



**To Russi Lala of Bombay, editor of "Himmat"; and to  
his wife, Freny, whose persistent encouragement inspired  
me to write this Memoir.**

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**M**Y parents were born in mid-Victorian days when strict religious upbringing and parental authority reigned in many families. My father came of a long line of Prestwiches who claimed to be one of the oldest families in Lancashire. My grandfather, Samuel Prestwich, started a business in the cotton trade known as S. & J. Prestwich, with his brother John as partner. My father, Richard Henry, moved to the commercial end of the work in Manchester. He was a man of great charm, popular with his business friends and greatly loved by his employees. It was a family business of the old-fashioned type which did much to build up a sound British industry.

At the same time, there were still signs of the poverty and privation, the hard and exacting conditions of the first industrial revolution. In those days my parents moved from Moses Gate near Farnworth to a charming small house and garden in Broughton Park, Manchester, where I and my younger sister were born. There I can remember sunny days and joyous games, racing round the garden, climbing trees, building houses in the sand pit. But I can also remember, in our neighbouring village, drunkenness in the street, people begging, men with misshapen legs as the result of the years of struggle from which prosperity was emerging. Those days, however, were for me the happiest of my childhood.

One game in particular I remember inventing, when I was a child of not more than seven or eight. I had been taken with my younger sister to see the pantomime 'Dick Whittington' at the Athenaeum Theatre in Manchester.

The marvellous community on the stage lived in my mind; and we imagined a place called 'Athenaeum Castle', where they would all come and stay with us. Everyone slept in one huge bed, around the room; and we all talked an imaginary language called 'Ashgar'—it sounded rather like that! We had Dick Whittington, Tom the Cat and all sorts of characters. I made my poor sister take part—usually as the Cat! It was a live and interesting community; wherever I went I could see them. The game came from a longing for lots of people around me; a longing which God was to fulfil many years later, in His way.

**I** was the third of four daughters, but my eldest sister had died at the age of seven from scarlet fever, a shock and grief to my mother of which she scarcely spoke in all her long life. We learned music, painting and drawing. Mother found good books for us to read. She taught us simple Bible stories which I loved. But these days of growing prosperity were days when men began to throw off the shackles of a religion that in the case of my parents had been more formal than real. Huxley and other philosophers found what they felt to be truth in a reasoned conception of the universe. And looking back, I feel that my parents about this time threw off what they felt to be narrow and unenlightened in their own upbringing and satisfied themselves with more 'up-to-date' and 'progressive' ways to believe and live.

But shadows began to fall for me. I went occasionally to Church with a cousin who looked after us, and I read every little religious book I could lay my hands on. But a sense of insecurity began to assail me at that early age and to grow and often to influence my inner life.

About 1895 we moved to a bigger house and garden in

Manchester. It was both colder and grander than our earlier home. A lady came to look after us who captured my affection and divided me to a great extent from my mother. We began to talk about my mother behind her back—something which stayed in my mind and haunted me until many years later I was able to tell her, and receive her loving forgiveness.

My father's growing prosperity reflected itself in our lives. My mother, who had always wanted a good education for us, was influential in sending us to the most advanced and up-to-date school she could find—Wycombe Abbey School in Buckinghamshire, where I was a boarder from 1899-1902. This school had a deeply religious background with a somewhat formal adherence to its demands—Church twice on Sundays, once on Saints' Days, prayers in Big School before lessons, prayers at night before bedtime. The life of the school, often in old and tough conditions, was built on a stern discipline, for which I can never be grateful enough. It has stood me in good stead many times in my later life and still helps me to be obedient to a disciplined life today.

One result of my father's increased prosperity was the acquisition of a house in the Isle of Man, to which, with endless pieces of baggage, servants and dogs, we resorted during most of the summer months from 1901-1911. It was in a beautiful position on the cliffs outside Douglas, with a large garden and a small golf course close at hand. These still seem to have been times of sunshine and care-free days, when in spite of inner conflicts and queries there was room for youthful high spirits and joy in life. But underneath there were many doubts and fears. I had never been baptised or confirmed and belonged to no church. My school, in spite of much that was good, had not given me a real faith to challenge and satisfy. I often had nervous fears for which I had no answer. Somewhere in this period my

mother took me on a visit to Italy, and in a hotel garden in Rome I met an old school friend who urged me with great earnestness not to give up the search for Christian faith. But when I got home, the rationalism of a book that my mother lent me, the dullness and coldness of the little church we occasionally went to, and the fear of what faith might ask of me, decided me to throw off the search, though not a daily prayer.

In 1907, my older sister married an X-Ray specialist, and later her children gave much joy to the family. She and her husband subsequently moved from Cheshire to Morville Hall in Shropshire: a home of great delight to their daughter and son, and a growing family of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In 1912, my father sold the house in the Isle of Man and we moved to a large country house in Cheshire. Tirley Garth was originally built for a director of I.C.I. in Northwich, who was unable to finish it. Another director took it on but became an M.P. and had to move to London. So the house was kept in abeyance and was in an unfinished condition when we came to look at it.

It belonged at this time to I.C.I. in Northwich, and its reasonable rental, the beauty of its position and the possibility of developing a landscape garden in its thirty-nine acres, decided my father to rent it.

**W**e moved into Tirley Garth in August and began to find a staff to carry its needs. We were then a family of four. My parents were in advancing middle age, but young and strong in spirit. I was already twenty-eight and my younger sister twenty-six. The development of a beautiful garden was of paramount interest to my parents and sister. I was more interested in the kind of society we would meet. We

had lived in Manchester amongst the families of business men. It was a society that had retained good manners and thought for others, and had musical and artistic interests. Now we found ourselves among people absorbed in hunting, bridge parties, race meetings and beautiful gardens, with little time for the obligations and amenities of a quieter social life.

My sister and I hardly fitted into such a life. We learned to ride, and hunted a little. My father, a man of great social charm and a keen golfer, soon found friends on the golf course. My mother, a gracious hostess though not a lover of society as such, welcomed our many friends who came from many places to visit us. Life took on a new glamour and brightness. And then the first Great War came with a sudden blow. How well I remember that day! The fear of war with Germany had haunted me for years. Now it was here in all its grimness.

Not long after, we took into our home three Belgian officers who had escaped to Britain from the first rush of the German Army through their land. We did our best for them and became good friends. My father provided them with clothes and we talked our halting, eager French to them. Eventually they managed to get back to their country, and my sister and I took on work at a Y.M.C.A. hut in an Army camp on the Morfa at Conway in North Wales. Up till then we had collected weekly sums for the soldiers from our neighbours in the village and had come to know the inhabitants of every house. In this way we found a friendship with them for which I have always been most grateful. Life in the thin wooden Y.M.C.A. hut was a test of endurance—extremely hot in summer and bitterly cold in winter. The training in somewhat severe conditions at Wycombe Abbey School had been a good preparation for this! But the hut was transformed by willing helpers; and our spirits were high, as we served a great cause, and also



perhaps because we enjoyed freedom from any kind of parental control.

After that first Great War, with its triumphs and tragedies, its heroism and heartbreaks, there followed a somewhat empty period for me. My mother began to think for our neighbours in the village. She put up the War Memorial, a wayside shrine; raised money to build the Women's Institute building; she started a Baby Welfare and she gave electric light to the school—the first in the village—just before she died. All this entailed sacrifice, and my younger sister Lois was much more willing to help in these new ventures than I was. After all the exigencies of the War, I wanted to enjoy myself, but somehow that kind of social life seemed to have slipped away. We had to face a more real existence in our beautiful country home. A certain emptiness crept into me—I had no real faith at this time to hold on to. Yet something of that life in the Y.M.C.A. had meant much. I had liked the services held there and the feeling of religious faith as a background to what had been given in service to the Army. My sister was more attracted to the Church than I was, and I found myself, even after going with her and my mother to the services, always feeling something of an outsider. Finally, I decided to join the Church, and my sister and I, well into our thirties or early forties, were privately baptised and confirmed. But though these services gave me a feeling of greater unity with the Church, I began to ask myself, What was it doing to win people to new life? For this I saw as its central and essential function.

I had read a good deal about St. Francis. The way he gave himself to bring people to Christ attracted me deeply, and I wanted to do that. There was a woman I knew who drank too much. I tried to help her, but went about it all the wrong way. Similar efforts with one or two other people were not much more successful.

**T**hen came an event which led to a change in my whole life, and I have to be very thankful to my sister Lois for this. At a small meeting held by the wife of the Bishop of Chester, she heard of the Oxford Group, and went to a conference they were holding in Oxford that summer, 1932. She came back so radiant and gave such a description of the 'changed' people she had met, that I, who was hungering for such change, decided to go to the very next meeting I could. So I went to a conference at Southport later that year, led by Dr. Frank Buchman, the initiator of the Oxford Group and its work of Moral Re-Armament.

I was greatly struck to meet young men and women giving leadership. They had decided to live by absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, and to obey the guidance God gives to people wholly given to Him. They were effective where I had not been. There was something steadfast and faithful about them. So upstairs, in a rather depressing hotel bedroom, I got on my knees and committed myself to this way of life, though I must admit it was without passionate enthusiasm! It was a very simple beginning. But every day since then I have tried to live by those four standards and to follow the guidance of God.

Before I left that conference I was introduced to a lady who proved to be a forthright and far-seeing friend, whom I later invited to come and stay at Tirley. In the course of a long conversation she put her finger on a resentment in my life which she said was like a bad tooth poisoning everything else. Evidently in the way I spoke of it there was still a rumbling of sore feelings. 'You must apologise for this,' she said firmly. So I wrote a letter, admitting my own blame and saying I was very sorry for what I had done. I cannot be grateful enough for this. The result was an extraordinary new freedom and eagerness to spread this

new way of living—new, yet as old as Christianity itself, which alone can give real hope and purpose to the world.

Along with others in Tarporley and Runcorn, we sought to spread the good news of what we had found and help others to find it. Links began to grow round the country.

In 1933 I went to my first Oxford Group House Party in Oxford. I remember how then my eyes were first opened to the world-wide scope of this new spirit and how it stirred me to see what could happen. In a subsequent House Party, in 1934, I first personally met Dr. Frank Buchman. In a meeting one evening in the Oxford Town Hall, I rose with great trepidation to my feet and spoke about my vision for Cheshire. Change for Cheshire, I felt, could change Britain! Looking back now in 1970, I know that it was at this moment that I began to get the conviction of what God meant me to do with my home and resources.

Dr. Buchman, who was leading the meeting, called out to me to see him afterwards. When I did so, he invited me to breakfast in one of the Oxford colleges. I recognised him as a very great man. What impressed me was his tremendous interest in people. Throughout breakfast, almost it seemed at every moment, someone was coming up to speak to him or to show him a document or photograph. To each person he gave his full mind and attention.

In those days I did not think quite so much about the world as I do now. But I knew that the breakdown of a civilisation begins in the moral downfall of people, and that this was what Dr. Buchman was fighting against. The breadth of his vision, his humanity, his care for people and his passion to win them for Christ appealed to me. There was, too, a commanding something about him which gave confidence. It was a kind of authority—he spoke with the authority of a man of God. He had evident gifts of statesmanship and understanding for any calling he might



*I.P.P., 1893*



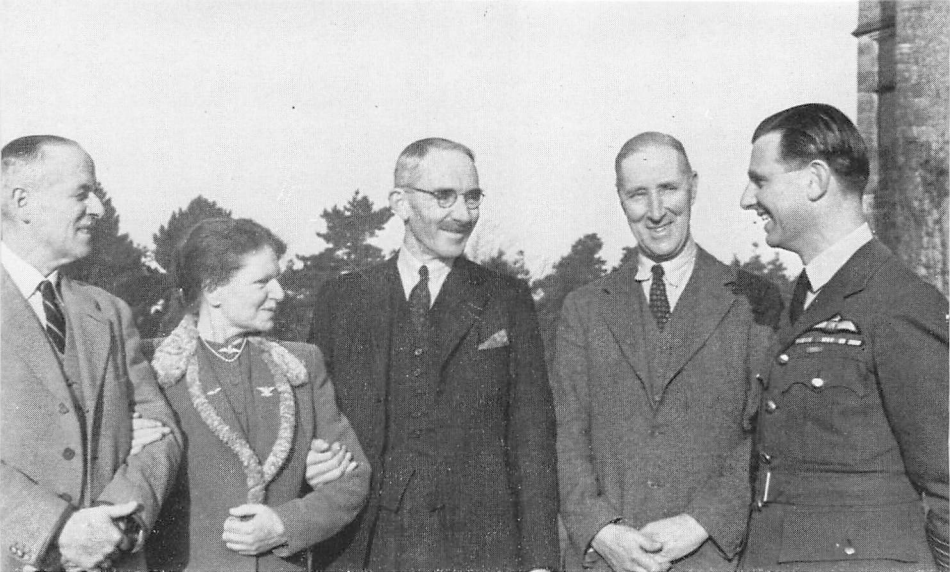
*I.P.P., 1936*



*Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Prestwich, my father and mother, in the dining room of Tirley Garth, 1934*

*Tirley Garth*





*Major General  
R. de R. Chammer,  
Brigadier David Forster,  
Rear Admiral  
Sir Edward Cochrane,  
and Group Captain  
P. S. Foss, with  
I.P.P., 1946*



*Dr. Frank Buchman  
arrives at Tirley  
Garth, 1946*

have followed; but he had accepted the greatest calling—humbly to follow Jesus Christ—and what millions owe to him and to this response to God can never be estimated.

At the conference, I watched him throw the young men into leadership—like throwing them into a pool and expecting them to swim. They stood up on the platform, and did extremely well. I knew he was changing and training these young Englishmen, and I valued what, as an American, he was doing for Britain. He must have seen something tough in this country that would stick it out and give it out to the world. Though we have often failed him, Moral Re-Armament has gone out from Britain; and it still does so, especially from the Westminster Theatre.

In 1935 many of us went to join Dr. Buchman at a conference in Geneva, and we had weekend visits to Berne, Zurich and Rheinfelden. From Basel that year, with much trepidation, I took my first aerial flight to London, expecting my family to be as thrilled as I was. To my great disappointment I was not treated like the heroine I had rather felt myself to be, and they were scarcely interested!

**T**here were subsequent visits to Oxford conferences in 1936-37. The 1937 conference stands out as a landmark in my memory. I remember passing through one of those depressing times when life seems to be rather in a quagmire, when suddenly one morning in my time of listening to God a new light dawned. I was thinking rather idly of our garden at home. Each year in the summer my father used to open it to the public for the Queen's Nursing Fund. It was a beautifully kept garden and in the spring had a superb show of rhododendrons. One year about two thousand people had come to see it. In my mind's eye, I saw these people walking up our drive. Suddenly the thought came to me, as

clearly as a voice speaking, 'Why not those two thousand changed?' New light on what I was called on to do sprang into my heart. I saw my home with throngs of people coming with their problems and going out with God. And I walked home on air with a new hope. This was what I was meant to do with my life and my home, to bring change to thousands.

My parents were still living at this time and were both over eighty. When I told them of the vision I had for Tirley Garth, it was natural that they did not share this view. All my father said was, 'You cannot afford it!' But God kept the vision clear before me, and the certainty that one day it would happen. Meanwhile my sister and I, with the help of nurses, did our best to care for our parents.

**I**t was during this period, in 1938, that Dr. Buchman and two young men came to visit us one evening and had supper. We were waited on by our faithful parlour maid Mary Craven, a Salvationist, who was a friend of many years standing. When I introduced her to Dr. Buchman, he looked across at her and said, 'It was a Salvationist who changed me!' He was referring of course to his initial experience of the Cross in the little chapel in Keswick, when he heard a woman—a member of General Booth's family—speak. As he put it, she 'unravelling the Cross' for him. I have often visited Keswick since then, and it has impressed me how a very great man's experience was born in such a simple place, in such a quiet way. There was no fuss. He just knelt there and gave his life to God.

Dr. Buchman met my father, and saw the garden and parts of the house. From what I heard him say afterwards, it had evidently delighted him, with its Elizabethan style and yet its modern amenities and spaciousness. At a subse-

quent conference, in Interlaken 1938, I remember Dr. Buchman saying to someone, 'She's got the loveliest home.' And indeed it was an inspired creation of the architects, with its grey stone mullions, its oriel window in the hall, its tall chimneys and courtyard. It has a commanding position on a hillside overlooking the plain and the Cheshire hills, and the distant Welsh mountains. It is a place to thank God for, and especially that He has chosen it for His own great purposes in this industrial area of Britain, surrounded as it is by the great cities of Liverpool, Manchester, Stoke and many smaller industrial towns.

In October that year, Dr. Buchman invited me to a conference in Southport which proved to be a very useful briefing for a subsequent visit to Belfast and Northern Ireland. It soon became obvious I would have to make up my mind whether I would join this campaign or return home after the training period. God's guidance, through many doubts and fears, was becoming more real to me. I found myself on the top of a bus heading for Liverpool, and subsequently on the ship for Belfast.

**O**ne morning in Belfast, I heard a woman speak in such a forthright and direct way that I decided then and there to have a talk with her. Her name was Mrs. Violet Grimshaw. Somehow my experiences so far had not wholly satisfied me; I wanted something more fundamental. What was it? With Mrs. Grimshaw's help, I began to see that my own possessions, and my relationship with my father, needed to be wholly open to God's guidance.

My father had been so generous and had thought things out for his daughters. He had already given us each a substantial amount, and I knew that in his will he had provided for us. But though I was then over forty, I still



felt more or less under his surveillance. I had not accepted my responsibility for what was mine.

God's guidance might cut across everything my father wanted; and I feared to go against him. I loved him very much. Would it not be ingratitude to go against his wishes? It was the hardest decision of my life. But by this time the guidance of God was the most precious thing in my life; I made my decision, and returned home free from a wrong dependence.

Soon after my return home, I was put to the test. My father, suspecting I think that this revolutionary change in my life might profoundly affect what I did with my resources, asked me to promise that I would never spend my capital and would leave all my property to the family. I said I could not promise to do either of these things.

Little could I then have foreseen the future and what Tirley could mean to a country in desperate need. But looking back I cannot be grateful enough for the freedom that came with my decision to be guided by God and not by my father. I had many encounters with my father through subsequent decisions I had to make, but nothing broke my relationship with him or my mother.

My mother passed on in 1938, greatly loved and respected. Soon after, the second great war broke out, in September 1939. I remember hearing it announced over the radio in the hall and how my sister and I knelt down and prayed. We bought gas masks and I prepared one room as a gas-protected chamber, as far as I knew how. We moved my father to a downstairs room, but he realised very little of this war and insisted on being moved back to his bedroom. He died shortly afterwards, in January 1940—a man dearly loved by his family and friends, especially I think for his courtesy and hospitality to people of all ranks and ages.

I had put away the thought of using Tirley for Moral

Re-Armament, thinking that no one would want to move here in this time of crisis. I wondered whether I should take another, smaller house nearby, as my sister had done, and invite some girls to come and live there, out of range of German weapons. Puzzled about what to do, I went to London to consult Roland Wilson, who was one of those responsible for the work of Moral Re-Armament in Britain. As we talked, the idea dawned on me, 'Why not let us use Tirley as long as we have it?' Many organisations and businesses were being compelled by the war to move their administrative headquarters out of London. Could not Tirley Garth make such an arrangement possible for this vital work?

**W**ithin a week, desks, beds and furniture began to arrive; and we were making our first attempt to transform the home into a training centre for Moral Re-Armament. It was not altogether an easy transition for me, in spite of my warm welcome for it. I had to learn, not without some doubt and difficulty, to trust people who had given their lives to God's service to carry out the practical work of the house as part of their duty.

With the arrival of Roland Wilson and his sister Mary (now Mrs. Lawson Wood) and forty whole-time workers in September 1940, things began to take shape. I had visualised an army of life-changers constantly on the attack in the surrounding areas. This was certainly to be a part of our programme, but meanwhile an exact and often painful discipline started at Tirley: punctuality, perfect standards of work, early morning quiet times, obedience to guidance—the training, in short, of a force who could bring a moral and spiritual breakthrough to a country in mortal peril not only from the enemy without, but from the more subtle enemy within.

It is hard to describe how people began to flock to this home, as a centre of new life and hope in the midst of the devastation of war. It was a time of slipping standards, when the war was made an excuse for carelessness in the home and country, and one of our first challenges was to create this home on perfect standards. The house was cleaned and polished, dusted and swept; and a high standard of meals, under war conditions, was maintained. Men and girls went down on their knees to scrub the kitchen floor. The men heaved great pots and boilers on to the kitchen stove. The beautiful garden, which for a time had been left in abeyance, became an excellent market garden, cared for by seven girls who dug the soil, tended the produce and drove the lorry to sell it in Chester and Liverpool markets in the early mornings. It was a hive of activity, but this was not its purpose, good as these high standards of work might be. The main purpose of this centre was to find an answer in men's lives to a torn and divided world, engaged in a second devastating war. Dr. Buchman put his finger on the need: 'Unless we deal with human nature thoroughly and drastically on a national scale, nations must follow their historic road to violence and destruction.' That was it—here was our essential, eternal task—to change men and women, to bring new life under God's direction to the nations and the world. An impossible task without God actively at work in men's lives.

Many made notable contributions to the development of the work of MRA at Tirley: the two men most responsible were Roland Wilson and Lawson Wood. Dr. Buchman's infinite care for people and his insistence on a high quality of work and attention to detail had impressed these things deeply on them. Graduates of their universities, with gifts of eloquence and administration that would have fitted them for high office in any career, they chose instead to be pioneers of a new world order, whose foundations

must be laid on the absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love and the daily and hourly guidance of God. This indeed they saw as a *sine qua non* for the world if men were not to destroy themselves by their own lust and self-seeking.

About fifteen older women joined us here to bring a new order in home-life with perfect standards of work and new family relationships. It was not always easy! We often had our own ideas of how things should be done. But it was a great new experience and was commented on by a young American officer who was over in this country. He said, 'If fifteen of you older ladies can get on together, you've sure got something to tell the world!' We told the world, not only by the increasing number of people who came to learn with us, but by a news letter called the 'Oxford Group News', written and printed on the premises and then checked by the whole household seated at trestle tables in the hall. The scrutiny was minute, page by page, and only perfect copies were allowed to pass.

**S**cores of service men came to Tirley on their leave. Some said the discipline was tougher than in the services! Many found fresh hope here and a vision of the world for which they were fighting. Standing out in my memory of these men are Michael Sitwell, killed in the early days of the war in Northern France; Tom Shillington, killed in North Africa as he went to help a wounded friend; William Conner, whose tank was one of the first to break through the enemy lines under Montgomery at Alamein; Cecil Pugh, the Air Force chaplain who chose to go down praying with his men in the hold of a troopship rather than accept safety in a life-boat; Group Captain Patrick Foss, who was

among those who made the assault on the Bay of Taranto; and those young Australian airmen, Gordon Wise and Jim Coulter, who helped to guard our shores and now fight with the same courage and sagacity to bring an answer to a bewildered world.

I cannot close this brief account of men and women in the services who came to Tirley without mentioning that gallant American officer, Colonel Robert Snider, who was decorated by the British government for his part in the defence of London against the flying bombs. He came often to Tirley in those war days, and used to take part in the activities or sit listening in the background with intense interest. He never missed an opportunity of inviting us to some function to which his Air Force service gave him an opening, and with a generous open-heartedness had a way of enlarging every situation in which he had a part.

**D**uring those days, and through the nights, we took turns to sit in the porch and 'spot' planes. On November 28th 1940, one of many air-raids took place on Liverpool and Manchester. We women were all sent to sleep in the cellar. I hated that. I would much rather have died in my bed. We could hear a terrific row as the planes passed overhead. We were blacked out, and never hit; but that night thirty-six incendiary bombs fell in our garden—one on the terrace within six feet of the house, and one on the roof. The men rushed to put them out.

Next day was the 21st birthday of one of the girls who worked in the vegetable garden; and round her cake, the bases of twenty-one incendiary bombs made excellent candlesticks. So what might have been a tragedy was turned into a joyous occasion.

Many songs and poems were written, inspired by our experiences in creating a revolutionary home. One day the thought came to one of the girls to write a play. So 'Giant Other Fellow' was born—a delightful short play, very apt for those days, with family scenes drawn from our life together, its villainous character 'Bad Egg', and its captivating song about the guidance God gives when men listen:

'Every morning when you rise,  
You'll do this if you are wise—

Just listen, and listen, and write down all you hear.'

'Giant Other Fellow' was given at the Military Training Centre at Saughton near Chester. A young subaltern who had worked at Tirley stepped through the curtains to announce the play. I shall never forget the applause that went up as he appeared—a tribute to a man who had stood up for what was right among his men, through jeers and laughter, and on many bitter mornings had lighted a candle in his barracks to be able to write down what God told him to do each day. Such sure foundations of character were laid in those hard days.

Eventually 'Giant Other Fellow' moved out into the country, and was presented to 30,000 people.

Meanwhile at Tirley, weekend by weekend, we would confer with men on leave from the armed services and others from industry and civic life. We planned together how to sustain the morale of our country through the dark war days. Articles were written each week for the press. One of these, called 'Mr. Sensible's Column', went regularly to 200 local newspapers across Britain.

The *Church of England Newspaper*, in a wartime editorial on the work of MRA, wrote of 'the daily work and conviction of those who know that through and beyond our present troubles, the vision of a world remade through the Cross of Christ is not illusory but real; that whatever it costs, it must come.'

Such was the vision that kept us going at Tirley through the war.

The war ended in September 1945 with the explosion of the atom bomb on Hiroshima. Henceforward we had to face a world fraught with vast new possibilities, vast new dangers, and though of course there were great rejoicings at the close of hostilities, we were faced with the question, What kind of a world, with these tremendous new powers, were we going to build? Was it to be controlled by man, or would he in his extremity turn to God as guide and governor of the world? The spirit of service that Britain had shown in the tense days of the war—would it still be used for the greater purposes of peace, or would it be assaulted by forces more subtle and more evil than open warfare, that could undermine the integrity of the nation and prove its moral re-armament a greater necessity than ever?

In 1946, Dr. Buchman returned to Europe, and visited Tirley in the spring of that year. I shall never forget the numbers of people who gathered to meet him—people who had come during the war, mill girls from Yorkshire, friends from the surrounding industrial towns, miners and their wives from Staffordshire. His old friends Lord and Lady Harrowby from a neighbouring county also came for lunch. He was delighted with the day. Late in the afternoon, I thought he must be getting tired, for he was nearly seventy years old. ‘Don’t you think he should rest now?’ I asked one of his aides. ‘You get him to do it, if you can!’ was the reply. But Dr. Buchman said, ‘Now I want to view the rest of the estate!’ Then, after driving round in the car, he went to the evening service in our little Church, where the Rector preached on judgment in the after life. It was a sermon which horrified me, and I feared its effect on Dr. Buchman. But to my surprise, all he said was, ‘Very powerful sermon, very powerful sermon—you

don't often hear a Church of England clergyman preach a sermon like that.'

**T**he great assembly centre for Moral Re-Armament, at Caux in Switzerland, was opened that year. I flew there in August with two companions in a four-seater plane—it was only my second flight and I was very nervous. It was a single-engined plane and the pilot had never been to Geneva before. We had to spend the night in Paris and next morning I remember hearing the inspector say, after examining the plane, 'Ce n'est pas dangereux!' Whatever 'Ce' was, we sped on our way, the pilot being ably helped by one of the passengers, who followed the rivers and railway lines on a map. When at last we came to the Alps we seemed to keep on dodging over the tops of the mountains and along the valleys until, to my great relief, Geneva appeared below us. Then, as we skimmed along the runway, I saw two friends awaiting our arrival—as relieved as we were, I think, for they had been searching all over the place for news of us. To me they looked like two angels of light. Air force men at Caux were horrified to hear we had crossed the Channel in a single-engined plane!

How Caux has grown since those early days of the summer of 1946! Enough cannot be said for the men and women who had the initiative to buy what had been a vast, fashionable hotel and transform it into a conference centre for Moral Re-Armament in Europe. The Swiss are a hard-working people, and they set to work to scrub and clean the rooms that had been used by refugees during the war, the lift-shaft where refuse had been thrown, the kitchen with its old-fashioned utensils. By July 1946, it was in sufficient order for Dr. Buchman and many people to come in for the first conference there, and though our practical work



was a bit rough and ready, it was a start in the development of the present perfect standards of this great conference centre.

'Turning enemies into friends' was one of Dr. Buchman's favourite precepts, and his first question at Caux was, 'Where are the Germans?' for he saw the potential greatness of that nation and how the recovery of Europe was dependent on their spiritual revival. So a German delegation was invited. Madame Irene Laure, leader of the Socialist women of France, who had suffered bitterly under the Germans through the war, heard they were coming, and wanted to run away. Instead she changed, and spent much of the next years in Germany, travelling up and down the country she had hated, saying how her hatred had been wrong, asking forgiveness and bringing new life.

Later both Chancellor Adenauer of Germany and Robert Schuman of France said of this brave French woman that she had done more than any other to create unity and understanding between their two countries after the years of war.

**N**ew life! That was what the world was needing after a second world war. Could we help to bring it here at Tirley?

Delegations from Japan and India began to visit us after going to Caux. From Africa, as country after country moved from colonial rule to independence, important groups came here. The leader of a million people in Northern Ghana headed one delegation. The Ewi of Ado Ekiti in Nigeria, came with another. I shall never forget the dignity and charm of these African chiefs, and their beautiful manners, their sense of humour and their readiness to meet any advances of friendship more than half-way.

These Africans were responding to the vision which Frank Buchman had given them for their continent—to bring an answer to East and West. ‘Though Africa’s shaped like a question mark, Africa’s got the answer!’ rang the song at Caux. There these African delegates wrote and produced the play ‘Freedom’, and later in Nigeria made it into the first full-length colour film made on the African continent. I saw the first performance of the play in Caux, and soon afterwards on the London stage. Some years later, two men who had fought in Kenya with the Mau Mau came to Tirley. They had lost their bitterness and found a new purpose—to bring the message of Moral Re-Armament to their country and to the world. Their President, Jomo Kenyatta, had urged them to translate the film ‘Freedom’ into Swahili, and they had come to England to do this. I remember giving all the available capital I had at the time to help this great project. They took their Swahili version back to Kenya, where a million of their people saw it at a critical time, and Kenya government leaders paid tribute to the film’s influence in inspiring unity in the country.

In 1948, Dr. Buchman’s 70th birthday was celebrated in Los Angeles, California, and I received an invitation to be present. This meant my first flight across the Atlantic. A young friend from Tirley’s experimental days went with me to help with reading and writing, as my eyes had already begun to fail. There was quite a party flying to the celebrations. We got into an electric storm over the Rockies and I heard one young man, as the lightning seemed to flash in and out of the plane, say quite calmly to the stewardess, ‘Do these planes often get hit?’ But then I looked across at a Bishop, who had spent many years working for men to find new life in Burma, and I had the reassuring thought, ‘God must surely want him to get there safely!’ And we did. We were met, I remember, by British friends at the airport—feeling triumphant and relieved that the

journey was over. Then, with an escort of police on motor-cycles, we drove to the headquarters of Moral Re-Armament in Los Angeles.

From there one of America's beautiful swift coaches took us to a conference at Riverside, seventy miles to the south of Los Angeles. Among the many who came, Dr. Buchman had invited a party of Japanese. Like the Germans at Caux, they came with a sense of guilt for their part in the war; and Dr. Buchman offered them a new vision of Japan as 'the lighthouse of Asia.' He gave them his best care, with beautifully prepared Japanese meals specially served for them.

**R**ecrossing America, I visited Detroit and experienced the 'damp heat' of that city in summer. Then I was driven the 300 miles up the long Michigan peninsula to Mackinaw City, where we embarked on a lake steamer for the beautiful wooded island of Mackinac. There we stayed for a few days in the Grand Hotel, where Dr. Buchman was gathering another world conference. I met the hotel proprietor, Mr. Stewart Woodfill, and his wife, arm in arm one on each side of Dr. Buchman. It was typical of the way he made friends with all who served him, no matter in what capacity.

The conference centre of Moral Re-Armament at Mackinac, with its great hall shaped like a wigwam, had not yet been built. But all unknowing, Dr. Buchman was fulfilling an old Indian prophecy which said that one day the nations would gather in a great wigwam and talk of peace for the world. How this prophecy was fulfilled is recorded in the colour-film 'The Crowning Experience', featuring Miss Muriel Smith, the Covent Garden opera singer. In the lead part of Miss Emma Tremayne, she

portrays the life of Mary McLeod Bethune, the great American educator, and in the final scene she sings 'The World Walked Into My Heart' to an audience drawn from many nations. This all took place at Mackinac later. But in 1948 it was a fascinating experience to stay in a little old house close to the lapping waters of the Lake.

From Mackinac and the heat of New York we went to stay with delightful friends in New Jersey, and one very hot day we motored to Allentown in Pennsylvania to see Dr. Buchman's loved early home. I remember its plain simplicity and family treasures—particularly a Christmas crib, his own water-colour paintings and the beautiful embroidery over the sitting-room mantelpiece, presented by an Empress of China.

A reporter called at the house that afternoon, and fired cynical questions at us. That interview was a great astonishment to me, and made me understand what Christ said of Himself, 'A prophet is not without honour save in his own country and among his own people.' This was true of Dr. Buchman, who was by then a world figure, but of whom some of his own people knew little.

**B**y this time Tirley had become known as a home where people found a faith in God and training in the ideology of Moral Re-Armament. MRA has a single purpose—to help men and nations to be governed by God instead of by their own selfishness. It was a high and hard task, to help men to fulfil such a purpose. But those who longed for change in their own lives and in the life of the country began to come here after the war in ever-increasing numbers. Older couples who had this purpose at heart helped to make Tirley a real home, where there was room for young and school-age children, and for men and women in every

walk of life, especially for those among the teeming industrial millions by whom we were surrounded.

From the mining areas of North Staffordshire, miners who were finding a new spirit in their homes and pits through MRA began to flock to this home. I remember in the old days how little I used to think about the coalminers, or the workers in my father's cotton-mill. But now I was glad to share my home with them. Some of them said to me, 'We never expected to come into a home like this, or to feel at home in it as we do.' And a working woman from London said, 'You know, when I am welcomed into a home like this, I don't envy it or want it!' A commentary on what a sharing, caring spirit could do in the world.

At this time an industrial play called 'The Forgotten Factor', by Alan Thornhill, had a great influence in the industrial areas. Wherever it travelled, as one miners' leader put it, 'absenteeism went down, production went up and teamwork came in.' The play went to Ireland and to many British coalfields. In celebration of Dr. Buchman's 70th birthday, the miners held a great rally at Stoke-on-Trent. To this came miners from France and Germany, some of whom stayed at Tirley Garth. From the change of heart in these men, the work grew amongst industrial men in their countries, and had a considerable influence on international events.

At first by hundreds, and with the advancing years by thousands, people began to come to Tirley. They came not only from this industrial area but from all over the country, and from all over the world—Europe, Africa, India, America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and many more of those Far Eastern lands. It became indeed a world-wide home, where people from many nations were cared for and helped to find the ideology which was for all men everywhere. None was too old, none too young, none too strange or difficult to find here new life in its welcome and training.



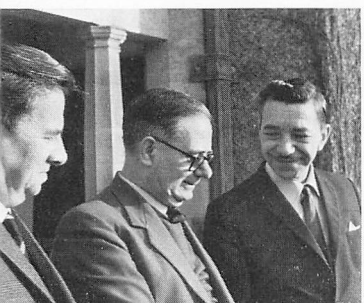
*Miners' leaders and their wives from Leicestershire, Warwickshire, and Staffordshire with I.P.P. in the Great Hall, Tirley Garth, 1948*



*Crowning the Utkinton Rose Queen at Tirley Garth, 1969*



*Young men and women from Australia, New Zealand, India, Malaysia, South Africa, Rhodesia, Turkey and Scandinavia taking part in a Moral Re-Armament training course at Tirley Garth, 1971*



*Trades Unionists from Rolls Royce, British Leyland and Vauxhall motor car factories at an industrial conference at Tirley Garth, 1971*

*Rajmohan Gandhi, with a delegation from Asia, welcomed to Tirley Garth by the Chairmen of Northwich Urban and Rural District Councils, with I.P.P., 1970*



These years between 1948 and 1951 were memorable for visits to Caux under Dr. Buchman's leadership, with many fine speakers. With what care for people he trained these speakers to throw their voices out so that those at the back of the hall could hear; to frame their message in such a way that if one person got it, all would get it; and, as it was sometimes humorously put—to 'stand up, speak up, and shut up!' He had no use for the mumblers. He would say, 'You have a great message. Give it.' And he himself had the genius to condense his profound philosophy into short phrases: 'There's enough in the world for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed. Suppose everybody cared enough and everybody shared enough, wouldn't everybody have enough?' Such sacrificial living in a nation would surely save our economists, politicians, directors of companies and trades union leaders much hard toil and sweat.

**D**r. Buchman's plain speaking and forthright teaching called many of us to see where we were going, to take up a new way of life and to spread it to all the world.

At the end of 1951, an attack of rheumatism and the doctor's advice to go for a time to a warmer climate led to a further visit to Los Angeles. This was at the invitation of Dr. Buchman, and I stayed in that hospitable country until 1953. The friendliness and good manners I found in America were often a challenge to my own. The crowds in the churches bore witness to America's hunger for an answer to the confused thinking of our modern way of life. May they again turn to the straightforward obedience to God's leading to which that great American, Dr. Frank Buchman, challenged his country and the world!

During the late 1950's, I went many times to the World Assemblies at Caux. In July 1961, I was invited to a summer



Conference there with some friends from Utkinton, the village about half a mile from our bottom gate. Among them was Mary Craven, who has worked at Tirley up to the present day. And here I should like to express my gratitude to Mary for all she has given to this home—for her high standards of work and her integrity of character—priceless gifts in these days when so much that is slipshod and half-finished is passed and accepted, and people forget that sound character and sound work go together.

After our arrival at Caux, all of us from Tirley and Utkinton were invited by Dr. Buchman to have dinner one evening at his table in the big dining-hall. I shall never forget how he received us in his sitting-room beforehand, insisting on being introduced to each one by name. But while including all his guests in his conversation afterwards, it was evident that he was framing his talk, as he often did, with one person in mind. That night I realised that he was thinking specially of a distinguished Italian lady who was brought into the room in a wheeled chair. Behind Dr. Buchman stood three young men from Hollywood, with musical instruments. He called on them again and again to sing songs for this lady, until it was time to go down to dinner. It was typical of the way Dr. Buchman had spent his long life, to win people one by one to bring the world under God's control.

Dr. Buchman died in Germany in August 1961. I was at his London home at the time, and it moved me deeply to hear that his last conviction, fought for with every breath, had been for Britain—'I want to see Britain governed by men governed by God.' Those words have sunk deeply into the hearts of men and women who long to see our country living again by God's moral laws, and under His rule and authority. They were the legacy that has inspired thousands to fight for what's right, in these days of the permissive society. If ever a prophet laid a matter on a

country, Dr. Buchman laid this on Britain. And the calling and responsibility have been taken up by men and women with a passion to see her different—and see her great again—with a commitment greater than to a Commonwealth, greater than for any renown for herself—the commitment to bring unity, peace and freedom under God to the whole world.

**A**fter Dr. Buchman's death, much of the responsibility of the world work of Moral Re-Armament fell to Peter Howard. It is not easy to pay adequate tribute to this great Englishman. By 1940 he was already well-known for his captaincy of the English Rugby team and as a vigorous political journalist. But it is as a man of faith, who sacrificed his life and leisure to bring his nation to great living, that he will surely go down to history. He made frequent visits to Tirley and wrote part of his book 'Innocent Men' here in the 1940's. Many have written of him as sportsman, playwright and author, but I think more of his caring for men of all ranks and characters. He had a tireless zeal to win men—not only to a new life for themselves, but to become builders of a new world. The cost of such sacrificial living was evident in his early death at the age of 56, in the far country of Peru in South America. So God withdraws His servants, perhaps to be a still stronger witness for Him in their death. 'Glad did I live and gladly die' wrote Robert Louis Stevenson of himself. It was certainly true of Peter Howard—gay, humorous, giving all for a single purpose.

While staying with a friend in order to go to Peter Howard's funeral service, I wrote the following poem as a tribute to his memory:

TO PETER  
WITH DEEPEST GRATITUDE

Lay him to rest:  
He was our country's best—  
He loved her farms and hills and fields  
And all the teeming soil yields;  
Spring hedgerows, silent skies, larks on the wing—

And everything  
That lived and moved;  
But most he loved  
Humanity, the common man  
Whom he aroused to change his self-willed plan  
And, under God, to fight  
For freedom and what's right  
Here in our nation and the world.  
He hurled  
The arrows of his tongue to slay  
The new morality, the pitfalls of today,  
And with a heart on fire he lived the Cross  
The scorn and lies and laughter, and the loss  
Of comfort, riches, health . . .  
For God's true wealth.

But now—  
The rumbling of an army grows, with battle-drums  
and bands  
Youth from the world's end, with victory in their hands,  
Fired with the purpose of God, in heart and mind,  
Unity for the least and all mankind.

Was it for this you died in far Peru,  
Giving your life for the greatest thing you knew?  
O long will it live in our ancient island story,  
The last and the greatest fight and its shining glory,

The age-long fight for the will of God to be done,  
Till His kingdom on earth, as it is in Heaven, be won.

I shall never forget the bitter cold of that March day, nor the exquisite arrangement of the flowers in beautiful Lavenham Church. Many people were in tears as the service proceeded and moving tribute was paid to his life and work. Afterwards we went to the burial, when the coffin was lifted from a dray drawn by farm horses and carried to the family grave in the simple churchyard at Brent Eleigh. I wondered then, as I have often wondered since, whether the bitter East wind and cold of that memorable day were sent as a warning of the hard battle that would face us all in becoming a nation 'governed by men governed by God'. We have yet to pay that full price.

**N**ew leadership emerged in the 1960's. World Assemblies took place at Caux in Switzerland and later at Panchgani in India under Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma. Music and drama played a significant part in demonstrating the adventure, gaiety and potent message of Moral Re-Armament, and many people in many lands began to feel its force and significance in building a God-led world.

At Tirley too music and drama sprang up. Those were the days when that dreadful phrase, 'I'm all right, Jack!' was on many lips. It was a symptom of the selfishness which has since been seen as the core of many of our industrial and economic ills. At Tirley a young company produced a musical revue dramatising their determination to counter this downward trend in Britain. They called it 'It's Our Country, Jack!'

One scene in it, 'The Ballad of Les the Plumber', tells the true story of a worker's leader, for 22 years a militant

Communist, and how he found a greater revolution in Moral Re-Armament. Vividly it depicts how he and his wife healed the bitterness that was tearing their home apart and took a new spirit to their industry and out to the world. That scene has become a classic, and has gone from its first beginnings at Tirley around the world.

A dockers' leader from the port of Bristol, who with his family had found a profound change of heart through MRA, invited 'It's Our Country, Jack!' to his union headquarters. From there it went to Switzerland. There, combining with fresh music and drama from other countries, it developed into the European revue 'Anything To Declare?' This in turn, as I write, has gone through India, Assam, Malaysia, Australasia, Iran, Malta and is now back in Europe. Its company of 100 includes many of the young men and women who first dedicated their lives to God and to this task here at Tirley.

The 1960's showed an ever-increasing number of people visiting Tirley, and necessitated an extension of accommodation. A large dining hall was added on the north side of the entrance court, with a passage connecting it with the old building. Here we are able to seat 120 to 150 guests, and as I write we are planning to furnish and decorate it so that it will be a place of dignity and beauty for those who come. There is new bedroom accommodation in wooden buildings in the grounds, skilfully placed so that the views are unimpaired. Army huts were purchased from a neighbouring estate, taken to pieces, stacked on to lorries and brought to Tirley. Perfect standards were insisted on in this work by a young construction engineer who had been in charge of building one of the great cooling towers that rear their heads about the country. He gave his services, as did many who took part in this work. Two valued friends, as a memorial to their father, turned one of these huts into a beautifully furnished chalet that stands on the hill above our bottom lodge.

Today thousands pour into Tirley at Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, and to many weekend conferences for students, teachers, civic leaders, and men and women from both sides of industry. Wrong relationships are put right and a way has opened out in many difficult strike situations. All this is a deep satisfaction to me, because Tirley was built up on the fruits of industry. Without the mill-hands and the miners my father could not have developed such a home, nor could I have given it for Moral Re-Armament without his bounty to me.

**H**ere in this lovely country we are surrounded by twenty million people in industrial cities like Manchester and Liverpool to the North, Stoke and Crewe to the South, Wrexham to the West, Sheffield and other Yorkshire cities to the East. Management, my side of industry, has enjoyed the fruits of industry and yet has not always been willing to share with those who helped to produce them. These are deep lessons to learn, but they have borne fruit in the friendships that have grown up here between the men and women of the docks and factories around us.

Men in management and labour often meet in conferences at Tirley and have recounted many instances of the influence of these talks in settling industrial disputes. I think of these men and women as the backbone of the country's stability. They can yet be a flaming example to the soft elements in the nation. They can make 'British made' again mean 'best made', and can carry a militant spirit for what is right beyond these shores to a waiting world.

As I look back over the years at the age of eighty-seven, I think of my dearly-loved country and where she is heading today. It was by the homely virtues of honesty and courage, sacrifice and unselfishness that she became great. Are we

forgetting these things in the deteriorating trends and self-seeking of modern life? The ordinary man and woman of this country helped to win great battles for freedom—Trafalgar, Mons, Dunkirk. The Battle of Britain was fought and won by men who were little more than boys, and by women who tramped to work under a rain of bombs. Such people as these will yet respond to an even greater and more urgent call today—to bring our country and the world under the all-wise, all-embracing Authority of God.

Will our greed be changed into a hunger for great living with world-wide purposes ahead, when men will again leave the comfort of home and go out in great enterprise?

Already we see it happening as men and women have gone out from Tirley to bring an answer to Africa, Europe, India, Australia, America—to bring the light of God's moral laws and His great purposes to all the world. And I cannot be thankful enough that He showed me, step by step, how I and my home could have a part and how thousands of people, young and old, would come here to find and further His plan.

It is impossible to imagine the peace and glory of a world wholly given to Him. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard . . . the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'

**L**ike a ship, Tirley is finding its way from port to port with a cargo of essential food for a waiting country. She has only one guide—the compass—to take her across vast oceans. The lives of all on board are dependent on that compass, firm in storm or calm—in fog and in bright weather. Few understand it, but all owe their lives to obedience and to its guiding finger.

Disobedience to this guidance not only means disaster for all on board: without obedience to that compass the ship could bring disaster wherever it goes. In our passion to see the world on a different, sure path, the only one compass to steer by is the guidance of God.

Like a ship's compass, God's guidance has four steering points. Is our course absolutely honest, pure, unselfish, loving? Otherwise we may head for disaster.

Those who see where Britain is heading, with her permissive society, her political and economic expedients that do not touch the deep roots of character, may well ask themselves whether their first urgent need and duty is not to listen to God and obey His unchanging laws. The welfare of our country is not dependent on the government of the day. It is dependent on the character of the ordinary man, the ordinary woman, who make up our nation—it is dependent on their daily sacrifice, their daily heroism in the present-day world of self-seeking confusion. Wise governments, wise leadership can do much, but in the end it is the character of the people—the little ships of Britain—that can help to move the country forward and save civilisation from disaster.

To bring God's life and direction for everyone who enters its doors has been, and is, our purpose for Tirley.

*In 1949 I gave the capital left me by my father to buy Tirley Garth from I.C.I. and make it available to Moral Re-Armament as a conference and training centre. It is now the property of a charitable Trust, depending on the gifts of those who want to forward this work. So I have asked the printer to put a Covenant form at the end of this Memoir, in order that those who read it may be able to contribute if they wish to the task to which Tirley Garth is dedicated.*

I.P.P.



**THE TIRLEY GARTH TRUST**  
**DEED OF COVENANT**

Full Name &  
Address in  
block letters

I ..... (Mr., Mrs., or Miss)

of .....

HEREBY COVENANT that on the first day of the month next following the date of this Covenant and thereafter for a period of seven years or during my lifetime (which ever is the shorter period) I will pay to THE TRUSTEES OF THE TIRLEY GARTH TRUST (named in the Schedule hereto) such a monthly sum as, after deduction of Income Tax at the standard rate for the time being in force, will leave the clear monthly sum of £

IN WITNESS whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this

..... day of ..... 19.....

THE SCHEDULE above referred to:—Sir Roy Pinsent, Baronet, John William Nowell, James Clifford Silver and Mary Walford Wood.

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by the above-named

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