



Lord Blanch, former Archbishop of York, addresses the public meeting on Whitsunday.

NEW WORLD NEWS

Vol 32 No 13 7 July 1984 20p



CONFERENCE REPORT

Photos:
D Channer and A Weeks

A NEW PRIORITY FOR BRITAIN

THE CRIMSON OF THE RHODODENDRONS splashed against the delicate gold of the maples, as people gathered at Tirley Garth, the MRA conference centre in Cheshire, over Whitweekend. They had come to discuss 'A new priority for Britain—building a nation governed by men and women governed by God'. Many came from the sharp end of British industry and public life—some with remarkable stories of industrial recovery, others from situations still fraught with conflict, such as the mines and Merseyside. 'There is right on each side,' commented one of these. 'I'm coming to the conclusion that two rights, pressed too far, can make a wrong.'

The weekend's main speaker was Lord Blanch, until recently the Archbishop of York, who chaired the public meeting for 700 on Whitsunday which formed the climax of the weekend. His hour-long address the day before had examined the nature of the Kingdom of God and the qualities required of its citizens. 'Faith moves mountains and dams up rivers and overthrows evil kingdoms and changes human hearts,' he said. One listener from an embattled position commented afterwards, 'Lord Blanch's magnificent reaffirmation of faith has given me tremendous encouragement. My decision is to stay with my situation, to live through it and to seek to be a channel of God's Holy Spirit into it.'

'Either we have moral values or we have a society where might is right,' commented a trade unionist. Assessing the weekend, one of its organisers, Gordon Wise, took up this point. 'The stability of Britain's political institutions; respect for the other person; concern for the less privileged; willingness to sacrifice for a cause—these are all fruits of a faith lived out by enough people over the centuries,' he said. 'Britain's cohesion depends on reviving these spiritual

roots. For society cannot work without a leaven of virtue. If the level of unselfishness drops below a certain minimum we will reap anarchy or despotism or both. Faith lived out and applied leads to rebirth and renewal of individuals and institutions.'

This issue of *New World News* reports on the weekend, which brought together trade unionists and managers, politicians, people from education and community relations, as well as Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus. ■



Ron Peacock (left), engineering workers' convener at Greater Manchester Transport, talks to Albert Benbow, convener of shop stewards at SU Fuel Systems, Birmingham. 'We at SU Fuel Systems changed from the black side to the good side and are now a success within British Leyland,' Mr Benbow told the conference. 'We got the co-operation of our management; they got the co-operation of the workforce because they took them into their confidence. I am thankful that we at British Leyland have pulled ourselves out of a hole. There are no "knitting circles" any longer, no sleeping on the night shifts. It's work from morning to night.'

GOD'S KINGDOM —NOTHING LESS

Lord Blanch addressed a session of the conference on the nature of the Kingdom of God. At the public meeting on Whitsunday, he summarised his talk:

THIS WEEKEND has been a new experience for me. I have never before attended or spoken at an MRA assembly. Perhaps I could give you a few of my impressions.

The first, of course, has been the remarkable international flavour—people from Malaysia, Poland, Australia, Germany and many parts of the world—and the extremely wide range of experience. This morning we have ranged freely over the Falklands, the coalminers' strike, the problems of transport in Manchester, the problems in Liverpool. There is an enormous range of expertise available.

I have no doubt that this is true also of the great institutional churches, of which I am a member. But MRA manages to mobilise its experience more expertly and quickly and is able to call upon a group of people who will go anywhere and do anything, if they are called by God to do it. I regard that as a very important part of the Christian life. The Church would have been nowhere if it hadn't had men and women in the very early days who were prepared to accept God's guidance and go where He sent them, however strange it may sometimes have seemed.

Yesterday I was asked to speak about the main theme of the conference: 'Building a nation governed by men and women who are governed by God'. All of us, I suppose, in one way or another are praying for the Kingdom. But it's not always obvious to me that we know what we're asking for.

There have been examples of secularised Kingdoms in our own generation. The most famous and significant of those, of course, is Marxism. It prayed for its own sort of Kingdom where want would be abolished, and where people could live in justice with each other. It no longer carries very much credibility, although it has a lot of political muscle. We have seen what happens when secular Kingdoms achieve the power which Marxism has achieved and I suppose only very few now really subscribe to it in their hearts as a way of life.

Social dimension

But there are ideas of the Kingdom which are part and parcel of Jewish, Christian and other religious traditions. For example, the Christian Church has sometimes aimed at a political Kingdom. The results have been, almost without variation, disastrous; not surprisingly, because the founder of the Christian religion fought out this temptation Himself in the wilderness and resisted the attempt to achieve the Kingdom by violence or by political means. Achieving a Kingdom of God by political or military manipulation is no longer a possibility for any of us.

Some have sought it by other means. Happily we have a representative here of the Jewish religion. Of all those who have tried to achieve the Kingdom by obedience to the Law, the most heroic and persistent example has been the Jewish race. I know how much I owe the Jewish people for my own faith and how much the whole church owes to them. The trouble with the Law as a principle of life is that it leads

either to complacency—'I have kept the Law and I'm all right'—or to scrupulosity and despair—'I cannot keep the Law and therefore I'm doomed to extinction'. Regulating for the Kingdom can only be regarded as a partial solution.

Others have despaired of the world altogether and have tried to create their own small Kingdoms for themselves. There were examples long before Christ and there have been many examples since. The whole monastic movement, for instance, was an attempt by like-minded people to live together in amity and peace, mirroring the Kingdom as they hoped it might one day be over all the world.

Then there are those who have sought the Kingdom purely in inward terms. They too have despaired of the world. They seek to enjoy and foster their own spiritual life: perhaps mixing with others with similar ambitions. They no longer believe it possible for God's Kingdom to come on earth, as it is in Heaven. But, after all, that is what we pray for. Most of us pray for it every day. Some clergymen on a bad Sunday may pray for it nine or ten times—'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.' Nothing less than that—the Kingdom of God on earth—seems to me to be the programme of the Christian Church—and indeed of MRA. You cannot ignore that social dimension to the Gospel. You cannot just be satisfied with a private inward life.



Lord Blanch, (right) talks to Gordon Wise, one of the conference organisers.

Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking it's Kingdom entirely based upon certain ethical principles, conduct and judgements. I found the recent television series on life in China—*The Heart of the Dragon*—very impressive, and at the same time rather depressing, because of the high ethical notions which govern that society. For example, the programme showed how a couple who wanted to break up their marriage were persuaded by a committee not to do so—not because divorce was a bad thing in itself, not because they would necessarily be happier if they did not divorce, but because it was important for the stability of society that they should stay together. That is an example of an ethical society which makes its judgements not on the basis of one Law, given once and for all by God to mankind, but on the transient needs of a particular society at a particular time. The Cultural Revolution is another example of this. It was a disastrous step, taken in response to what were believed to be the needs of society at that moment, transforming, changing and corrupting all previous attitudes and ethical judgements.

All of us in the monotheistic tradition, Jews and Christians

'The Kingdom of God,' said Lord Blanch during a session of the weekend conference, 'can be regarded as an ever present reality, wherever its citizens are subject in themselves to the sovereignty of the Spirit—guided by God.' He pointed to aspects of this 'everpresent Kingdom':

THE FIRST—and I think the Church owes MRA a great debt for this—is the reality of **divine guidance**. Why the bishops of the early twentieth century, of Frank Buchman's time, took such an exception to the idea of divine guidance I cannot understand. They were presumably familiar with the Acts of the Apostles. There are notable examples of divine guidance in the Acts of the Apostles....

Then there is **intercession**, when it is applied intelligently, deeply and to particular people....

The third is **penitence**. Not simply for our own sins but also for the sins of society. Penitence includes a sense of impermanence. It is a realistic appraisal of where we really stand. Pride, which is the very opposite of penitence, is the greatest obstacle to salvation, for individuals and for societies....

And then lastly, **faith**. One of my predecessors, William Temple, used to say that he was lying awake in bed one night, burdened with the burdens of office, very worried about what was happening. And it was as if the Good Lord touched him on the shoulder and said, 'William, you go to sleep, I'll keep awake.' Fear or anxiety is a denial of faith. In St Mark's Gospel, the opposite of faith is not unbelief but fear. It is faith itself, not acts or deeds which arise from faith, which moves mountains and dams up rivers and overthrows evil kingdoms and changes human hearts.

and Muslims, would say that the only Law which is finally valid over all the world and at all times is the Law of God. It does not change with the needs of society. It is always there. It is never right to commit murder, for whatever good cause. It is never right to commit adultery, however attractive. It is never right to steal other people's property, however desirable it may seem. The Kingdom will always contain an element of glad observance of the Law of God as a way of freedom.

But in the end, the Kingdom is something experienced by men and women in their own lives and at their own level of understanding. I am glad that we happen to be meeting on the great festival of Pentecost, a great festival both for Jews and for Christians. Pentecost is, as it were, a first fruit of the Kingdom. It helped people to feel that the Kingdom had already come, at least partially. It gave them a taste for the Kingdom which would come hereafter.

The marks of that Kingdom, as one reads the Acts of the Apostles, were the following:

Firstly, the early Christians were open to God. So often we conceive of ourselves as doing things for God, acting upon God, causing God to act, praying to God—whereas the essence of every true citizen of the Kingdom is that He is receptive to God, waiting to hear, listening, eager to obey. That is the mark of the great saints, all down the ages.

The second thing is openness to each other. I speak as a fool here, because the last quality I think I have is openness. I'm not all that good at being open to other people or encouraging other people to be open to me. Nevertheless a mark of a true citizen of the Kingdom is a new openness to other people, a willingness to accept them across the

barriers which are created by class, nation, ethnic grouping or profit. The classes which disrupt our own society result from a failure of openness to each other.

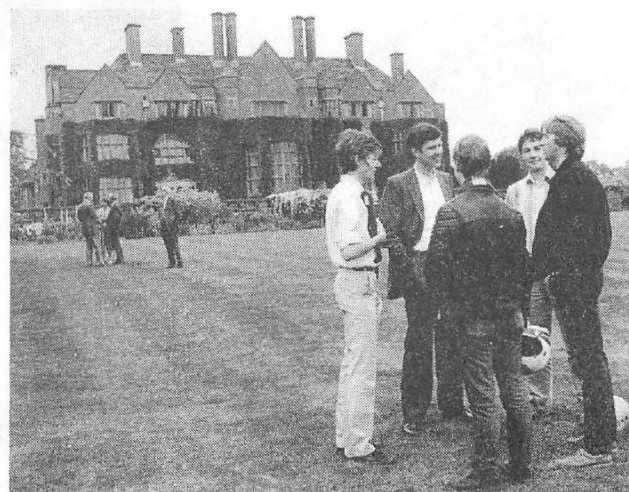
Then there is a kind of openness to new truths. I told those who arrived at the conference earlier this weekend that I hoped they'd leave some of their baggage behind them—either in the hall or in their bedrooms—because it is essential if you are to hear new truths to sit lightly for a time to old truths. You may rediscover elements in that old truth that are permanently valuable. But you have to be prepared, as those first Christians were, to leave behind much of the past in order to welcome the present with open arms. Christians should be leaving behind the past all the time and pressing on.

The institutional churches have not set a very good example in that respect. If ever there are bodies in this country which are devoted to the past and to traditions, it must be within the great institutional churches. Understandably, we value history. History is a good teacher. We cannot escape from it, it is part of us. Nevertheless it is a gross failure if we are entirely dominated by the past and unwilling therefore to open our hearts to new truths.

The final thing about the citizen of the Kingdom is openness to the future—as a possibility, not as a threat. Many of us today see the future as a threat, understandably. There is no way any kind of arms control can exclude the possibility of the use of a nuclear bomb. We all know that. We may argue about how to control it, but it cannot be disinvited. We live under that threat and shall for the rest of our lives, and all our children after us shall do so. Someone once wisely said that the trouble with the modern generation is that it is the first generation which knows that it could be the last.

But we must not regard that just as a threat. After all the early Church longed for the day when the Heavens would be rolled back and the earth would be burned up and the Lord of Heaven would appear on the clouds. It would be rather strange if their 20th century counterparts were entirely and hopelessly afraid of the future. I do not believe that God would allow His own creation to be destroyed by the stupidity of man. We must replace that fear of the future by openness to the future, openness to new possibilities of life together and of the Kingdom in its fullness, not just in its partial nature as we have sometimes experienced it.

I end by echoing the phrase which was used in a song which was just sung—'Better to light a candle, than to curse the darkness.'



Tirley Garth



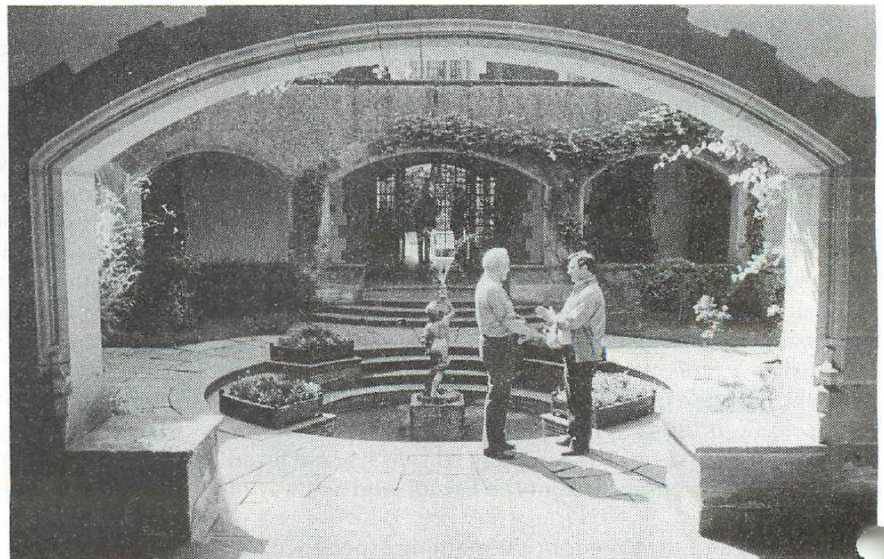
Alfred Stocks, Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council and Chairman of the Trustees of Tirley Garth, chaired the opening session.



V G Gopal, President of Tata (Steel) Workers' Union, Jamshedpur, India (right) talks with B Awari, Adviser for multicultural education in Thameside, and Hari Shukla (centre), Senior Community Relations Officer for Tyne and Wear. Mr Shukla told a meeting, 'Newcastle upon Tyne is a world community. Mention an ethnology and we have some representatives living in Newcastle. When we meet and learn about each other's faith and develop respect for each other, then life becomes very interesting and there is no fear. Fear is what divides us and causes suspicion. When it is removed we can work together, not only for the sake of our city, but for the country and the world. It's a small experiment, but it has worked in Newcastle and I am sure it would work in other areas.'



'In my factory the situation arose when it was necessary for someone to take a stand,' said Malcolm Jack from Drews Lane, Birmingham, a national committee delegate of the AUEW, speaking in his private capacity. 'I accepted that if I wanted to put a value on my society, then I couldn't just continue to criticise what was wrong with it, I had to grasp the nettle and put forward what I thought was right with it. I mirror thousands of other people inside British Leyland who thought the same as I did, but it was a question of having sufficient conviction to get up and say it.'



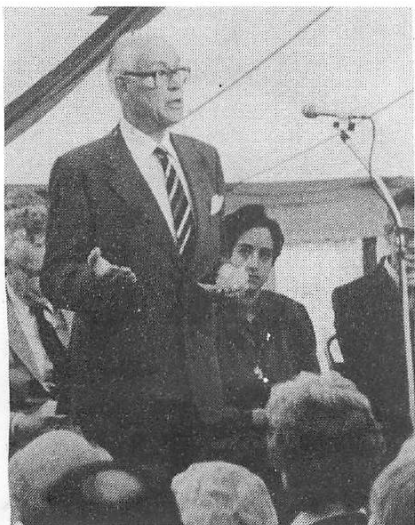
Trade unionists talk at the entrance to Tirley Garth



Puan Hajjah Saleha, Chairman of the Unity Board of Malaysia, at the conference



Rabbi Dr Norman Solomon (centre) represented the Chief Rabbi at the weekend. He is seen here with his wife talking to James Anderton, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, on the opening night.



'In the late Sixties and early Seventies we in management got it wrong for Britain,' said John Vickers, Chairman of Vickers Oils, Leeds. 'We didn't read the signs right and planned for massive expansion. When the downturn came, the adjustment was all the more painful.'

'We will not get the plans right if we rely on human wisdom alone. But if we listen to the leading and intelligence God gives us, we can. In 51 years of experience in our firm, every policy decision we have made on the basis, as far as we could see it, of it being morally right, has been economically viable.'

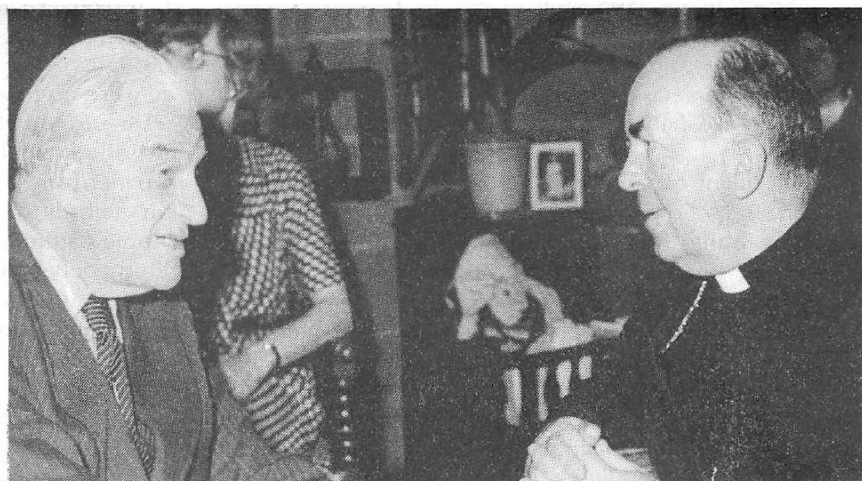


Dr Omnia Marzouk, from Egypt, is training as a children's doctor in Liverpool. 'I see a lot of great joys, but a lot of heart-breaking things too,' she said. 'Unemployed parents bring in their children. There are also the broken families, the single parents, the neglected or battered children. I worked desperately in one hospital to save the lives of premature babies, while unwanted pregnancies were being dealt with in another hospital just down the road.'

'I am grateful Britain opens her doors to people from other countries, either to work temporarily like me, or to make a base here. I believe that we're meant to care for your country. Perhaps we can help you to refine something through our spiritual truths and our cultural respect for family and community life.'



Dorothy Tunstall, recently retired Sheriff of Chester (left), talks to Rosalind Peacock. Councillor Tunstall was one of several from local government attending the conference.



The Rt Rev Joseph Gray, Catholic Bishop of Shrewsbury (right) talks to Rev Neville Brazier-Creagh



Neville Cooper, Executive Director of Standard Telephones and Cables, England, told a meeting, 'Those of us who manage in industry have responsibility for creating wealth, but also for creating a new society.' Leaders needed a new inspiration, he said. 'We need intellectual analysis—and we also need to show genuine care and concern.' Mr Cooper is seen here at the opening meeting with his wife Barbara.



'We have about 4,500,000 foreign workers in West Germany—1,500,000 of them from Turkey,' said German photographer Thomas Bräckle. 'They have a different culture and religion and we find it difficult to live together. I am working with friends in Berlin to bring German and Turkish people together to think how we can solve this problem.'

LLANWERN— BACK FROM THE BRINK

DAVID JAMES, Secretary of the Supervisors' Group of the ISTC (steelworkers' union) at Llanwern steelworks, South Wales, told the public meeting how the plant pulled back from closure in the early eighties. Mr James, who is also a member of the plant's works council, has worked there since it opened in 1962.

THE MODERN STEEL-MAKING COMPLEX at Llanwern was planned in the late Fifties for the entrance of Britain into Europe. It was doomed from the start because the works were split between two places—Llanwern in Newport and Ravenscraig in Scotland. But nevertheless the workforce broke all the production records and broke into a market which was very competitive and cost- and quality-conscious. In the end the decision to go into Europe was delayed and this meant we had a problem on our hands in relation to costs.

As the plant expanded in tonnage, the workforce expanded. In its heyday in the mid-Seventies it was making 2 million tonnes of steel a year with 10,000 men. We had tremendous industrial relations problems in those days. People were getting bloody-minded. They did not want to look forward to technological advances and changes.

Between 1962 and 1979 we did not turn in a reasonable plant performance. By 1979 our quality had deteriorated, our financial prospects had disappeared and instead of profits, we were turning in massive losses. People thought this land owed them a living. They thought the British Steel Corporation and the government would sustain them for ever.

Crunch

In late 1978 or early 1979 the decision was made to close a major steel plant because of the losses the industry was making. In late 1979 a group of us were told that Llanwern had been chosen and that the decision was irreversible. After the national steel strike of 1980, which lasted 14 weeks, we returned to work absolutely dejected, realising that something had to change. A small group of us started to plan a campaign to change people's attitudes and a group of managers planned with us. That in itself was incredible, because in days gone by the trade unions had had the upper hand in the plant.

We set out to try to rescue the plant. I'm a third generation steelworker and I haven't any sons to go into the industry, but I have a daughter who wants to work. Llanwern takes all the coal produced in seven or eight pits in the area. We realised that if our plant went, they would also close—and so would the peripheral industries which fed off Llanwern.

In the middle of the steel strike we came across Moral Re-Armament. One of my colleagues, Gwilym Jenkins, said, 'I want you to meet a bloke who'll help us to build bridges.' And that's what happened. Doors opened, bridges were built. There was I, a socialist, going up to London to meet



David James

the Private Secretary to the Minister of Industry of the day and asking, as we drove, 'Do you think we can really trust these Tories that we're going to talk to today?' We did speak to them and the exchange that started that day continued through a series of meetings, until we in Llanwern showed we were prepared to do something about the situation.

The big crunch came in August 1980 when we signed the first of our Slimline agreements at Llanwern. It meant not two men, one job, but—in the first instance—one man, one job. Shortly afterwards it meant total work flexibility. People's attitudes to work altered and the dignity of work returned. People these days give a full day's work for a full day's pay. Our workforce has shrunk from 10,000 producing two million tonnes to just over 4,000 producing two million tonnes. Our stock in the marketplace has risen. We are the leading supplier of outside body parts to the motor car industry. Our quality is among the best in the world. Our man-hours-per-tonne, which is the international standard for steel production, is now down to about 3.4. Last year we made a profit of just over £5 million—the best result the plant has ever produced. All this happened because we were prepared to accept change for the sake of saving a plant, to make sure that young people had the opportunity to work in our area.

What we have achieved is spreading slowly but surely through the rest of the British Steel Corporation. If this spreads through the whole of British industry, the strength of British industry will lead to a rejuvenation of the country.

Next bridge

The Bible talks about 'faith, hope and charity'. We've the faith to work. We have seen hope work in a practical way. We went to the brink, we looked into the gorge, we did not like what we saw, so we've come back. And we don't want charity because we've shown we can produce goods of the right quality and at the right price.

It is a great pity that we have to have four million people unemployed in this country today. It is a great shame that we've got so many elderly people working in industry and insufficient jobs for young people coming in. They have faith—that some day we will provide them with jobs. We have to give them hope that they can be employed. And I don't think any youngster today needs charity. The next bridge we have to build is to ensure that Britain's industrial base can support the generation that is coming up behind us. ■

GOD AND THE TAX MAN

GRAHAM AND JEAN TURNER told the public meeting about the impact of Moral Re-Armament on their personal and family life. Mr Turner is a freelance journalist.

Graham Turner: When we got married, I was a person who had had a faith, but dropped it. I found trying to live by absolute standards of morality too darn difficult. Instead of trying to live by the Cross, I started instead to live by the ladder and I became very ambitious.

The result was that we became one of those families who are very respectable on the outside, but behind the facade we had a lot of rows and unhappiness. I used to have to do a lot of writing at home, and I really regarded our three children as noisy furniture. They always seemed to be making a racket at the wrong moment and I was very cruel to them at times.

From time to time we would see friends from Moral Re-Armament. One of them eventually asked me if I would like to have a quiet time listening to God with him. I said yes, because I felt that although we were giving our children decent food and housing and sending them to good schools, we were not giving them anything to live their lives by.

God spoke to me very quickly and quite painfully. First thought: 'You have been fiddling your taxes. Go to the Inland Revenue and tell them the truth.' Second thought: 'You have been fiddling your expenses at the BBC.' I used to call my secretary every Monday morning. She would say, 'How much do you want?' I would name a sum and then we would use our imaginations. I thought I should go to the BBC and pay the money back. And the third thing was that I should tell Jean about a flirtation I had had when I was working at the BBC. Fortunately it was not serious, but it could have been. I felt very burdened by this thought, because I knew Jean had been straight.

Opencast mining

It was not an entirely palatable menu. But I felt so desperate that we were not giving the kids the things they would need later in life, that I followed these thoughts. If you want an experience which is both bracing and comic, go to the Inland Revenue and put your tax situation in order. It was a difficult time. They were not easy things to do, but they were worth it.

I thought our seven-year-old son was old enough to know what I was doing and why. He said, rather unhelpfully I thought, 'Of course, if you'd been honest in the first place you wouldn't be in trouble now.' Three months later he came down looking somewhat solemn and said, 'Daddy, I've been stealing sweets from the local shop.' He said he thought he ought to give the grocer all the money he had. 'But you can't have stolen so many sweets,' I said. 'No,' he said. 'But God said I've kept the grocer waiting for his money.' So he went and told the grocer and gave him the money. And that was the start of a very real faith, which is entirely his own. It might never have happened if I had not gone to the tax man and paid the money back to him.



Graham and Jean Turner speak to a crowded marquee.

Jean Turner: Graham made it quite clear that whatever I said, he was going to do the things God told him to do. So that meant I was not going to be the boss in the house any more. I thought that if he was going to be God's man and not my man any more, then I ought to decide to be God's woman. So we try—sometimes triumphantly, sometimes rather dryly and dustily—to find out what God wants of us before we start each day and to do the things He tells us to do.

I said to an old friend one day, 'If we really do everything God tells us to do, He may tell us to go and help the people of Patagonia or somewhere'—we had three small children. 'My dear Jean,' he replied. 'Do you really think God cares so little for the people of Patagonia...?' My pride was horribly punctured, but it made me think that God is darn well going to make sure you can do the things He asks you to do. And He's going to prepare the people for you to see and the situations for you to go into. And this is the basis on which we try to make our decisions as a family.

Graham Turner: You may reasonably ask—what effect does this have on me as a journalist? I am a person of strong opinions, to which I am very attached. One thing MRA has done for me is that there is no opinion now to which I am so attached that I am not ready to change it if God shows me different.

Quite often as a journalist you use people. It's like opencast mining—you use them and throw them aside. MRA has taught me I must care for people, as well as working with them. ■

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LEAVING THE BAGGAGE BEHIND

Bryce Cooke and Jean Ogden of Manchester's Radio Piccadilly attended the first meeting of the conference and interviewed some of those there for the Sunday evening programme 'Sunday Saver'. We print extracts. Bryce Cooke asked James Anderton, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester police, for his impressions:

James Anderton: I was much encouraged by the approach taken by the several speakers who introduced in a personal way the theme that they would like to see expressed during the weekend's work. They were all concerned, essentially, to establish a reawakening of the human spirit in communion with God our Maker, in such a way that we can get above and beyond politics and economics and the social disruption of the day and try to get back to first principles....

Bryce Cooke: I get a sense—I am sure you will take this in the right way—you are a member of what could be termed the Establishment, there is Lord Blanch here, captains of industry. Looking at it, it is very much an Establishment thing.

James Anderton: There are trade unions and convenors here, and I think that's a balance that has to be struck.

Bryce Cooke: I wonder whether it is not just supporting the Establishment.

James Anderton: Well, it could be construed as indicating that, but I would hope that that is not the impression that is left. I am sure it is not the intention of those who convene conferences of this sort to get together a group of people of like mind comfortably to reinforce their opinions of each other. I think it has been said tonight if that's why we have come then we ought not to have bothered. I think it is important to drop our defences, open ourselves in a very honest way to the views of others and be prepared to examine oneself in the light of one's relationship with other people.... It is a start and a very good one, and if we can all go away from here at least encouraged to do something better and to perhaps be less self-important, which is a risk we all suffer, I think, then we are on to a better thing.

Bryce Cooke: The next speaker for the weekend was Lord Blanch, former Bishop of Liverpool and ex-Archbishop of York. Jean asked him about a comment he had made earlier about the need to 'leave our baggage behind'.

Lord Blanch: I think a lot of the problems which we experience personally, and certainly experience in national life and in the life of the churches as well, is that people are intensely devoted to the things that they have acquired in the course of their lives, some no doubt worthy ideas, some very partial ideas and some really wrong ideas. And if you are going to get anything from a conference of this kind you

have to be prepared to let these things slip away and to listen again.

Jean Ogden: Therefore you believe that Moral Re-Armament is about change?

Lord Blanch: Yes, I do. In fact the whole Christian faith is about change.

Jean Ogden: But we are not talking about the Christian faith, are we, in that respect? You are in a way, I suppose, showing the discrepancy—or you must feel the discrepancy—between the Christian Church and the aims of Moral Re-Armament.

Lord Blanch: Oh no, I don't feel that at all. Never have.

Jean Ogden: Well, why is there a need for Moral Re-Armament?

Lord Blanch: Because Moral Re-Armament, because of its origins and because of the kind of people who belong to it, do have a range of contacts way outside the Church in which the Church is not particularly expert. We have in the Church, obviously, people who are familiar with industry, but it is nevertheless true that when I was in Liverpool there were people associated with the MRA who were *working in* the front line to try and bring reconciliation in some of those labour disputes there. And that, I think, is a very important aspect of the Church's work. If there is a group doing it, I only thank God they are doing it and wish we could do it better.

Jean Ogden: Don't you think the Church should become more involved in the doing of faith rather than just *thinking* about it?

Lord Blanch: Yes, I do, but the two are not really incompatible. You are not going to do anything very seriously if you are not thinking about it, and if you only think the thing runs into the sand because nothing happens. I think the two things are complementary. I am very glad to have MRA around, really doing something which needs to be done about raising moral and spiritual standards, seeking change in human institutions and human beings, and causing things to happen which need to happen.

Jean Ogden: What do you see as the future of Moral Re-Armament then? Would you like to see it growing and becoming a large organisation?

Lord Blanch: No, because I think that once a thing becomes a great monolithic organisation it loses a lot of its powers. That is what has happened to some of the churches—they have become so cumbersome and so big and so dependent upon long processes. You really want to keep an organisation small enough so that you can act tomorrow, not the year after next. I think that is the advantage of the MRA: they are prepared to work in small groups where decisions can be made and where they can send people here and there at a week's notice....

I myself would hope that it would retain its flexibility and its own adaptation to change. MRA is by no means the same as it used to be. It has changed over the years. It is more sympathetic towards the Church, much less critical of it, much more willing as it were to learn from other people as well and to use the resources which the Church has. And that's, I think, how it should be. ■

**NEW
WORLD
NEWS**

Published fortnightly for Moral Re-Armament by The Good Road Ltd, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF, England. Printed by T W Pegg and Sons Ltd. Articles may be reproduced without reference to the editor, acknowledgement welcomed. Price 20p. 10 copies £1.70 plus postage. Special rates for pre-publication bulk orders. **Annual subscriptions: British Isles** £8.50 (2 copies of each issue £12.00); UK pensioners and students £6.50 (2 copies £10.00). **All other countries** airmail £11.00. Regional offices and rates: **Australia** New World News, PO Box 1078J, GPO Melbourne, Vic 3001 \$20.00; **Canada** Moral Re-Armament, 387 chemin de la Cote Ste Catherine, Montreal, Quebec H2V 2B5 \$25.00; **New Zealand** New World News, PO Box 31009, Christchurch \$25.00; **South Africa** Moral Re-Armament, PO Box 10144, Johannesburg, 2000 R20.00; **USA** Moral Re-Armament Inc, 1030 Fifteenth Street NW, Suite 908, Washington DC 20005 \$20.00. **Editorial and business address:** 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF. Tel: 01-828 6591.