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Church & People

Moral Re-Armament Team for S.A.

MORAL RE-ARMAMENT is sending an international team to Africa. Their campaign in the Copper Belt has already begun and they are expected in the Union sometime early in the New Year. However widely opinions about the Moral Re-armament movement may differ, it is certain that men of good will throughout this unhappily divided continent will welcome the team and its efforts on behalf of unity and co-operation.

The strength of Moral Re-Armament lies in the sincerity of its members, in their enthusiasm and in the freshness with which they tackle problems of our post-war world. They have shown a greater awareness of the divisive tactics of international Communism than have most of the Christian Churches, and they have sought to bring unity to discordant economic and racial groups wherever opportunity has presented itself.

One of the team coming to this country is an ex-Communist, who for 25 years, was in the Communist Party of Germany.

The leader of Moral Re-Armament is Dr. Frank Buchman, an American whose early years were spent in the orthodox pietism of the Lutheran Church. Dr. Buchman at an early stage in his career had a spiritual experience which radically changed the direction of his life.

IT is possible to discern three phases in the development of this movement. A generation ago it was known as the First Century Christian Fellowship and in that phase it did not differ widely from old-fashioned evangelical Methodism.

It next entered into the phase in which it was known as the Oxford Group. In this phase it seems to have modernised its methods considerably, and to have become more publicity-conscious.

Its third phase—that of Moral Re-Armament — began shortly before the last war when physical re-armament of the western nations became a necessity for defence against Hitler.

In all these phases it has preserved an identity with the mind of its founder, but some of us would doubt whether in its present phase it has the spiritual power which it had in its earlier periods.

Once before this movement launched a campaign in the Union, in 1929. Some who visited the Union then as members of its team will be returning here next year. They will be returning to a land which even more than at the time of their previous visit needs healing of its disastrous divisions. If they can make some contribution to the cause of unity and peace in this country, their visit and their efforts here will have been well worth while.