

Outreach from new Aberdeen centre

report from Geoffrey Craig

THE WORLD is coming to Aberdeen these days. Walk down Union Street and you hear accents from many different countries. Go to the harbour and you find it swarming with vessels, mainly oil rig service boats, loading the 1,001 different items that a drilling rig requires hundreds of miles away in the North Sea.

Many pin their hopes for the future of Britain on the oil under the sea. Some use the oil developments to encourage personal and national greed, others see them as heedless exploitation of people and land. So the forces of division are fed in community and country.

In the midst of all the bustle and argument, a house at number 11, Beechgrove Avenue is developing as a centre of an alternative, constructive approach to the situation. The purchase of this house for the purpose of Moral Re-Armament was made possible by the contributions of 70 people throughout Scotland.

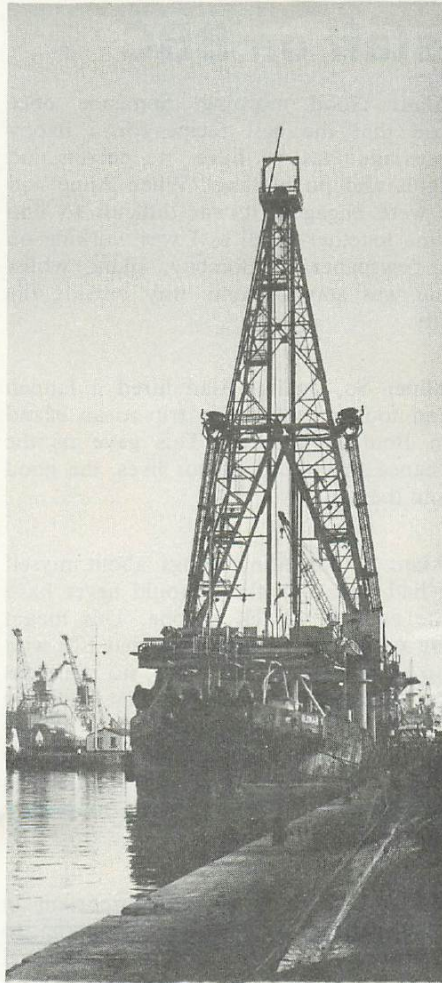
Starting from this home, a group of students in Aberdeen are presenting a challenge to the people of Scotland's North East, to re-examine what they are living for, and where Britain is heading.

No more Whisky

Since Easter last year they have been performing Peter Howard's play *The Ladder*, which strongly portrays the challenge of the Cross, and its relevance to present-day society. The cast all have full-time commitments to studies, but they have given fourteen performances of *The Ladder* so far.

They have been in the heart of the city, and out to the country, to the villages of Echt, Sauchen, Strachan and Finzean. Audiences have included farmers, industrial workers, members of youth fellowships and women's guilds. After the Sauchen performance a farmer's wife said, 'In these days when most of the voices you hear are those of despair and cynicism, it is most refreshing to meet a group like this of convinced and convincing men and women who give hope.'

After each performance the cast members tell the audience why they are pre-



'Glomar V' drillship in Aberdeen Harbour
Photo: NESDA

senting the play and what they have learnt through it. Sandy Cook, a student at the Agricultural College, says, 'Through this play we hope to bring a change in society.' He goes on to report a decision made recently by his family, who farm land near Aberdeen. 'Thinking of those who do not have enough to eat in the world, we want the barley we grow to be used for food. We have decided not to sell any more of our barley for malting (whisky) even though it means taking a lower price for it.'

Over the Christmas - New Year period the cast were invited to take the play to Tirley Garth, the MRA training centre in Cheshire. At their own expense

Clergy meet at Tirley Garth

'TO BE GOD'S PROPHETS to a nation and a world in crisis, and to proclaim God's answer.' This was the decision of 30 clergy, ministers and lay people from Scotland, Wales and England - Methodist, Anglicans and Presbyterian churchmen.

In a two-day conference last week at Tirley Garth, Cheshire, they met with students, trade union men and farmers. They heard of changes in men bringing the power of Christ to bear in docks,

NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

they made the 740-mile round trip to present the play to an audience which included people from several areas of Europe. They have also been invited to perform the play at the European MRA Conference for Students and Young Workers to be held in Edinburgh 31 March to 4 April, and at the International Centre at Caux, Switzerland, in the summer.

International visitors

In addition to all the students who regularly come to 11, Beechgrove Avenue, the house is being used more and more by people from other backgrounds and other parts of the world in the programme of Moral Re-Armament. In the last year visitors to Aberdeen have included Mick Lennon and Tom Ormond, a Maori leader, from New Zealand; Antonio Falcao, former docker, and Antonio Rodrigues, former political agent, from Brazil; and in January this year Dr and Mrs Anton Skulberg from Norway. Dr Skulberg is an MP and former Minister of Education.

During 1974, several people went out from Aberdeen and Peterhead to participate in the conference in Caux. They included a Sheriff Court judge, Frank Ramsay JP; a civic leader, Baillie Mrs J Lamb, Peterhead's Dean of Guild; and students from the cast of *The Ladder*.

motor industry, aircraft industry and agriculture.

'You are tackling issues near to my heart in a way I have never heard before,' said a university chaplain. He said he had come because of the change he had seen in his son who had learnt to listen to God.

Messages were received from Swedish churchmen and from Father Bernard Bot SJ, of Holland, who emphasised 'the uniqueness of every man in God's plan'.

As a means of bringing a Christian answer to the present needs they particularly welcomed the new film *Cross Road* and *The Black and White Book*.

'New World News' staff on BBC

Mr and Mrs Alan Faunce gave five talks last week on BBC Radio Medway's 'Thought for the Day'. It is the first time that this programme, which reaches listeners in North Kent and parts of Sussex and Surrey, has featured a husband and wife team.

Alan Faunce was introduced each morning as a journalist on Moral Re-Armament's weekly paper *New World News* printed in Tonbridge.

We reproduce two of the broadcasts by the Faunces who return soon to India.

GOOD MORNING. There's a Cornish proverb about marriage which says: 'Cooking lasts, kissing don't.' My wife is an excellent cook, and one thing she knows, like any good cook, is that you can't make a good omelette out of bad eggs.

In the same way, as every statesman or Member of Parliament knows (or ought to know), it is not possible to make an unselfish society out of selfish men and women. We can plan a new society on paper, but it still has to be built by people.

Take racial discrimination for example. We have to have laws to deal with this problem—but laws alone cannot change people's attitudes. How then can they be changed?

Now many of my own Kentish forbears served in the army in India, helping keep that country under British rule. I grew up with the feeling that I was in some way better than people of other races. When I went to college I at first kept away from students from Africa and Asia, although I could see they were often lonely and unhappy.

On Monday I told how I tried the experiment of listening to God and obeying the thoughts that came. One of my first thoughts when I tried this experiment was to introduce myself to a certain student from Africa, and to tell him how I had in the past been cold and superior towards fellows like him.

To do this hurt my pride—but as I talked honestly with him I began to find an answer to the arrogance and hidden fear that had created barriers between me and other people—white as well as black.

Because of this experience, I was able to go gladly to India some years later, when I was asked to work on a newspaper edited by a grandson of Mahatma Gandhi—although this meant working with, and serving, a people my own forefathers had helped to rule.

I have come to see that what really matters is a man's character, not his colour. God is colour-blind. If we in Britain live as God intends us to, I believe we can show the world how people of different races can work together.

Alan: Good morning. Someone once said that the best recipe for a happy marriage was to have 'no secrets, no fights and no bluffing'. When Aline and I were engaged, it was difficult to find time together at all as I was working on a newspaper in Bombay, India, whilst she was staying some way outside the city.

Aline: So, finally, Alan hired a launch and took me on a day trip to an island in Bombay harbour. This gave us the chance to talk about our lives, the good and the bad.

Alan: I told Aline things about myself I had once thought I should never have the courage to tell anyone. This meant we were able to begin married life with no secrets from each other, no skeletons in the cupboard. And on that basis we aim to continue—though not always easy. As Aline knows, I tend to shut up like a clam when annoyed—and need to be winkled out of my shell to restore normal good humour.

Aline: One thing we find important in our marriage is to have something to live for that takes us outside ourselves. I often feel I have so much practical work to get on with in a day that I'm too busy to think. So we find it a great help to get up early, before the rush of the day starts, to spend time listening quietly for thoughts that God gives us for our lives.

Alan: Sometimes we have had the thought to invite to our home people we might not otherwise have expected to—like the Asian family, with eight children, who had just fled from Uganda. Or the group of young people, with the Moral Re-Armament show *Cross Road* who came to Tonbridge recently.

Aline: Most of all, we have been grateful for times when our home has been used to help people find something new for their lives. For instance, the young teacher who said the evening she spent with us was a turning point in resolving difficult relationships at school.

Alan: On behalf of my wife and myself, thank you for listening. What we have tried to say can be summed up as: 'Back to God and on to a better world' or in those familiar words 'Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven'. Ordinary people, if willing to start with themselves, can bring in the most dynamic revolution of all, through which the Cross of Christ will transform the world.



Photo: Huston

A most terrifying discovery

by Professor Theophil Spoerri

Professor Spoerri, who died on 24 December at the age of 84, held for thirty years the Chair of French and Italian Literature at the University of Zürich, and was Rector of the University from 1948–1950. His work on Dante gained him the Gold Medal of the City of Florence. He was a PhD of the University of Geneva 'Honoris Causa'.

An authority on the philosopher Pascal he had a study published by Gotthelf-Verlag, Zürich, in 1968 who also published his *Practice of Faith* in 1967. 1967 saw the publication of *Dynamik aus der Stille*, a study, in German, of the life of Dr Frank Buchman—the fruit of a long friendship between the two men.

He was one of the first Swiss to enlist with Frank Buchman in what was later to become Moral Re-Armament.

During the World War II he, with others, did a work in the 'Gotthardbund' for the strengthening of the moral and spiritual fibre of the nation which has recently obtained recognition, and a week before his death he received from the hands of a member of the Swiss government a prize honouring him for his work in bringing literature and faith together.

A young Swiss said at his memorial service at Montreux, 'The picture I keep of him is one of a man almost perpetually surrounded by young people bombarding him with questions, and most of the time these questions were on the subject of faith, of God or Jesus Christ... And when one heard him one really felt the desire to abandon what was small and rotten in one's life and live at the height of the faith he had put in us.'

WHAT IS CHANGE PHYSICALLY?
For a boat, a ship? It is changing the direction. But to change the direction you must be in motion. Thus change is a movement, which has a direction.

And what is change with an apple? It begins with flowers. Some people want to be flowers all their life. But the flowers have to fall, and the fruit begins and ripens. And what happens when the apple is ripe? It falls from the tree. It may be eaten, it may fall in the earth and become a seed, and a new tree begins. That is life. Life is always going beyond itself, changing every moment.

But what is change in us? In human beings? Change goes from what I am to what I am meant to be. Therefore change in human life can miss its direction. Some people are satisfied with what they are. They don't go beyond that, they go around and around themselves. And they are dead without knowing it. That explains the hard word: 'Let the dead bury their dead.'

What does Jesus say about change? You will find change in every religion. There are wonderful things said about change in the Koran and in the Bhagvad Gita. But what is it with Jesus? In what connection does he speak about change? His main and first message was: 'The kingdom of God is come. Change your way of thinking and living, and follow me.'

Beyond repentance

Change is a wonderful Greek word: metanoia. It is mostly translated with 'repent'. Repent is good, but change and metanoia is more than repent. It is to change our whole way of living and thinking. Change is always going deeper than we like. Change is against something, against our usual way of thinking, of living. There is nothing bad about that, that is human nature. It is a natural way of living. We go our way, we try to do our best, we try to go higher and higher, we try to get to the top of the ladder. The movement goes from earth to heaven. But then we reach our limit.

Complete breakdown

To reach our limit is the decisive experience of our life. It is a hard experience. We don't like to be limited. But suddenly our efforts have come to a full stop. It is a complete breakdown. But the most terrifying discovery is that the limit is a barrier which separates us from the source of our life, from God. That deadly separation is *our own fault*. We are at the end of our self-effort, our self-realisation, our self-justification. Nothing can be done from our side.

Then a miracle happens. Through the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ the barrier is taken away. God comes himself from beyond the limit answering death with life, sin with forgiveness. That is the experience of the Cross: it is not what we can do for God, it is what God does for us.

The succession is important. It begins with 'the kingdom of God is come'. Somebody said the other day: But you must accept it, you must be open for it. No, no, no! The kingdom is come, even if we don't know it, if we don't accept it, if we don't like it, if we don't believe it. It is here. That is the beginning.

Exciting news

And then comes change – metanoia – what we can do. 'The kingdom is come' is God's work, and only then does man's work begin. Metanoia – change your way, return and follow me. Maybe we don't realise what it means that the kingdom of God is come. If you see somebody excited saying: 'Do you know the news?' And you say: 'What is it?' 'The kingdom of God is come!' That is news. That is good news.

Now the second question: Where does change happen?

Jesus himself answers this question: The kingdom of God does not come in a spectacular way. You cannot say: Here it is, or there it is, because the kingdom of God is inside you. Do you know what it means, that the kingdom of God – the coming of the kingdom of God – is inside us? That means also that it is inside everyone we meet. We could say instead of: Good morning, Peter! Good morning, kingdom of God!

What a change it makes in our dealing with people, that we know that inside them there is the coming of the kingdom of God. How different would be our attitudes towards them, if we realize that in every moment with every person. The Greek word which Jesus uses here is 'entos'. And entos means *inside you and amongst you*. The coming of the kingdom is always inside and outside. Both are connected. Change is always inside and outside. If it is only inside, it will become a sentimental reversal in oneself.

If it is only outside, it will become a sterile striving for our own growth, our own success.

Here comes our next question: Where is change going to?

Listening to the inner voice is only effective if it is at the same time changing ourselves and the world. Our failures we discover in measuring our life in the face of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. In that connection we see their full weight and terrible significance. They are the obstacles to the coming of the kingdom of God. They are hindrances. Our sins are not only relevant to ourselves, but relevant to what happens with the coming of the kingdom of God in the world.

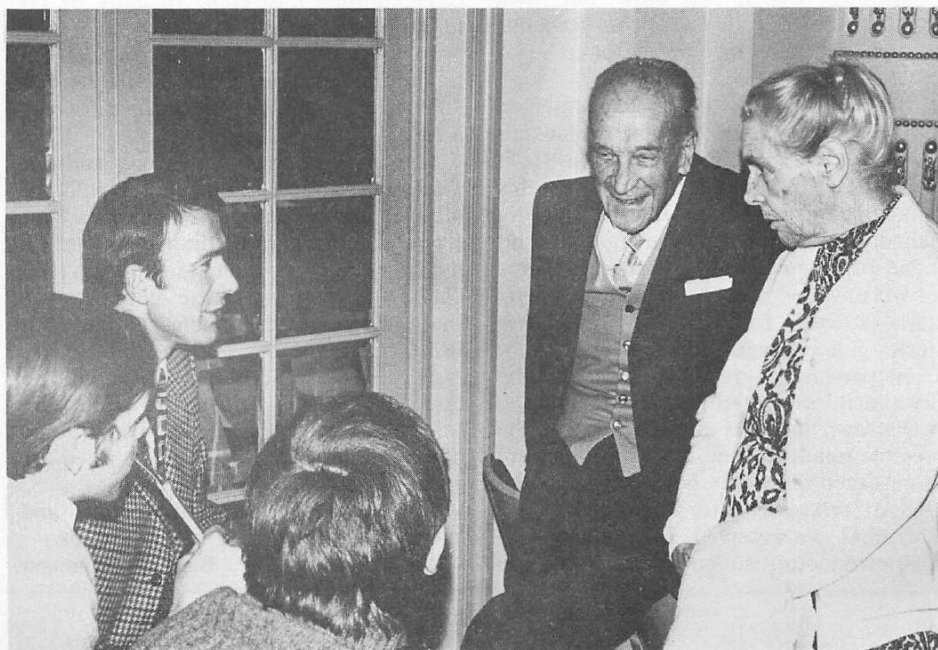
A Theophil Spoerri Fund has been set up in Switzerland for the training of young people at Caux.

Being an obstacle to the advance of the kingdom, they have their terrible relevance. That makes us hate sin, and go through the whole sequence: forsake, be honest, restore. We see more clearly how the person is related to the universal, and we understand the full meaning of what Gabriel Marcel, the French philosopher, said: 'The secret of Caux is the strange connection between the intimate and the global.' That is the full dimension of change. Changing the world means economic change, social change, political change, all based on personal change.

The last question: Where does change come from?

The question: What are you living for? is intimately connected with the questions: What are you living from? What is the source of our change? Our

DISCOVERY continued on page 4



Professor and Mrs Spoerri with young people in the Caux theatre.

Photo: Maillefer

●ALBERT MINGAY, recently retired United Kingdom Commissioner of The Salvation Army, writes in *The Officer*, 'I recommend *Good God, It Works!* without reservation as a work to stimulate both faith in what we are doing and further insights in ways of doing it.'

'A most revealing and convincing book. Not a few readers are expressing their concern about the generation gap. There is no blurring of the issue here. The family ups and downs are recorded starkly, beautifully and in realistic context.'

'How wrong is the impression formed by some that Frank Buchman and Moral Re-Armament discounted the great truths of the Atonement.'

●THE ETHIOPIAN HERALD is serialising the article on The New Man by Dr Klaus Bockmühl from *New World News* (Vol 23, No 10).

●THE SURREY HERALD has reviewed Frank Ledwith's book about life in a shipping insurance film, *Ships That Go Bump In The Night* (Robert Hale £3.50). It says that the book 'is written with humour and insight. It brightens up what laymen may see as a dry and colourless profession and shows the people within it to be full of character and life.'

It says that the 223 page book 'is informative without being stuffy and full of good descriptions of people and places'.

●Films for liberal and social studies and religious education (with questions for

discussion) – a new 6-page brochure about MRA films – has just been printed and is available without charge from MRA Productions, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF.

'These 16 mm feature and documentary films,' says the brochure, 'offer a broad perspective on world issues and a practical approach to the social and moral problems of today. The dialogue is mature and thought-provoking with incisive insights into questions of Christian faith and ethics. They are recommended mainly for senior classes and students, but the family pantomime *Give a Dog a Bone* is included for younger pupils.'

Time may show that the presence of different races in South Africa has been a blessing and not a curse, says Mr Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma.

Writing in *Himmat*, the Indian weekly which he edits, he says: 'Nowhere else in the world are Blacks, Whites, the mixed and Browns gathered together in such generous proportions.'

'Long regarded as being behind the times, South Africa has the chance – in spite of the history, in spite of the odds – to be ahead of the world in racial co-operation.'

The opening paragraphs of a news story in 'The Star,' Johannesburg.

DISCOVERY continued from page 3

goodwill, our duty-mindedness, our know-how? All these things are not bad. No, but the important point is again in what succession you put them. First thing is the coming of the kingdom: 'They will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' That great descending line from heaven to earth is the real direction of change. The coming of the kingdom does not exclude intelligence, goodwill, duty-mindedness. But if they are included in the coming of the kingdom, they become fluent, creative, peaceful.

Frank Buchman spoke often of *liquid love*. A wonderful expression! And I heard him say once: 'If you deal with a very difficult person, there is nothing more helpful than *divine nonchalance*.' I think I must stress this point, especially for the good people among us. They do their best, they measure their life with the four absolutes, they listen to their inner voice early in the morning, they write down their thoughts, they obey. And they think, it is all they can do. And sometimes they become overtired, and all that becomes homework, a difficult task to do. That is what Caux means for many of us.

The right succession

But that can be an entirely false attitude. You become overtired because you are not living in the right succession. The right succession is: First the coming of the kingdom, and then what we do. Some of us don't realise that all we do is because first there is the coming of the kingdom. It would be a great help, if they knew that first the kingdom of God is here. And because the kingdom of God is here, even if they don't know it, they are doing what they do. They are willing to give their life to God, to let their will be crossed by the will of God, but the real thing is that God comes over the limit on their side.

It wouldn't be such a liberation, such a joy, as we experience when we are willing to give our life to God, if it wasn't for this new dimension coming into our life, if it wasn't that the coming of the kingdom goes directly into our usual life, and that this wonder of change comes in and makes all things new. One day I heard Frank Buchman saying: 'What interests me when I have to deal with a person is what hinders him from having the glorious freedom of the children of God.' That was his way to change others in the world dimension of freedom.

And you know that the fruits of the spirit, and this is the heart of faith and the nerve of change, are love, joy, peace. Remember, there is no change without love, joy, peace.

Of trumpets and targets

FORGIVE US if we blow our own trumpet – the fact is many of you, our readers, will keep blowing it for us! For instance:

'*New World News* comes like water on a thirsty land – it is hopeful and exciting,' writes a subscriber in Kenya. 'It is like a ray of light and hope in this darkening world,' declares another in Canada. 'Grateful for the thought and scope of recent issues... making it such a worthwhile and valuable weapon,' states a letter from Brazil, and 'These stories give courage and renewal of faith. I am personally greatly inspired by the news in it,' says a student in Uganda.

Our own belief is that because of the present trend in the world people are more eager than ever before to read the kind of news we exist to publish. Over Christmas we received 161 new annual and introductory subscriptions, and these

have continued to come in daily so far in the New Year.

In view of this response we feel our minimum target for 1975 should be that 1000 new people get the chance to read *New World News* regularly.

If every reader of this article sold one new subscription, that aim would be attained many times over. And judging from comments we receive in letters many readers do long for others – including leaders of their countries – to share the hope and challenge that *New World News* brings.

May we ask your help to reach this target? We will be glad to send subscription forms to anyone who would like to use them. Subscription rates are given at the foot of the back page.

Together, we can achieve this – and every other target God sets before us.

Business Manager