

# **The Missional Legacy of Frank Buchman**

An Examination of the Principles Propounded by  
Frank Buchman (MRA) and Their Relevance for  
21st Century Europeans.

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*“This kind of person would be well needed at this point in time.”*

-A Swiss professor at the bus stop outside Lausanne University  
on the 24 February 2022

*“Upon a foundation of changed lives permanent reconstruction is assured.  
Apart from changed lives no civilization can endure.”* (Buchman, 1961, p. 5)

-Dr. Frank Buchman in a speech titled A New Illumination, given in 1934

# Abstract

The 21st century world continues to face widespread unrest over climate change, depleting natural resources and political instability. War is perhaps the greatest upheaval for most people. The principles that Frank Buchman and Moral Re-Armament (MRA) set forth should be reconsidered as a potential solution to the problems that we will face for example in Ukraine, Russia, and wider Europe when hostilities cease.

However, due to being misunderstood, Buchman and MRA have been consequently ignored by mainstream educational providers in Europe. This study focuses on their missional aspect of Buchman's legacy by interviewing people who served in the MRA movement after Buchman's death and by comparing their responses to the extant documentary correspondence with Buchman.

The interviews and examination of the documentation showed that Buchman's principles have remained stable in the lives of those involved in MRA (renamed Initiatives of Change in 2001) and continue to bring positive change to the 45 countries in which they are active through emphasising individual change. Contrary to often made assumptions, it is these principles which have been used to build trust in places of division, to create peace in times of war, and to provide training that has underpinned democracy in places in which totalitarianism has reigned. Over time, many Europeans, particularly in the West, either have not known or have forgotten the principles that create the foundations for peace. With the exception of the wars in former Yugoslavia, Europe has experienced a prolonged period of peace and security since WW2. It is incumbent on educational authorities to raise awareness of these principles, on religious bodies to provide opportunities to engage in conflict resolution, and on governmental agencies to promote dialogue between peoples of different faiths and those of none. This might ensure that

Europeans retain the knowledge and skills necessary to bring peace and reconciliation to Ukraine, Russia, and wider Europe.

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# Introduction

## Remaking the World

*“Peace in the world can only spring from peace in the hearts of men.”*

(Buchman, 1961, p. 3)

-Frank Buchman in a speech titled *Our Primary Need*, given in Geneva 1932

This research project focuses on the lessons which can be learnt from the missional leadership of Frank Buchman and ponders the relevance of his principles to Europeans of this time. According to Van Gelder and Zscheile (2011, p.4), there are four themes that appear in missional church writings:

1. God is a missionary God who sends the church into the world.
2. God’s mission in the world is related to the reign (kingdom) of God.
3. The missional church is an incarnational (versus an attractional) ministry sent to engage a postmodern, post-Christendom, globalised context.
4. The internal life of the missional church focuses on every believer living as a disciple engaging in mission.

Buchman is a forgotten figure who demonstrated exemplary missional leadership. His principles, the 5Cs: confidence, confession, conviction, conversion, and continuance (Lean, 1988, p. 79) energised the Oxford Group (OG), later renamed Moral Re-Armament (MRA), which inspired personal recovery, international reconciliation, and interfaith cooperation movements, each of which have resulted in worldwide impact (see Appendix V).



In the late nineteenth century, it was commonplace to find churches and missions of every description scattered across North America and Europe, but from Buchman's perspective, this reality did not seem to be changing the world for the better. This was particularly true in Europe, and was borne out by the two World Wars fought on the continent as well as the ensuing materialism in the twentieth century. As a young evangelist, Buchman longed to see people's lives and nations changed by the power of God. He set about changing the individual lives of people who later would change nations. This was a step towards remaking the world. The aim of this paper is to learn from his leadership and his principles. The central issue of finding ways to change lives which consequently change nations remains just as relevant to the current generations of Europeans. Buchman's solution was to propound biblically-based principles and a sequence of actions.

The review of the available literature paints a picture of Frank Buchman through the years. It focuses on:

- a) Buchman the man, his background, influences, his experiences, his character, and his principles.
- b) The recovery movement, the development of Twelve Steps communities, and other recovery groups.
- c) The post-WW2 reconciliation movement, its origins, its connection to the churches, politics, and royalty.

As there is no existing study of Buchman's missional leadership to date, this study aims to fill that gap.

## Missional Leadership

According to Lean (1985, p. 30), Buchman was ordained as a Lutheran priest and began work in a street children's shelter. He later received spiritual power for his work arising from his experience during a conference in Keswick, England, in 1908. From then on, he inspired thousands of people to become involved in the work of changing lives and nations. Buchman was a living example of God's on-going plan to send his Church into the world.

Furthermore, his focus went far beyond individual conversion, he worked to see God's reign enacted in nations, in industry, in the arts, and in government. His desire to see 'nations ruled by men ruled by God' illustrates his missional thinking. He formed teams of performers, evangelists, and social political activists to promote life-change, reconciliation, and dialogue. These teams incarnated their message, living together as international, gender-blind and classless communities. Buchman developed four principles drawn from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), also known as the four absolutes: honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. He also encouraged followers to listen daily in silence for guidance, and in doing so, he inspired a radical movement of mission-minded people on all five continents by rendering discipleship manageable for ordinary people.

Although he is largely forgotten by Europeans of this age, Frank Buchman was an outstanding example of a leader who inspired people to join with God in discipling nations and attempting to reach all creation (Mark16:15). He did not set up a church, though his followers originally called themselves The First Century Fellowship. He did not write a definitive theological text, but his public speeches have been transcribed. Instead, he emphasised Christianity as a life rather than simply as a belief; in this, he demonstrated missional praxis.

His life illuminates the close and intricate connections between Americans and Europeans. In the last three centuries, European immigrants have had an extremely significant influence on the development of American culture with American economic and military strength greatly impacting developments in Europe since the twentieth century.

# Chapter 1 Context

## The Battle of Ideas

*“Change is the heart of the superior ideology.*

*As individuals change, a new climate comes to the nation's life. As leaders change, policies become inspired and the nation's life-blood flows again.”*

(Buchman, 1961, p. 169)

Frank Buchman in a speech titled *The Answer to Any 'Isim'- Even Materialism*, given at the World Assembly of MRA in 1948

## The Political Sphere

In the early part of the twentieth century, two major wars raged in Europe followed by a period of growing materialism. Marxism and fascism were the leading political philosophies in Europe. Hitler's national socialist party came to power in Germany in 1933, Mussolini founded the fascist party in Italy in 1922, and England was struggling with three million unemployed when the communists founded the October Club in Oxford in 1932. Nevertheless, the demise of fascism was brought about with the ending of WW2. At that time, according to Lean (1988, p. 154), many viewed Marxist communism as the solution for which to strive. In contrast, Buchman's ideas were rooted in his Christian faith which he believed produced a better ideology than either communism or fascism.

In a speech given at MRA's conference centre on Mackinac Island in Lake Michigan, Buchman spoke of the concept of MRA as an ideology which had a different origin from all other “isms” because it was not material in origin but rather moral and spiritual. “Its aim is to restore God to leadership as the directing force in

the life of the nation.” Lean (1988, p. 321). Buchman’s principles spring from the Bible and the Christian heritage of America and Europe. Despite these Christian foundations, there was great confusion as to whether his ideology was Rightist or Leftist. He insisted that the most important force to be guided by was the Holy Spirit stating when he was eighty years old that, “The true battle line in the world today is not between class and class, not between race and race. The battle is between Christ and anti-Christ” (Lean, 1988, p. 321).

In the mid-1930s, as many nations began to re-arm for the pending war, Buchman and the Oxford Group (OG) began to emphasise the need for ‘moral and spiritual renewal’ on a worldwide scale. Buchman saw the need for an alternative ideology to Nazism and Communism. He regarded these political ideologies as being rooted in materialistic philosophy. Furthermore, he believed that democracy was rooted in ‘spiritual and moral philosophy’. This was shortened in 1938 to ‘moral rearmament’. Buchman viewed moral rearmament as a coherent world philosophy not simply as the name for the movement. The most important difference between these philosophies was that materialism, whether in the form of Nazism or Communism, contained the idea of coercion whereas moral rearmament philosophy contained the idea of consent. This did not prevent MRA proponents from providing highly compelling and forceful presentations of their ideas. This development placed MRA as an alternative ideology to Communism, particularly in the post-war years with the decline of Nazism. MRA became the main ideological alternative to Communism. Strictly speaking, MRA was not a political ideology, but it was a moral and spiritual ideology that encompassed the political sphere of life. The official organisation continued to be registered as the Oxford Group in London, UK. However, the movement, its protagonists, activities, and ideology became known as Moral Rearmament (MRA) from 1938 onwards. MRA became an ideology acquiring a more universal outlook in the post-war years (Boobbyer, 2013, p. 134).

During the run-up to WW2, MRA was often accused of being sympathetic to the Nazis and anti-Communist. The reason for this was Buchman's meetings with Himmler and his positive comments about Hitler. However, this criticism came from the chairman of the Labour Party and Fleet Street journalists. Buchman admits to having been misled by Hitler but sincerely believed at the time that Hitler could change. The incident illustrates the difference in approach between MRA and traditional political approaches. Central to MRA thinking was the concept of individual change. Buchman maintained that individuals needed to personally turn to God and learn to be guided by him. This in turn, he believed would enable them to carry out their professional responsibilities more fruitfully and meaningfully. Buchman attempted to meet Hitler three times with the help of German MRA supporter Annaliese von Cramon. Unfortunately, Buchman was unsuccessful; Himmler, the leader of the para-military guard SS, decided to outlaw MRA in Germany and no meeting between Buchman and Hitler ever took place (Boobbyer, 2013, p. 137). Due to these attempts to meet with Hitler, the British Labour MP suggested that Buchman should be arrested as a Nazi sympathiser if he re-entered the UK. Others, such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, considered Buchman to be naive in thinking that Hitler could change. In Bonhoeffer's view, Hitler was beyond change and simply needed to be eliminated (Bonhoeffer, 2005, p. 218). Despite this view, according to Dawson (2020, p. 45), Bonhoeffer was greatly influenced by Buchman and the Oxford Group (OG).

After the defeat of the axis powers at the end of WW2, Nazism as an ideology sharply declined in the world. By contrast, the triumph of the Soviet Union meant that Communism replaced Nazism as the dominant ideology. In brief, Nazism had been an ideology based on racial struggle. Communism was an ideology based on class struggle. Both were materialistic in outlook. The response from Buchman was not to emphasise the racial or class struggle, but to highlight the spiritual and moral struggle. This worked well as an alternative to Communism. As Boobbyer (2013, p. 141) proposed, much of MRA's post-war literature was directed against

Communism, particularly the booklet *Ideology and coexistence* (1959). It was printed in the millions and distributed around the world in countries in which MRA held some sway. MRA workers adopted the slogan “moral rearmament or communism.” Therefore, critics have called Buchman anti-Communist and associated him with US senator Joseph McCarthy. MRA countered in a statement published in the British newspaper *The Times* on 30 March 1961 that, “Anti-communism is an attitude of hate towards people. Absolute love is one of the standards of Moral Re-Armament. It hates nobody. It does carry on hate: the hate of evil” (sic).

## The Religious Sphere

Another important change occurred in part because of the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis and the Soviets. Ideology itself came to be seen as negative and destructive. There were those within the Church who felt that mission should not be guided purely by ideology but by the Holy Spirit. Buchman adapted by emphasising MRA as a lifestyle rather than an ideology.

Although Buchman lived in an era when church leaders usually spoke from the front in their gatherings, he was different in that, when invited, he usually brought a team of younger people with him who all spoke while Buchman simply coordinated. He thought that it was important that the listeners heard the message about individual change from people who had recently experienced change. “Fresh fish” as he called them. This led to the accusation that Buchman was 'too sure' of himself. Due to this accusation, several senior figures within the Anglican Church investigated Buchman on behalf of Dr Lang, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, and concluded that there was no basis for the accusation (Lean, 1988, p. 177). Another accusation was that he spoke in public meetings about matters that were 'too personal', such

as sexual temptation. Princeton University officially investigated and acquitted him of the accusation. It was only in praxis, not theology, in which Buchman differed from mainstream churches. He laid the emphasis on personal change and transparency that lead to social change in contrast to mainstream Protestant churches which laid the emphasis on holding the correct beliefs and Catholic churches which prioritised trying to improve society but neglected individual change. Buchman's emphasis was both the cause of his success and the cause of controversy surrounding him. He believed that personal change resulted from listening to God's guidance. He also controversially believed that this was available to anyone. Therefore, MRA workers daily practised a 'quiet time' and sought individual guidance. He was not a top-down leader, which was in stark contrast to the church of the day that relied on priests and pastors for guidance. Buchman attempted to teach this principle to politicians, industrialists, labourers, entertainers, miners, dockworkers, and other groups within society, including royals in Europe and Asia. Here we see Buchman's missional thinking. He did not have a narrow view of who could be guided by God; instead he believed that if a person aspired to absolute moral standards and set aside time to listen they would be guided. This principle was not new, the discipline of silence has ancient roots, but Buchman first learnt it from F.B. Meyer in 1909 and was aided by the book by Wright (2018) *The will of God and a man's lifework* (classic reprint) originally released in 1909. Buchman practised quiet times throughout his life and many MRA workers followed this same practice. This was an important missional principle that encouraged all people to look directly to God for guidance rather than to other spiritual leaders. That is not to say that leadership was unimportant, only that it did not supersede the Holy Spirit's direction.

In the 1930 conference at Lambeth Palace, the Anglican Church was initially supportive of the Oxford Group's (OG) ideas after hearing reports on OG's work in South Africa. The Bishop of London commissioned lawyers to investigate the changes that people claimed to have experienced. The result was that the bishop



acclaimed Buchman's work throughout his career. Similarly, the Archbishop of Canterbury carried out extensive enquiries and corresponded with the Bishop of the Episcopal church of America. Both agreed that Buchman's character was beyond disrepute but there remained questions about young leaders in the church working full-time for OG. This is the traditional accusation of 'sheep-stealing'. Buchman was flexible in that he believed that people should follow the Spirit's leading which may not accord with their denomination's goals. This radical thinking brought him into conflict with churches.

The reality of life-changing experiences was uncommon in the churches of the day with many priests and bishops failing in their task which was to bring people to Christ. This is illustrated by the visit of the Metropolitan of India, Ceylon, and Burma, Dr Foss in 1933. According to Lean (1988, p. 179), Dr Foss "did not smoke, drink or indulge himself in any other way" to which Buchman retorted "Yes, that's all true. But Dr Foss cannot diagnose people" (ibid., p. 179).

According to Boobbyer (2013, p. 83), Buchman saw MRA as a "program of life" guided by the Holy Spirit. The key to understanding Buchman is not found in looking at his theological ideas but by looking at his spiritual practice. He did not differ from mainstream protestant/evangelical beliefs, but his practices were in many ways similar to Francis of Assisi and the monastic communities of late antiquity.

Buchman had a genius for expressing Christian experiences into everyday language. However, this was a double-edged sword. For example, from 1915 onwards, he was increasingly exposed to people from non-Christian religions. Instead of expecting them to convert to Christianity, he encouraged them to practice their own religion more seriously. At the 1937 Congress of Faith, MRA insisted that it did not represent one particular religious outlook; furthermore, when later applying for funding from the Ford Foundation, MRA stressed that it was not a religious

organisation. This missional thinking came about because the calling to 'remake the world' was such an enormous venture that it required the engagement of all faiths. This went beyond the spheres to which traditional denominations could reach and most likely cost MRA the support it needed. Whereas missionaries from western countries had tried to convert others to Christianity, Buchman's approach differed by emphasising living by absolute moral standards and listening to God for guidance.

# Chapter 2 Literature Review

## Unknown or Forgotten History

*I want Britain to be governed by men governed by God.*

*I want to see the world governed by men governed by God.*

*Why not let God run the whole world?*

(Lean, 1988, p. 529)

Frank Buchman shortly before his death in Freudenstadt, Germany in 1961

## Introduction

Several key works have been written about the remarkable life of Frank Buchman. In the book *Remaking the world* (1961), first published in 1947, sixty-four of his speeches given between 1932 and 1961 have been collected. This is the primary source from which we derive Buchman's principles and core ideas as well as his practical solutions for national conflicts and personal struggles. The following is a survey of the pertinent literature in chronological order.

## 1920s

British Labour MP and columnist for the Daily Express accused Buchman of indecency in 1928 and repeated the accusation nine years later (Lean, 1988, p. 259). His book *The mystery of Moral Re-Armament* (1964), was a devastating critique of Buchman's movement. He remained opposed to Buchman throughout his lifetime even suggesting that he should be arrested as a Nazi sympathiser in

1946. His views of Buchman were influential because they were published in daily newspapers.

## 1930s

An early article written about Buchman was by Julian Thornton-Duesbury (1932, p. 210). He was a fellow and chaplain of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who knew Buchman. In his article, Thornton-Duesbury (1932) strives to understand what Buchman's thinking meant for the church's understanding of "revival thinking and practice". He notes that after Buchman's "vision of the crucified Christ" (ibid., p. 208), three theological concepts arose when sharing his experience with others and attempting to bring change to them. These three concepts of ruin, redemption, and regeneration were essential (ibid., pp. 211-215). Thornton-Duesbury expresses, "There must have been something very wrong with the Church if this Oxford Group (OG) had to arise." Buchman had no new theology or method; instead, he focused on the message of personal change to students at elite universities at a time when the "Divvers" (examinations in biblical literature) were abolished and the "October club" (communist organisation) was being founded at Oxford (ibid., p. 217).

## 1950s

The well-known French philosopher Gabriel Marcel (1960) wrote *Fresh Hope for the World* which was first published in French in 1958. The book is a collection of testimonies of individuals who felt that their lives had changed through Buchman and the OG. Marcel developed a philosophy of 'Christian existentialism' and provided the philosophical underpinning for the concept of change from within. The book focuses on people's experience of change, not just their ideas about change. He met Buchman a couple of times and was very much affected by Buchman's belief that human nature could be changed. Marcel contributes significantly to our

understanding of the philosophy of man especially in his *Letter of personal assurance to three anxious friends* (ibid., pp. 1-15). Further, he points to its universal application in his chapter *The universal man - Frank Buchman* (ibid., p. 174) illustrating this with the story of the leader of Ghanaian Muslims, who is a Ghanaian parliamentarian, and who himself undergoes the experience of change.

## 1960s

An early study was published by Farley (1962, p.16) entitled *Dr Frank Buchman and MRA*, in which there is a section where he outlines the response to “Buchmanism” which was a term disliked by MRA supporters. Farley details in a letter dated 20 January 1961 the diversity of opinions, such as the Holy See expressing disapproval of MRA in contrast to some prelates supporting it (ibid., p.18). He recognised that MRA was mainly supported by Protestants, particularly Lutherans from Germany and Scandinavian countries. The Anglican Church was divided over its support because it disapproved of what it viewed as Buchman “equating oriental religions with Christianity” (ibid., p.19). Farley does not mention Eastern Orthodox responses. Although Buchman attempted to gain the backing of all the churches, he was not deterred by their lack of support. His missional goal was not to remake the Church but to remake the world.

## 1970s

Buchman’s inspirational leadership style can be seen in that he himself did not start many of the projects that he is associated with, but when closely examined, he inspired others to achieve steps that they otherwise would not have taken. Philippe Mottu (1970) was an important example of this. In his book, *The Story of Caux*, he how Buchman inspired him to buy and renovate the derelict Palace Hotel in Caux during WW2. It is popularly known as Mountain House. Buchman came with a team

of over a hundred people to open the first conference in 1946. Over the next few weeks, three thousand people attended from thirty-four nations.

The speech that Buchman had given in Zurich about the role of Switzerland as a “prophet among the nations” serves as a clear example of the inspiration for ninety-five Swiss families to provide the money to buy the Caux Palace. It also motivated hundreds of volunteers to renovate the place. Pierre Spoerri records this in Mackenzie and Young’s book (2008, p. 47). Mottu (1970, p. 53) called this speech “a call for the mobilisation of the Swiss people.” The speech galvanised the Swiss people including the President of the Swiss Confederation, the Commander in Chief of the army, and thousands of individuals across the nation. Mottu himself recounts the astonishing thought he received in 1942: “If we survive the war, we must put at Frank Buchman’s disposal a place where the people of Europe, now divided by hatred, suffering and bitterness, can come together again. Caux is the place” (ibid., pp. 54-55). The Mountain House at Caux became central to MRA. From there, Buchman’s principles spread around the world. It became the site at which reconciliation began between German and French leaders. It was also the place at which Japanese leaders were received back into the family of nations. At the first post-war meeting of MRA at Caux, Buchman famously asked “Where are the Germans?” And he added: “Some of you think that Germany has got to change; and that is true. But you will never be able to rebuild Europe without Germany” (ibid., 1970, p. 63). This was another example of a brief statement lacking detail that arguably inspired a whole movement towards peace-making and reconciliation. Buchman had the ability to place a morally compelling and sufficiently wide vision in front of people which would mobilise whole groups of people into investing their time and money into it. Buchman proved able to do this on all five continents. Many who attended conferences at the Mountain House in Caux, Switzerland, reported having life-changing personal experiences that subsequently impacted the social and political situation in their nations.

David Belden (1974, p. 213) wrote a doctoral thesis entitled *The origins and development of the Oxford Group (Moral Re-Armament)*. It seeks to correct the false assumptions and misunderstandings about Buchman and MRA largely publicised by Driberg (1962 and 1964). His authority is augmented by his personal experience. He was born into MRA. Both his parents worked full-time in MRA.

## 1980s

C. Piguet and M. Sentis (1982) wrote about their experiences working on racial reconciliation in South Africa in the book *The World at the Turning Point*. The importance of their work is two-fold: It documents the process by which their spiritual experience at Caux forged their political activities into successful peace-making between races. This was central to Buchman's missional thinking. They were not restricted to church activities alone, but they brought their spiritual and moral renewal to bear on the politics of the day. It is also important in another way in that it provides clear evidence of Buchman's ecumenical influence as one of the authors is Swiss Protestant and the other is French Catholic. In Chapter 13 *Meditation in action, Piguet and Sentis (1982, pp. 101-109)* directly comment on Buchman and his equipping of people with "new motives for living"; his balanced silence and action; his emphasis on the spiritual rather than the material; his absolute moral standards; and his down-to-earth attitude, seen, for example, in firstly encouraging reconciliation with people that we know.

Jacqueline Piguet published the French resistance worker Irene Laure's biography *For the Love of Tomorrow* which included a chapter about Frank Buchman (1985, p. 74). She records Buchman's now legendary question to Laure in Caux, "Madame Laure, as a Socialist, how do you expect to rebuild Europe without the Germans?". This question goes to the heart of Buchman's missional leadership style. He did not preach to people or strongly direct them, but he often suggested something or

asked a challenging question. It is also worth noting that Irene Laure became an excellent example of the high-quality leadership that Buchman and MRA inspired.

The British journalist and lawyer Garth Lean wrote the definitive biography of *Frank Buchman: A Life* (1985), which was the British edition, and published as *On the Tail of a Comet* (1988) in the United States. As one would expect, he focuses on the most important biographical events in Buchman's family and working life. It also refers to his views and the scope of his ministry. However, it hardly attempts to evaluate any of the timeless concepts and principles in Buchman's life.

Nevertheless, Lean was an important eyewitness who knew Buchman for over thirty years and travelled with him on numerous occasions especially throughout the 1930s. His book remains the best source of historical information about Buchman. This part of twentieth-century history is not widely known and has been neglected by European educational curricula providers; Lean's work could be used to fill that gap.

Alan Thornhill (1986, p. 63) was an Oxford don and a priest. After meeting Buchman in 1928, he was inspired to write twelve of MRA's plays and wrote the script for one of their films. In his book *The Best of Friends*, he said, "Moral Re-Armament strives for both a deeper and more effective Christian experience and for the widest application of faith to the issues of society" (ibid., p. 9). When discussing with well-known scholar, and broadcaster Malcom Muggeridge, he clarifies that one of the chief difficulties that MRA faced was its uncompromising stance against sexual immorality, encapsulated in its second moral absolute; purity. Muggeridge had said, "Stand up against eroticism and you've had it... The concept of sexual purity sticks in the craw of the twentieth century" (ibid., p.16). Buchman's principle of absolute purity was radically opposed to the moral relativism espoused by European societies from the mid-1960s onward. He was gifted at communicating in simple ways, "Sin is the disease, Christ is the cure, the result is a miracle" (ibid., p. 66).



## 1990s

Edward Luttwak contributed a chapter to a collection of essays edited by Johnson and Sampson (1994), *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. This book records with hindsight the ways in which religion has played an important role in a number of instances by bringing solutions to international conflicts. Luttwak's essay in Chapter 4 *The overlooked role of the Moral Re-Armament movement* details post-war Franco-German reconciliation. His view is important because he is a military strategist who worked at the security research organisation Centre for Strategic International Studies. Luttwak explored the relevance of applying Buchman's principles that brought about Franco-German reconciliation to the conflict between Serbia and Kosovo. Former EU commission president Jacques Delors affirmed its relevance and extended it to include other countries on a path to join the European Union.

In her review of Luttwak for *The Journal of Common Market Studies*, political science professor Catherine Guisan (2011) cites the MRA members, e.g. French resistance officer Irene Laure and the Norwegian former Gestapo prisoner Leif Hovelson who wrote *Out of the Evil Night* in 1959, who spent years in post-war Germany telling their stories of overcoming hatred towards the Germans as examples of the ways in which civil society contributes to peace and reconciliation.

Dikedi et al. (1999, p. 3) wrote in the *MRA world bulletin* an interesting insight into Buchman's leadership. In a section about the quality of MRA's spiritual life, they stated, "Buchman's constant - perhaps even his first - concern was rooting his team in the deepest spiritual truths he knew." It is misguided to think of MRA only in terms of what the movement did or did not achieve. Dikedi et al. of the International Coordination Group reminded their readers, "Buchman would not hesitate to pull full time workers away from important tasks and fly them half-way around the world to assure purity of purpose and a renewal of expectancy" (ibid). Social activism was to

be balanced by being rooted in spiritual truths. It was Buchman's insistence on absolute moral standards that contrasted MRA from other social and political movements. The Clean Kenya Campaign reported that same year that absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love were adopted as 'the four pillars of new Kenya' (ibid).

## 2000s

Sacker (2004, p. 261) affirms that Buchman focused on men who attended elite universities in Britain and the US. He tapped into the desire in many men for "real experience" in their lives. He cast a broad and challenging vision which many men responded to who saw traditional church attendance as insipid. It caused a surge of religious experience in the 1920s at a time when Britain and America were secularising. The weakness of this strategy was that Buchman as an unmarried man insisting on absolute moral standards, particularly absolute purity, left himself wide-open to the accusation of puritanism. Princeton university ordered an investigation into his methods and whilst they found no wrong-doing, the damage had been done. The accusations remained with their suggestion that Buchman was indecent in sexual matters.

The devastating critic of Buchman and MRA written by the Chairman of the British Labour Party MP and Daily Express columnist Tom Driberg (1946) in *The Mystery of Moral Re-Armament* created further suspicion when in 1928 he stated that, "Public confessions" were "indecent" (Lean, 1985, pp. 258-9). Driberg was openly homosexual at a time when it was still illegal in Britain. In the light of this, it is reasonable to suggest that Driberg's vehement reaction against MRA was at least in part because Buchman's focus on young men from elite universities involved living by absolute moral standards. Perhaps he saw Buchman as a secret homosexual. Nevertheless, Lean (1988) stated that there was no evidence to

support the claim that Buchman was homosexual. Driberg and a number of others used their positions in Fleet Street press to misrepresent MRA and cast aspersions in the national newspapers. This labelled both Buchman and MRA as being controversial (ibid., pp. 134-137).

Archie Mackenzie (2008, p. 19-22), who was a British diplomat for thirty-two years, compiled records along with David Young of Buchman's life and legacy using Lean (1985) and Johnson (1984) as sources. They bring the story right up to the present by documenting the legacy of nations changed and lives changed since Buchman's death. It is controversial in places but offers a positive view of the movement.

## 2010s

The best way to understand Buchman's ideology is by considering the more recent work achieved by Philip Boobbyer in *The Spiritual Vision of Frank Buchman* (2013). Boobbyer is a historian of Russian thought at the University of Kent who wrote the first scholarly overview of Buchman's political and theological ideas. He introduces various theological writers who influenced Buchman. Although he does not directly evaluate the missional aspect of Buchman's leadership, insights are gained into his leadership from his examination of Buchman's principles and practices. Boobbyer (2013) describes the development of Buchman's practices over time; for example, in between the world wars, the OG greatly used specifically Christian language. However, after the World War II, the renamed MRA increasingly utilised 'neutral' language. The reason for this development was that the movement became more widely exposed to people from non-Christian religions and people with no religion (Boobbyer, 2013, p. 85). He concurs with Lean (1988, p. 76) that central to Buchman's thinking was living according to absolute moral standards: honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. People could evaluate their own lives according to these standards during 'quiet times'. These were times set apart daily when

individuals actively listened in silence for guidance. They then recorded their thoughts and applied them to themselves and to society. Boobbyer quotes extensively from Buchman's speeches, such as *War of Ideas* (1943) and *All the Moral Fences are Down* (1961). Boobbyer's chapter on Buchman's politics and ideology conveys that Buchman believed in what he called 'inspired democracy': the idea that democracy is undergirded by people who are guided by God through their quiet times and are living according to absolute moral standards (Boobbyer, 2013, p. 157).

Boobbyer's work has been peer-reviewed by some such as the Swedish theology professor Jarlert (2014, p. 807) who points out that Boobbyer fails to tackle in sufficient depth Buchman's view that the Oxford Group was 'a life' not an organisation. This illustrated a lack of understanding of the missional nature of Buchman's movement. OG was motivated by their mission to remake the world and consequently did not fit in with any particular church or organisation. Buchman viewed his mission of bringing change as going beyond that of the personal. He believed personal change would lead to structural change in the family, workplace, nation, and internationally. It is not clear to what point Jarlert thought the structural change was valid.

Boobbyer's work was also reviewed by Daniel Sack (2015, p. 278) who encourages historians of American religion to pay attention to the MRA movement because "it creatively combined classic American evangelicalism, popular psychology, media and celebrity culture, and a unique form of anti-politics". He also notes, "After giving rise to Alcoholics Anonymous and Up With People, it largely faded from public view after Buchman's death in 1961, and it has gotten little attention from scholars since" (ibid., p. 278). He does allude to Buchman being focused on small group evangelism and story-telling. Indeed, Buchman was missional in that he managed to reach his generation through story-telling rather than preaching. Another point of view that is held by many is that Buchman was a "chameleon" and simply changed

his methods for different situations. Nevertheless, Flynn (2016, p. 99) notices that Buchman was consistent in personal evangelistic outreach and in his dependence on the Holy Spirit to guide. This emphasis on personal evangelism was in contrast to the mass tent revivals which were normal at the time. It would be interesting to compare Buchman's methods with, for example, Billy Graham's (1918-2018).

Garth Mason (2015) published an amazing doctoral study of the effect of MRA philosophy on Philip Vundla who was an ANC activist in 1950s South Africa during the apartheid era. Mason (2015, p. 179) concludes that MRA's principles directly influenced Vundla's "belief in the centrality of community values, finding common ground between opposing political forces and his avoidance of egoic identity politics". Mason zeros in on the use of two boycotts: one of a school and the other of a bus service. The non-confrontational negotiations eventually influenced ANC's political activism strategy. This demonstrates the direct application of Buchman's principles to the process of decolonisation and the independence in South Africa. According to Mason (*ibid.*, p. 154), Vundla was a precursor of Mandela.

According to Pamela Jenner (2018) in *Changing society through drama*, MRA owned and operated the Westminster Theatre in London from 1949 until 1970 with their presentations being taken on the road across the world. She argues that the culture in Britain changed towards the end of the 1960s which caused the direct moral messages of MRA drama to cease to gain popular appeal. The sexual revolution began to imbue even the word 'moral' with a sense of being antiquated. MRA responded slowly to the changing culture (*ibid.*, pp. 194-196). Nevertheless, Thornhill's play *Return Trip* (1974) about a drug addict who converts to Christ and then relapses as well as Ruthann & Gray's *The Clashpoint* (1983) about racial tensions in an inner-city school in the north of England did attract attention from young people. However, in general, movies began to compete with theatre as a medium. Moreover, the Education Act of 1989 reduced funding to the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), which in turn cut the funding for school children's day

trips to the theatre, which were known as 'The Day of London Theatre' (ibid., p. 206).

## 2020s

A recent article by Schimmelpenninck (March 2022) calls for a renewal of moral values in Europe. Schimmelpenninck is a Dutch columnist for Volkskrant newspaper who is responding to the decision of the German government to militarily rearm after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The writer recalls his grandmother telling him stories about her brother and sister's involvement in MRA. He admits that at the time it sounded too Christian to him and, being a child of the 1990s, he was not really interested. Despite this, he does mention well-known figures in Dutch industry, such as Frits Philips, the founder of the multinational Philips Electronics company, and their involvement in MRA, which he calls "the Salvation Army of the rich".

## Conclusion

Referring to Schimmelpenninck's (March 2022) response, it is a significant one because the writer highlights the current reality in Ukraine. In his view, the West needs to do more than militarily rearm, it needs to do so both spiritually and morally. This is essentially the same argument raised by Buchman eighty years ago. Schimmelpenninck (ibid.) opines "the war in the East is a logical consequence of Europe's moral deficit." He claims that while Putin has been concerned about empire-building, "Europe was only concerned with itself." Schimmelpenninck asserts that the solution is that the "richest and happiest among us should morally rearm" and use some "quiet times". Where he misconstrues Buchman is that he thinks MRA was only for the rich. Buchman did emphasise that the prominent national leadership needed to be reached and changed if nations were to be

changed, but his principles and practices were aimed at all classes and conditions of people. Buchman emphasised that in order to remake the world one must start by remaking oneself. In practice, this meant living your life according to Buchman's four absolute moral standards. In turn, to do this, it required spending time alone each day in silence in order to hear God's guidance. As one obeyed God, so one's life would change. The origin of this emphasis was two experiences in Buchman's life: Firstly, in 1908 in Keswick, England, whilst listening to Jessie Penn-Lewis, "she pictured the dying Christ as I had never seen him pictured before" (ibid. p. 30), he recalled later. During this experience, he "saw his own sin, pride, selfishness and ill-will" (ibid., p.30). He subsequently asked God to forgive him. Buchman felt "a strong current of life suddenly being poured into him" which led him to write six letters of apology to people back in the States who were the board members of the street children's shelter for which he had worked (ibid., p. 32). Secondly, in 1909 at Penn State College, Buchman met F.B. Meyer who challenged Buchman as to whether he spent sufficient time listening to the Holy Spirit to guide him (Lean 1988, p. 35-36). Buchman's response was to begin spending at least an hour each day quietly listening to God, a practice which he continued throughout his lifetime. These experience as well as his reactive action became a model for remaking the world by beginning with oneself.

# Chapter 3 Methodology

## Voices From the Front

*“It is not a question of a change in policy; it is a question of changing people. Democracy and her freedoms can be saved only by the quality of the people who speak in her name.”* (Buchman, 1961, p. 348)

Robert Schuman the Foreign Minister of France in 1950

## Research Design

In order to discover more about the leadership of Buchman and the impact of his principles on the lives of others and to ponder on what Europeans can learn from it, I undertook two different forms of research: One was a series of semi-structured interviews with people who had worked with MRA and IofC; and the other was an analysis of documents written to Buchman during his lifetime by his associates.

## Semi-structured Interviews

I wanted to hear the experiences and opinions of the informants when they were speaking freely without feeling pressured to provide particular answers; therefore, I asked a series of open questions. In a free-flowing conversation, a certain amount of interpretation both on the part of the informant and on the part of the interviewer is required. For example, according to Thomas (2017, pp. 109-110), informants with an insider’s viewpoint might present a picture of the movement in its best or worst light depending on their individual experiences. The informants all have different personalities and will naturally express their experiences and opinions differently. In



order to reduce the amount of interpretation needed, I have directly quoted them. The interviews were loosely based on four questions. However, during the interviews, in addition to their own accounts, the respondents also volunteered personal testimonies and anecdotes heard from friends and family members. They all emphasised that what they had shared was only the briefest of summaries of what had transpired in their lives over the years. With this in mind and due to the wealth of information, much of the raw data was vastly reduced in order for it to be manageable for this project.

## Documentary Analysis

To gain insight into Buchman as a missional leader, I wanted to hear from those who personally knew him. The best way to achieve this was to examine the extant correspondence between them. These documents were analysed for direct references to Buchman's principles or personal impact. I have liberally quoted from the authors who were well-known figures at the time. The letters are addressed to Buchman at Mountain House, Caux. They are sent by political and national leaders from other parts of the world. These unpublished letters are held in the public archives of Vaud at the University of Lausanne. I wanted to see if issues raised in those letters corroborated the experiences of the interviewees. I have used some excerpts to triangulate results.

## Study Approach

It was not feasible to carry out a large-scale study involving many countries which might have yielded nomothetical results; moreover, as the added value of a much wider scope was questionable, I designed an idiographic study. In this way, we can learn from the individual respondents and authors who themselves learned about leadership through experiencing MRA or directly from Buchman. Patterns were

discovered from their responses to the questions and written documents, which were then triangulated along with the literature review.

The four principal questions to interviewees were:

1. What kind of leader was Buchman and what was inspirational about him?
2. How have Buchman's four moral absolutes directly affected your life?
3. What kind of social projects or community projects have you served in locally or internationally?
4. What did you learn from MRA?

Question 1 asked for their experiences of being led or inspired by Frank Buchman. Question 2 was aimed at the respondent's personal life and was usually answered by memories of ways in which they had internalised the practice of living by absolute moral standards. Question 3 dealt with specific activities undertaken in MRA arising from the ideology within the movement. Question 4 was deliberately open and wide-ranging. The intention here was to allow the respondents to summarise their lifelong learning from the movement, be it negative or positive.

Respondents shared about events that had happened in Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, and Australia. The sample consisted of thirteen people of six different nationalities who currently live in three European countries. Interviews were conducted in three countries using the English language. This was not the mother tongue of most of the informants which carried potential for misunderstanding.

As I wanted to interview eye-witnesses of Buchman's leadership style, I focused on an older demographic. However, out of the six people I approached who were old enough to remember him, none of them were in sufficiently good health to be

interviewed, but three submitted a written statement. Their statement was the closest to the original source.

## Participants

- A British/Swiss couple who have lived and worked at Mountain House conference centre in Caux, Switzerland. This interview was carried out at their home in the village of Caux in February 2022 (two days before Russia invaded Ukraine) and included a detailed tour of the nearby Mountain House. They are both Christian.
- A Syrian woman who has become involved in lofC in recent years. She came to Sweden as a refugee fleeing the war in Syria. She benefited from lofC through their help with integration into Swedish society. This interview was held in a restaurant in Sollentuna, Sweden, in October 2021. She is Muslim.
- An Indian/Russian couple who live in Stockholm, Sweden. He is a business owner and she is a PhD student. He has been an lofC worker in Sweden. They were interviewed in a restaurant in Sollentuna, Sweden, in October 2021. He is Hindu and she has no religion.
- A Swiss woman who has worked with Moral Re-Armament in England since the late 1960s and possesses a long-term perspective. She went to Caux, a neighbouring village, with a school friend to improve her English. This led to her spending her entire working life in the Moral Re-Armament movement. Her experience begins only eight years after Buchman's death. She is Christian.
- A Finnish couple from Espoo, he is the current chairman of lofC Finland. She works as a Lutheran priest. They are both Christian.

- A Finnish entrepreneur from Espoo. He worked in film production and travelled with the MRA teams for many years. He is Christian.
- A Finnish cook from Hyvinkää who spent almost her entire working life in MRA. She is Christian.
- Three elderly Finnish people who attended Buchman's meetings and saw him lead.

The total data gained from this research project was collated and triangulated utilising principles obtained from the work of Thomas (2013), as well as Ward (2017).

## Ethics

The most valuable aspect of my research has been the information gathered from interviews with those who worked on behalf of MRA, some hailing from as long ago as the 1960s. Many of them worked on a voluntary basis, sometimes living in large houses leased by the movement. Ten people were interviewed face-to-face, and three provided information via email. The majority were recruited through the lofC international website. All informants consented to having their responses included in this research project. Their names have been withheld to protect their identities.

## Data Gathering and Materials Used

The verbal data gathered from the interviews has been stored on a speech recording device and the transcripts are held on a database. The documentary data is held in the public archives of Vaud in Lausanne, Switzerland. The quoted documents have been photographed with a picture-capturing device and are held on a database.

## Procedure

Interviews were held with four of the informants in a restaurant in Sollentuna, Sweden. This was the location that they chose. The first interview was held with two other participants present; therefore, it is naturally possible that the informant's freedom to speak was somewhat impaired. Nevertheless, my interpretation was that she was not limited by the other's presence. These interviews yielded not only insight into the current work of IofC in Sweden but also data on MRA's influence in France, India, Russia, and Syria. The fourth of these interviews was held on a different day. It particularly focused on MRA in England and Switzerland. The informant had worked with MRA in London since the late sixties, just a few years after Buchman and his successor Peter Howard had died.

Two interviews were held in a private home in Caux, Switzerland, with follow-up online video calls and email correspondence. The interviews included a guided tour of the nearby Mountain House conference centre. The interviewees had travelled widely with MRA including extended periods in Australia and South Africa. They had worked at the Mountain House conference centre for over forty years and are both currently involved in collating material about Frank Buchman for both the For A New World website and for the public archives of Vaud in Lausanne. Their knowledge of events at Mountain House, Caux, are second to none.

One interview was held in a private home in Hyvinkää, Finland. The interview focused on MRA in England, Finland, France, and South America. This informant spoke with great insight about her experience of community living within MRA.

One couple visited our home in Helsinki, Finland, and during the interview recounted the history of MRA in Finland with its particular sensitivity to its Russian neighbour. He is the current chairman of IofC Finland which has around one hundred and fifty members. Another Finnish man was interviewed at our home who had worked with MRA for many years, particularly in film production. He was able to illuminate the continuance of the movement's principles from one generation to the next. He also reported on a recent conversation with three elderly people who had been in Buchman's meetings and had observed his leadership. I was able to collect their comments in electronic form.

## Analysis

The raw data from this research is composed of words spoken during interviews and words written in letters. Both contain perceptions, ideas, feelings, thoughts, and activities undertaken. The data from interviews was sifted for recurring patterns in the answers given and categorised in order to be presented in an orderly fashion in the form of charts (see Appendix 4), and cross-referenced with the written data from the documents. This analysis shed light on Buchman's missional leadership and yielded lessons for our time.

# Chapter 4 Research Findings

## The World Remade?

*“Moral Re-Armament is the greatest thing that has come out of the West”*

(Lean, 1988, p. 408)

Mahatma Gandhi to Roger Hicks in India 1940

The following chapter analyses the transcripts of seven and a half hours of semi-structured interviews with ten participants. The interviews were held in Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland. Secondly, there is an analysis of five unpublished documents copied from the Vaud Archives in Lausanne in Switzerland.

### 1. Discursive Analysis

In February 2022, whilst I was visiting Switzerland to research the history of Frank Buchman, Russia invaded Ukraine causing a storm of emotions and reactions in the West. This threw my research into sharp relief because Buchman had learnt the art of making peace and bringing about reconciliation after WW2. The vast majority of today's Europeans have not lived through the realities of war resulting in them no longer knowing the means to achieving peace and reconciliation. Buchman's call for spiritual and moral Re-Armament is as relevant for the current generations as it was in the post-war reconstruction era. The ten interviewees contributed insight into Buchman's missional leadership that was more nuanced than the documentary evidence. Interviewees stressed that their answers grew out of their individual unique experiences in MRA.

## Question 1: What kind of leader was Buchman and what was inspirational?

First, information was collected from three elderly people who had actually attended Buchman's meetings and had personally observed his leadership style. Due to their age and infirmities, it was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews with them. Despite this, they sent these answers via one of the interviewees. They said about Buchman, "**He trusted the Holy Spirit** and could be very unexpected and humorous in his ways of leadership". The three elderly people who heard Buchman speak were referring to what appears to be the key to understanding Buchman's missional leadership. "He trusted the Holy Spirit". It is such a short statement, yet it speaks volumes about the way in which Buchman worked. Of course, this statement can be interpreted in different ways, but what is important is that the three observers believed that Buchman was in some way being guided by God. Buchman was a charismatic leader in his historical context, and he had intuitions. The evidence from those three who actually observed him pointed to his spiritual influence. Secondly, here is a selection of responses to Question 1 from the ten people who were interviewed in person. The interviewees are alphabetically listed from A to J.

A described Buchman as being a prophet.

B recounted how Buchman had indirectly inspired two men to begin a group that later became Alcoholics Anonymous. He noticed that Buchman was not concerned whether or not its followers would attribute its origins to him.

C recalled Buchman holding large events in Scandinavia "left a permanent mark on people". Referring to the positive changes.

D & E: This couple explained how Buchman inspired Bishop Lehtonen (1921-2010) to found MRA in Finland. He also inspired Matti Joensuu (1915-2003) who established family counselling services as well as Mathilda Wrede (1864-1928) to establish an evangelistic ministry within the criminal justice system.



F explained how Buchman had inspired large numbers of people to work around the clock, without pay for many years.

H stated, "I was drawn to lofC through a man who was in his nineties who had known Buchman". The man had impressed him with his knowledge of India's colonial history and his stories about Buchman's friendship with three generations of the Gandhi family. The fact of Buchman's friendship with three generations of Gandhi's family is also recorded by Mackenzie and Young (2008, p.150).

I told how Buchman and his movement equipped many such as herself to work for the welfare of their countries.

J expressed, "I heard a lot about Frank Buchman that he would suggest ideas to people about what they could do. He emphasised that each person was responsible to God".

The ten interviewees all worked in MRA or lofC after Buchman had died. Therefore, their experience of Buchman was second-hand. They referred to what they had heard from older MRA members about Buchman and, in some cases, what had been written about him. Perhaps the most outstanding theme to arise from the informants was that of Buchman's ability to **inspire people to undertake activities that were aimed at creating a better world**. In this, Buchman was missional, he was interested in the reign of God in the whole world. One interviewee described this to me as Buchman's "genius for helping people find their destiny". Upon closer examination, it became clear that Buchman had attained a significant track record of having helped people who then went on to initiate reforms in their countries. This is the same theme that arises from reading the literature about him. The same interviewee described Buchman as "a prophet" because Buchman was able to read people well and, on numerous occasions, predicted what they would do. Whilst this interviewee did not personally know Buchman, his description concurs with that of Boobbyer (2013) and Lean (1988) who both document a great many examples of people who were inspired by Buchman to take actions that they otherwise would not have taken.

## Question 2: How have Buchman's four moral absolutes (honesty, purity, unselfishness, love) directly affected your life?

Fifty percent of the interviewees answered '**becoming honest**' was the main effect that Buchman's absolutes had had on their lives (see Appendix IV). Most of the interviewees included a short story with their answers about the ways in which they were challenged to become brutally honest with themselves about their own behaviours and/or attitudes. This led to open and honest discussions with parents, siblings and/or partners, and with co-workers. The interviewees reported positive outcomes from speaking honestly, such as more loving relationships, increased transparency, and greater emotional freedom. Here are some of their comments and stories:

A had been attracted to the idea of "changing the world" based on moral absolutes. B believed God had spoken to him about his brother: "Your calling is just to love him".

C said, "I became free when I started to get honest with myself. It led to creativity".

D was a strict Christian who learned to love a Buddhist from Thailand.

E told of several instances where he had told the truth about his wrong-doing in the past and he has continued to be truthful in this way.

F described speaking honestly to her father about the bitterness she had held towards him because of his habitual drinking. This resulted in her father visiting her at Caux for the first time the following Christmas.

G talked of becoming more committed to moral standards in general.

H reported becoming honest with his mother and described the absolutes as a compass or a lodestar in his life.

I expressed growing commitment to moral standards in general.

J recounted how she felt urged to be honest with her estranged father which led to some level of renewed relationship.

When analysing the four absolutes, it should be borne in mind that they intermingle. For example, it is difficult to imagine how one could live with absolute love and at the same time be dishonest. Due to this, the four absolutes should be seen as a package. However, when the interviewee was asked to describe the personal impact of these absolutes, the stories that they told began with an honest acknowledgement of personal wrong-doing. For example, one interviewee grew up without her father who had divorced her mother due to his constant drinking. The interviewee refused to meet him or acknowledge any of his overtures towards her. Whilst in MRA, the interviewee felt convicted that she should admit her bitterness and coldness towards him. She subsequently apologised and asked for his forgiveness. This was primarily a case of an honest disclosure on her behalf. The following Christmas, her father came to visit her at Caux and mentioned that it was the first time that anyone had taken the trouble to speak to him directly about how his drinking had personally affected them. This response underlines the reality that the interviewee had also acted with absolute unselfishness because her confrontation with her father had provided him with a pathway back into relationship. She did not need to do that; it was an act of unselfishness. Therefore, **honesty** is, in fact, just the starting point for learning to live by moral absolutes which are the foundation for living in a missional community.

**Question 3: What kind of social or community projects (locally or nationally) have you served in?**

The question about social and community projects revealed a wide variety of activities in which interviewees had partaken. Theatrical presentation was the principal method through which MRA communicated its message until theatre-going was overtaken by movie-going in popular culture during the seventies. In more recent times, **schools and courses** have become the method of choice for IofC to mediate their message. Here are some of the activities in which interviewees were involved:

A worked as an actress in the musical called *Anything to Declare*. She organized conferences, published books, and established the archives at Caux.

B worked as an actor in the musical called *Anything to Declare* and worked as head cook at the Mountain House in Caux.

C worked as a technician on the play called *Wind is Shifting* which was performed in Germany and Scandinavia. He spent ten years on the road working in film production.

D worked as the purchasing manager for the kitchen at Mountain House in Caux and in the programme called Effective Living which was run in Australia.

E managed the kitchen workers at Mountain House in Caux and in the programme called Effective Living which was run in Australia.

F worked as a cook and child-carer in many countries including Switzerland, England, France, and Brazil.

G worked on the programmes called Trust Builders and Change Makers for young people in Sweden.

H worked with the Indian Youth Climate Network and represented IofC at the Copenhagen and Paris international climate conferences. He also directed the Trust and Integrity programme in Sweden.

I worked with the programme called Foundations for Freedom in Russia and Eastern Europe as well as the Trust and Integrity programme in Sweden.

J worked as hairstylist to a theatre group in England, France, Holland, N. Ireland, and India. She also worked as a launderer at Mountain House in Caux.

Interviewees explained how theatrical presentations were not simply limited to performances at theatres but that they went on tour for months, sometimes years at a time during which they performed in industrial premises, schools, and military barracks. One interviewee explained that the performers and technicians of the Westminster Theatre lived together in several large neighbouring houses in London's Mayfair. Jenner (2008) in her doctoral thesis writes about MRA's

ownership of the Westminster theatre. This provides insight into how living together as a caring community with a common vision was in and of itself a highly effective form of outreach. They cooked meals together and were able to share with poorer families living nearby. This was a missional community living as a vanguard of God's kingdom demonstrating its values. This was also true of the teams which arranged various schools and courses in which fifty percent of the interviewees participated (see Appendix IV). Buchman encouraged everyone to take discipleship seriously and engage in mission. However, upon closer inspection, interviewees mentioned personal and relational difficulties that sometimes occurred when living in close quarters. One interviewee described it thus, "It takes a long time before you really get to know some people." He was referring to the sad fact that some people turned out not to have changed as much as they claimed. The graph of results for Question 2 only displays the main project in which the interviewee served. An interesting finding was that almost all the participants seem to have worked in hospitality at some point alongside their other projects. This reflected Buchman's roots of growing up with parents who owned a hotel (Lean 1988, p. 5).

#### Question 4: What did you learn from MRA?

This question attempted to access the inner experience and the convictions of the interviewees. One interviewee summed up her learning by using the saying, "Be the change you want to see". This expresses the heart of the mission. A number of interviewees shared how they had been initially attracted to the movement because they wanted **to change the world** but that sometime later they realised that this began with **individual change**. Their thoughts were as follows:

A said, "There were remarkable people involved in MRA".

B shared that he had learned to accept himself.

C learnt to recognise guidance in her life.

D learnt to accept people from other religious backgrounds.

E learnt to listen for guidance and provided several noteworthy examples of this.

F learnt that she could find solutions to problems without losing her composure.

Often the next step came as a thought during a 'quiet time'.

G learnt to tell her own story and to trust others. She also mentioned that from "listening to older people" she learnt that history often repeats itself.

H learnt that MRA is interested in environmental issues as well as social issues.

I learnt to think critically about problems, which contrasted with her technical college training that only enabled her to do her job.

J experienced what it was like to live in a community of people who cared for each other; furthermore, she learnt that God had a plan for her life.

One interviewee commented on the guidance that he had received from his practice of setting aside quiet time. He mentioned the difficulty he had had in listening for guidance, but he continued by pondering that, when he looked back over the years, he observed numerous incidents and trends that he now regarded as having been guided by the Holy Spirit. These answers indicate that Buchman's principles of living by absolute moral standards, listening for guidance, experiencing personal change, and taking social/political action were being imbibed by his followers.

## 2. Documentary Analysis

### 2.1 Karl Theodore Schmitz - Bürgermeister

The Mayor of Berlin, Karl T. Schmitz, wrote a letter to Buchman in May 1948 in which he stated that Buchman's "message had become known all over Europe as the message of Caux". He expressed the hope that it would be heard and obeyed. This is an indicator of the Europe-wide reach gained by Buchman's message. It is especially significant that it was stated by the mayor of the capital city of a defeated

nation. A nation in which political and economic ideologies were competing for control of the European mind. The phrase “the message of Caux” was a reference to the MRA gatherings in Caux, Switzerland, in which honest confession, forgiveness, restitution, and reconciliation principally transpired between elites from Germany and France. This was written less than three years after WW2 and is a testament to Buchman’s missional leadership.

## 2.2 From the Administrator of Marshall Aid

When the European Recovery Program, commonly called the Marshall Plan, was enacted in the aftermath of WW2, it aimed to rehabilitate the economies of seventeen European countries; its American administrator, Paul G. Hoffman, wrote to Buchman in 1948 that “You are giving to the world the ideological counterpart of the Marshall plan”. Hoffman understood that creating a stable environment in which democracy could flourish required something more than purely material assistance. Today, many Europeans have forgotten Buchman’s important contribution to the success of the Marshall Plan (1948) and the Schuman Plan (1950). His programme of Moral Re-Armament provided that moral and spiritual underpinning that was vital for the Marshall Plan to work.

## 2.3 Some Quotations for Articles (p. 1)

Konrad Adenauer was the first Chancellor of West Germany (1949-1963) and described himself as an ‘old friend’ to Buchman. In 1949, he stated that “We can be grateful to the men and women of Moral Re-Armament that, in this world of destruction, they have had the courage to raise the banner of moral values.” In 1958, Adenauer wrote to Buchman “Now is the time to work more strongly than ever for European unity through Moral Re-Armament. A Europe in which freedom and brotherhood should reign can only be created when nations are mutually

conscious of their moral responsibility.” Then later in 1960, he wrote, “I must tell you how much I value you and your work of Moral Re-Armament. It is absolutely essential for the peace of the world.” This correspondence corroborates the Norwegian Leif Hovelson's detailed insider's view of West Germany's industrial and ideological struggles during the reconstruction era. Denazification and anti-Communism processes cleared the way for the 'economic miracle' that subsequently transpired. Hovelson (1959, ch. 11) records the success of the rediscovery of morals through the programme of Moral Re-Armament in bringing peace and cooperation to industrial disputes.

## 2.4 Some Quotations for Articles (p. 2)

Hans Bjerkholt, who founded the Norwegian Communist Party in 1923, stated in 1955 that “Marxism is a signpost on the road, but it is not the decisive answer for the new ideological age. The new road for our age is the philosophy of Moral Re-Armament.” In the same year, the President of Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem, observed the effect of communist ideology on Asian culture when stating that “We welcome Moral Re-Armament. It perfectly responds to the longing in the heart of Asia for a change in the heart of the West.” This statement is fascinating not least because, from a historical perspective, communist ideology gained primacy in Vietnam in 1976. To this day, President Ngo Dinh Diem is remembered as a controversial figure, yet a close reading of his words clarifies that he understood Communism to be a Western ideology, one that he hoped would be replaced by the ideology of Moral Re-Armament. Buchman's leadership clearly suffered a setback in Asia, particularly Vietnam.

In 1956, a top secret one-hundred-and-twenty-two-page Gestapo document attacking Moral Re-Armament was discovered. The Nazis denounced Moral Re-Armament as “frontally opposing the Swastika with the Cross” and “lending God's garment to world democratic aims.” The Gestapo were the Nazis' secret police;



therefore, whilst it is not exactly clear who wrote this document or how widely it was circulated, it nonetheless exposes that the Nazis acknowledged that Moral Re-Armament was a spiritual and democratic movement which was a threat to Nazi ideology. The Nazis were militarily defeated in 1945 with their ideology subsequently declining in influence. Buchman's role in its decline is often overlooked. His ideology certainly had an influence on the prevailing political and economic ideologies of his day, which were Nazism and Communism.

## 2.5 Extract of a Speech by Dr Buchman on the 11th Anniversary of MRA (p. 1)

In 1949, Buchman spoke at an event in which he said, "The secret lies in the great forgotten truth that when man listens, God speaks. When man obeys, God acts. When men change, nations change". Buchman had a consummate ability to communicate his core principles in simple language.

## Conclusion

In the light of all this research and reading, a story emerges of a man and a movement of people that impacted all the continents of the world. Many nations in Africa and Asia that formerly lived under colonialism have found relatively peaceful transitions to freedom. The warring nations of Europe have mostly lived in peace for over seventy-five years. The ideologies of Nazism and Communism are no-longer ascendent, and democracy continues to spread to places in which totalitarianism has reigned. Buchman significantly impacted the individuals who led these geopolitical changes. For example, Piguet (1985, pp. 9-13) relates the incident of Irene Laure, a French resistance woman, who publicly asked for forgiveness from the Germans, which consequently led to reconciliation between French and German people. Later, she encouraged similar steps between Pakistanis and

Indians, blacks and whites in Zaire and many other places. According to Fountain (2017, p.76), it was at Buchman's conferences in Caux that Konrad Adenauer and Robert Schuman began a relationship of trust that later allowed for the European Coal and Steel Community to be set up under the Schuman Plan. This was the precursor to the European Union. These are examples of the many people who experienced life-changing experiences through their contact with Buchman, as well as of the ways in which that contact led to social political change, sometimes involving geopolitical change. Europe currently needs men and women who will embrace Buchman's principles and apply them to the local, national, and Europe-wide challenges of today. Personal change is an invisible but essential part of democracy. Nations change only as people change. Economic policies and legal codes are currently prominent, yet the need for spiritual and moral change in people often goes unnoticed. Buchman focused on that aspect, and it still continues through IofC. His story should be more widely known.

# Chapter 5 Recommendations

## Reclaiming the Legacy

*“May he be heard and followed more and more, in all nations of the world, by those who today still clash in fratricidal hatred”.*

(Buchman, 1988, p. 348)

Robert Schuman, as Foreign Minister of France in 1950

### **1. Buchman’s principles should be applied to the burgeoning mental health**

**crises.** The Twelve Steps is a peer-group support network which is based on Buchman’s principles of confidence, confession, conviction, conversion, and continuance (Lean, 1988, p. 79). The programme has been adapted to meet different human needs, e.g. gambling, depression, divorce recovery, and sex addiction. These principles will work for many other mental and social healthcare concerns. The professionalisation of mental healthcare has often overlooked a low-cost and readily available source of support pioneered by the OG.

### **2. Buchman’s principles should be applied to peace-making in Ukraine and**

**Russia when hostilities cease.** After WW2, there were people such as Schuman, Mottu, Buchman, and others who planned for peace even before the war had ended; people such as these should now be gathered.

According to Fountain (2017, p. 76), Schuman is currently called the Father of Europe because, in the Schuman Declaration 1950, he provided the political architecture which rendered war impossible and began building the peace. Whilst the moral courage and the ideals were Schuman’s, there was a period when discouragement threatened to overwhelm him to the point at which he was ready to leave politics altogether. At this point, Buchman asked him, “What do you think in

your heart you should do?" (ibid. 67). This question led to Schuman overcoming his fears and discouragement. Monnet supplied him with a proposal and through Buchman, Adenauer became his political partner. He announced the plan on 9 May ushering in the first step towards European integration (ibid. 72). The questions for us presently are: Where is the Schuman for Ukraine? Where is the Adenauer for Russia? Who will create the peace plan as Monnet did, and who, like Buchman, will bring these men/women together and provide spiritual and moral encouragement?

### **3. Buchman's principles should be applied to crises of values in present-day**

**Europe.** Since the end of WW2, there has been a precipitous decline in church attendance and with that has come a sharp increase in moral relativity. Buchman believed that democracy was underpinned by spiritual and moral values. According to Fountain (2017, p. 82), Schuman believed that Europe "cannot and must not remain an economic and technical enterprise; it needs a soul". Europeans should adopt the absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love as a diagnostic tool for discerning moral malaise as well as seriously heed Buchman's call to daily set apart time for silent listening. Moral malaise can be overcome, values can be rediscovered.

## Recommendation to Educational Authorities

**4. Buchman and the program of MRA should be studied in our educational system.** Their contribution exists as an important part of twentieth century history that has been largely forgotten. I recommend that the origins, development, influence, and legacy of this movement should be included as one of the subjects in the history syllabus of schools. History is the study of past events comprising the actions of people and their ideas. Buchman was undoubtedly a remarkable figure during his time. The peoples of the world and particularly Europeans would benefit from knowing about his life and work. Many of the interviewees bemoaned the fact

that Buchman is so little-known to the current generations. Here are some specific suggestions:

**4.1** At secondary school level, Buchman could be introduced in history classes along with other well-known figures, such as Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi.

**4.2** At upper secondary level, Buchman's contribution to the development of peer group recovery could be included in psychology classes. His pioneering work in interfaith cooperation could be included in religious education classes and his post-war peace building should be examined in social studies classes.

**4.3** At university level, a bachelor's program in spirituality and social/political reform could be undertaken as a multidisciplinary course. At the master's level, a programme in the moral underpinnings of western democracy would be needed. Finally, at the doctoral level, further research should be carried out into the specific historical and cultural factors that influenced the development of Buchman's ideology in different contexts, e.g. in Catholic cultures, Eastern Orthodox cultures, Protestant cultures, non-Christian religious cultures, and secularising cultures.

## Recommendation to Initiatives of Change International

**5. Initiatives of Change and For A New World website should build or become a new institution dedicated to advancing the ideology of MRA.** Buchman did not leave behind any material that he himself had written, yet large numbers of authors have written about the impact that he had on their lives. While interviewing people for this study, I was constantly referred to books by individuals such as that of Leif Hovelsen, a Norwegian who had been imprisoned by the Gestapo during WW2. Most of his friends did not survive, but he did; after the war, he spent eight

years in Germany during which he reported first-hand on the battle between the ideologies of MRA and Communism, of which the latter threatened at the time to occupy the ideological vacuum created by the demise of Nazism. He presents an extremely detailed picture of life in the cities of the Ruhr in post-war Germany. This is just one of hundreds of titles by authors who were inspired by Buchman and MRA. Therefore, I recommend that a new institution should be built to compile and preserve this content. This could take various forms. I present here a few suggestions:

**5.1 A Frank Buchman museum or visitor centre** in which the extant materials about Buchman and the programme of MRA can be viewed. His house in Pennsylvania serves a similar function in the US, but, in Europe, Buchman is very much associated with Mountain House in Caux. Perhaps it could be located there or nearby Montreux. Possible sources of funding could be Lausanne University, Vaud Canton, the Swiss federation, and private donors.

**5.2 A Frank Buchman lecture** could be held as a series of talks on subjects related to Buchman's life and the MRA programme. Researchers and experts in the field could be invited to share their work and insights in these talks.

Whenever I mentioned that I was researching Buchman and the MRA programme people responded by expressing their desire to hear more about him and to view more resources. For a New World website has already archived many resources and posted them online. I encourage them to consider these suggestions while building that online archive. I think that it would be a suitable tribute to the speech that Buchman gave to the Swiss people in Zurich in 1932. According to McKenzie and Young (2008, pp. 47-48), Buchman said, "I can see Switzerland as a prophet among nations, and a peacemaker in the international family". Is this prediction still valid?

# Recommendation to Persons and Communities of Faith

## **6. The believing individual and community should familiarise themselves with the principles that Buchman proffered and then begin to put them into practice.**

The principles that Buchman propounded facilitated a life rather than a belief system; for example, the practice of daily listening to God for personal guidance and national strategy during a 'quiet time' is something that should be actively and purposely practised not merely believed in. It would be interesting to follow the effects of this if large numbers of Europeans would apply this practice. Here are a few pointers:

**6.1 Telling one's own story of personal change** reaches beyond intellectual assent and reaches to the heart of listeners. European churches are often structured in such a way that there is one professional clergyman presenting a prepared speech from the front. Buchman believed that ten people telling their personal stories was suitable for a meeting. He focused on people who had recently changed, those whom he called 'fresh fish'. Another aspect of this practice was that the stories often came from people who had been believers for many years before experiencing personal change. It was not only about those who had recently found faith. A third aspect was the spontaneity of storytelling. One of the interviewees remarked on Buchman's practice of often calling on someone without warning to tell their personal story to a crowd of people. European churches could learn from this practice by becoming more spontaneous.

**6.2 Confessing one's own sins and making restitution** leads to accountability and integrity as one begins to live by absolute moral standards. A typical church service in Europe overlooks the shame and guilt that emanates from the sins that remain hidden. It is worth noting that many who followed Buchman and joined MRA did so precisely because they discovered freedom from hidden sins as they learned the practice of confession and restitution. This would of course require confidentiality

and small groups, but I believe that European Christians would benefit considerably from adopting this practice.

**6.3 Adopting social and political action** propels faith from the private sphere into the public realm. It enables people to partake in God's mission in the world; one's faith becomes visible. In a speech given in 1936, Buchman (1961, p. 40) envisaged small teams in which leadership would be given "not through one person, but through groups of people who had learned to work together under the guidance of God". If European Christians would organise themselves into small teams of volunteers with the aim of influencing society locally and nationally, this could cause what Buchman called "A revolution to cure a revolution".

These are just three of the many practices that constituted Buchman's programme of MRA with much of it being applicable as a blueprint for believing individuals or communities to become missional. Indeed, there is a crying need for churches in Europe to become relevant and effective; its spiritual and moral power needs to be re-awakened!

## Recommendation to Local, National, and International Governing Bodies

7. In the interests of good governance, **governmental bodies should protect public forums in which spiritual and moral issues are proffered.** It is currently unpopular in Europe to think of solutions to the world's problems as coming from Christianity. We live in what Van de Poll (2020) described as 'secularising and multi religious' societies which are often dismissive if not outright antagonistic towards religion, especially Christianity. Naturally, there are various historical reasons for this. Many Europeans believe in what Roxburgh and Robinson (2018, p. 14) have called "modernity's wager: the conviction that life could be lived well without God".



However, the twentieth century turned out to be a very bloody century marked by two destructive world wars and the threat of nuclear mutual destruction. Buchman wanted governments to be led by people who were governed by God. In other words, societies in which God is acknowledged as the main source of agency. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the near constant threat of Islamist terrorist attacks provide ample support for the assertion that people in positions of authority need guidance at times. I recommend that governing bodies take seriously Buchman's concern that cooperation between political and religious leaders is essential for maintaining peace. Government at both the national and European level holds a vital role in protecting the free flow of ideas in the public space. Buchman's life story suggests that guidance for society can emerge from any quarter including the religious one.

Here are two academics who have changed their views about Christianity in recent years: German sociologist Jürgen Habermas, who is Marxist by background, is widely regarded as one of the world's most influential secular philosophers. In an interview in 1999, Habermas (2006, p. 150-151) conceded that "there was no alternative to Judeo-Christian ethics for grounding freedom, solidarity, emancipation, morality, human rights and democracy: For the normative self-understanding of modernity, Christianity has functioned as more than just a precursor or catalyst. Universalistic egalitarianism, from which sprang the ideals of freedom and a collective life in solidarity, the autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, the individual morality of conscience, human rights and democracy, is the direct legacy of the Judeo ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of a continual critical reappropriation and reinterpretation. Up to this very day there is no alternative to it. And in light of the current challenges of a post-national constellation, we must draw sustenance now, as in the past, from this substance. Everything else is idle postmodern chatter". English historian, author, and broadcaster Tom Holland wrote in *The New Statesman* in 2016: "Today, even as faith in God fades across the West,

the countries that were once collectively known as Christendom continue to bear the stamp of the two-millennia-old revolution that Christianity represents. It is the principal reason why, by and large, most of us who live in post-Christian societies still take for granted that it is nobler to suffer than to inflict suffering. It is why we generally assume that every human life is of equal value. In my morals and ethics, I have learned to accept that I am not Greek or Roman at all, but thoroughly and proudly Christian".

Both of these eminent scholars acknowledge that Christianity has played a highly influential role in the historical and philosophical development of Europe. Since WW2 and the advent of decolonisation, millions of people adhering to non-Christian religions have immigrated to Europe.

**7.1 Governing bodies in Europe should protect the Christian heritage of Europe.** It is not the government's job to promote any faith but to ensure that justice for all is upheld. It is the task of the faith communities to persuade society about faith questions. However, in the case of Europe, there is a historical and cultural aspect of Christianity that needs to be preserved.

## General Recommendations

At the end of WW2, it is estimated by the editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica that between forty and fifty-million people lost their lives, a similar number were severely injured or traumatised. Beyond that, there was a mountain of bitterness and hatred between peoples. Buchman found a way to begin the reconciliation and healing process most notably at Caux. Europe presently faces mounting deaths, injuries, and traumas in Ukraine. Preparations should be initiated for when the war ends to ensure that reconciliation and forgiveness can take place. Willing partners from the previously warring nations can be invited to engage together around Buchman's

principles albeit in a twenty-first century context. Perhaps starting with that practice that worked so well at Caux, that of encouraging participants to admit the faults of one's own side and asking the other for forgiveness. If this is done whilst refraining from pointing out the wrongs that the other side has perpetrated, the likelihood of a lasting peace will increase.

# Conclusion

## Let the Spirit Lead!

*“If we plant an oak tree today we won’t be around to sit in its shade twenty years from now. Those who sit in its shade then will not know who planted it, it’s irrelevant”*

Gerald Pillay (2022) in an interview titled *Meet the President*  
Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wt4Q4VS6QPU>  
Timestamp 1:03

Churches and denominations have often been guilty of continuing weekly rituals and ceremonies according to the church calendar without really paying attention as to their effectiveness in their mission to remake the world around them. Churches need to adapt to the society around them. Van de Poll (2020, p. 317) calls it “secularised (or secularising) and multi-religious at the same time”. This research suggests that new models for mobilising ordinary people into the mission of remaking the world can be effective. Traditional church models have their part to play, but MRA facilitated practical ways for widespread discipleship and missional engagement. Roxburgh and Robinson (2018, pp. 6-7) have criticised what they call “Euro-tribal” churches. Could the principles of Buchman and the MRA programme contribute to a solution? Those respondents (K, L and M) who had actually been in Buchman’s meetings and had heard him speak live remarked that, “**He trusted the Holy Spirit** and could be very unexpected and humorous in his ways of leadership”. This reliance on the Holy Spirit and willingness to act with spontaneity is much needed in leadership during these times. The goal of remaking the world remains valid. The question is: Are leaders willing to trust the Holy Spirit or are they too committed to doing things the way they have always done them?

Much of European Christianity has adopted the belief that the mission is predominantly carried out by the Church through personal or campaign style evangelism. There is still little understanding of what Newbiggin (2006) called “the mission of God”—the belief that God is always sending his Son and his Spirit into the world. The Church in Europe needs to return to this understanding and learn to recognise what God’s Spirit is already doing. Jesus once said, “The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.” (John 5:19) Buchman and MRA learned to listen to God and they discovered what the Father was doing. Buchman stood in a long line of Christian revivalists and reformers who have impacted the European continent and through it the world. He would not think of himself as being something special, but before his death in 1961, he did express to his friends that he believed he had been “wonderfully guided”.

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# Appendix I

## Theological Beliefs

Frank Buchman and his followers held certain theological beliefs which were

1. The sovereignty and power of God
2. The reality of sin
3. The need for complete surrender to the will of God
4. Christ's atoning sacrifice and transforming power
5. The sustenance of prayer
6. The duty to witness to others

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# Appendix II

## Timeline

### Frank Buchman (1878-1961)

A missional leader who felt God call him to remake the world.

### The Oxford Group OG (1920s)

In 1908, at the age of 30 years, Buchman had a spiritual experience at Keswick, England, that released him from bitterness.

### Alcoholics Anonymous AA (1935)

Many alcoholics who become sober through their interaction with the Oxford Group established Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935.

### Moral Rearmament MRA (1938)

The Oxford Group changed its name to Moral Rearmament in the run up to the Second World War in line with its aims as a movement of spiritual and moral renewal.

### Caux Switzerland (1946)

A derelict hotel in the mountains above Montreux was renovated to become the international conference known as Mountain House where post-war reconciliation was promoted most notably for Europe, South-East Asia, and Africa

### Focus on Reconciliation (1950s-1980s)

Moral Rearmament produced plays and musicals that were shown all over the world. Centres were established in Asia, South America, and Africa. Buchman died in 1961.



## New Initiatives (1990s)

Bridging racial division, improving transparency in election campaigns,  
and building democratic institutions was the new focus.

## Initiatives of Change IofC (2001)

### Initiative of Change International (2010 to present)

National association in 36 countries working on trust building,  
ethical leadership, and sustainable living.

<https://iofc.org/en/our-story>

# Appendix III

## Interview Questions

### The Four Principal Questions Were:

1. How have Buchman's four moral absolutes directly affected your life?
2. What kind of social or community projects have you served in? Locally or nationally.
3. What kind of leader was Buchman and what was inspirational?
4. What did you learn from MRA?

# Appendix IV

## Responses to Questions

### Results For Question 1

Question 3: What kind of leader was Buchman and what was inspirational?

	Speeches	Actions	Relationships	Events
A	x			
B			x	
C				x
D				x
E				x
F				x
G				
H		x		
I				
J	x			

**40% (4/10)** were inspired through events arranged by Buchman

20% (2/10) were inspired through Buchman's speeches

10% (1/10) were inspired by Buchman's relationships

10% (1/10) were inspired by actions taken by Buchman

## Results For Question 2

How have Buchman's four moral absolutes directly affected your life?

	Honesty	Purity	Unselfishnes	Love
A			x	
B				x
C	x			
D				x
E	x			
F	x			
G				
H	x			
I				
J	x			

**50% (5/10)**      **replied absolute honesty**

20% (2/10)      replied absolute love

20% (2/10)      did not specify one particular absolute

10% (1/10)      replied absolute unselfishness

## Results For Question 3

What kind of social or community projects have you served in?

Locally or Nationally

	Musical/Play	Film	School/Course	Hospitality
A	x			
B	x			
C		x		
D			x	
E			x	
F				x
G			x	
H			x	
I			x	
J	x			

**50% (5/10) served on schools or courses**

30% (3/10) served in musicals or plays

10% (1/10) served in film production

10% (1/10) served in hospitality

## Results For Question 4

Question 4: What did you learn from MRA?

	To Accept Oneself	To Accept Others	To Change Others	To Remake the World
A		x		
B	x			
C				x
D		x		
E				x
F				x
G		x		
H				x
I	x			
J	x			

**40% (4/10)**      **learnt ways to remake the world**

30% (3/10)      learnt to accept themselves

30% (3/10)      learnt to accept others

# Appendix V

## Biographical Notes

### Frank Buchman

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
1878, June 4	Born in Pennsburg, Pa.
1899	Graduated with B.A., Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa.
1899-1902	Attended Mt. Airy Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa.
1902	Ordained Lutheran minister
1905	In charge of Luther Hospice, Philadelphia, Pa.
1908	Travelled to Europe and England
1909-1915	Served as secretary, YMCA at Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pa.
1915-1919	Toured Asia under YMCA auspices
1916-1922	Part-time lecturer, Hartford Theological Seminary, Hartford, Conn.
1921	Visited Cambridge and Oxford, England, where the foundation was laid for the fellowship later called the Oxford Group
1926	Received Honorary doctorate, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa.
1929	Travelled to South Africa with the Oxford Group

1931-1938	Led Oxford Group teams to Scandinavia, Holland, Canada, and the United States
1938	Inaugurated campaign for Moral Re-armament at East Ham Town Hall, London, England
1939	Launched campaign for Moral Re-armament in New York, Washington, D.C., and California
1940	Initiated You Can Defend America program
1942	Suffered paralytic stroke
1942-1947	Conducted Moral Re-armament summer training sessions, Mackinac Island, Michigan.
1946	Presented first annual World Assembly for Moral Re-armament, Caux, Switzerland, headquarters
1952-1957	Travelled with Moral Re-armament teams throughout Asia, Australia, and Europe
1961, Aug. 7	Died in Freudenstadt, West Germany



# Organisational History of Moral Re-armament

Date	Event
1918	House-party strategy of conversion begun in China by Frank Buchman
1921	Foundation laid for First Century Christian Fellowship and later the Oxford Group
1925-1926	"Buchmanism" investigated by Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
1929	Oxford Group toured South Africa
1931-1937	Oxford Group teams sent to Scandinavia, Holland, Canada, the United States, and South America
1933-1940	Oxford Group supplement published in the New Witness
1936	National Assembly, Stockbridge, Mass.
1937	Rising Tide published
1938	Campaign for Moral Re-armament begun at East Ham Town Hall, London, England World Assembly for Moral Re-armament, Interlaken, Switzerland
1939	Moral Re-armament movement launched in the United States World Assembly for Moral Re-ReArmament, Monterey, California
1940	Peter Howard joined movement (died 1965)
1941-1945	You Can Defend America program
1942	Premier of the movie, The Forgotten Factor
1943-1945	Controversy regarding Selective Service deferments for members of Moral Re-armament

1946	First annual World Assembly for Moral Re-armament at Caux, Switzerland, headquarters New World News published
1947	Purchase of Westminster Theatre, London, England
1948	Production of the play 'The Good Road' in Germany World Conference for Moral Re-armament, Los Angeles, Calif.
1949	The College of the Good Road organised
1951	Assembly for the Reconstruction of Pacific Relations, Los Angeles, California. Production of the play 'An Idea Takes Wings' Production of the play 'Jotham Valley'
1952	Assembly of the Americas, Miami, Florida.
1953	Condemned by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
1954-1955	Report on Moral Re-armament issued by the Church of England Social and Industrial Council
1955	Production of the play 'Vanishing Island'
1955-1956	Statesmen's missions to Europe and Asia
1957	Production of the plays 'Freedom' and 'The Crowning Experience'
1961	Peter Howard assumed worldwide leadership of the movement Production of the play 'The Tiger'
1963-1964	Production of the play 'Space Is So Startling'
1964	Production of the motion picture, 'Tomorrow's American'

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1965	<p>Up With People launched</p> <p>First of several yearly Up With People "Sing Outs"</p> <p>Founding of Mackinac College, Mackinac, Michigan</p> <p>Peter Howard died and no successor appointed; each country developed own leadership</p>
1970	All Moral Re-armament publications ceased
1975	Up With People separates from Moral Re-armament
1976	Moral Re-armament presents Buchman's Allentown, Pa., home to Lehigh County Historical Society, which opened it to the public
1989	United States President George H. W. Bush commemorated MRA on its fiftieth anniversary International conference, Caux, Switzerland

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Source: Library of Congress (2011) *Moral Re-armament Records*.

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