have been able to practise two very useful skills: inner listening and outward expression of conviction. Another major reason for my remaining with the group for nearly eighteen years has been the ability to practise my Christian faith openly and freely within the network.

Personal encounters

Évelyne Seydoux, Fernand and Lette Maton, Félix and Ginette Lisiecki, Françoise and Guy Chauchat, Philippe Lobstein, are among friends, mostly from France, who played a part in my relationship within IofC. In Quebec and Canada, it is impossible even to try to name all the significant links created through the various activities.

I would rather refer to some of the things that have been achieved. Many could describe the aspirations and fervour which propelled us into different activities of training and service; the *Oratorio pour notre temps* (Oratorio for our Time), written by Félix Lisiecki and Françoise Chauchat and performed in Quebec City and Ottawa; ecumenical meetings; my time at Caux; the use of the Irène Laure film; the 50th anniversary of MRA at the Montmartre Canadien; the Intergenerational Days at the Seniors' Fair. For a while, we even had meetings organized by MRA-Portneuf. At that time, we began to distribute the sayings of Frank Buchman on small cards. This was a way of stimulating reflection and dialogue in our milieu.

I owe it to Lise and Laurent Gagnon for helping me to keep my focus in life. They also opened the way to a new career for me in the field of facilitation. It was through their considerate support and trust that I was able to facilitate sessions on *How to discover your Personal Mission*. They contributed to the creation of a valuable series outline. My gratitude is above all for the quality of the links created and the quality of the

questions raised. IofC offers us means to keep alert, a first step in making the best use of our freedom.

IofC in transition

Where do things stand now? Life for me in 2005 is much as it was in 1986: the challenges of family life and community involvement. IofC remains a network of support and ongoing learning with which I am glad to be associated. It remains a relevant reference and stimulant to keep my conscience open and active.

I am part of the transition, even if it is not my first objective. My involvement is much as it has been for almost eighteen years. Life within IofC and its outreach into the community are important to me. I am challenged by what is needed to sustain and develop IofC. And, in this respect, the creation of a responsible nucleus seems absolutely necessary as a way of assuring the development of IofC in the wider Quebec City region. It will find its right place in the region, through collaboration between those already active in the network and those who are new to it.

For generations that follow, I wish that the purity of IofC's message will be fully accessible. I hope that we will be able to share this vitality. To sum it up in a few words: we must remain faithful to the words and spirit of the founders.

Paule Charbonneau
Donnacona



*Adalbert
Otou-Nguini*

A MESSAGE AS CURRENT AS EVER

I was born in 1948 at Mbankomo, a small locality on the outskirts of Yaounde, in Cameroon, into a very large family: we were eight children from my mother and some thirty in total from my father, who had four wives. I therefore grew up surrounded by a lot of people, in an environment where it was necessary often to make concessions and share everything. My father was a very authoritative person, who required that order and discipline be maintained in his home; he was also very devoted to his family. He did his best to give us the means to fight our way through life.

My mother, on her side, endeavoured to inculcate in us, her children, a Christian education from when we were very young. She was the daughter of a tribal chief who had wanted to give her in marriage to a person she did not love; so she ran away from her father's home and took refuge in a convent of Catholic Sisters, where she was welcomed, taken care of and trained until she met my father, who married her in church. From her religious education in the convent, she had kept a solid faith which sustained her and helped her to stay married, even after my father took other wives. She then took refuge in prayer and led us into it. It was therefore with a great satisfaction and an immense joy that she welcomed my decision, at the end of my elementary studies, to go to the seminary with the intention of becoming a priest.

Education and work

I did my secondary studies at the St. Joseph Junior Seminary at Akono and the St. Theresa Inter-diocesan Seminary in Yaounde. The seven years that I spent in these institutions shaped my life, because, besides the excellent classical education I received, I also acquired sound moral and human values. For personal reasons, I did not pursue my training up to the priesthood.

In 1968, I was admitted to the University of Yaounde where I studied French and English Language and Literature; then, with a Cameroon Government scholarship, I went to Paris to be trained as a translator/interpreter at the Advanced School of Interpreters and Translators (ESIT) of the Sorbonne University. When I returned to Cameroon, I worked for about ten years as translator/interpreter at the Presidency of the Republic. In 1985, I was recruited by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and assigned to its Western and Central African Office in Dakar, Senegal.

In 1993, I was transferred to the ICAO Headquarters in Montreal, where I now reside with my family - my wife, Martine and our five children. Naturally, we had to adapt to our new environment, find our way around and look for useful and interesting activities. The children quickly adapted to their school environment where they are progressing without any major difficulties. Martine, despite her heavy workload at home, opted to go back to university to complete a doctoral thesis in Law. She is also involved in many community and religious associations. As for me, besides my work, I joined various reflection and social groups, which enabled me to establish and develop relationships with people from various backgrounds and origins and to search for solutions to existential problems.

MRA / IofC

I discovered Initiatives of Change through Laurent Gagnon, whom I met for the first time in 1999 at the *Centre Afrika*, provided by the White Fathers for Africans to hold events and meetings. We had a group there called *Groupe Échange*, made up of people of various origins, who met periodically to share ideas and experiences on various problems and issues with a view to improving mutual understanding and bridging differences. The discussions were always lively and constructive and the atmosphere very pleasant. At the end of one of these meetings, Laurent came and spoke to me about Moral Re-Armament, which, he said, was involved in some of the issues which we were concerned with. I remember that I found the name Moral Re-Armament somewhat strange and wanted to know more about it.

I therefore read with keen interest the documents on that movement that Laurent sent to me a few days later. I started to discover its ideas and principles, as well as its activities and programs around the world, especially in Africa, devastated by wars and catastrophies. I was attracted by its message, which stressed that ‘the individual can be a powerful factor of change in society and that personal and global change should start with a profound knowledge of oneself.’

That was also the time when, as the world was going through difficult moments, especially in Africa, I was wondering how I could help. I was looking for a group or a movement in which I could get involved, which would enable me to bring my modest contribution to the search for remedies to the evils plaguing the world: wars, poverty, intolerance, inequality, egoism. The message of MRA appealed to me; it seemed to give me tools and answers to my questions

When Laurent moved from Quebec City to Montreal in 2000, we intensified our exchanges. He invited me to several

meetings and film showings that he was organizing at his home, and I read literature on Frank Buchman and the movement that he initiated; I also read reports of IofC's activities and achievements around the world, and followed with interest the change of name, from Moral Re-Armament to Initiatives of Change, which was a clear indication of its will to modernize the presentation of its message.

Translating at Caux

A great opportunity to know Initiatives of Change better from within came one day as I was talking with Laurent about Caux, the centre in Switzerland, where international meetings are held every year during the summer. Laurent suggested that I might offer my services on a voluntary basis as a translator and interpreter for some of the sessions. It would enable me to gain a better knowledge of the movement and, possibly, to find answers to some questions I still had. So I contacted Maria Wolf, the co-ordinator of the language services for these meetings, who welcomed my offer of help. Thus I went to Caux for the first time from July 2 to 19, 2002 to work as interpreter at two sessions: *Service, Responsibility and Leadership* and *Hope in the Cities*. The first was a meeting of young people, mostly from Eastern Europe, who came to Caux to exchange ideas and experiences on matters related to service, responsibility and leadership, with a view to applying them to their own lives and around them, in line with the teachings of Frank Buchman. The second session, *Hope in the Cities*, was organized by teams which are active in the United States, the United Kingdom and some other European countries, for a better integration of poor communities, victims of segregation and ill-treatment. The members of these teams shared the problems and difficulties they were facing in their work and the solutions they were able to come up with, as well as prospects for the future. Listening to these people from various parts of the world and discussing with them, and after experiencing community life as organized in Mountain House for two weeks, I discovered a new facet of

Initiatives of Change and came to appreciate it even more. I took advantage of my stay to learn more about the origin of IofC, its structures and its programs and about the people who lead them. In the quietness of the mountain, I took time to meet with myself and to meditate on the meaning I wanted to give to my life and to the commitment I was about to take in the movement. I came to understand that as an individual, I may not be able to change substantially the events that shatter the world, but I can, nevertheless, contribute to the search for solutions; by endeavouring to change myself, by living in harmony with my conscience and with the people around me, by joining this 'international network of people of all cultures, religions and creeds, who work for local and global change, starting with their own lives.' Those two weeks spent at Caux were a determining factor in my commitment with Initiatives of Change.

A new dynamism in Montreal

I returned to Montreal, full of the 'spirit of Caux', which is made of serenity, confidence in the future and the will 'to be part of the solution, not to be part of the problem'. I decided to get more involved with IofC at the local level and to help reinvigorate its activities in Montreal by giving some of my time and energy to the two full-time workers, Lise and Laurent Gagnon, on whose shoulders lay the burden of organizing, directing and animating the activities of the movement. The Montreal team was not structured and only met on very rare occasions. It was 'out of breath', as many of its members were aging. It needed a new dynamism.

Although IofC does not much favour the creation of structures of administration, the idea of a certain form of 'governance' at the local level to assist in developing short and medium term goals and in planning activities to make the movement better known, started to emerge in Montreal. A group was formed to reflect on this new approach. Some old-timers were opposed to

this idea, insisting that IofC is essentially a matter of heart and conviction, not a matter of organization and structure. To arrive at an enlightened decision, a consultation of all those associated with IofC in the Montreal region was convened, and a majority was in favour of the creation of a local structure of governance which was named Montreal Regional IofC Committee.

On March 27th 2004, at a special meeting attended by forty-five IofC members and supporters, the committee was set up. It was composed of seven members and had the following terms of reference, "to appropriate and apply to today the thinking of Frank Buchman, by initiating and promoting projects which aim at bringing about individual and collective change and to foster social, intercultural and inter-faith dialogue in the Montreal region, in line with the programs and activities of IofC worldwide and the guidelines of the Council of Management of IofC-Canada."

Soon after it was formed, the committee set out to assist the regional coordinator in his many tasks of planning and organizing local activities. It encouraged the creation of "workshops" with the objective of encouraging reflection and the exchange of ideas on themes related to peace-building, reconciliation and rapprochement in Canada and in the world. It sponsored the drafting and publication of this book to recount the various steps of the presence of MRA/IofC in Quebec. It also negotiated the recruitment of two Interns, whose tasks were to form a youth group and to organize fund-raising activities. A bank account was opened for the activities of IofC in Quebec and a fruitful cooperation was established between the IofC teams in Montreal, Quebec City and Ottawa.

All these organizational and restructuring efforts would be to no avail if they were not backed by a profound spiritual ideal and a real will in the people who promote them to effect changes within themselves. IofC is first and foremost a movement of

spiritual encounter, which prepares one to bring about changes to one's own life that can contribute to changes in the world. That is why the Committee encouraged and sponsored the creation of a team for reflection, sharing and commitment, which meets once every month around the theme of 'creating a space for peace', as peace is a precondition and the final aim of any positive action. That team is the backbone of our activities in Montreal.

During the Canadian Consultation which took place at the *Manoir d'Youville*, on St. Bernard Island near Chateauguay from September 30 to October 2, 2004, the issue of 'Governance in Initiatives of Change' was discussed and the experience of the Montreal team was examined with a great deal of interest by other Canadian teams. While it may not be directly 'exportable', this experience can inspire other groups to organize themselves for greater effectiveness and outreach, taking into account their particular circumstances.

Participation in the Council of Management

My commitment with the movement has continued with my enrolment as a full-fledged member of the Initiatives of Change Association (Canada). This is not a condition for participating in the activities of the movement, nor is it a sign of greater involvement. Essentially it enables the association to have statutory members to conform to the legal requirements under the Canadian law governing corporate entities. As a member, I participate in the Annual General Meetings with full voting rights. Of course, members should first of all have convictions on the ideals of the movement and be prepared to promote and defend them in all sincerity. I have also been elected to sit on the Council of Management of IofC-Canada. In that capacity, I participate within a team of seven members in the collective management of the Canadian association and in taking important decisions concerning the smooth running of the association.

I perform this task with a lot of joy, humility and gratitude, as it gives me an exceptional opportunity to serve and to work on a common objective with amazing people from other Canadian provinces.

In conclusion

My involvement in the organizational and administrative structures of IofC, both at the local and the Canadian levels, does not make me lose sight of the essence of what I am looking for in IofC, namely, to acquire a better knowledge of myself, a greater ability to listen to my inner voice, and to endeavour to achieve personal change, as a first step towards the change I want to see around me and in the world. Frank Buchman's message is as current today as ever: the world really needs to re-focus on essential values to combat the evils that plague it. In that search for essential values, it is sometimes useful to look around us and to be inspired by certain models. Other people of all races, creeds and origins may be engaged in the same process or are aspiring to be so. How can we get in touch with them? What can we do together? Without wanting to promote a kind of "organization-mania", it may be necessary to establish structures to provide a better framework for planning and more effective action. That is the only meaning I can give to my involvement with the governance structures of IofC.

I am most grateful to the generations which preceded us for keeping alive the light of hope which was lit by Frank Buchman and for passing it on to us. It is now our responsibility to continue that wonderful work and, in turn, pass the baton to the coming generations, 'for the love of tomorrow'.

Adalbert Otou-Nguini
Montreal



Lise Gagnon

A MISSION, FROM THE PERSONAL TO THE GLOBAL

There are times in life when one is more receptive and ready for inner discoveries. These are often moments of emptiness, with a vacuum to fill; moments of vulnerability. Consequently, a space is created where vital forces can enter and dwell in us. Then comes the invitation to welcome them, to develop them and to put them at the service of society. It happened to me when I was twenty-five years old.

But I will first say that I was born in Verdun on the island of Montreal in 1946, the younger of two children. My childhood was simple but stimulating, thanks to the openness of spirit of my parents who, already in those days, had friends of various nationalities. I was also influenced by the annual visit of missionary nuns to my primary school and by several years in the Girl Guides, where developing dedication and a sense of responsibility were highly valued. Our family was not rich but I was encouraged to go to university.

After five years working as an occupational therapist and a short experience in international cooperation in Chad in 1969, I felt a strong desire to return to a third-world country to work. So, to equip myself for this, I went back to university for two years, this time to study physiotherapy. This choice had consequences: the loss of the challenges of daily responsibility, a new lifestyle among students who were younger than I and whose values were different, a drastic reduction in income and a sense

of being uprooted. And the feeling of emptiness grew deeper in professional, human and spiritual terms.

Welcoming a new dimension

At the beginning of the second year of this regime, in October 1973, a certain Aline Gagnon spoke to me of her recent visit to Caux and about her brother Laurent who was very involved with Moral Re-Armament. Soon after, I was invited to meet some members of the Montreal team, including a newly married couple, Richard and Rosalind Weeks: he was from England and she from the Republic of Ireland. They had come to live in Montreal to enrich the team with their experience and their music, and did so for eight years. During the same period, some visitors from Alberta and Switzerland, with deep convictions and commitment, awakened in me a most positive interest.

Searching for inspiration

At that time, the plan for my life was set: finish the course in physiotherapy, which was preparing me to work in the Third World, and if possible, get married. Now, for the first time, I heard about the idea of seeking God's plan for one's life. He would surely not object to my praiseworthy project. At an MRA young people's weekend in Trois-Rivières, I saw my African ring fall into the powdery snow. During the ten minutes of searching for it, I had a powerful spiritual experience. As one who wanted to become a lay missionary, I felt the presence of God as though he were saying to me, "Lise, your plans are very noble, but your mission is first of all here, now, wherever you are and every day of your life. You will know in your heart if it is right for you to work in Africa some day." And it was only thirty years later that I returned, to participate for twelve days in an international consultation in South Africa. But I never lost that sense of mission.

Making a moral inventory of my life from a new angle led me to see some grey areas regarding honesty and take steps to correct the situation. The quest for absolute love helped me to discover that, in an interpersonal conflict I was going through, I had to find the courage to apologize, whatever my share of the wrong. So I sent a letter of apology, which really hurt my pride. The person concerned never responded and, in fact, died accidentally a few months later. Experiences like this, renewed regularly, became guideposts for the rest of my life.

The following year, I felt the call to devote all my time to this major task of transforming society. I was convinced that it was a greater need, even if my work as a physiotherapist with handicapped people was fulfilling. As I was bound by a contract with the government, I decided to explain my new convictions to my supervisor with transparency and to request that my work with MRA be considered as an equivalent contribution to society. To my great surprise, the idea was accepted and I took the positive answer as a sign from above. During my final internship at the hospital, there were evident tensions among staff members in the department, so I had an opportunity to put into practice the principles learnt about building bridges and creating harmony.

In October 1975, I joined my life – or rather the Supreme Master did so – to Laurent Gagnon. Since then, even if a common commitment unites us, each is called to deepen his or her own relationship with God and role in his plan. We spent the first four years of our marriage at the Canadian MRA centre in Montreal, where, at different times, from three to five other people were also living. In spite of my many years as a Girl Guide, this experience of communal life in an environment to which I was unaccustomed proved to be a difficult but valuable time of learning. Coming from a very simple background, was I really free from all social prejudice, especially towards those who were better off? I believed so, but I had to work at it.

In this context of the seventies, I also had the privilege of working with, and appreciating the openness of spirit, conviction and hospitality of, four 'young retired women': two from Ontario – Irmgarde Westerman and Reta Moran – and two from Alberta – Helen Berry and Ruth Freebury. They had come to live in Montreal for several years to absorb Quebec's culture, and in this way inspired and served the team. Helen was even our 'chauffeur' in her elegant automobile on our wedding day!

Life in Quebec City

In 1979, my husband Laurent and I had the inner conviction that we should settle in Quebec City, among other reasons, to build links in the political and academic spheres and to develop the basic work of MRA. That also brought us closer to the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, where a dynamic team was close to our hearts. Gradually, a fellowship between Anglophones and Francophones developed, and together we started a series of local, regional and inter-provincial meetings, including dialogues between Quebec and Ontario. In March 1980, well supported by colleagues from Europe, the United States and the rest of Canada, the Quebec City team organized a 'week of action', which offered a public program with varied themes. It was here too that our African connection began, thanks to our encounter with several students from francophone Africa. Most of all, 1980 was the year when our son Jean-Michel was born.

Our lodgings were always big enough to hold meetings of up to twenty people, to host working lunches or to offer short-term hospitality to people from Quebec and the whole world, who came to lend a hand. At particular times, we had people to stay for longer periods, such as Jorge from Mexico, Yann from France and the Chrysostome family from Benin who became part of our extended family. As I had chosen to be a stay-at-home mother, this was also a concrete way for me to be involved.

Organizing frequent meetings in an apartment is not easy. After five years, we felt that the moment had come to buy a house. But where would we find the money, since we had been living on the gifts of generous contributors ever since our first involvement? After consulting friends and colleagues at the local and national levels, the principle, but not the means, was agreed for us to begin this new phase.

A few weeks later, a family from Western Canada gave us a substantial sum for the down payment. Then three families, two in Quebec and one in Trois-Rivières, agreed to guarantee our loan, and took the initiative of sending a letter to a wide network, to let people know about our plan and our needs. This resulted in gifts from more than a hundred people, enabling us to have manageable mortgage payments. This adventure in faith confirmed in us the principle that Providence provides generously for the needs of its children. And now we have more than thirty years' experience of this generosity through the intermediary of many people, very often at some sacrifice on their part.

The 1991-92 school year was very special for our son, as we took a sabbatical year in Victoria, BC, joining the MRA team there, but living at a different rhythm. It was particularly enriching for the family and allowed Laurent to gather the stories of his fourteen brothers and sisters and his mother (his father had died) for a book on the Gagnon family, which they had commissioned him to do just before we left. The book was published in December 1992, and the profits from the sale were used to create a small solidarity fund for the family.

Table for twelve

Often a simple idea develops on its own. Over the time of the Charlottetown referendum, and the later referendum on Quebec sovereignty in 1995, political and linguistic tensions

were ever present. We initiated a dialogue lunch, bringing together a dozen people to seek alternatives to the widening breach. The formula met a need and it was the beginning of a long series of such lunches, held on a monthly basis for over three years, in the intimate atmosphere of our home. To heighten the dialogue, university professors, political scientists, a judge, clergy and ordinary people occasionally joined the regular core group. In addition, at least one member of that third 'solitude' - the First Nations people - was present at each occasion. Everyone contributed toward the cost of the meal.

Diversity in continuity

During this period, I became a volunteer for UNICEF, and for four years was secretary of their board for the Quebec City region. Africa came into my life through another door, allowing me to see a different aspect of international cooperation.

Another important step for me was the assumption of greater responsibilities following the opening of a meeting place in Quebec City, from 1996 to 1999. With the help of a small but dynamic team, we assured a welcoming presence every day in addition to planning and facilitating meetings with a focus on individuals or situations. In this way, once a week, several people would gather at noon with their lunch to reflect on a theme or draw inspiration from a member of the group or a special guest. Another weekly meeting took place in the evening. Among the most appreciated topics offered were: the series of four studies on the message of Frank Buchman; the times given to looking at conflicts in certain parts of the world such as Burundi; the family; a series of films for reflection. Everyone's skills were needed for the organization, planning and facilitation of the events.

It would take far too long to name all those who, in one way or another, helped or participated during those years in Quebec City. There were some difficult moments when we

needed to stop and reflect, to apologize for hurtful words or attitudes, to respect differences of approach and of character, or even to be ready to forgive. But we are full of gratitude for the gifts of light as well as the gifts of shadow, which enabled us to grow and to do our part in building a better world.

Back to Montreal

In spite of our attachment to the Quebec City area and all the people we had worked with for so many years, the inner whisperings pointing to a return to Montreal became stronger and stronger. This intuition was supported, among other factors, by the conviction that the future of Quebec and Canada would be greatly influenced by events in the greater Montreal area, where one finds several potential elements for serious tension, but certainly also elements for solutions. We can think of the presence of a francophone majority, a large number of Anglophones, many ethnic groups and also of the nearby Mohawk communities of Kahnawake and Kanesatake.

By happy coincidence, some African friends also moved to Montreal around that time, in 2000. This intensified our activities with people from that continent, especially from the region of the Great Lakes (Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo). The theme of forgiveness and reconciliation recurs again and again as an essential key to enable these peoples, marked by the suffering of serious conflict, to undertake human, social and economic reconstruction. It is very important for me to be with and give the best of myself to so many people of the diaspora living in Quebec, so that they may in their own way contribute to the development of their countries. I am proud to be a member of *Mamies Immigrantes pour le Développement et l'Intégration* (MIDI), an organization founded by our Congolese colleague Henriette Nzuzi Ntumba. In spite of the differences of colour and often of religion, we are all women who want to cultivate peace in our families, our surroundings and our countries.

During the past four years, with the help of a small team, I have enthusiastically carried the torch, in Canada, for the world program *Open Homes - Listening Hearts*, which has taken place around June 1st each year since 2002. This activity offers an excellent opportunity to take a step in approaching people who are different from us in culture, religion or social standing.

And life goes on... Each person has a mission; it is up to each one to respond.

Lise Gagnon
Montreal

“The sacrifice necessary for lasting peace is nothing compared with the sacrifice of war.”

Frank Buchman, 27 August 1939



Laurent Gagnon

A UTOPIA ... CALLING FOR ACTION

My introduction to Moral Re-Armament came in 1971, and the great adventure still continues. My wife tells me I will not accept retirement before I reach the age of 80. Of course, she is exaggerating! Before saying any more about this full-time commitment, I would like to tell you about my background. I was born in the Gaspé in 1946, eleventh in a family of fifteen children; a good school for learning about social behaviour and active democracy! Indeed, slogging hard on the farm and in the forest from an early age was part of an effort in collective survival. I still remember my mother saying, "We need wild meat from the forest", as I was the family's hunter. My father, who was almost illiterate, was a farmer, a logger and a raftsman; he sometimes described himself as a 'migrant worker'; indeed, he had to go into exile during the winter months and work far from home so he could come back with a bit of money for planting, to pay the debts and help with the life of his ever-growing family.

When I was sixteen, a priest invited me to go into my own exile, in a seminary near Montreal, because it seemed I was called to the religious life. These years of apprenticeship in Chambly, then Trois-Rivières, were very difficult because my basic academic training had some serious deficiencies. After several years, I found myself at a dead end. The report from an IQ test concluded with these words, "Your future is not in using your head but your arms. Go back to the farm and the forest." During the same period an eye examination showed that I had

serious problems with my vision. So in 1968 I left this 'world of the head' for some 'arm work' in the forest. But after a year, and a thump of my fist on the table, I started a three-year university course in theology. Miracle or not, I succeeded and came out of it strengthened and confident. Determination was my constant companion. Then, leaving the path of religious vocation following a time of discernment, I decided to do supplementary studies in education, while teaching religion for a year.

Meeting challenges

One day in December 1971, a friend invited me to a Moral Re-Armament meeting at the University of Trois-Rivières. I went, more to please than out of any conviction. That evening ended in an unexpected way, as the facilitator suggested the following exercise to the twenty or so people present: "Using a pencil and paper, take the time to listen to what comes to you in the silence through the Spirit of God or your conscience or your heart." To my surprise, I wrote, "When you were sixteen and told your parents about your wish to become a priest, what you are experiencing here is what I wanted for you with this large world family."

This was a new and intriguing element, significant in light of the searching I had been doing over the preceding years. My attention then turned towards the participants such as the director of the port of Trois-Rivières, Théo Lauzon, Pastor Charles Pelletier and his wife Aileen, Professor de Forest and his wife, Eric Turpin from Northern Ireland, Richard Weeks and Bryan Hamlin from England, Serge Borel from Switzerland - a group that was diverse and so very welcoming.

On the way home, walking through the snow towards my small apartment, I was rather thoughtful, because I had just received a calling that made sense but bore with it challenges in terms of change. The message and the international dimension

resonated with me in a positive way, but there were these famous standards of personal evaluation, veritable truth detectors for oneself, one's community and the world. The second of these standards, purity, bothered me but was no less valid than the other three as a preparation for a free and complete commitment. I thought of my girlfriend, with whom I lived on the weekends. When I shared with her what I had just discovered, her immediate reaction, which became stronger a little later, was, "That's going too far; we don't have to be more Catholic than the Pope." I ended our relationship, apologizing for my share of responsibility. She went to Caux in the summer of 1972 in a final effort to get me out of this so we could get married. After a week of discernment, personally and with my new colleagues, I succeeded in saying no to this flattering invitation, and yes to a full time commitment with MRA.

A total commitment

Helping to remake the world, taking into consideration all aspects of the individual and of society, was a captivating objective for someone as passionate as I. This utopia was sufficiently all-embracing and relevant for me to consecrate all my time, all my energy, all my life to its achievement. But how could I go ahead, with no salary, no assurance of success and still carrying a student debt? While choosing such a commitment is not an automatic passport to an easy life, it does produce, over time, a deep contentment. Are we not born to use our gifts to the utmost? Being realistic can also mean being ready to risk everything, once everything has been put in the hands of a caring Master. Opportunities and solutions came along to help me pay off my debt; I was able to live in people's homes after I had sold or given everything away in order to be free to serve wherever the need arose.

I now had to contemplate clearly and confidently a 'career' with no salary, in the tradition of the movement which

stipulates that 'Where God guides, God provides', thanks to the generosity of those He inspires. And this has continued for thirty-three years in a spirit of trust and willingness... This commitment has been made easier for me by the active presence of Lise Dupuis, whom I married in 1975 in Verdun; a city girl with only one brother, who says she married a tribe! Our twenty-five year old son, Jean-Michel, is committed in his own way in Quebec City as a street educator with young people in difficulty. It is important to mention that since 2003 Canadian fieldworkers receive a regular allowance from the national association, which still depends on private donations. We have always had enough and we are grateful.

Experiences in the field

In the following months and years, I found myself in Northern Ireland and various places in the Americas in response to invitations to assist in building trust between fierce opponents in the religious and ideological arenas. At the beginning of the seventies, there was much unrest on the Quebec labour scene. At the invitation of workers and other residents of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, I became involved at the time of strikes against the aluminum and paper multinationals, in facilitating dialogues in the spirit of Initiatives of Change. In this, there were two valuable tools. One was the film *Men of Brazil*, about conflicts between employers and workers and the other was the powerful maxim, 'In every conflict or crisis, do not look for who is right but rather what is right for all.'

The divisions within this vast country went well beyond the disputes between Quebec and the rest of Canada, as the causes of discontent were as much regional and provincial as they were Canadian. I am firmly convinced that one of the major keys, long underestimated, is in the hands of the First Nations. It is only after many rounds of negotiations and constitutional setbacks that we have begun to realize that it takes

more than geography and money to make a country; that we need more than history and a constitution to keep a people and a country united. For my part, it took time to recognize my arrogance. I could only see the great need for change in others, until the moment when I was confronted and I had to take a different approach through the perspective of the First Nations people, for whom I now have much gratitude.

At Caux, in August 1992, a reconciliation with two militant Mohawk women led to some unexpected consequences. There was a meeting with them and five teachers from Quebec, four nuns and a brother, during which I had to translate the conversation. At the same time I was reacting inwardly to what I judged to be false statements from these ladies. I had also stopped the showing of an inappropriate film, which they were using, especially with young Africans from countries in crisis. Then, very early one morning, I was having difficulty in my time of listening because of the strength of my reactions. Suddenly, I wrote in my notebook a thought which was surely not my own: "Faced with the half-truths of these women, can you respond with half-love?" A real bombshell! I had to turn the light of truth inward and assess my motivation and my reactions. I believe that in His own time God can communicate with us in an incisive manner. Even so, this did not absolve the women. At first shocked, then thoughtful, I became more open to the message, and I had to act. I knew that for fifteen years I had been working in indigenous communities, more as a 'civil servant' than as a respectful listener. My heart was not free.

After some fruitless attempts at dialogue, it was finally during a cultural program the same evening that I was able to breach the wall that separated us. In front of four hundred people I took the initiative of joining the Mohawk women in their traditional dance to the beat of the drum. Surprised and touched, they both embraced me. Wishing to commune on another level, I entered into their tradition and their spirituality.

Surprising consequences

There followed a series of events, mysterious and unexpected. A month after this experience in Caux, I was at a lunch in the home of these women in Kahnawake, south of Montreal. The meal was interrupted many times by visitors, curious to see this white man, a Quebecer, what's more, whom they had heard about: the Grand Chief, Clan Mothers, warriors of the Oka crisis who two years before had confronted the Canadian Army for seventy-eight days. To each visitor, my hostesses introduced me, "This is Mr. Gagnon, our former enemy." I was both stunned and amazed.

This all happened during August and September, 1992. In January, 1993 I received a telephone call from Luc Lainé, a Huron with whom I have since worked a lot in Quebec City building bridges between the communities. He was calling from Ottawa on behalf of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and he said, "You know, sir, we have heard a lot from the Mohawks about your reconciliation at Caux in Switzerland. We need you to give your testimony at a public hearing of the Commission in Montreal, which will deal with the Oka crisis of 1990. This day will be very delicate."

Indeed, the climate was very tense. I will always remember that, during my presentation, I could see the two women sitting in the front row of the packed hall, there to support me. Since then, I have kept in touch with them, even though we have not always agreed. We understand each other on another level. I am also still in contact with Tony Reynolds, the former Executive Director of the Commission, with Judge René Dussault, the Co-Chair, with the Mohawk leaders in the two communities of Kanesatake (Oka) and Kahnawake, and others.

These experiences have convinced me that the First Nations peoples could become 'wounded healers' in this country

that is polarized by linguistic, cultural and political questions. Everyone would gain a lot in terms of dignity and credibility and would have a message for many countries in crisis. The contribution of these peoples, outcasts since colonization, is crucial. A day may come when untenable situations will force the politicians and others into daring to think and act in a new framework; one where the current pattern of patching things up would be replaced by working towards an inclusive and harmonious partnership.

What an enlightening meeting I had at Caux in 1996 over a meal with the Grand Chief Joe Norton from Kahnawake and two Somali leaders! One of them, who had spent several years as ambassador for his country in the major capitals, was imprisoned under a false accusation. Ambassador Al-Azhari turned to Chief Norton and said, "Grand Chief, all that I suffered in prison was because of my colleague here beside me. However, we have decided to work together in the spirit of Moral Re-Armament, even though we are still political opponents, because of the many innocent victims in our country and for the sake of the future." You can imagine the astonishment of my friend Norton, who greatly appreciated his two-week stay in this 'house of change'. Since then, I have had the opportunity of sharing several meals with him and, at his invitation, attending meetings of chiefs at the provincial and federal levels.

A hope-giving approach

Other examples could demonstrate further how the approach of IofC is valued, as much in the political field as in families and society. This was also borne out during my term on the International Council from 2000 to 2003. Of course, these efforts are not always fruitful, neither are the results always visible. Decisions on what is undertaken or what needs are responded to, are not motivated by the prospect of success but simply by the rightness of the issue. On many occasions, in

Africa and elsewhere, I have had to explain that our role is not that of a fireman, but that of a gardener, sowing in expectation that fruit will come in God's time and way, depending of course on the openness of individuals and peoples. It comes down to a capacity to give freely of oneself, to question ones' motivations, and to trust, faced with the reality of a divine plan to be found and followed.

My commitment has remained constant because I have tested and tasted the power of God in situations where there seemed to be no way out. I have no doubt about the relevance of the principles and the basic message of IofC. Between doubt and certainty lies experience, which is not debatable because it is tangible and personal. This assurance often has nothing to do with the qualities of the servant, or the perfection of his actions and approaches, but rather with the ability to persevere and pay the price of his choices.

Pursuing the mandate

One of my colleagues was asked whether he regretted having accepted becoming a full-time worker. He answered, "Sometimes I would have preferred to be a truck driver." In the same vein, I would say, "There are times when I would gladly return to the farm and the forest." But I know very well that it would only be for vacations and to rebuild my muscles! Like my father, I am a 'migrant worker'.

Every commitment is a source of satisfaction, of difficulty and of solitude. Human nature being what it is, all sorts of misunderstandings and tensions can arise. Change is equally real for people in positions of leadership. Sometimes passion and patience coexist with difficulty in me. Nevertheless, results and even failures can help forge new opportunities to bear witness.

I am very happy with the tools of governance IofC has given itself in Montreal and Quebec. They are well matched to

the capacity for carrying together the directions, decisions and implications which make a commitment intentional and meaningful. I welcome with joy the growing number of professionals and young people who are joining our ranks. The field of operation is still huge, here as elsewhere, and the challenge is rewarding.

Laurent Gagnon
Montreal

"If pain is not transformed, it will be transferred."

Richard Rohr

"There can be no peace without justice but also no peace without forgiveness and compassion."

Dr. Cornelio Sommaruga

IV DEVELOPMENTS
PAST AND PRESENT

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MOVEMENT

Initiatives of Change is an international movement, active in sixty countries and formally incorporated in thirty-nine. Each national body is independent but may affiliate to Initiatives of Change-International, which was founded in 2002. On the international level, IofC's work is coordinated by an international council and by global consultations, attended by representatives from all parts of the world.

Historical note

This structure has evolved gradually over the seventy years since IofC - then known as The Oxford Group and later as Moral Re-Armament - first began. The movement's energy has always derived from the spiritual inspiration and inner transformation which motivate its adherents. IofC is a way of life rather than a membership organization, and formal structures have been kept to the minimum.

In the early days there was little thought or intention of founding an organization. Those who came into contact with the movement's founder Frank Buchman and his colleagues were typically encouraged to form local 'teams'. These met regularly to support each other in the new way of life they had embarked on. Often they were assisted by one or more full-time workers, who felt a calling to devote themselves voluntarily to this work and who typically were housed and supported financially by members of the local team. This tradition of unsalaried full-time workers still continues in many countries.

As World War II loomed, increasing attention was given to strategic activities aimed both at reaching individuals and at

affecting the course of events. Through the late 1930s there were mass meetings in Europe and America. During and after the war, travelling groups, often with stage productions, campaigned in many parts of the world. Permanent centres were established for conferences and other purposes. These developments still relied on voluntary effort in an unstructured network, but also required a level of organization, staffing and finance unforeseeable in the early days. Significant amounts of money were raised, almost entirely by individual donation and often at considerable sacrifice on the part of the donors.

Beginning in 1939, various national groups incorporated MRA formally, usually as an ad hoc response to circumstances - the need for a legal entity which could own property, for example. A series of independent national bodies grew up, conforming to local laws and traditions. They were responsible for the work of MRA in their own country, but had no formal coordination or international accountability. These national bodies still bear the ultimate legal and financial responsibility for all that is done in the name of IofC in their countries.

The beginning of structures

In a world-wide network characterized by commitment to divine will and by strong friendships, this worked well, with a minimum of organizational structure, and the nineteen forties and fifties saw the great expansion of MRA in many parts of the world. But after the deaths of Frank Buchman and Peter Howard in the sixties, the sudden absence of an agreed world leader as a focus for decision-making and direction led to a painful split between several national bodies, some of which put their energies into a US-based youth program, which evolved into *Up With People*. Following a period of adjustment and re-grouping, IofC leaders from a number of countries began to develop a system of Global Consultations, the first of which took place in Nemi, Italy, in 1980.

These Consultations, now biennial, last for a week and are informally charged with the task of identifying issues of importance to IofC world-wide and recommending courses of action. Typically a Consultation has thirty-five participants, representing all parts of the world. They are chosen partly through national or regional nomination and partly through an individual's conviction to take responsibility.

The Consultations set up an international council, composed of seven to nine people, to offer leadership in setting priorities for global action and solving problems. Members serve for three to five years. Known as the IofC International Council, it plays an important role in setting IofC's global agenda, but has no powers other than its own moral authority.

Governance and Finance

In financial matters, too, Buchman's early principle that "where God guides, He provides" still pertains, though it may be variously expressed in different cultures. In countries with a tradition of individual giving to support spiritual endeavour, IofC's programs, centres and full-time workers tend to be financed by personal donations. In a few countries the main source of finance is from corporate membership, e.g. in Japan. In India, companies and organizations pay for their personnel to participate in courses at the IofC centre in Panchgani, near Bombay. The sources are becoming more varied, including an increasing number of grants from foundations and governments, and each is recognized as a means of divine provision.

Although the core principles of the life to which IofC invites people have remained unchanged, the pattern of its work is constantly evolving. As it has become more diverse, and the world has become more complex, it is no longer possible to characterize IofC's work as one global campaign or project. Instead a number of national and international programs have

developed. Each of these is clearly formed around a strategic objective, and in that context each promotes the fundamental experience that IofC has always stood for. In many cases these initiatives are substantially self-financing, through individual donations and grants from Trusts or Foundations. Each is nurtured by IofC's facilities and contacts, remains a part of its work, and seeks to promote its principles, not unlike the subsidiaries of a commercial holding company.

In response to the need to establish legal control globally over the use of its own name and trademarks, to coordinate better internationally, and to facilitate collaboration with the United Nations and other multilateral institutions, the IofC International Council facilitated, in August 2002, the formation of Initiatives of Change-International. This international association, incorporated in Switzerland, now enjoys Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and Participatory Status at the Council of Europe. It has an executive committee of nine, with Cornelio Sommaruga as its first President.

THE MOVEMENT IN THE WORLD

1908 Frank Buchman is born on 4 June 1878 in Pennsylvania. He becomes a Lutheran pastor and while visiting Europe in 1908 he goes into a small English church and hears a woman preaching on the mystery of the Cross. It leads to a remarkable spiritual experience, which frees him from a deep bitterness caused by a problem with the authorities of a hospice he has founded for abandoned boys. He writes six letters to the six board members with whom he is in conflict. The course of his life is completely changed. "I began to see myself as God saw me, which was a very different picture than the one I had of myself," he says, "I realized how my sin, my pride, my selfishness, had eclipsed me from God. I was the centre of my own life. That big 'I' had to be crossed out." The strength of this experience convinces Buchman that moral compromise is destructive of human character and relationships, and that moral strength is a prerequisite for building a just society.

1921 This experience leads Frank Buchman to dedicate the rest of his life to training men and women in how to participate in 'remaking the world'. He begins working among the students at several British and American universities. In this way is born the movement, which is given the name of the Oxford Group.

1935 Buchman's action spreads through the 1930s into many sectors and on other continents. Alcoholics Anonymous is established as a direct result of the liberating experiences which some people find through their contact with the Oxford Group.

1938 As European nations re-arm for war, Buchman calls for 'moral and spiritual re-armament' as the way to build a 'hate-free, fear-free, greed-free world'. In the years which follow, under the name of Moral Re-Armament (MRA), he launches a program in Europe and America to rally the positive forces to foster change in private and public life based on a change in motivation and character. These ideas are adopted everywhere and provoke broad public debate.

1946 MRA opens an international conference centre in Caux, Switzerland, made possible through the generosity and hard work of hundreds of Swiss. From this centre, Buchman undertakes an action for the reconstruction of Europe.

1947 At this time, contact and exchanges with Germany are almost non-existent. Buchman and his colleagues take the initiative to have hundreds of Germans come to Caux. Their meeting with the French, who also come in large numbers, lays the foundation for a massive reconciliation between women and men of these two countries. Buchman is later decorated by both the German and French governments for his contribution to European reconciliation.

1949 Conferences at Caux and similar ones at Mackinac Island in the US achieve further public recognition through several other major contributions to international developments in the post-war years. Notable are the parts played in the reconciliation between Japan and her former enemies in South-East Asia, and in the accession to independence of several African countries without major bloodshed.

1950 During the 1950s, MRA groups travel the world, often using theatrical presentations as a means to convey their ideas. Centres are established in Latin America, India, Japan and several African countries.

1961 When Buchman dies in 1961, the former British political journalist Peter Howard assumes the leadership of MRA, but four years later he too dies. Without a clearly identified leadership to ensure cohesion, unresolved differences among those taking responsibility hamper its activities and slow its expansion.

1965 In some countries a new approach is tried, concentrating on the younger generation, and in others more traditional ways continue. *Up With People*, which develops into a global educational program, becomes a spin-off from MRA. After a period of confusion, trust is slowly re-established and valuable lessons are learned.

1968 At Panchgani in India, *Asia Plateau* becomes a major centre for the training of people from industry, education and other national sectors. Elsewhere, attention focuses on the social climate in enterprises or on race relations in the great cities of the West.

1970 With reconciliation a primary need in many parts of the world, much of MRA's work concentrates on supporting peace-making initiatives in Africa and Asia.

1980 During this period in Britain some of the work is focused on bettering industrial relations at the big car and steel manufacturing plants, important at that time for economic stability, and some on the growing multiculturalism of the country's large cities.

1990 The collapse of Communism triggers new needs and opportunities for the rebuilding of democracy in the post-Soviet world. This becomes one of the major focal points in the nineties.

Other initiatives that develop throughout the 90s are *Hope in the Cities*, which is created to bridge the racial divide in the

US; *Clean Election Campaigns* in Taiwan, Brazil and Kenya; and a continuing concern for the creation of moral and spiritual infrastructure for development in both richer and poorer nations.

2001 With the approach of the new millennium, there is world-wide recognition that the words 'moral re-armament' no longer hold the same resonance as they did in 1938. In 2001 the new name Initiatives of Change (IofC) is announced to the world's media by the Caux President, Dr Cornelio Sommaruga (former President, International Committee of the Red Cross), and Professor Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma.

2002 August 2002, the IofC International Council coordinates the formation of Initiatives of Change-International, an international association with its headquarters in Switzerland, recognized by the United Nations as a Non-Governmental Organization.

2004 While ways of expressing truth, and methods of coordinating the global work, continue to change as succeeding generations take on this particular responsibility for the moral and spiritual renewal of society, the essential philosophy of IofC remains the same - that personal change can lead to social, economic and political change. With its emphasis on experience rather than philosophy, it provides a focus where people of different religious and political persuasions can meet without compromising their own beliefs, and be part of a global network committed to working for change in the world.

2005 Initiatives of Change-International is granted Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and Participatory Status at the Council of Europe.

THE MOVEMENT IN QUEBEC

In addition to the personal stories and the information on the growth of Initiatives of Change given in the foregoing pages, we offer you here a summary of events, activities and developments which have marked its history in Quebec. While we have attempted to invoke our collective memory, these recollections of significant events from 1931 to 2005 do not claim to be exhaustive. Given the global and open nature of the movement, certain actions have had an influence beyond the borders of Quebec.

1931 Eleanor Forde from Montreal returns home from Oxford to prepare Frank Buchman's first visit to Canada, set for 1932. She is the first woman to work full time in the service of The Oxford Group. This marks the beginning of the movement in Canada.

1932 In October, the first visit to Canada by Frank Buchman and his team begins in Montreal and continues through Ottawa and the West. Buchman and the sixty people travelling with him spend Christmas and New Year in Lucerne, Quebec.

1933 An Oxford Group meeting takes place at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City from May 26 to June 5. Frank Buchman takes part with his delegation and a large number of guests. The theme is *World-changing through Life-changing*.

1934 Frank Buchman and a group visit Canada again, this time meeting the Premiers of several Provinces and the Prime

Minister, R.B. Bennett, who affirms in a farewell message, "The work you are doing has made the task of the government easier. Your influence has been felt in every village and city, even in the remotest outpost of the Dominion."

In June, in a special ceremony in Banff, Alberta, Chief Walking Buffalo of the Nakoda (Stoney) Nation makes Frank Buchman a blood brother, naming him *A-Wo-Zan-Zan-Tonga* (Great light out of darkness). It is the beginning of a lasting friendship.

1942 The patriotic review, *Pull Together Canada*, written and produced by members of the cast as a service to their fellow Canadians, is staged in Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces on the invitation of provincial leaders.

1944 On May 10, The Oxford Group (Moral Re-Armament) in Canada is incorporated and subsequently registered as a charitable organization.

1948 In Montreal, the industrial centre of Quebec, birth is given to a new ideological tool for France. A French theatre group rehearses and presents an avant-première of *l'Élément oublié*, a translation of the MRA industrial drama *The Forgotten Factor*. More than 2,000 people pack the theatre for the two performances before the cast sets off for the première in Paris.

1949 Several Canadians, including some from Quebec, commit themselves over the next ten years to the crucial work of postwar reconciliation in Europe and Asia, with active support from local teams.

1950-1965 Many people, touched by the movement, travel to the MRA centre on Mackinac Island (in operation since 1942) to take part in conferences, help with the practical needs

or accompany delegations. Notable among the delegates are Francophone Quebecers from the political, artistic and religious domains.

1958 The feature film of the African play, *Freedom*, tours Canada, from Montreal to Vancouver. Members of the cast travel to the cities where the film is shown and make a deep impression.

1959-1960 A First Nations delegation of eight from Southern Alberta, led by Chief Walking Buffalo of the Nakoda (Stoney) and Chief David Crowchild of the Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee), carry out a world journey that will take them to eighteen countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Before leaving, Chief Walking Buffalo, eighty-eight years old, tells Prime Minister Diefenbaker that he is going "in the name of Moral Re-Armament to build unity between nations by changing the hearts of men." The old chief had decided, during a stay at the Mackinac Centre in the United States, to renounce bitterness, pride and fear in order to support Buchman in his work. "As an Indian", he adds, "I have had good reasons for hatred but now I know that I can even forgive those who have done me wrong. I feel like a new man." On their return, fourteen months later, they report back to Diefenbaker and Opposition Leader Lester Pearson. In 1976, the chief's son, Bill McLean, who travelled with him in Australia and Africa, and David and Daisy Crowchild, insist on accompanying the cast of the review *Song of Asia* to several regions of Quebec with a similar message.

1963 *El Condor*, a drama written and performed by students, workers and industrialists from Peru, Bolivia and Brazil, plays in twenty-six cities of Quebec between October 1963 and February 1964. A delegation of more than eighty people from seventeen countries, delivers its message to 125,000 students in a hundred and twenty schools, universities and colleges. An even wider audience is reached, through

twenty-nine television broadcasts and forty-eight radio programs. Father Henri Roy, founder of the Pius X Institute, is the instigator of this tour. Several celebrities join him in inviting and receiving the international group, including: Émilien Lafrance, Quebec Minister for Social Welfare and the Family; Alfred Hamel, Mayor of Saint-Félicien; and Isaïe Villeneuve, President of the aluminum workers union, Lac Saint-Jean. Employers and union leaders in the ports, asbestos mines, textile and pulp and paper industries also participate.

Lorenzo Paré, Editor in Chief of the newspaper *L'Action*, echoing commentaries about *El Condor* in several other papers, writes, "Western theatre was born in cathedral forecourts to bring the sacred mysteries to the people. ...With this elite group of amateurs, dedicated to the moral re-armament of their brothers, theatre has returned to the purity of its origins to offer the masses a moment of resurrection." After Quebec, the touring group, including a number of French and English speaking Canadians, visits several cities in the rest of Canada. They are joined by others, including Bill Boccock from Alberta and Catherine Young from Ottawa.

Music at Midnight, a play by Peter Howard and Alan Thornhill, premieres in Montreal on April 22 at Her Majesty's Theatre. During the preceding days, *La Presse*, *Le Devoir* and *The Gazette* have announced it as a major event in Montreal under the distinguished patronage of the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, Paul Comtois, and the honorary chairmanship of Premier Jean Lesage and Mayor Jean Drapeau. Sixty-six well-known political, social, economic and sports leaders offer their support, including René Lévesque, Pierre Laporte, Georges E. Lapalme, Lionel Chevrier, Maurice Richard, Jean Béliveau, Paul Desmarais, Paul Gérin-Lajoie, Andrew R. Webster, Samuel Bronfman, and Dr. and Mrs. Wilder Penfield. The next day, Jean Baraud reports on the play's success in *La Presse*.

1964 On October 24, farmers Geoff Boccock and Bob Muir from Alberta and Billy Wake from Saskatchewan arrive to visit their counterparts in Quebec. Charles Danguy from France and Marcel Leblanc serve as guides and translators. They start by meeting Gérard and Thérèse Leblanc and twelve of their fourteen children at Aston Junction; then in Quebec City they meet officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Laval University. In Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean and elsewhere, they visit members of the clergy, media and education, as well as leaders of the independence movement. A declaration to the media, in both languages, expresses their vision for the country and the world, and their views on the prime importance of farmers' role in feeding humanity.

A conference in Alma, Quebec from December 28-30 brings participants from Halifax to Victoria and from abroad. Federal ministers and members of the Quebec National Assembly are present. Marcel Lessard, a local MP, tells the meeting, "We must give our youth a new reason, a new aim for which to work. Moral Re-Armament is a goal of the greatest significance." Cecil Morrison, President of Morrison-Lamothe Bakery, with eight hundred employees in Ottawa, and Isaïe Villeneuve, Past President of the union at the Arvida aluminum plant, take part in a forum on honesty and caring for the needs of the world. Finally, taking part in a youth panel, Jacques Desjardins, President of the 55,000 member General Union of Quebec Students, tells how, "as Latins, we have a special role to play in this hemisphere, in francophone Africa and sections of Asia." Sheilah McCormick, a recent graduate of McGill University, says, "Our generation is the hope of this continent. If we English are not too proud and if we are ready to learn or follow the example of the Quebec students in taking responsibility for the future, we can undertake with the French Canadians to lead this continent in a new direction."

Crée pour un grand destin, the French edition of Peter Howard's book *Design for Dedication*, is launched during a

reception at the Canadian Club in Montreal, October 20. The newspaper *Le Devoir* reports the event in a three column article, mentioning translator Michel Sentis from France and quoting from the foreword by Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston, which describes the book as containing "some of the finest addresses I have read in modern times."

Peter Howard, world leader of MRA since Buchman's death in 1961, addresses the students of the University of Montreal on November 25. Speaking in French, he tells his audience, as an Anglo-Saxon who holds Latin culture in high esteem, that "culture is like a living being. It needs air, food and exercise to be preserved. The way to preserve a culture is to put it to work. If you build walls all around it, it will decline and die. This has been true all through history. A culture which today learns the art of unity within itself will unite nations. That is the high aim of true culture in a divided and distracted age. A nation at peace within itself will bring peace to humanity. God and man are waiting for some great nation with all the genius of a multi-racial and bilingual society to give the lead. It must be done. It will be done if we decide humbly, hopefully, that the grace and power of God can do it."

1970 From Trois-Rivières, a new phase of development and expansion begins, which relaunches the message of MRA in Canada reaching many sectors of society. This produces close collaboration with individuals, community development groups, and civil and religious authorities at every level, in a climate of genuine trust. In a period of ten years, experienced people like Paul Campbell and Bill Jaeger from England come several times to help transmit this spirit in the political and labour environments. They are helped in this by active local teams and many international visitors.

1971 A conference is held in Cap-de-la-Madeleine, near Trois-Rivières, with participation from different parts of

Canada, the United States, France and Britain. An international team remains for several months at the invitation of Charles and Aileen Pelletier. Others generously provide accommodation.

1972-1977 In the belief that the people of Ireland and Quebec have much to learn from each other, a creative exchange begins in the early seventies, which continues for a decade. A delegation of fourteen Catholics and Protestants from Ireland visits Montreal, Trois-Rivières and Quebec City in the spring of 1973 and presents readings of a play, rooted in the reality of the conflict but giving the group's experience that the deepest hate and prejudice can be cured. They are followed by another delegation in 1974. In exchange, groups from Canada representing First Nations, anglophone and francophone communities are welcomed, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic.

1973 In the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, a dynamic develops with meetings and discussions. At first, this centres around two Duchesne families, Fernand and Marthe, François and Jocelyne; they are joined by others: the families Gagné, Gagnon and Perron, as well as the Priests of the Holy Sacrament and many others. These people organize monthly breakfasts; weekend conferences with the participation of colleagues from Montreal, Trois-Rivières and Quebec City. At the invitation of the local people, MRA becomes involved in conflict resolution during the serious strikes at the Abitibi-Price paper mills and the Alcan aluminum plant. The film, *Men of Brazil*, (a true story of how conflict was resolved in the port of Rio by applying the MRA approach) encourages the search for fair solutions.

A Canadian conference takes place from December 7-9 at Cap-Rouge, with the theme: *Quebec – Headache or hope for a world in crisis*. It is attended by people from six provinces and from several other countries. Keynote speaker Montreal

psychiatrist Dr. Gustave Morf, author of the book *Terror in Quebec*, warns against the danger of over-reacting to violence. "The phenomenon of violence is the expression of a deeper problem," he says. "If we wish to have an answer to violence we need to cure the problem that lies behind it." He suggests the underlying problem is materialism. The conference report states, "Violence calls for an answer that goes beyond linguistic, cultural, economic and social barriers. Necessary as it is to learn a second language, we need to find an altogether new language."

1974 On October 16, the Canadian MRA Centre in Montreal is officially opened in the presence of two guests of honour: Frederik Philips, President of Philips International and the Hon. Jean Cournoyer, Quebec Minister of Labour. Acquired with the help of many donations, this centre is used for administration, for development and as a base for a number of MRA full-time workers: Rosalind and Richard Weeks take on the running of the centre, while Lotty Wolvekamp from Holland assists Richard in the office. Diane Paré, Laurent and Lise Gagnon and Francine Gagnon join them later.

A synergy develops between the local team, the full-time workers and the many people from outside, especially from Western Canada and Europe, who come to help for periods varying from a few days to several years. Among these are: Serge and Regula Borel, Paul and Annejet Campbell, Irene Massey, Bill and Clara Jaeger, Dorothy Phillips, Marion Manson, Gwen McLean, Ellen Ostero, Alain and Anne-Marie Tate, Laurie and Elsa Vogel. This enables an expansion of the work in Montreal and in the regions of Trois-Rivières, Quebec City and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

1975 *Answer to Class War* is the theme of an MRA conference held in Alma, Lac-St-Jean in early November and planned by the dynamic local team. Guest speakers include

Gustave Morf, Paul Campbell, Bill Jaeger and Jacqueline Pellerin. The conference report concludes with this statement, "Our first task in answering the class war must be to restore credibility between individuals and different groups in society. In addition we have to earn trust through the quality of our personal lives and by our unselfish commitment."

1976 *Song of Asia*, an MRA musical review from Asia and the Pacific, undertakes a four and a half month tour of Canada at the invitation of the First Nations chiefs of Treaty Seven in Alberta. Thirty-five young people from twelve countries present their show in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec. This production tells, through song, dance and dramatic scenes, of the experiences of some of the members of the cast, of solutions applied in situations of conflict and how the strongest hatreds can be cured. In Quebec, they give performances in several cities and reserves. They receive a very warm welcome from Chief Ron Kerby and the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, and from Chief Walter Watso and the Abenaki community in Odanak. They also meet Grand Chief Max Gros-Louis of the Hurons and are invited by Chief Aurélien Gill of the Montagnais to attend an assembly of Montagnais and Attikamek chiefs in Chicoutimi. Wherever the cast performs, Chief David Crowchild and his wife Daisy from Alberta, are their escorts. At other times, Chief Gordon Crowchild of the Sarcee (Tsuu T'ina) and Chief Bill McLean of the Stoney (Nakoda) join the youth.

Richard Weeks from Montreal has a letter published in *The Gazette* on October 27, in which he argues that the heart is as important as the head in understanding the context of the passionate Quebec-Canada debate.

Lee Crowchild, an eighteen-year-old Sarcee from Alberta, runs thirteen miles from the Montreal MRA Centre to the Kahnawake Mohawk reserve to raise funds to attend an MRA

conference in Auckland, New Zealand. In Kahnawake, he is welcomed by Band Counsellors James Kane and Annie White.

1978 An article in *Le Devoir* on the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Frank Buchman attracts the interest of Radio Canada (the French language network of the CBC). A producer, interviewer and film crew travel to Caux, where a number of interviews are recorded for the program *Second Regard*. Material from the interview with Irène Laure is later used in the film *For the Love of Tomorrow*.

1979 A workshop for young North Americans, with the theme, *Dynamic of Effective Living*, brings together sixty-two participants, at *Collège Marie-Victorin* in Montreal, in June.

The first issue of the Canadian Newsletter appears in June. Material is assembled in Quebec City for the French edition and in Calgary for the English.

1980 A week of action takes place in Quebec City from March 24-30, on the theme *A New Society: Let's build it*. This follows the move of Laurent and Lise Gagnon from Montreal to Quebec City in 1979 and the launching of a local team. Discussions take place on subjects such as family life, interpersonal relationships, partnership in industry, the role of the clergy and laity in the building of a new society. The team which has been preparing this activity for five months is composed of: Maryse Azzaria, Liane Trottier, Michel Pérusse, Aileen Pelletier, Sister Estelle Marie Brunet, Lise and Laurent Gagnon.

Annejet Campbell, author of the new book, *Listen to the Children*, is in Quebec with her husband Paul, and with Pierre and Jeannine Chavanne from Morocco, from November 5 to 20. Paul Campbell, who hails from Alberta, was Buchman's physician, and the Chavannes are former French settlers who

contributed to Morocco's achievement of independence without bloodshed through their readiness to change their own attitudes.

An industrial seminar in Montreal on April 24 coincides with a major strike in the public and para-public sectors. The seminar is led by Angelo Forte, former trade union Vice-President, and Drew Webster, President of Webster & Sons. Sixty people participate and the speakers include: Father Gérard Dion of Laval University's Department of Industrial Relations; Jean Cournoyer, former Quebec Minister of Labour; Willy Rentzman, Personnel Director from Denmark and Father Émile Bouvier, SJ, Professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Sherbrooke. Irène Laure from France is the guest speaker at lunch.

1981 Christians and Muslims meet at Laval University on December 8. The event is organized in collaboration with Father Armand Desautels, and Guy St-Michel, Director of Pastoral Services. Special guests include: Vigar Hamdani, from Pakistan, representative of the World Muslim Congress at the United Nations, and The Rev. Harry Almond, Arabic scholar who lived for twenty years in the Middle East and is one of those responsible for the work of MRA in the United States. On December 12, a one day Muslim-Christian dialogue takes place at McGill University in Montreal, organized in collaboration with Father MacBeath Brown of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism. Harry Almond, Jamal Badawi, Muslim scholar, from Halifax, and Issa Boullata, an Orthodox Christian from Montreal, are among the speakers.

1982 A series of brunches in Sorel, organized by Raymond Vanasse, begins on January 24 to present local leaders with 'models' based on concrete experiences in diverse sectors of life: forty people from management, unions, education and hospital workers are present at the first meeting. Among the special guests are: Georges Lacroix from the Beauce region,

Dick Flood from Ontario, Harry Almond from the United States.

Several Ontario-Quebec dialogue meetings are held with people from the two provinces. In Toronto and Hamilton in August 1982, Diane Paré and Jacqueline Pellerin from Quebec, with Vreni Gysin from Switzerland, meet with students of Toronto teacher Elizabeth Flood. They also meet community leaders and MRA team members with Victor and Imelda Walker as well as Irmgarde Westerman and her numerous contacts.

At the initiative of Diane Paré, Irène Laure from France, Vreni Gysin from Switzerland, Nelson Marcellino from Brazil and Sam Pono from South Africa travel to Trois-Rivières to exchange experiences with Jacqueline Pellerin and the people of her neighbourhood of Hertel, with Guy Bacon, Member of the Quebec National Assembly, Mayor Gilles Beaudoin, Vicar-General Monsignor Denis Clément and others.

1983 In April, Drew Webster, company CEO, and Angelo Forte, union leader from Montreal, are invited to the Beauce by the industrialist Georges Lacroix to present MRA to Rotarians and their wives. Forty people attend.

The play *Un soleil en pleine nuit (Poor Man, Rich Man)* on the life of St. Francis of Assisi is presented in Montreal, Quebec City, Jonquière, Trois-Rivières, Sorel and Ottawa, from April 7 to 30. It is performed by Michel Orphelin from Paris, mime artist, singer, actor and colleague; he is accompanied by eight musicians and technicians associated with MRA.

On the initiative of Raymond Vanasse, the Christian Amateur Theatre youth present Peter Howard's play *Through the Garden Wall* in Sorel, Drummondville, Quebec City and Shawinigan, during April and May.

Through this year and the years following, Laurent Gagnon, along with other Quebecers, takes delegations to the Maritime Provinces. For example, in January 1984, George (Scottie) McFarlane from the United States and Ian MacLachlan from Scotland go to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to share in a dialogue with employers and union people in coal and steel, teachers, members of the clergy, Aboriginal leaders and others such as David and Vera Miles, George McCurdy, Lorne White, Alice Nickerson, Hazel Kitchen. Archbishop James Hayes of Halifax takes care of the accommodation. During a conference in Truro, NS from June 17 to 19, 1983, two pastors present declare that they accepted God's call because of MRA, thirty years before. One of them quotes: 'Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future'.

1984 At the *Salon de la jeunesse* (Youth Forum) held at the Montreal velodrome from February 10 to 19, MRA has a booth on the theme *Transforming the World... and your Life*. Two young women, Catherine Hutchinson from England and Renate Assam from Austria, help the organizing team, which comprises Thérèse Labonté, Francine Gagnon, Chantal Létourneau, Jean DesGroseillers, Diane Paré, Laurent and Lise Gagnon.

An animated reading of Peter Howard's play *The Ladder (L'Échelle)* is presented in Quebec City, simultaneously in English and French, in two rooms of Garneau College on January 29, at the invitation of the Quebec Ecumenical Committee. Aileen Pelletier directs and Major Stuart Booth of the Salvation Army plays the leading role. The play is then performed in the Grand Seminary of Québec on April 13 and in Orsainville prison on May 20 by a multigenerational team.

In May, Jacqueline Pellerin from Trois-Rivières is named 'Woman of the Year' by the *Salon de la Femme* in Montreal, in recognition of her 'exceptional accomplishments'.

Following the transfer of the MRA national office to Ottawa, the Montreal Centre is replaced by a large apartment suitable for all kinds of meetings.

1985 A *Radio Canada* television crew returns to Caux (see 1978) in July and August 1985 to film three programs on youth, health and the family for the religious affairs program *Second Regard*.

N'ayez pas peur (Don't be afraid), created for International Youth Year, is performed at *College Garneau* in Quebec City on 14 April. It is co-authored by Jean de Lavallée, Réjean Bussièrès, Lise Moisan, Lucie Beaulieu, Steve Boivin and Laurent Gagnon.

Moral Re-Armament is one of sixty organizations with a booth at the *Salon de la famille* in Quebec City on November 3. The chosen theme is *The family listening to God, others and the world*. The senior members of the group, Jean and Marie-Thérèse de Lavallée, make a significant contribution.

1986 There is a family workshop from June 6-8, in Montreal: *The family, heartbeat of society*. How to revive the desire for solutions and bring a fresh value to interpersonal relationships?

1987 A provincial youth meeting with the theme *A rendez-vous where each person counts... to remake the world* is held at Cap-Rouge, near Quebec City, in July.

1988 The fiftieth anniversary of MRA is celebrated in Quebec City from April 29 to May 1, with the theme *Fifty years of history: a legacy, a project*. The youth team, which is largely responsible for the organization, and the participants benefit from the active presence of pioneers who have come from Europe, the United States and other parts of Canada, including:

Stuart and Polly Ann Smith, Matt Manson, Bill Jaeger. The newspaper *Le Soleil* runs an article written by Jean Martel on April 24, with the headline 'Moral Re-Armament to Change the World'.

1989 In Quebec City, November 11 and 12, there is an Ontario-Quebec dialogue. People come from five Ontario cities to participate. In their name, Geraldine Hughes of Oakville refers to the political divisions and mentions how "our wounds can help us to understand the wounds of others." This is followed by another in Ottawa, from February 9 to 11, 1990.

On March 6, the magazine *Pastorale Québec* publishes an article by Father Denis Duval entitled, 'Moral Re-Armament: an amazing network', written following his visit to Caux.

1990 In its June 7 issue, the magazine *L'Église canadienne* presents a six page dossier on Moral Re-Armament, 'Remaking the World in God's Way'. The text, by Jean de Lavallée and Laurent Gagnon, has been prepared at the invitation of the editor in chief, Rolande Parrot.

1991 The North American première of the musical *Oratorio for our Time* is held in Quebec City on March 9 and 10, at the *Montmartre canadien*, under the direction of Father Xavier Vandermeerchen. In the following years, thanks to the conviction of Jean and Céline Breton, Paule Charbonneau, Brother Bertrand Gendron and some others, there are presentations in seven cities of the province. In Ottawa, as part of the celebration of 125 years of confederation, a performance is given in the Anglican cathedral by a Catholic choir from Lévis, Quebec, augmented by members of local Anglican and United Church choirs. On each occasion, the presence of composer Félix Lisieski and the author, Françoise Caubel-Chauchat, both from France, brings joy and inspiration.

1993 On May 7, Laurent Gagnon testifies before the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples on the theme of reconciliation. This is at the request of the Commission itself following a suggestion by Mohawks, aware of his reconciliation with two ladies from Kahnawake at Caux in August 1992.

A national conference in Quebec City, on the theme *Healing Canadian Communities for a Genuine Partnership*, assembles one 105 people from six Canadian provinces, France and the United States from May 14 to 16. William Commanda, from Maniwaki, Quebec, spiritual leader of the Algonquins, gives the opening prayer. He performs a ceremony rarely done before non native people, the 'Reading of the Wampum Belt', which illustrates the way in which the Aboriginal Peoples and the Europeans should coexist peacefully, each in their own canoe without interference.

In its September 5 issue, the Montreal newspaper *La Presse* runs a long article by Father Irénée Beaubien after a week's visit to Caux, entitled 'Moral Re-Armament is above all a state of mind, a spirit'. The author, a Jesuit and former director of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, writes, "I bring home from Caux a dose of hope for the future of humanity. Moral Re-Armament, steeped in the ecumenical spirit, appeals to values common to everyone. In this movement, every involvement and every commitment rises from within each person who is attracted by the network's objectives. The full time staff consider their involvement a vocation, not a job with the prospect of promotion."

1994 A prayer vigil, 'for elections without bloodshed' and in support of the people of South Africa, is organized on April 9 at the Montreal Meditation Centre. Amali Assiama from Ivory Coast, a law student at McGill University, who has done preparatory work for the drafting of the transitional constitution, is the coordinator. Prayers are offered by Christians, Jews,

Muslims, Buddhists and representatives of the First Nations. These are followed by songs, music, times of silence, prayer and the reading of messages from Archbishop Desmond Tutu and President F.W. de Klerk. The South African ambassador and Consul participate, as well as ANC representatives.

Similar activities take place in Ottawa and Quebec City and people in other provinces are encouraged to light candles in their homes as a sign of support for the South African people.

During a visit to Montreal by William Porter, founder of the International Communications Forum, Shelagh Webster prepares three discussion groups for journalists to converse with him about ethics in the media.

1995 MRA initiates a dialogue on the occasion of a national meeting of the Assembly of First Nations, which assembles 250 Chiefs in a Quebec City hotel. Forty Quebec citizens invite the chiefs to a 'reception of the heart' in the hotel lobby. This activity takes place against the background of the National Assembly debate on the Quebec sovereignty referendum bill and is organized with the Sociology Department of Laval University and the Ecumenical Council of the region. A large number respond and informal discussions, accompanied by accordion music, are followed by brief speeches expressing appreciation and a mutual desire to become better acquainted.

Grand Chief Max Gros-Louis of the Huron nation says, "Your presence here today is a step forward on the journey together in our respective canoes." For his part, Matthew Coon Come, Grand Chief of the Quebec Crees and seen by many as a political enemy of Quebec, speaks with warmth, "Your ancestors and mine have left us the legacy of high values that challenge us all and that should help us find ways to a respectful dialogue. Forums like this should be multiplied. I don't speak French but my children are studying in French-language

schools. It is a clear choice on my part." Ovide Mercredi, Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, says, "I am ready to come back here and sit with leaders and citizens to speak and to listen as we are doing now - if I am invited, of course." At the end, a message to the chiefs, signed by people associated with MRA in eight provinces, attracts considerable attention.

1996 On January 30, at the request of Grand Chief Joe Norton from Kahnawake and his colleague, former wrestler Billy Two-Rivers, a round table conference organized by MRA brings together twenty-two chiefs from Quebec and twenty-three non-Aboriginal Quebecers representing a broad range of important organizations. A young chief says, "I have spoken publicly in several places in Europe, but not enough with those who live nearby." The host, Joe Norton, declares, "We have coexisted in Canada for centuries, but we don't know one another. When the human element is taken into account, the spiritual factor will follow. I believe that we are at the beginning of an experience of learning and understanding. You seem ready to work for a better future. Well, so am I."

Two indigenous leaders, Chief William Commanda from Maniwaki, accompanied by his daughter Evelyn, and Grand Chief Joe Norton from Kahnawake, participate in celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the Caux conference centre in Switzerland, along with the Manitoban Elijah Harper and his wife Anita and some fifty other Canadians. Harper became famous in 1990 by ending the hopes of a constitutional agreement between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Rajmohan Gandhi, a grandson of the Mahatma, who has been involved with the work of MRA since the fifties, is honored at a banquet organized by the Kahnawake Band Council under the leadership of Grand Chief Joe Norton. Gandhi also gives a lecture at Concordia University in Montreal on the same day.

1997 Political science students from Laval University discover the Aboriginal Peoples. Isabelle Porter, Krystina-Maud Bergeron, Olivier Brisson and Jean-Pierre Barette meet with leaders of the Mohawk communities of Kahnawake and Kanesatake, facilitated by Laurent Gagnon. After that, two meetings launch a dialogue with four university students from Kahnawake. Next, they are invited together to present a workshop on the theme of *Resolving our Differences: a path to peace*, during a Canadian conference on conflict resolution at Bishop's University in Lennoxville, in southeastern Quebec.

1998 Meetings begin in Quebec City and Montreal, in the framework of the program Partners in Reconciliation, in response to the need for dialogue in Canada between linguistic communities, different generations, Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals. 'Talking Circles' are used and sub-themes give focus to the task: finding the truth in history and facilitating healing; transmitting the heritage of each for the benefit of all.

1999 A series of meetings on relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Quebec, takes place at Laval University at the invitation of René Boudreault, Luc Lainé, Laurent Gagnon and Jean-François Tremblay. About twenty leaders from the aboriginal, academic, political and legal communities come to explore avenues towards a better understanding and partnership.

2000 The book by priest and psychologist Jean Monbourquette, *How to Find your Personal Mission*, is the resource for a series of seven sessions at the home of Jean and Céline Breton in Quebec City. Educator Paule Charbonneau from Donnacona leads the group in its efforts to identify life priorities according to a divine plan.

2001 In the autumn a series of monthly meetings begins at the home of Laurent and Lise Gagnon, recently moved from

Quebec City to Montreal, to study and reflect on the Richmond Affirmations, which redefine the core values of Initiatives of Change. This is followed by a study of the book, *Dynamic out of Silence*, on the life and work of Frank Buchman, led by Alain Marchildon.

On December 12, three months after the events of September 11, an interfaith dialogue and inner reflection is held at the invitation of the Muslim-Christian Committee of Laval University in association with the Quebec Islamic Centre and Initiatives of Change.

2002 Cornelio Sommaruga, President of Initiatives of Change-International, visits Montreal on December 3-4, after three days of meetings in Ottawa. In Montreal, he meets with young professionals and university students over supper, followed by a dialogue with thirty guests at the Gagnon home. The following day he has breakfast with Kimon Valaskakis, Professor of Economics at the University of Montreal and Founder of the Club of Athens, and members of his world governance team. Then he speaks at a dinner for seventy-five people on the theme of *Globalizing Responsibility*.

Radio Ville-Marie, in Montreal, produces three programs for broadcast, moderated by Jean Rousseau, on the theme of *Building Peace*. On January 31, Laurent Gagnon shares his experience; on April 18, a discussion of peace-building initiatives in Ireland takes place between Rosalind Weeks, an Irish Canadian Protestant from Ottawa, and Georges Bériault, a Catholic from Montreal and representative of Sinn Féin; on June 6, there is an interview with Allen Gabriel (Kanatii) from the Mohawk Nation of Kanesatake-Oka.

MRA becomes known internationally as Initiatives of Change. In Canada the official name will be changed to Initiatives of Change Association (Canada) – Association Initiatives et Changement (Canada).

2002-2005 In January 2002, an international gathering in India proposes that on or around June 1 each year individuals and groups around the world engage in an activity for intercultural dialogue under the theme *Open Homes - Listening Hearts*. Events are held in Montreal and Quebec City, where among the many participants are special guests such as: Jeanne-Marie Sindanie from Congo (DRC), Thomas Rundschum from Germany, the French musician Monique Chaurand, Louis Azzaria, originally from Iraq and Allen Gabriel, Mohawk from Kanasatake. Similar annual activities continue until the present.

2003 The Quebec Regional Committee for Initiatives of Change is created on January 25, in response to the desire for more regular activities and bearing in mind the fragile world situation. The core group comprises: Jean and Céline Breton, Paule Charbonneau, Rachid Raffa, Laurent and Lise Gagnon. They are soon joined by others, such as Marie-Thérèse de Lavallée, Julie Lafond, Lucie Pagé, Victoria Thibodeau, Robert Laroche, Yvon Matte.

Kimon Valaskakis, former ambassador to the OECD in Paris and founder of the Club of Athens, addresses a group of twenty-four people at the Gagnon home on October 8 on *World Governance and Human Solidarity*.

On December 3, the video *Breaking the Chain of Hate*, telling of reconciliation between Christian and Muslim militiamen following the civil war in Lebanon, 1975-1990, is shown in Quebec City.

Among the twenty-five people, mostly of African origin, who attend a showing of the video, *For the Love of Tomorrow*, in Montreal in January is Madame Assana Sangaré, Member of Parliament and former Minister in Ivory Coast. She is touched by the message and decides to start a team, using the video as a tool, in her divided country. In March, Laurent Gagnon meets

Professor Dedi Séry, also from Ivory Coast, in Montreal. Upon his return, the professor joins forces with Mme Sangaré to draft the statutes for an IofC association in their country. The official launching of IC-CI takes place on May 27 during Laurent Gagnon's visit to Abidjan, following a conference in Ghana.

2004 On the initiative of Father Denis Duval, a meeting is held on February 25 between the Archbishop of Quebec, Cardinal Marc Ouellet, and five members of the regional committee of IofC: Marie-Thérèse de Lavallée, Paule Charbonneau, Robert Laroche, Pierre Ranga and Laurent Gagnon.

The Montreal Committee for Initiatives of Change is created on March 17 at a special regional assembly, in order to broaden responsibility for the development and outreach of IofC in the region. This is approved by the forty-five people present, who then choose the following seven members to form the executive committee: Adalbert Otou-Nguini, Jacques Claessens, Martin Tshibangu, Karen Bambonye, Olivier Brisson, Pierre Ranga and Lise Gagnon. It is at this meeting that the project of writing a book about IofC in Quebec takes shape.

A day of renewal and training is held in Montreal on June 19 for the teams from Montreal, Quebec City and Ottawa, with the theme, *Life Values and Paths to Commitment*.

In October, Karen Bambonye and Evelyne Mudahemuka begin a three-month internship. Their principal task is to create a youth team in Montreal.

A Canadian consultation is held in Montreal from September 29 to October 3. Twenty-nine delegates from six Canadian provinces consider such subjects as governance, IofC's purpose statement, finances, youth development, current programs, future plans. The next consultation will be held in the same place in September 2005.

2005 Michael Prior, Chair of Initiatives of Change Association (Canada) and National Coordinator Anne Hartnell visit Montreal and Quebec City from February 22-24 to meet with IofC teams. At the meeting in Montreal, Roger Paul Gilbert, retired Canadian diplomat, suggests that real efforts be made to rethink the country and reconnect Canadian communities. Discussions continue in Montreal and in Quebec City, resulting in a collective expression of an intention, taken up at the AGM in Alberta on May 28, that a process of healing and reconciliation be developed in the country. Canadian teams are investing in this project, the high point of which will be a conference in Quebec City in 2008, in the framework of the 400th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the City. The host team has accepted the project and the process is under way.

A delegation of four Lebanese spends four days in Montreal at the invitation of IofC from April 27-30, following visits to Washington and Ottawa. Ramez Salame gave up his gun early in the war to devote himself to creating links between Lebanese of all persuasions; Assaad Chafitari held a senior rank in the main Christian militia. He made an unprecedented public apology in 2000 to those who suffered because of his actions during the war. Muhieddine Mustapha Chehab, a former commander in a Sunni Muslim militia, has openly acknowledged past wrongs and reached out to his former enemies. Roweida Saleh, from the Druze community, is one of the next generation of leaders in Lebanon who are involved in healing and reconciliation. The sixty lunch guests, and the one hundred and thirty who attend the public meeting, are deeply touched by the experiences that are shared. Their message can be carried further through the recording of two segments for the television program *Second Regard*, and the production of a DVD by Andrew Webster. One of their Montreal hosts said, "Our four guests are leaving, but after hearing their challenging message, we should have the courage to rethink seriously our relationships, particularly those with the first inhabitants of this land."

At the end of September, 2005, a representative group of twenty-nine from across Canada meets near Montreal for the annual Initiatives of Change consultation and agrees to engage in a process of healing and reconciliation towards 2008 and beyond. This 'journey of healing', under the theme *Toward a Community of Communities: From Solitudes to Partnership*, begins, in a moving way, at the consultation itself. Louise Lanctôt from Repentigny, Quebec, tells how she grew up with a perception of the English that wasn't very positive. "This prejudice," she says, "came upon me quite unconsciously. I maintained this image during my young adult life in Montreal's east side, far from the English milieu. My negative feelings only worsened after familiarizing myself with historical readings and the political setting. After having comfortably instilled this negative perception, I continued to live far from the English, but close to my hatred. My wish is to be true and honest with you and to express my regret for my lack of compassion and ask for your forgiveness and cooperation in helping me reach out to you. I know my heart is 'without borders', but sometimes I have to reconnect with it in order to find the necessary compassion to help heal the wounds of the past."

This statement provokes deep reflection as participants examine their own attitudes and 'lack of compassion'. It is agreed that a countrywide process will "enable a greater recognition, understanding and appreciation of our diverse realities and cultures." As a start, Louise Lanctôt is invited to visit Alberta. She is given a warm welcome and tells her story on a variety of occasions despite her limited English. She shares how this journey towards 'the other' began one year before through a change of heart, which led to a moving reconciliation with her aging mother. All this, she says, is "part of my journey of discovery in the spirit of IofC".

LIFE VALUES

In the vision of Initiatives of Change, raising the subject of values and the challenge of personal and collective change implies a readiness to engage in the dynamic of 'remaking the world'. We agree to become, effective immediately, pioneers of the future and not prisoners of the past.

Values and Ethics

Values can be defined as determining factors in personal behaviour, in a community project or any other undertaking. *Morals* are a reflection, in conduct and conscience, of a person's, or a group's, fundamental choices. They lay out the principles which lead to a certain degree of perfection. As for *ethics*, they constitute a code of behaviour to be followed in a given situation.

Distinction should be made between values of 'preference', those to which we pay lip service and values of 'reference', those by which we choose to live. The goal of individual growth is to reduce the gap between the two. The increasing number of new values should not take the place of those which are seen as fundamental, which reflect natural values and serve as common denominators.

For some, the question of values may bring to mind a time of indigestible moralization. Clearly a major change had to come. This led many, in the name of freedom, to reject values, with not altogether happy results. Inner struggles developed between the traditional and the modern, bringing not liberation, but confusion and disarray. So how do we get back on track,

give conscience a voice, and freely choose the solid underpinnings that our societies need? Human beings are vulnerable, but are inhabited by a presence, which can act powerfully within them.

Truth detector

Individuals and communities need lucidity and courage. Moral values can be real truth detectors for people and for the situations in which they live. The four values offered by Initiatives of Change can be summarized briefly as follows:

- *Honesty* in word and action frees us to think and live in the right way;
- *Purity* of heart and behaviour brings clarity and creativity to relationships;
- *Unselfishness* turns our own desires and dreams into compassion;
- *Love*, source of all giving, brings inner conversion, healing and reconciliation.

How can we go on believing there is no connection between private permissiveness and public actions, when the victims and after-effects are there to be seen? Would it not be irresponsible to offer anything less than time-tested values, given the size of the task of transformation that is before us?

Utopia or Hope

Firmly opting for absolute values, far from being a utopian dream, is a commitment which can give rebirth to hope. It is a question of dignity and respect; not of imposition, but of invitation to equip oneself with guiding and illuminating values, which can bring forth solutions and channel vital energy.

Many sacred books propose a journey with God towards perfection, inviting each person to think, act and live in a perspective beyond normal everyday routine. It makes sense,

therefore, to cultivate a coherent approach to personal and social standards of excellence, essential to building a world of justice and peace. In this way a more solid foundation can be laid, not for a soothing status quo but for a daring and contagious spirit of care.

“Human nature can be changed. That is the basic answer. National economies can be changed. That is the fruit of the answer. World history can be changed. That is the destiny of our age.”

Frank Buchman, July 15, 1947

LISTENING AND WELCOMING

Initiatives of Change defines itself as a multi-faith network that is open to all. It works for a positive transformation of communities through individuals, according to a divine rhythm, tempo and plan in which everyone has a part to play. Through daily times of listening, it is possible to catch glimpses of this plan. According to the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel, we meditate in silence in order to welcome God's guidance, for ourselves, for those around us and for the world.

Listening

There are three important parts to listening:

- *a time of connection* - with the divine, with the deepest thing within, with the true self, a time of surrender.
- *a time of correction* - to question ourselves, our motives, behaviour and life choices;
- *a time of direction* - for practical leading for the day ahead, for our choices and relationships, to catch a vision of a commitment to our neighbours and the world and discern initiatives.

Should we, as has been and is still practised, write down the thoughts which come to mind during a time of listening? Yes, because this act of humility and trust not only helps our memory, but also starts us on the path of commitment. And, as many will confirm, it bears abundant fruit.

An inner compass

Listening for guidance does not eliminate human reason; rather, it enlightens it. Human wisdom and knowledge have proved inadequate. We need an inner compass. Listening prayer

replaces neither scriptural revelation nor religious teaching, but it brings them to life and keeps us aware of the divine will, here and now. God takes sociology and human context into account but, unlike us, is never their captive.

This experience between an individual and the Creator can also be used in a group, when seeking collective discernment. However, the listener does not engage in silence simply to seek guidance, but also to be filled with an active presence. When people listen, God speaks; when people obey, God acts.

A technique and a process

Meditation has several forms. The time of quiet listening which we are discussing here is like a spiritual discipline, not just another meditation technique. The discernment process, considered in the context of the four values, along with silent listening, is part of moving forward towards perfection and the achieving of one's destiny.

In this way, for over sixty years, people seeking truth, believers, unbelievers, agnostics, have been invited to listen to the internal wisdom or conscience or to what Mahatma Gandhi called the 'inner voice'.

Through history, humanity has moved away from its Source; this has produced a harvest of sorrow and devastation. There is still time to reconnect. Each person can discern his or her personal contribution for the benefit of their own milieu and of humanity in general. People today are in a constant quest for an oasis where they can renew their spirit and for guidance to help them stay on course in pursuit of their mission.



Frank Buchman

FRANK BUCHMAN, THE FOUNDER

It is with good reason that this book contains frequent references to Frank Buchman, since he was, and remains, at the heart of the movement he initiated. The following text offers some additional comments and insights, gleaned from several works, which may help the reader know better this man whose life so marked the twentieth century.

For some, Frank Buchman is a saint; for others, a prophet, and for still others, the conscience of the world. However, everything began with a personal crisis due to a deep bitterness towards members of the Board of the hospice for homeless boys, which he had founded. The forgiveness and liberation, which he experienced in a small English church in 1908, changed the course of his life and his commitment.

A Secret Shared

According to English journalist Peter Howard, who succeeded Buchman, there was a secret in Frank Buchman's life which the world needed to know, "It brought him love and hate. It led him to believe that everyone he met, rich and poor, black and white, boss and worker, could and should be made new. It bore him to the heart of nations. It made him think and live in global terms."

He lived in this spirit, was motivated by it, and saw that those around him lived it too. For the last forty years of his life, he had no salary and no assured income of any kind. He went in the faith that 'Where God guides, God will provide'. He offered his followers neither position nor security, and he asked nobody to enlist at his side. Instead, he made one and all face the needs in the world, and in themselves, leaving to them the decision their conscience would dictate.

Buchman felt that people who had a personal experience of faith renewed should work to bring solutions to the world's problems. He expressed this thought very forcefully at a public assembly in Visby, Sweden, in 1938, "We have come here with different objectives. First, some of the people have come here hoping to be changed. That is very good, very necessary. Some of you come here with the hope that you will learn to change others. That, too, is very necessary. But the danger is that some of you want to stop there. I am tremendously interested in a third point - how to save a crumbling civilization. But then I want a fourth thing. I want to reach the millions of the world."

A Dynamic and a Vision

Buchman did not want to create a new denomination, but rather a new determination. By putting the accent on experience rather than doctrine, he offered a field of action that enabled people of different religious and political persuasions to work together without compromising their basic beliefs and primary loyalties. What counted for him was not the numbers of people he attracted, but the dynamic of change and growth in each one. He had a vision of many converging paths, each with respect for the particular heritage of the other.

In *The World at the Turning*, Charles Piguet and Michel Sentis write, "Frank Buchman was at the same time a man of action and a man of prayer, a man who could move crowds and

a man of silence, a man deeply involved in the great questions of the age and a man of detachment who knew how to let other people take action." To participate in an overseas action with Buchman was great character training, but also an opportunity to gain knowledge and appreciation of the culture and the history of the country in question.

A Swedish journalist wrote of Buchman, "His enormously active life is built on one thing only – guidance, for which he is on the watch every moment. He is a sail always held to be filled by the wind." A Swiss politician observed, "Buchman lived in the world of noise, but his roots were in the world of silence. That was his great secret. He brought the quietness of inner concentration from the monastery to the Cabinet Minister's conference room, to the industrialist's office, to the worker's bench."

Frank Buchman's last words, some hours before his death, left us with the challenge that he wanted to see the world governed by people who were governed by God.

His legacy must not only be preserved; it must also be implanted in the hearts of many, to help bring about the renewal which the world still needs, perhaps more today than ever before.

V SUPPLEMENTARY
INFORMATION

AFFIRMATIONS AND GLOBAL MISSION

Initiatives of Change is an international network open to people of all cultures, nationalities, religions and beliefs, who work towards change, locally and globally, by starting with change in their own lives.

Initiatives of Change affirms that ...

- in this era of globalization, an individual can be a powerful agent for positive change in society;
- in this age of overabundant information yet appalling human need, listening in silence – to the inner voice for some, for others to their conscience or for God's leading – is an essential source of inner freedom, discernment and direction;
- 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 a process of deepening self-knowledge;
- in this climate of moral relativism, unchanging values of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love offer a practical framework of principles by which to measure our individual and collective behaviour;
- 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;
- in this time of communal tensions, all people should be valued equally: every person has a story to tell and a part to play;
- in this time when cycles of hatred are perpetuated, acknowledgement of past wrongs, restoration and forgiveness are means by which the human spirit is liberated and the wounds of history are healed;

- in a society that is quick to assign blame, honest conversations and readiness to accept our own responsibility can unite people for action across barriers that have historically divided them;

- 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.

Global Mission

- Healing the wounds of history where cultures and civilizations meet.

- Strengthening the moral and spiritual dimensions of democracy.

- Encouraging care and responsibility in family life and personal relationships.

- Rebuilding a sense of community and hope in cities.

- Tackling the root causes of poverty and corruption.

- Strengthening moral commitment in economic life.

- Forging networks among people from different cultures and faiths.

CURRENT PROGRAMS

Agenda for Reconciliation

AfR is a global network active in conflict prevention and reconciliation. Annual conferences at Caux (Switzerland) offer participants from situations of tension and conflict a safe space and the opportunity to learn from one another. In Canada, the focus is mainly on facilitating trust-building and dialogue initiated by refugees and immigrants from regions in conflict, both in Canada and in their country of origin.

Website: www.afr-iofc.org

Creators of Peace

This international women's initiative, also active in Canada, invites everyone to embrace their own peacemaking potential at every level of society.

Website: www.cop.iofc.org

Hope in the Cities

This program addresses the serious ethnic and racial tensions present in major urban centres, through honest conversations on race, reconciliation and responsibility.

Website: www.hopeinthecities.org

Foundations for Freedom

F4F is a training program, for young leaders in Central and Eastern Europe, to encourage commitment to the values that underlie a truly free society.

Website: www.f-4-f.org

Clean Elections / Clean Africa

Countries where Clean Election campaigns have been initiated include Taiwan, Brazil, Kenya and Ghana. On the African continent, it has broadened to a Clean Africa Campaign to address issues of corruption, poverty, conflict, family life and leadership.

Caux Initiatives for Business

CIB engages business people and decision-influencers in addressing issues associated with globalization, personal and corporate responsibility, environmental imbalance and social exclusion.

Website: www.cauxinitiativesforbusiness.org

International Communications Forum

ICF is a network of media people from 116 countries who, recognizing their power to influence society for good or for ill, want to play their part in building a less corrupt and more compassionate world.

Website: www.icforum.org

Farmers' Dialogue

The Farmers' Dialogue links farmers worldwide in pursuit of global aims implemented through local actions. It affirms their calling to feed the world and aims to create a common purpose based on shared values for the soil, environment and family life.

Website: www.farmersdialogue.org

Global Indigenous Dialogue

Started at the initiative of indigenous people from Canada and Russia, this annual dialogue assembles aboriginal people from all continents around considerations of their priorities and their vision of the future.

Website: www.gid.iofc.org

Partners in Reconciliation

This Canadian program of bridge-building through honest dialogue between First Nations, francophone and anglophone and other communities, as well as with people of different faiths and cultures, aims to heal the broken ties between individuals and communities in Canada. In 2005 it adopted a three year process under the theme: *Towards a community of communities – from solitudes to partnership.*

E-mail: l.gagnon@ca.iofc.org

PUBLICATIONS – WEB SITES – ADDRESSES

BOOKS

Frank Buchman: a life. Biography of Frank Buchman. Garth Lean, Fount Paperbacks, 1988, 590 pages.

Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate. “A deeply moving and eloquent testimony to the power of forgiveness in the life of individuals, of communities and between and within nations. It effects change - a powerful book.” *Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize laureate.*

Michael Henderson, Book Partners, 2002, 189 pages.

FOR A CHANGE. An international magazine sharing stories of people who make a difference. Transforming Relationships / Healing / History / Building Community. Six issues per year. Website: www.forachange.co.uk

DVD & VHS VIDEO

For the Love of Tomorrow

A unique profile of Irène Laure, member of the French Resistance who, in the rubble of post-war Europe, discovered forgiveness to be a force stronger than hatred.

Produced by David Channer for FLT Films. NTSC VHS / DVD © 1987, 41 minutes.

The Cross and the Bodhi Tree

Subtitled ‘Two Christian encounters with Buddhism’, this film depicts the spiritual journeys of a French Catholic priest who works in Cambodia, and an Anglican nun from an enclosed convent in England. Directed by Alan Channer and produced by FLT Films. NTSC VHS / DVD © 2001, 43 minutes.

These and other publications and videos are available from:

- Canada: **MRA Books**, #2227, 1010 Arbour Lake Road NW, Calgary, Alberta T3G 4Y8
E-mail: MRAbooks@ca.iofc.org
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Many people have been named in the book because the individual was, and is, at the centre of the life of IofC, and we wanted to remember their valuable involvement, their participation at various levels of responsibility, their financial, logistical or

other assistance over the years. Of course, many others have shared in the life and work of IofC teams without being mentioned. All were nevertheless important in the development of the movement.

In gratitude, for the sake of posterity, and at the risk of involuntary omissions, we are adding, below, the names of people who have not already been mentioned in the book. On a single occasion or over the long term, from various regions of Canada and elsewhere, living or deceased, they have played their part in helping develop the outreach of Initiatives of Change in the province.

From Canada: John and Jenny Bocoock, Phyllis Bocoock, Phyllis Flood, Bill Gray, Sarah Fluter, Chris and Anne Hartnell, Edith Lawson, Micheline Leclerc, Kay McNeil, Keith and Joy Newman, Ellen Ostero, James and Yolande Thwaites.

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The future belongs to those who are ready to invest with passion in a lasting and inclusive effort for global transformation, rooted in their own lives, in solidarity with humanity on the move. May the mission of Initiatives of Change go forward with determination across Canada and around the world.

Laurent Gagnon

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