

Who will ride in '76?



RIDE ON TOUR

NOTTINGHAM
2 — 6 March
Theatre Royal

LEEDS
8 — 13 March
The Grand

NEWCASTLE
15 — 20 March
Theatre Royal

BRADFORD
22 — 27 March
Alhambra

HULL
29 March — 3 April
New Theatre

LIVERPOOL
5 — 10 April
Royal Court Theatre

MANCHESTER
12 — 17 April
Palace Theatre

BIRMINGHAM
19 — 24 April
Hippodrome

WOLVERHAMPTON
26 April — 1 May
Grand

BRISTOL
3 — 8 May
Hippodrome

SOUTHAMPTON
10 — 15 May
Gaumont Theatre

LONDON
Starting May 20 a minimum
run of seven weeks at the
Westminster Theatre.

AT THIS SEASON newspapers and broadcasts wallow in gloomy reviews of 1975 and even gloomier previews of 1976.

But there are also signals of hope for all who care to look at them.

Bleak the immediate prospects may be, but there are deep undercurrents of change which may have far-reaching effects.

It is so easy to be concerned with what we ourselves are doing that we also miss the signs of the times.

The call of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to Britain is clearly one sign. Their appeal is to the whole community, not just to those who call themselves Christians. They ask us to think about two basic questions:

What sort of society do we want?

What sort of people do we need to be in order to achieve it?

The Archbishops want to see a national debate develop on these issues, at every level. They also want to hear what happens when ordinary men and women face these questions honestly and apply their answers practically.

It is the boldest thrust from the established church into the life of the nation for several decades. It deserves the thoughtful support of all who consider themselves Christian revolutionaries.

Then there is the campaign of *Action '75*, started by men on the factory floor in industry. 'We are not content', they declare, 'to allow economic disaster to overtake us, our children and this nation without action being taken by each one of us.' They go on to outline several practical ways in which such action can be taken by ordinary men and women. Like the Archbishops they stress that each man and woman counts. 'The resolution of Britain's problems lies not in the hands of political figures and the leaders

of sectional groups alone', they say, 'but in the determined action of every individual within these shores.'

We have already witnessed the effectiveness of the campaign of *Song of Asia* in Scotland, London, South Wales and Oxford. That campaign continues in the North West this month* and it is hoped that the cast of *Song of Asia* may find time in their schedule to return to Britain in the spring in order to accept invitations to the Midlands and the North East.

Now a new initiative is developing, which I believe is also a signal of hope for our nation.

On 2 March 1976 *Ride! Ride!*, a new musical by Alan Thornhill and Penelope Thwaites, opens at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, at the start of an 11-week tour of Leeds, Newcastle, Bradford, Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Bristol and Southampton. The show then opens at the Westminster Theatre in London's West End on 20 May.

Unanimous support

Ride! Ride! was written at the instigation of two leading Methodist scholars and preachers.

It was performed at the Methodist conferences in Newcastle in 1973 and Bristol in 1974. Conference unanimously passed a resolution that it should be performed all over the country.

In 1975 Aldersgate Productions was

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*STOP PRESS

An extra performance of 'Song of Asia' has been arranged for 2.30pm on 14 January in the Forum Hall, Wythenshawe, Manchester.

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NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT



CAUX

EIGHT AFRICAN COUNTRIES were among 28 nations represented at the New Year conference at the MRA centre in Caux, Switzerland.

Leonard Kibuthu, of the majority Kikuyu tribe of Kenya, and Wycliffe Khagula, who comes from one of the minority tribes, spoke of how they had found the answer to tribal prejudice and hatred.

'The whole of our country, Kenya, and Africa is being threatened by chaos of hatred and bitterness,' said Kibuthu, who once fought with the Mau Mau. 'Tribalism and nationalism are the main threat to freedom in the whole continent of Africa. Unless we apply the four absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, the whole continent will be faced by another civil or ideological war like Vietnam.'

Search for an answer

Young people from South Africa, Rhodesia, Namibia and Lesotho, representing all four major racial groups, addressed the conference on the theme 'Southern Africa — the search for an answer'. Among them were three Afrikaans students from Pretoria.

'I have become aware of the things that are wrong in my country for the first time here at Caux,' said one of them, Miss Mariana Vos. 'I used to feel that I had done nothing to create the situation in South Africa,' said her colleague Miss Jeanne-Marie Trengove. 'But I realise that I have contributed to it by being indifferent. You cannot make up for the insult of refusing to shake hands by building hospitals. All the good I have done was destroyed by demanding humility and gratitude in exchange. I love my country

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What is Moral Re-Armament?

a talk given last month on LBC,
a London commercial radio station,
by Gordon Wise,
Secretary of Moral Re-Armament in Britain.

Moral Re-Armament, MRA, The Oxford Group, the First Century Christian Fellowship — these are all names which have been used over the years to describe what is acknowledged to be one of the great spiritual movements of this century.

Robert Schuman, when Foreign Minister of France, called it 'a philosophy of life applied in action, a far-reaching transformation of society which has already begun.'

A Cardinal once described it as 'a crack of the whip for Christians who have forgotten their mission and a positive alternative for sincere Marxists'. And Radio Moscow has spoken of its 'power to capture radical, revolutionary minds'.

You will find in the first pages of *Remaking the World*, the collected speeches of Frank Buchman, who initiated MRA, his conviction that MRA was a revolution whose concern is vital Christianity.

He also described it as a good road, along which the ordinary man and the statesman can travel together. And in a whimsical afterthought he once added that MRA was like a large lake where a lamb can wade and an elephant can swim.

This emphasis of MRA on waiting on the leading of the Holy Spirit — the inner voice, the enlightened conscience — was put very simply by Dr Buchman. He used to quote the wording on a postcard sent to him by a General after the first World War: 'God gave a man two ears and one mouth. Why doesn't he listen twice as much as he speaks?'

It is the experience of millions, and of myself, that adequate, accurate information can come from the mind of God to the mind of man. When man listens, God speaks. When man obeys, God acts. Then you get new men, new nations and a new world.

Memory and ink

Those who attempt to live out MRA take God seriously. We get up an hour earlier to pray, to read the Bible or other scripture, and to seek God's guidance. I write down the thoughts which come into my mind. The Chinese have a saying, 'The strongest memory is weaker than the palest ink.' That is why I write down my thoughts.

You may ask: 'How will I know whether the thoughts I get are from God or not?' Well, I test them against the highest standards that I know, against the teaching of the Bible, for example. I check these thoughts against Christ's absolute moral standards — honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. These, you may recognise, are like

a summary of the Sermon on the Mount. The Muslim finds them in the Koran.

When I began, at the age of 17, I had things to put right with other people. I returned money for things I had stolen. I was honest about cheating in exams. This was not the whole programme but it was a necessary pre-requisite. It was like a doctor washing his hands before an operation. Washing one's hands is a necessary prelude but it is not the operation. I need to get straight, with God's help, and then get on to God's highway, where He can tell me what to do and where to go day by day.

After taking stock of my life I gave all I knew of myself to all I knew of God. It was like a contract with God — a two-sided affair.

Shaving a monkey

Now, change is the heart of MRA — the change which results from an explosion of God's Holy Spirit in the human personality. But the aims and claims of MRA go far beyond personal change. MRA stands for a full dimension of change: economic change, social change, national change and international change, all based on personal change.

Some Christians say it is enough to have a spiritual experience, but often that is all too personal and self-satisfying. Some Marxists say that man's environment alone changes his character, and that unless his environment changes, he can do nothing about his character. The Russian experiment proves the inadequacy of this doctrine. Both personal and structural changes are needed. Our characters are the result of a succession of moral choices. A man's character will determine his environment. He can create or he can destroy. Certainly, a man's environment will affect his character. But to educate a man without seeking a character change is like shaving a monkey. He has a smooth cheek but he remains a monkey.

International teams of MRA workers criss-crossed the borders of Europe in the 'forties and 'fifties. Nowadays, we take for granted that France and Germany are neighbour nations and have found healing and reconciliation. It is a fact of history that both French and German governments decorated Frank Buchman for the work of Moral Re-Armament in helping to bring about this reconciliation. Robert Schuman freely acknowledged his debt to Buchman in helping stimulate the ideas which led to the Schuman Plan. The German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, wrote: 'We have seen the

conclusion after some difficult negotiations of important international agreements. MRA has played an invisible but effective part in bridging differences of opinion between the negotiating parties.'

Take Britain today. A few months ago, a group of housewives took the Festival Hall and called a meeting, entitled 'Home Truths for International Women's Year'. They are tackling inflation on the home front and have decided to buy from need and not from greed. They drew 2,000 people to the meeting from all over Britain.

And a group of Trade Unionists, inspired by the ideas of MRA, have launched a programme which they call *Action '75*. These men, militant trade unionists from the motor industry, the building trade and the aerospace factories decided to give content and meaning to Harold Wilson's plea for a year for Britain rather than a year for self. Back of the statement is solid factory floor experience affecting pay and productivity.

This is perhaps the most exciting age in all history. Man holds in his hands the choice between world transformation and world destruction. The controlling factor is an idea. Which idea will win the world? The man who has the bomb must have his violent ideas defused before his bomb goes off, or is defused. His ideas need to be replaced by a passion for people, to help them to change. The employer who wields power needs to shed his sole right to control other men's destinies and to include the workers in policy-making. The trade unionist needs to regard the capitalist as a human being who can change voluntarily, which would be more useful to society than a programme of liquidation. Parents need to live out what they tell their kids to do. Children need to respect authority because God is real to them and because He is the ultimate source of authority.

Harbingers of history

MRA is all this and more. It is a world family of humble, hopeful people who dare to believe that God has a plan for the entire earth and every human being on earth: everyone matters and has a part.

If you persist with Moral Re-Armament you will get opposition. Hitler opposed it. So did Stalin. Opposition is neither to be sought nor to be avoided. If you are out to change things God's way, you will be opposed, even persecuted, whether you like it or not.

But if you are, then you are in a historic tradition. Persecution is the fire that forges prophets. Millions are content to go to work from nine till five (or less) and to keep going the momentum created by other men's earlier endeavours.

But MRA is for the initiators, for the bold, for those who are impatient with the status quo and would be the harbingers of history, way out there where the stones are rough and the goals are great.

This is the most difficult, the most challenging programme of life that mankind has ever been offered. It is the most satisfying and adventurous way I know of spending the rest of your life.

ALEC SMITH, from Salisbury, Rhodesia, was quoted on the front page of 'The Rhodesia Herald' calling on black and white in Southern Africa 'to give up our pride and privilege to save a continent'. He was speaking at the World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament in Caux, Switzerland as Prime Minister Ian Smith and other leaders of Southern Africa were meeting on the Victoria Falls bridge.

Speaking earlier in Salisbury, Alec Smith said, 'I am passionately in love with this country. So I am looking for a solution, a way to bridge the gaps, the divisions. We claim to be God-fearing, but it would be foolish to deny that we have problems. They are not unique. If we can live together peacefully, the world can.'

'Hatred and prejudice have nothing to do with colour, age or nationality. They go on in people's hearts. When I committed my life to God I had conclusive evidence how to overcome prejudice. God turned hate into love.'

'We will solve our problems when we all start with ourselves and examine where we need to change.'

The 'Daily Express' Hickey column in November described the dramatic change in the life-style of this young Rhodesian under the headline, 'Smart Alec, the reformed Smith — Premier's son turns his back on drugs'.

We print Alec Smith's story in his own words as told to the Asian newsweekly 'Himmat'.

Bridge the gap by Alec Smith

I WAS BORN and brought up on a farm in Rhodesia. My father was a Member of Parliament as well and so from an early age I was exposed to politics. Sometimes friends nine would suddenly stop seeing me because our parents had sided with different political parties. This hurt me and made me wonder how deep these friendships really were.

While I was still at school my father became the Prime Minister of our country. This did not affect me at first, but I soon began to notice a change in the attitude of people I knew and people I met. Some of the people I knew already started to treat me differently, as if they wanted to win my friendship for their own gain. I soon became very careful about whom I called a friend.

Some people automatically hated me because they did not agree with the views of my father. More often than not I would be introduced as 'Ian Smith's son' and my name would never be mentioned.

I just wanted to be myself and so at college I really went wild and enjoyed myself with a small group of friends that I trusted. People began to notice me and I enjoyed it.

Parents embarrassed

At university I studied law, but I spent most of the time breaking the law. I had long hair, a beard, and I wore crazy clothes. I drank a great deal and took drugs all the time. I became involved in political demonstrations and was even warned by the police.

I was often in the newspapers and I embarrassed my parents a great deal. I really enjoyed all this because I became something myself. People would notice me and recognise me even if they did not like me or my way of life.

My university career ended in disaster. I turned up for one exam paper dead drunk and wrote a letter to the professor telling him what a stupid exam I thought it was. I was later advised that I would not be allowed back into the law faculty.

Soon after this I was called up to do my national service in the army. I spent the



Alec Smith

Photo: Franzon

following year in the army and hated every bit of it. The army did not cure me and when I was discharged I was filled with bitterness and hate for the whole system, especially for my parents.

I felt my whole life was destroyed. I had lost all my hope and ambition. I drifted into a life of heavy drug-taking and fantasy. The only thing that seemed real to me was when the next 'trip' would be.

It was in this state that I was arrested for trying to smuggle drugs into the country. This really shook me. I was brought before a court of law, sentenced and given a large fine. I had to find the money or go to jail and so I managed to get a job as a photographer. I really enjoyed my work and for the first time I felt happy with what I was doing. This still did not solve my personal problems.

However, about this time I began to search into the concept of God and his existence. I began to feel God's guiding hand in my life. I went to a church and was faced with the challenge of Christ on the cross. I knew what I had to do, but I was not able to take that final step. For two weeks I wrestled with my will and a fear of the unknown.

Finally I gave my life to God, and for the first time in my life I was really free. I had many problems, but God helped me to sort them out. I was able to see clearly the problems facing my country and I felt a need

to tackle them. I had become an active Christian, but I felt I was not being as effective as I could be.

At this point I met Moral Re-Armament. They invited me to a film show. This was a film on the life of Dr William Nkomo, a black nationalist from South Africa who had changed and fought for an end to hatred and racial divisions in his land.

This film seemed to be relevant to the situation in my country. I felt that I should get involved. I have worked with MRA since then, because they are tackling the root causes of the problems in my country and the world; hate, fear, greed and selfishness.

Growth of an idea

In December '74 some of the MRA team in Southern Africa met in Bulawayo to discuss plans for the new year. It seemed that God led us to plan a conference in Salisbury in June 1975. The idea grew and many people responded from all over the world as well as from Rhodesia.

The conference lasted for a week and over one thousand local men and women attended. The MRA delegates were also to see thousands of people around the country after the conference. The effect of this time has been felt across our country.

Militant black nationalists and extreme white nationalists found together an answer for the hatred and bitterness which divides them. Many ordinary people found new direction for their lives, and a new hope for Africa was born.

People are the problem in the world, but they are also the answer to the problem. I believe that as we solve the divisions in our land we will bring an answer that works to the world.

Indian call

NIKETU IRALU, from Nagaland, one of the cast of *Song of Asia*, flew this week to Alberta on the invitation of leaders of the Canadian Indian people. He is attending

a conference for Indians and non-Indians from the USA and Canada in the Convention Centre, Calgary. The conference invitation states, 'North America needs a shake-up.

1976 is the year. Cultural re-strengthening is needed for Indians and non-Indians alike.'

Conference hosts are Chief Gordon Crowchild, Chief Leo Pretty Young Man, Chief Bill McLean, Chief (Acting) John Chief Moon, Chief (Acting) Nelson Small Legs and Councillor Fred Eagletail. They are from the Sarcee, Blackfoot, Stoney, Blood and Piegan Reservations.

Co-hosts are Ed Burnstick, Canadian Director, American Indian Movement; Roy Little Chief, Chairman, Calgary Urban Treaty Alliance; Arnold Crowchild, President, Sarcee Development Corporation.



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formed to translate this into a reality by launching a professional production. On its board are several prominent Methodists as well as representatives of other denominations. Its Chairman is Dr John Gibbs, a former Vice-President of the Methodist Conference and Chairman of the Methodist Drama Committee.

Dr Gibbs writes: 'Although we owe a great deal to the pioneer work in the theatre done by MRA and we are leaning heavily on the expertise and know-how of the Westminster Theatre, I want to say that *Ride! Ride!* is our responsibility. We, as Methodists, are doing it for the whole Christian Church and for the country itself, and it is up to us to see that every theatre is packed and that, as well as coming ourselves, we bring our neighbours, the clubs we belong to and the people we work with. Then, indeed, in 1976 we will see John Wesley ride again, and the truths for which he fought may well become regnant in the hearts of the British people.'

Ride! Ride! tells the true story of Martha Thompson, a Lancashire girl from Preston, who ran away to London and found work in the home of a quack doctor. She was converted at one of John Wesley's street meetings but her employers were so outraged at her 'enthusiasm' that they had her committed to Bedlam, the notorious lunatic asylum. There she languished for two years until her plight came to the ears of John Wesley. The man who preached to thousands each day in the open air was just as concerned for the fate of one poor serving girl in Bedlam. He fought everyone who stood in the way, right up to the Home Secretary, to secure her release, and then took her to her home in the north, on the back of his own horse.

Through the play, author Alan Thornhill, composer Penelope Thwaites and director Peter Coe (who directed both the London and New York productions of *Oliver!*) are anxious to show the stature of John Wesley and the impact of his message.

A silent revolution

Historians have pointed out that Wesley was born into a society not unlike our own: brilliant in many respects, but also corrupt, violent and heartless. By giving a new sense of dignity, responsibility and purpose to the ordinary working man, Wesley changed the face of the England of his day.

His work led to social reform: the abolition of the slave trade by Wilberforce, the Factory Acts of Shaftesbury; to early trades unionism (five of the six Tolpuddle Martyrs were Methodists); and influenced the founders of the Labour Party. It contributed greatly to that massive moral and economic regeneration which made Britain the leading world power of the nineteenth century.

In an age when violent and bloody

revolutions were taking place elsewhere, which resulted, as violent revolutions always do, in a loss of freedoms for several generations, a silent and bloodless revolution took place in British hearts, which led to an expansion of democratic freedoms in this country and many parts of the globe.

Democracy depends not so much on the enlightenment and sincerity of the politicians, important though that is, as on the discipline of the electorate. Without that self-discipline an increasing imposition of enforced discipline from above becomes almost inevitable, leading to bureaucratic or military dictatorships of right and left.

Engaged in a battle

If democratic government is now in jeopardy, it is in large measure because this inner discipline has broken down.

What Wesley did for eighteenth century England, now thousands of ordinary dedicated people can do for our country in this last quarter of the twentieth century.

They can take part in a campaign through many of our largest industrial cities and in London, a campaign in which all can participate who are truly committed to the moral and spiritual re-arming of the nation.

The assault of evil on the nation is being matched by the assault of the Holy Spirit. We all have the chance to be engaged in the battle, with whoever is also fighting it and wherever it is being fought.

Who will ride in '76?

HUGH WILLIAMS

Note: 20,000 seats have already been sold for *Ride! Ride!*.

The thing which I was greatly afraid of...and which I resolved to use every possible method of preventing, was a narrowness of spirit, a party spirit... that miserable bigotry which makes many so unready to believe that there is any work of God but among themselves.

JOHN WESLEY

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passionately but I hate passionately the things that are wrong.'

'We can only be forgiven by the blacks if we take on the responsibility of changing South Africa,' added Miss Thea de Froe. 'This change has to start with the people. I believe that South Africans can change.'

'In the Kingdom of God there is unity and freedom,' said Anthony Phatudi, a teacher from the Homeland of Lebowa. 'God knows no colour. Man is not colour, man is deeper.'

Robert Phoko, a Lesothan studying in Germany, added, 'It is not the white colour that matters. It is the heart of man that is the answer to the problem.'

IDEOLOGY

People still wish to maximise their consumption; the fall in material living standards is deeply resented; for many individuals in developed countries 1975 will have been regarded as a very bad year. There has as yet been no evidence of moral change; no magnanimity; no readiness to do with less for the common good; no recognition of the fact that, in the long term, an ideology based on rugged individualism must give place to one in which the rights of the community are paramount.'

JOHN A LORRAINE
writing in the *New Statesman*
(26 December 1975)

In our time the most urgent need of the human race is not to solve the problem of war or peace, or the problem of lack of food and energy, or even the ecological problem. Its most vital need is a new consciousness: a new, all-embracing profound ideology that would bring order to that unbelievable chaos in human minds that is almost the basic difference between contemporary man and men of all other eras.'

MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV
writing in *The New York Times*
(23 December 1975)

Communist and non-Communist have one fundamental weakness in common. They are not creating a new type of man. Consequently both lack the one essential for creating a new world. But there is a superior ideology which is giving men new motives, new character. It works! It is a new thinking forged by living absolute standards, absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness, love. With this ideology, nations will begin to think. They will solve all their problems. Families will be united. Youth will find a purpose more dynamic and compelling than lawlessness. This is the new statesmanship, a life commitment adequate to change the thinking, living and daring of the whole world. For everyone everywhere this is the future. This is normal living.'

FRANK BUCHMAN
from a world broadcast (1956)