EXPERIMENT WITH GOD

Frank Buchman reconsidered

by

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FOREWORD

When the news of Frank Buchman's death on August 7th, 1961, reached the Swedish press, I was on the staff of a now defunct Stockholm daily and the editorial department gave me the task of writing an obituary. I wrote a short article in which I brought out the fact that Frank Buchman had made a notable contribution to the spiritual life of Scandinavia in the thirties as leader of the Oxford Group movement. At the end I also noted that the movement, and its own publicity in particular, had come under some criticism in recent years.

In my view it was a factual, balanced obituary and I turned it in to the editorial department in the normal way. I got the manuscript back at once with the word that the editor had turned it down. Nothing was to be written about Frank Buchman.

After that first-hand experience of this deliberate policy of silence about a great life's work and about one of the most important moral and spiritual movements of our time, I have felt an urgent need to make a personal contribution towards a just evaluation of Frank Buchman's work and message which is, it seems to me, now more relevant than ever.

And so, ten years after Frank Buchman's death and fifty years after the birth of the Oxford Group, I am glad to present this little book.

GÖSTA EKMAN

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At the Crossroads

PEOPLE WHO CAME in touch with Frank Buchman felt that they were at a crossroads. Their eyes had been opened to a new and more radical way of living. They had met a challenge which demanded a personal decision.

Honest people felt that this challenge did not actually come from Frank Buchman himself. His words were like a voice from deep inside themselves. They recognised in his questions the voices of their own conscience. He had appealed to their deepest sense of responsibility, and had given them a vision of a purer, straighter, more costly, but richer, way of living.

Many people in Sweden, in Scandinavia and around the world took the challenge seriously. For some the meeting with Frank Buchman was a definite turning-point. For others it became a period of radical self-examination and startling clarity, a frightening counting of the cost, which ended in a compromise. Nevertheless, it permanently marked the conscience and left behind an ineradicable vision of a clean, uncompromising life and of a greater closeness and openness among people.

Today there are still thousands of people in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland for whom Frank Buchman's

name is bound up with the most far-reaching spiritual awakening which Scandinavia has experienced in this century. But what the inspiration of the Oxford Group meant for Christian revival, for a new direction in culture and the arts, and as a source of moral strength in the resistance to Nazism has in a very strange way been dropped out of sight. So, just here there lies an urgent and worthwhile field for research and information. Which should now be taken in hand.

There were also people who reacted against Buchman and his challenge to absolute honesty as against a personal insult or an espionage into their private defence secrets. The fear of being so lit up that their inner selves, with their dirty corners, would be revealed filled them with horror and disgust. Their reactions were focused on Frank Buchman. His alleged attacks had to be met with counter-attacks. But, in fact, the challenge was from the inner voice of each person's conscience. Their attack on him was just a sign of the battle going on inside themselves. When they attacked Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group they were unconsciously fighting against their own better selves, their inner sense that their lives could be, and should be, radically different.

For Frank Buchman's challenge was radical. It demanded a decision — not for or against him, but a "yes" or "no" to one's own conscience and sense of responsibility in the light of absolute moral standards. So it was quite natural that the radically-minded followed — or persecuted — him. That his opponents have succeeded to such a degree in belittling, not to say erasing, his memory may be partly explained by the fact that our mass media have been dominated in recent years by radicals without moral standards.

At any rate we now have the paradoxical and preposterous situation that a personality who has inspired and shaped the most remarkable spiritual awakening of our century, not only in Scandinavia but in many parts of Europe and the world, is

being passed over in silence by our organs of publicity, both secular and religious. This policy of silence has meant that Frank Buchman's major role is almost unknown to the younger generation. It is, however, scarcely possible, in the long run, that concealment or denigration of such an outstanding personality and of the historic events in which he played so great a part, will remain undetected or be acceptable to a younger generation, critical of prejudice and open to anything genuinely radical.

There is another, deeper reason why Buchman's name has been pushed into the background since the huge wave of revival around the Oxford Group was submerged in the hurricane of the war and occupation. If you pick up Frank Buchman's speeches and read them with an open mind, not thinking that they were spoken thirty years back, you will be astonished to find that both in form and content they are more topical today even than when they were delivered. Like many another prophet, Buchman was ahead of his time. He saw further and deeper than his contemporaries. So he shared the fate of other great prophets — to be better understood by the next generation.

Any young radical today who reads the talk Frank Buchman gave at the great gathering in the ruins of St. Nikolai Church in Visby on August 16th, 1938, cannot fail to see how burningly relevant it is to our present situation. The speaker could well have been one of today's young Christian revolutionaries appealing to everyone of his own age with prophetic passion and power to take responsibility for rescuing the world from impending catastrophe.

> I hope that by the time I finish speaking some of you will have made a decision. We have come here with different objectives. Some of the people have come here hoping to be changed. That is very good, very necessary. Some of you

come here with the hope that you will learn to change others. That, too, is very necessary.

But the danger is that some of you want to stop there. I am tremendously interested in a third point — how to save a crumbling civilisation. That is the thing that interests me. But then I want a fourth thing. I want to reach the millions of the world.

I am not interested, nor do I think it adequate, if we are going just to start another revival. Whatever thoughtful statesman you talk to will tell you that every country needs a moral and spiritual awakening. That is the absolutely fundamental essential. But revival is only one level of thought. To stop there is inferior thinking. Unless we call for something bigger than that we are done for.

The next step is revolution. It is uncomfortable. A lot of Christians don't like the word. It scares them. It makes them goose-fleshy. That's where some of your critics come from — goose-fleshy Christians with armchair Christianity. Begin to work out how many still go to church and ask why the Church today is not reaching one hundred per cent of the people. I know revolution makes people uncomfortable, and I am not here to make you like me. What the Oxford Group will give this and every nation is a spiritual revolution.

If you are not going on that battlefront, I wish you well. I am not going to quarrel with you or criticise you. You do exactly what you like in the way you like. That's your idea of democracy.

I am going to promise you one thing. I am not turning back. I am not turning back, no matter who does, no matter what it is going to cost. I do not want you to come along just because I am here — that isn't it. That would be a poor revolution. That would be a poor fellowship. Let us for a moment see a picture of the Cross of Christ, and let me say,

if you join in this great crusade, you will get the way of the Cross. I am not going to lure you by hopes of material success. I am not going to lure you by saying you are going to be heroes. I am not going to lure you, although I believe that these lands can give a pattern on how to live. It is a personal experience of the Cross. It is not I, but Christ. It is not I at the head, but Christ who leads.

I am not going to ask you to make a decision right now. The thing you have got to decide is between you and God. Do it alone. Write it down if you want to. It is a deed, like the transfer of property — so you turn over your life to God, for full and complete direction as a fellow-revolutionary.[1]

From these paragraphs of Frank Buchman's Visby speech in 1938 one can begin to understand why people reacted so strongly and in such different ways to his challenge.

Here is a preacher of revival who is out for more than revival, a revolutionary who is out for more than revolution, a leader who has placed himself under higher leadership.

2

The Great Listener

FRANK BUCHMAN was sixty years of age when in 1938 he made his first and only visit to Sweden. Only a few years before that he was unknown to the majority of people in Scandinavia. It was when C. J. Hambro, President of the Norwegian Parliament, invited him and a strong team of the international Oxford Group to Norway in the autumn of 1934, that his name became a household world and a subject for discussion everywhere. Buchman and the Oxford Group became front-page news, book titles featured them, and they enlisted many of the foremost newspapermen, churchmen, writers, musicians and artists who were carried along on the mighty wave of spiritual inspiration which swept Denmark, Sweden, Finland as well as Norway, from that time in 1934 until the outbreak of war in 1939.

Frank Buchman's speeches in 1938 and 1939 repeatedly gave prophetic warnings of impending world catastrophe. He even did his utmost to speak to the consciences of the warmongers, and was scandalously lied about and falsely accused of being sympathetic to Hitler. When the storm broke and the awakening in the North was dimmed by the dark clouds of war and occupation, the Oxford Group experience had struck such firm roots of faith and hope in the hearts of many people

that they found courage and power to resist even in the face of naked force. When the liberation came in April 1945, one of the most outstanding leaders of the Norwegian Resistance, Bishop Arne Fjellbu, declared, "I would like to state publicly that the foundations of united resistance of Norwegian churchmen to Nazism were laid by the work of the Oxford Group."[1]

It could be said that the awakening failed to reach its full development and did not have sufficient time to ripen properly so as to bear fruit before the catastrophe struck. The international force was scattered, and Frank Buchman spent the war years working in the United States. But to say that his warnings and appeals to statesmen and nations did not succeed in bringing them to their senses before it was too late, is to misunderstand his down-to-earth realism and to think of all he gave in a much too short and superficial perspective, far different from his own. He always saw that the conflicts of world politics were rooted in human selfishness and motives of prestige, and he had no illusions that catastrophe could be avoided through the political and diplomatic means which had shown themselves powerless when tensions had reached breaking-point. He must have seen the outbreak of war as confirming rather than disproving his diagnosis.

Yet he saw too clearly and deeply into its real causes to be content just to lay the blame on this side or the other among the warring powers. That is an easy way of shrugging off responsibility from oneself and one's own nation. Indeed, he saw such irresponsibility as the basic cause of war. "Before crisis ends in catastrophe, have we the courage to face the real cause?" he asked in a broadcast talk from America a few days before war began.

> Every nation and every individual is responsible for the existing situation. The failure lies not with one nation, but

with all. We are all to blame. For in every nation those forces are at work which create bitterness, disunity and destruction. Nations, like individuals, have turned a blind eye to their own faults while pointing the finger at each other.[2]

Nor did Buchman have any illusions about the Second World War making the world "safe for democracy", or laying the foundations for lasting peace. He well knew that to win the peace would take as great sacrifices as to win the war. This was where individuals and nations had failed.

We have all wanted peace. We have sought it in pacts, in leagues, in alliances, in changes of systems, in economic and disarmament conferences, and we have sought in vain. We have wanted peace but we have never yet paid the price of peace — the price of facing with God where we and our nations have been wrong, and how we and our nation, as God directs, can put wrong right.[3]

The chief sin is that we have no adequate philosophy for life. Our conception of living is wrong — easy, soft, protective, indulgent. We need a whole new content and conception of life. We have tried thinking and living as we want. Now try thinking and living as God wants. Try living as we want the other fellow to live. Try living as we want the other nation to live . . .

We cannot make peace between the nations when the people in the nations are in a state of permanent personal warfare. Strikes, labour difficulties and war are inevitable until we change our whole thought and quality of living.

Someone must always *make* peace. For peace is not an idea; it is people becoming different. Most of us want to make peace by repenting of the other fellow's sins. That is how the world would like to do it. But we cannot

permanently go on expecting other nations to repent first.[4]

Some of our modern researchers into the causes of conflict might dismiss such views as too simple or naïve. Frank Buchman, of course, was a simple man — he often said so himself. But he was by no means naïve or unreflective about human conflicts. Rather, he had thought the problem right through to its fundamental elements. He had tested his words by experience. He had a great gift of reading people accurately, a thorough training in the cure of souls and an extraordinarily international experience in solving crises and conflicts in human relations. He once prayed, as he told someone, that God would make him super-sensitive to people, and sometimes he was tempted to wish he had not prayed that prayer.

Frank Buchman never had "status" from a society point of view. From 1921 on he had no salary, had no personal possessions, although he never made any parade of this voluntary poverty before the world. He held no positions of power. He created no organisation. And yet his influence upon men of all classes and creeds in every part of the world was such that he must be reckoned one of the greatest leaders of our day, and indeed of all time. The only explanation of this must be sought in the inner authority and grace which streamed from him, and which are the gift and secret of all truly great spiritual leaders. This grace was felt, not least, by people from the Third World and from non-Christian traditions when they met him.

On the purely intellectual plane, Buchman did not initiate such new and unusual ideas as would place him among the great philosophers, nor did he claim to have brought a new message. "I am a simple man and I do simple things," he used to say, "but it is just those simple things which the world

needs." His message to a civilisation that was falling apart was to bring men back to the practice of "simple, home truths that some of us learned at our mother's knee, and which many of us have forgotten or neglected."[5]

That might sound romantic or reactionary, but for Buchman it was both realistic and revolutionary. For it came out of his living experience and gave him a vision of a future renaissance, of a steadily growing new world order. That new order had nothing to do with any external authority or enlightened dictatorship. It was the vision of real democracy in which every individual listens to and obeys the inner voice of conscience, participating in and responsible for everything that happens.

Frank Buchman never wrote a book, hardly ever even wrote a newspaper article. No sermon of his has been preserved. The only things to appear in print from his pen are a series of speeches, delivered between 1932 and 1961 and published under the title *Remaking the World*. So it is not as a writer, not as a preacher or orator, that he ranks as one of the great leaders of this century. That is one reason why his name has been obscured in recent years, years stamped by the mass media's superficial race for the daily deadline and their lack of time's perspective.

Moreover, when he led gatherings it was his custom to let others speak, saying very little himself. He saw his task as to inspire others to take responsibility and leadership. He held that a genuine leader's ambition should be to train others to do the job better than he could himself. A noted Swedish literary critic, Herbert Grevenius, who closely studied Buchman's leadership during the great gatherings at Visby in 1938, wrote in *Stockholms-Tidningen*:

> I myself, as recently as last year when there was much discussion about whether Buchman would come to Sweden

or not, described him in this paper as a "little Caesar", issuing his dictates from afar with a self-assumed power and perfection. Well, I never knew Caesar but I don't think he was in the least like Frank Buchman.

It is not his lightning smile that forms his secret. His epigrammatic sayings, his briskness, his ability to hold a meeting in his hand and yet disappear into the background — none of these really tells you anything about the real Frank Buchman.

If you examine a photograph of him closely you will see something in his very expression, something almost distrait, a sort of listening apart, and for once the camera does not lie. This thinking-apart, this listening aspect, is there in real life as well, however close he is to you. If you watch his face over a period you cannot but be struck by how often he appears to be questing, at a loss, not to say helpless. And he doesn't try to conceal it.

His enormously active life is built on one thing only — guidance. He openly admits it. He is a sail always waiting to be filled by the wind, a man with a great and warm and humble heart, a democrat who wants to set men free under God's dictatorship.[6]

Twenty years later Ayatullah Modjtahedi, a leading Moslem from Iran, recorded a similar impression.

I saw in Frank Buchman a man of God [he said] and in my meetings with him at Caux I discerned that his spirit of faith and of close attentiveness to the Voice of Truth is singularly strong. One of my chief memories of him is the various occasions on which in the early morning I was invited to his room at Caux and went to find him in conversation with friends already gathered there. Frank Buchman chatted, talked, listened, laughed and made

> others laugh. Yet in the midst of all this, I saw him dwelling in worlds far removed from the material, as if he were sunk in a spiritual realm and drawing inspiration from the world of the soul. I saw this faith of his was so simple and uncalculating that despite international popularity and position, he lived and mixed with his friends as if he were our equal. His whole life and action bore this out.[7]

Above all Frank Buchman was a listener. That is the secret of the inspiration on which his life was based, the inspiration which charged him as if with an electric current, and which he transmitted to those who came within his circuit or dared to make contact.

During the Disarmament Conference in Washington in 1921, a general sent Buchman a picture postcard of a man's face with the words underneath: "God gave a man two ears and one mouth. Why don't you listen twice as much as you talk?"[8] Or, as Buchman often put it, "Today we hear men's voices too much. We are tired of them. We long to hear God's voice."

Great writers and orators carve themselves places in the chronicles of their times. Great listeners are not so much noticed. When they are noticed it is usually through other people. They have no ambition to talk "of themselves". They think of themselves as transmitters of given truth which they want to pass on. The listener's "own" message is in fact a very simple one — an invitation and a challenge to others that they, too, become listeners.

"The danger of our age is that we fail to listen. We talk, talk, talk. But the answer is listening — that is the secret. It is open to all."[9] When Buchman kept repeating this basic message of his, he was not proclaiming anything new. He was consciously linking his message with the age-old tradition and experience of the Christian Church.

The new thing is that Buchman was bringing to life and putting into practice an ancient, proven truth, as he also did on many other important issues. "To this world of speed and hubbub Frank Buchman brings silence and reflection," wrote French Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel. "He brings them out from monasteries and retreats to play their part in the industrialists' and cabinet ministers' office, in the classroom and the kitchen."[10]

It is in the nature of things that the great listener's name does not come down to succeeding generations through his own words and deeds. It is in other people that he creates something, and it is through them that he goes down to history, that his message finds further application and contemporary expression. Modern theology speaks of Christ as "the man for others". Christ did not "speak of himself". The deeds he did, he did through the Father. He wrote nothing. Very little of what he said has been preserved. It is in the apostles, evangelists, interpreters, followers, that he lived and lives through the ages.

It is in being men for others that great listeners are most like Christ. Frank Buchman is one of these. That is one reason why so little has been written about him in the last decade.

Against the background of the great influence Buchman indisputably exercised, a fact confirmed by thousands of competent witnesses all over the world — in Sweden, for example, by a man like Archbishop Nathan Söderblom — it may seem strange that by now, ten years after his death, no detailed biography of him has been written. Some of the factors which have contributed to this peculiar silence have been indicated above. In his own day, the listener tends to be in the background. Even those of his followers or imitators who have louder voices tend to be more prominent. Then, the prophetic message needs the perspective of a certain period of

time both for confirmation of its truth and for fuller and truer interpretation.

Such interpretation — or, better, application — of Buchman's message requires a certain knowledge of his life, not least of his international activities from the time of the decisive experience in Keswick in 1908 until the birth of the Oxford Group in 1921, activities which, up to now, are far too little known.

3

Violence Towards Yourself

FRANK BUCHMAN'S challenge was radical. He called himself a revolutionary. That is a strong word. It conjures up violence or hardness and arouses reactions, not least among Christians. "It makes them goose-fleshy," was the drastic expression Buchman used in his Visby speech. What right had he to call himself a revolutionary? Where do we find the radical element in his life?

We need to remember that the concept "radical" does not have, or at least has not always had, simply a political content. The word derives from the word "root", and properly means to go to the root, to the bitter end, not to compromise.

To be radical means to *will* something, to present demands. It is in the nature of genuine radicalism to make steadily increasing demands, always to be ready to go further. "I am not turning back, no matter who does, no matter what it is going to cost,"[1] Buchman promised at Visby.

Opening the Swedish Parliament one year in the twenties, Carl Lindhagen said, "In every human heart there lives, on the one hand, a capitalist who wants to keep what he has, and, on the other, a communist who wants to share what he has not."

Radicalism can move in two quite different directions. *I*

can direct my demands to others, or to myself. These two directions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but they tend to become so as the demands are sharpened and as people's inner motives are revealed. Political radicalism directs its demands outwards to those who want to hold on to what they have. If they refuse these demands, the political radical is prepared to resort to revolutionary violence.

But there is another deeply personal radicalism with a completely different direction. There are people, even if they are rare, who direct their radical demands inward on themselves. They, like Buchman, are deeply conscious that "when I point my finger at my neighbour there are three fingers pointing back at me".

Genuine radicalism is always dynamic, and that is above all true of the inner-directed radicalism. Radicals who make demands on themselves cannot stop at any compromise. They are driven from within to become revolutionaries. They have to conquer everything which stands in the way with violence — against themselves. "O God," wrote St. Teresa of Avila, "in how many ways did Your Majesty set about preparing me for the state in which He wished me to serve Him! Thus, without my willing it, the Lord compelled me to do violence to myself. Blessed be He for evermore."[2]

This is the kind of violence of which Buchman spoke at Visby. Here is the decisive line dividing revival and revolution, the thing that makes "armchair Christians goose-fleshy". "You will never, never, never come into this experience until you know the Cross of Christ. Some of you have heard about it, Sunday by Sunday, but it's not an experience. If it were experience, you would not shrink from anything."[3]

Frank Buchman had that experience in 1908 when he was 30 years old. It was in a little English church in Keswick and a woman was speaking to a congregation of about seventeen persons. He said: She unravelled the Cross for me.

> A doctrine which I knew as a boy, which my Church believed, which I had always taught, that day became a great reality for me. I had entered the little church with a divided will, nursing pride, selfishness, ill-will. The woman's simple talk personalised the Cross for me that day, and suddenly I had a poignant vision of the Crucified . . .[4] For the first time I saw myself, with my pride, my egoism, my failure and my sin. "I" was the centre of my own life. If I was to be different then that big "I" had to be crossed out.[5]

Buchman, the young radical, had come to the crossroads of his life where he had to use violence against himself in order to be free to meet the future.

The ill-will mentioned had been directed against six committee men responsible for the home for poor boys which Buchman had started in Philadelphia, his first assignment after completing his theological training. He had chosen one of the toughest districts of the city to work in, by way of answer to a fellow student who had accused him of being ambitious. It was not difficult to gather homeless and hungry "little wild men" into his boys' home, but it was hard to get enough money to go round.

One day the committee had informed him that the money for food would have to be cut down. Buchman, over-tired after five years of hard though successful work, was hurt and bitter. He resigned. The bitterness against the committee men and overwork made him ill. To restore his health he took a trip to Europe, travelled in the Middle East, and then went to Keswick to take part in a summer conference. "There something happened."

> A great many people speak of the Cross, but it does not mean a thing. It isn't real. It is something they hear

about or read about, something that applies to someone else. But an *experience* of the Cross is vital, real and goes straight into your life. With an experience of the Cross you will shrink from nothing. I learned at Keswick that I was as wrong as anybody else: I was most in need of change. I was the one to begin.[6]

He returned to the house where he was staying feeling a powerful urge to share this experience. He sat down and wrote a letter to each of the six committee men. At the top of each letter he wrote the verse:

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Then he wrote:

My dear Friend,
I have nursed ill-will against you. I am sorry. Forgive me?

Yours sincerely,
FRANK.

He got no answers to these letters but that was not the important point, as Gabriel Marcel observes.

What mattered was that something fresh had come into his life, something which was to determine its whole course. A new man had arisen in him that could not tolerate the mediocrity and compromise of the old, who could no more let his life drift on the whims of self-will, but was completely surrendered, as an instrument is, to be guided

and tuned by a higher wisdom. A prisoner had escaped to become a free man.[7]

The young radical had committed violence on himself. It was a revolution in his own life and it quickly became effective in the lives of others.

That same Sunday in Keswick Buchman found himself walking by the lakeside with a young student. As they walked he told the student of his experience in the church and then listened while the student talked about all that was troubling him. "Before we got home he [the student] had had a similar experience and when he told his parents about it they were filled with joy."[8]

Harold Begbie, in his book *Life Changers* (published in 1923), puts Frank Buchman in the ranks of the genuine mystics in history from Plotinus to Tolstoy. Begbie records that he asked Buchman to describe his Keswick experience "as if he were giving an account of it to a doctor or to someone who has never heard anything about Jesus".

Buchman replied — "I remember one sensation very clearly; it was a vibrant feeling as if a strong current of life had suddenly been poured into me. That came at the same time as my surrender. What followed on this sensation was the dazed feeling of a great shaking-up."[9] He sat for a few moments in some confusion, he continued, not trembling in body but conscious of a long vibration in spirit as though his soul was still in a state of shock from the new experience. He felt no immediate feeling of lightness, no jubilant sense of liberation. He was conscious of a mighty inner change, though for a time he could only think of this change in terms of its physical effects.

As Gabriel Marcel confirms, the whole of the rest of Buchman's life took direction from the experiences of that day. Not long after his Keswick visit he returned to the

United States where he was asked to take the post of chaplain and youth leader at State College, Pennsylvania, to try and bring order into a situation reminiscent of present-day crises among students. Penn State was in the midst of student strikes and serious problems with bootlegged liquor. Buchman tackled his task in the light of what he had learned at Keswick, namely that radical change can only come out of deep personal experience and decision and that it can be passed on only from man to man. "You can't cure people of eye troubles by spraying medicine from a second-storey window," he used to say. "You have to treat every patient as an individual."

Personal evangelism and the cure of souls was at that time being thoroughly applied among students and systematically studied in the theological colleges. It was widely recognised that in order to help a fellow being plagued by personal problems, one had to set aside time and take full responsibility for him. Frank Buchman went a step further. He looked for people who were problems not only to themselves but to their whole communities. If their problems could be solved it would be reasonable to suppose that their change would have a positive effect on their communities and would provide the turning-point for bringing the answer. In Keswick Buchman had seen for himself the "chain reaction" which his own liberating experience had started.

In his judgment three men blocked the whole situation at Penn State College and therefore, also, held the key to a positive solution. One was the dean, the second a well-known graduate student, the third the college bootlegger who smuggled drink into the students. One by one Buchman made these three into friends and fellow workers. The atmosphere of the college changed. At one point twelve hundred of the sixteen hundred students were attending Buchman's Bible class. The news spread in the student world and many

interested people visited him. He himself had to travel a great deal, being much in demand. These intensely active university years gave him a very rich "life-changing" experience which he shared with others.

But there was a further experience which came during these years and it gave Frank Buchman both inspiration and a practical programme of action. In his own words —

> I was very busy working eighteen to twenty hours every day. So busy that I had two telephones in my bedroom. Still I was dissatisfied with the results. So I decided on a radical procedure — to give that hour of the day from five to six in the morning when the phones were unlikely to ring, to listen for the still small Voice to inspire and direct.[10]

"God told me what to do and I wrote it down. If you have a photographic memory you are to be complimented. But I am a stupid man and I have to write down what I hear. The Chinese say that the strongest memory is weaker than the palest ink."[11]

A few pages back we called Buchman the great listener. Over and over again in his speeches he would repeat, "When man listens, God speaks. When man obeys, God acts." This conviction was solidly and unshakably based on experience. It made his life into a modern legend, a fact which is still awaiting expression by those who write about him. Once in his later years when he stood by the spot in Allentown, Pennsylvania, where his parents lie buried, he was heard murmuring quietly to himself, "I have been wonderfully led."

That walk with his student friend in Keswick in 1908 was, as we have seen, the beginning of a most important period in his life. Seven years later, in another part of the world, he takes another walk which can be regarded as the symbolic

beginning of his next great epoch when the long-range perspectives of his world task for the first time are discernible.

> In 1915 two men, one a Westerner, the other an Indian, walked together on a beach in Madras and formed a lasting friendship based on mutual respect and a common love for people. During the next thirty years each of them became world famous. Each became the confidant of statesmen and a figure of tremendous influence upon millions of ordinary people. The Indian was my grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi, the Westerner was Dr. Buchman.[12]

The writer of these words is Rajmohan Gandhi, who goes on to quote his grandfather's statement that Buchman's work was the best thing that had come from the West. For several years now Rajmohan has dedicated himself completely to continuing Buchman's work in India and Asia. The base from which he and his colleagues work is a conference centre at Panchgani, not far from Bombay, which was begun in 1968 and is still being expanded.

When Buchman went to the Far East in 1915, he found himself "led" into the middle of one of the most remarkable movements for revival in the history of world missions. Christian student conferences in America and England had already proclaimed the theme of "evangelising the world in this generation". National Student Christian Federations were set up in India, China and Japan and these, together with the Y.M.C.A.'s world movement, became the means of a powerful awakening which enlisted tens of thousands of academically trained young people for volunteer missionary work and which won thousands of young intellectuals in the Far East to Christianity. Pioneer work towards unifying these international missionary programmes was done at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910.

In such a global perspective it may seem a paradox that the new and effective thing about this world-spanning awakening lay in the slogan "personal evangelism". There was no suggestion of mass salvation. The "one by one method", sometimes called "soul surgery", was of course not new — indeed it was the primitive Christian way — but it was soundly based on the new psychological knowledge of man and had been carefully tested in the practical care for souls. The method had been arrived at by several internationally known Christian leaders like Henry Drummond and John R. Mott. Already in 1873 Drummond had written:

> We have spoilt ourselves by thinking to draw thousands by public work — by what people call "pulpit eloquence", by platform speeches, and by convocations, councils, and Christian conferences, and by books of many editions. Yet we must begin again and begin far down. Christianity began with one. We have forgotten the simple way of the founder of the greatest influence the world has ever seen — how He ran away from cities, how He shirked mobs, how He lagged behind the rest at Samaria to have a quiet talk with *one woman* at a well, how He stole away from crowds and entered into the house of one humble Syro-Phoenician woman, "and would have no man know it". In small groups of two's and three's, He collected the early church around him. One by one the disciples were called — and there were only twelve in all.[13]

Frank Buchman's friend and colleague, Howard Walter, in his book *Soul Surgery*, quotes from Henry Clay Trumbull's classic *Individual Work for Individuals* the statement of a missionary leader in China at that time who said that "he wanted no great preachers in his field. That was not the sort of missionaries who were needed in China. If he could find a

man who could talk familiarly, face to face, with another man, wherever he met him, he had missionary work for that kind of a man in China."[14] Walter records that "many changed lives in China this past year have resulted from the confession by Dr. Buchman, to small groups, of how for a whole year he did not win one soul to Christ because he was harbouring a feeling of resentment towards a group of men who, he knew, had wronged him."[15]

One factor which helped to create the interest and awakening among students in the Far East was the new ecumenical conception of the missionary effort. John R. Mott, one of the leaders who set the tone in this direction, urged students to hold fast to everything in their own religion which reason, conscience and experience showed them was true — this when he was talking to non-Christians. And he would add, "But don't let that keep you from entering into a deeper relationship to Christ, who came with the amazing claim to be the way, the truth and the life."[16]

Frank Buchman's work, as C. J. Hambro noted, "was no sporadic phenomenon, but rather the consummation of fifty years' development of personal Christianity in England and America."[17]

The friendships Buchman made before and during the First World War with spiritual and political leaders and future leaders in the Far East, together with the ecumenical openness which marked the contacts with non-Christian traditions, were to be of fundamental importance for his continuing work through the Oxford Group and its world-spanning programme of Moral Re-Armament during the forties and fifties.

4

Try God's plan

IN 1938 BUCHMAN RECALLED:

> I came to England seventeen years ago, alone, unknown, simply because two very good people wanted to see two of their family different, and that is how this work began. I still remember walking the streets of a certain town in England and feeling I wanted to pinch myself because the things that came in my quiet time were so amazing. God used to tell me in 1921 that there would be a mighty awakening of God's Almighty Spirit in this land.[1]

When he met the disillusioned and sophisticated post-war generation of students at Oxford in 1921, he came, as Paul once did to Corinth, not proclaiming "in lofty words or wisdom", though he had been theologically trained. For a quarter of a century he had listened to student debates in both West and East and knew all the constantly repeated arguments for and against religion and Christianity. As chaplain and missionary he had had plenty of experience that weighty words of wisdom could "win the argument and lose the man".

Buchman did not come to Oxford as a preacher. His aim

was to get the students to listen — not to him, but to the Voice inside them. Like Jesus he would answer questions with a question — "Why don't you let the Voice inside you tell you what's right?"

He could state that, "A great new revolution came into my life when I began to listen to God each morning. The danger of our age is that we fail to listen. We talk, talk, talk. The answer is listening — that is the secret. It is open to all."[2]

It is a secret which is age-old. In the Old Testament the prophets listened for guidance, Buchman used to point out. He himself came from Pennsylvania, the Quaker state founded by William Penn who was converted in Oxford. In the Quaker tradition listening to the "inner voice" in a "quiet time" was the guide-post for human life and society. The practice of early morning prayer, the "morning watch", was strongly stressed in the "personal evangelism" which Buchman knew from his theological training and had practised and further developed during his time in the student world mission.

The message which made listening real to students in Oxford was very simple — as simple as the story of Creation in the Bible, as simple as the Sermon on the Mount and the Acts of the Apostles. A Gospel which claims to be universal has to be simple — not through simplification but through a deepening, through becoming radical. It must go to the root of the problem in man and in the world.

In the years when broadcasting was becoming widespread, Buchman often used illustrations from the radio when he spoke about listening to the inner voice. Listening, reception, presupposes the broadcast message. To hear God's word, man must tune in on the right wavelength. He quoted a business magazine which said that there was only one way to avoid being sucked down by materialism, namely to listen "to the sound of a Voice which comes from something not ourselves,

in the existence of which we cannot disbelieve. Without it we are no more capable of saving the world than we were capable of creating it in the first place."[3]

To speak of an inner voice can sound like mysticism. Yet we all constantly listen to our inner voices and are directed by them. It is how we "think". For the most part these voices echo our own and others' thoughts. But probably all of us have had the experience of receiving new, unusual, sometimes surprising, thoughts that may on occasion suddenly solve a problem or bring in a factor that clarifies a situation. Scientists, inventors, artists certainly know the experience of receiving creative, "inspired" ideas. Who is there who will deny that at some time or other he has heard the "voice of conscience"?

Buchman listened for the "guidance" of the inner voice. That, too, may sound like mysticism but it is, in fact, an every day matter, valid for all men. It is a question of the motives and the forces that direct our lives. "Everyone is guided by something. What are you guided by? Is it your own desires? Is it your pocket-book? Your fears? Your wife? Your husband? Or what the neighbours think?"[4]

He maintained that "anyone can hear the words of the Lord. It is only necessary to obey the rules. The first is that we listen honestly for everything that may come — and if we are wise, we write it down. The second rule is that we test the thoughts that come, to see which are from God."[5]

> God can put thoughts into your mind. Have you ever listened for them? Have you ever tried taking pen and paper, and writing down the thoughts that come to you? They may look like ordinary thoughts. But be honest about them. You might get a new picture of yourself. Absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, absolute love. Those are Christ's standards. Are they yours? You may have to put things straight. I had to. I began by

writing to six people, admitting that the ill-will between us was my fault, and not theirs. Then I could really help people. Remember — if you want the world to get straight, get straight yourself.[6]

When man listens — and obeys the rules — *God speaks.* That was Frank Buchman's first main thesis. But the condition for the listener to distinguish God's voice in the inner dialogue is that he is willing to test his thoughts to see which come from God.

One test is the Bible. It is steeped in the experience through the centuries of men who have dared, under Divine revelation, to live experimentally with God. There, culminating in the life of Jesus Christ, we find the highest moral and spiritual challenge — complete honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.[7]

"A revelation of God is to be found wherever there is genuine religion," Archbishop Söderblom wrote. Such revelation has always been mediated by those who listened. God spoke to Adam and to the prophets. He spoke to men through Christ and through the Holy Spirit, as the Acts of the Apostles testify, as, indeed, does Christian history down the centuries. Has the Heavenly Father stopped speaking to His listening children today?

In an age so filled with a multiplicity of voices, it is by no means easy to listen and hear the inner voice. "Guidance comes in the silence," Buchman said. It can be difficult enough to achieve physical quietness. It is even more difficult to find inner quietness. One of Buchman's sources of inspiration in the practice of silence, Father Alphonse Gratry, member of the French Academy and professor at the Sorbonne who died in 1872, wrote in his book *Les Sources*:

To listen you have to be quiet. Now, I ask you, among men and especially among thinkers, who is quiet and listens in this way? Quieten the voices of men and of books. Be really alone. Is that your idea of silence? What is this continual murmuring of vain thoughts, restless desires, passions, prejudices, which bears in on you and influences you, though you do not realise it? In practice you need to listen to God in the morning before the distractions and business of the day begin. "What, in practice, is listening to God?" you ask me. "What really do I do?" Here is the answer — You write.

Gratry, who had learned the secret of listening from St. Augustine's writings, continued:

Those who seek, find. If you seek in silence and solitariness in a disciplined and persevering way, you will be suddenly conscious that you are not alone. You may be doubtful at first whether this unseen guest is not just your own ego. Do not remain in such doubt. Just take care not to lose what you hear in such times. Don't pride yourself on your memory. Memory is a faculty which forgets. So it is necessary to write. Write for God and for yourself. Write in order the better to hear the word in you, and to keep His words. If you truly are His disciples then the inspiration which comes will be most concrete, most precise, most relevant.[8]

St. Francis of Sales used to say that half an hour's listening each day is essential, except when you are exceptionally busy. Then a full hour is necessary.

Take time for meditation, and, if at all possible, in the early morning [he wrote in a letter to a friend]. If you don't

trust your memory, I advise you to write down your findings. Take time for a thorough examination of your conscience, and note down several thoughts. They are meant to be a spiritual bouquet of flowers to give you joy and inspiration throughout the day.[9]

Buchman experienced a "great revolution" in his life when he began to listen to God's guidance every morning. It might be a radical decision — involving violence to oneself — to get up an hour earlier than one has to or is accustomed to. But listening and writing down one's thoughts in a time of quiet is not of itself revolutionary. It can stop at revival.

The revolution comes with Buchman's second main thesis: *When man obeys, God acts.* Listening is quite different from the kind of meditation which seeks to merge the self with the impersonal universe. When God speaks to the listening man it is a personal call, a call from Thou, another Person who in the deepest sense gives him an identity, a call which challenges a response and responsibility. It is a question of obedience, a word which is unfashionable nowadays and even, to many, disgusting, because it seems to deny men's personal freedom. But the inner voice, whether we call it the voice of God or the voice of conscience, never forces us. It faces us with a free choice — to obey or disobey the guidance which has come.

It was for guidance that Frank Buchman listened. "Guidance was the only basis to his fabulously active life," Herbert Grevenius wrote in 1938. For him guidance was "the daily source of inspiration for creative thinking and living." But the condition for guidance was the willingness to listen and *obey.*

Obeying someone else's word to me is no problem so long as that word fits in with my own will. But when the "still small voice" which I recognize as the voice of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, crosses my own will then I am

faced with the revolutionary choice either of compromising or of committing violence on myself. It is when a man, faced with such a choice, dares to rely more on God, on his conscience, on his sense of what is right, than on what will be to his own advantage and suit his own plans and security, that Buchman's second thesis becomes a reality, namely, "When man obeys, *God acts*."

"Then you experience the dynamic which is almost forgotten — the Holy Spirit, that gives the guided answer and tells you exactly what to do as a clear, direct call from God."[10]

"The one thing we really need is to be guided by God's Holy Spirit. That is the Force we ought to study. Then we will have a clear light that ends confusion."[11]

If this sounds like pious hope or religious mysticism to the secularist, Buchman simply invites him to make the experiment. The way to this experience is open to everyone who is prepared to try it honestly and thoroughly. "Why not try God's plan? For those of you who are not yet convinced, the only way is to make the experiment."

A.J. Russell writes in *For Sinners Only*:

> It is impossible to understand Frank at all, unless he is thought of as always in God's presence, listening for direction and accepting power which he says is the normal way for a sane human being to live. Frank is an example of the psychologically mature man, thoroughly integrated round the highest relationship possible to man. He is disciplined. He does not wander voluntarily in his spiritual life: he goes direct to the Source all the time, and expects the Source to come direct to him . . . This discipline at the heart of the movement means complete freedom. The paradox of Christianity. Frank is a child listening to God and obeying Him implicitly, and getting all those around him to do the

same. And no one will ever understand this movement who does not accept this as a working hypothesis, whether he believes it or not at the start. After a time he begins to see it is true.[12]

The experiment, then, is a realistic, simple, morally demanding one. Remember, Buchman would say, that religious experience, to be valid, must have a moral backbone. In other words the experiment is not a theoretical or intellectual one. It has to do with the way I am living. And it can mean moral and spiritual revolution — doing violence to myself.

Such willingness is a very radical matter, but that is what is required by the "experiment with God" if it is to go further than a spiritual awakening or a deeper self-knowledge, valuable though these can be. On the other hand, "faith" in the usual religious sense is not a necessary pre-condition for beginning to "listen for guidance". The listener needs no more faith than the scientist beginning a scientific experiment. All he needs is a working hypothesis, some conviction that the experiment has meaning, that there is something not yet discovered to be sought and found, and a willingness to be guided by the results as the experiment proceeds step by step. Only afterwards is "faith" verified and transformed into "knowing". It was through such listening and obeying that Buchman learned by experience that he was not alone in his actions, but that "When man obeys, God acts."

5

Revolution and Democracy

FRANK BUCHMAN advised those who listened to test the thoughts that came in quiet against the Bible and against the standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. In addition he recommended a further "excellent test" — "What do others say who also listen to God? This is an unwritten law of fellowship. It is also an acid test of one's commitment to God's plan. No one can be wholly God-controlled who works alone."[1]

Those who have begun to listen for guidance may find that God's word and call comes to them in different ways, bringing its challenge and correction, sometimes through something that happens, very often through a word spoken by another person — perhaps in a sermon on occasion. Indeed, the man who has learned constantly to listen for God's voice begins to listen in quite a new way to his fellow men.

If *revolution* is a key word in Buchman's programme so also is *democracy*. In our present-day situation the two terms may seem almost contradictory. For Buchman the one implies the other. A democratic society can only function in its fullest dimension when individual men are prepared as revolutionaries to do violence to themselves.

In 1936, in a trans-Atlantic broadcast from the United States, Frank Buchman described the Oxford Group as

> a Christian revolution for remaking the world. The root problems in the world today are dishonesty, selfishness and fear — in men and, consequently, in nations. These evils, multiplied, result in divorce, crime, unemployment, recurrent depression and war. How can we hope for peace within a nation, or between nations, when we have conflict in countless homes? Spiritual recovery must precede economic recovery. Political or social solutions that do not deal with these root problems are inadequate.[2]

The Oxford Group's answer to revolution is more revolution, a greater revolution, a revolution in human nature, which is our only hope, Buchman said that same year, "National and world problems remain the same because the root problem — human nature — remains unsolved. Until we deal with human nature thoroughly and drastically on a national scale, nations must still follow their historic road to violence and destruction."[3]

Buchman had no illusions about man being able to change his own nature. "God alone can change human nature." Neither did he believe that man by his own efforts could remake the world. "God made the world, and man has been trying to run it ever since. That must stop ... Many have been waiting for a great leader to emerge. The Oxford Group believes that it must be done not through one person, but through groups of people who have learned to work together under the guidance of God."[4]

In the Visby speech of 1938 he had observed:

> An increasing number of citizens in democratic states are now unwilling to acknowledge in speech and action those

inner authorities on which the life of democracy depends. Each man has his own plan. It's so wonderful each to have his own plan. It's such freedom, such liberty! Everyone does as he pleases. But not in the Oxford Group. There you have true democracy. You don't do as you please, you do as God guides. You do God's plan.[5]

"We talk of freedom and liberty, but we are slaves to ourselves."[6] From that kind of slavery liberation does not come through political revolution. It is one of the doctrinaire revolutionary's cruellest illusions to believe he can change men through changing the social system. The attraction of revolutionary propaganda lies in its false, collective hope of freedom, a freedom which has always to be put off until some future time.

The revolution Buchman talks about does not need to be postponed to some uncertain tomorrow nor does it need to be set up through propaganda and conspiracy. "The place to begin is with yourself. And the time is now." It is not a question of loveless violence towards others but of the only violence which is compatible with love — the conquering of oneself.

No sincere and responsible person can deny the principles of Buchman's revolution. "Everybody believes in honesty, purity, unselfishness and love — for the other fellow."[7] The revolutionary factor, however, does not start when I accept these principles as principles but when I make the revolutionary decision to put them into practice in my own life even if that means that I must commit violence on myself. That, in turn, means submitting my life to God's guidance, means listening to and obeying the true source of power, so often forgotten — the Holy Spirit.

"The more men, under God, govern themselves, the less do they need government from outside,"[8] Buchman said, and

that gives the connection and the interplay between revolution and democracy.

He had experienced political democracy's tendency to give way before the threat of Nazi, Fascist and communist dictatorship. In a broadcast from America in 1940 he pointed out the danger.

> We are failing to bring to our nation today the reality of the importance of every citizen, a reality that gives power and the answer to frustration, personally, domestically, socially, nationally and supernationally. Because every citizen does not feel he has this answer, he delegates the responsibility to the few in the hope that they will have it. Because of our selfishness and our low level of living we delegate to others what should be our own responsibility, and hope that if we give them a big enough vote they will accomplish what is necessary for the nation.[9]

So everyone is responsible, he insisted.

> Each man has an immediate part to play. He can accept for himself a change of heart. He can decide to listen to God daily. He can start to build a hate-free, fear-free, greed-free world. The sacrifice necessary for lasting peace is nothing compared with the sacrifice demanded by war. God has an inspired plan for peace and the means to carry it out through men and women who are willing to obey.[10]

God who has created the world and who holds it in being, also has a plan for His creation which includes every single human life as well as humanity and humanity's future. In the same way as the order of creation is mirrored in the atom and in the solar system, so God's plan and guidance cover both the

details and entirety of our individual lives and of our communal life. With regard to obeying God's guidance it follows that he who is faithful in the least will also be found faithful in much.

Near the end of his life someone asked Frank Buchman what was the explanation of his worldwide influence. He replied that perhaps it was his attention to detail. At the same time, though he did see to the smallest details, he was a world citizen both by experience and conviction. He thought globally. His belief that a decentralised democracy could still function in a contracting world of ever greater technical, economic and political units, was based on his faith in God's all-embracing plan and care. Without such basic common values and norms it is difficult to see how the younger generation's demands for the right of individuals and localities to decide things for themselves can lead to anything except chaos and, sooner or later, to dictatorship.

The message that God has a plan and a marvellous destiny for every man is good news which gives democratic equality a wholly different dimension of reality from the one it has in a materialistic welfare state, however well-developed its social services may be. A physically or socially handicapped person cannot be given a feeling of equality merely by a social policy or by material compensation. If a man gets this help in an impersonal way, he may even have an increased feeling of living on the charity of the community, a charity made possible by unjustly privileged taxpayers who keep complaining about their taxes. In the middle of the welfare state he can experience the humiliation which the people in the developing countries feel when they receive alms from the developed countries.

Buchman, however, regarded democracy — and dictatorship — not so much as something political but as something personal, a human concept presenting a private

challenge to everyone. "Ask yourself, 'Is your home governed by a democracy or a dictatorship?' " he said. "I fear that many, all too many, ardent advocates of democracy reserve for themselves the right to be dictators in their own home. Selfish at home, they have no constructive programme for a selfish world." The same thing is true in industry. "In industry the forgotten factor is that God has a plan. And that forgotten factor is the key to every problem that industry faces. Only a new spirit in men can bring a new spirit in industry and create the fair play and efficiency that industry needs."[11]

This may sound unrealistic. But what honest man, whether he believes in God or not, can deny that it is right? If it were realistic to expect change to begin with the other person, whether in the home, in the factory, in politics or in the world, all we could expect in the long run would be a political radicalism driving us steadily towards bloody revolution and dictatorship. As Buchman used to say, quoting William Penn, "Men must choose to be governed by God, or they condemn themselves to be ruled by tyrants."[12]

He also quoted a well-known Dutch Socialist politician who said, "The Oxford Group has nothing to do with politics. Still, it has everything to do with politics. For it is a revolution in all politics, because God directs not only the platforms, but the politicians."[13] Practical politics, of course, must be concerned with power and with economics. Buchman knew that and he included these factors, also, under God's plan so that they took on new dimensions.

> Materialism is our great enemy [he said]. It is the mother of all the "isms". There is the battleground. There the warfare must be waged so that we can firmly establish the homely truths of honesty, unselfishness and obedience to God which are the hallmarks of personal and national

sanity.[14] If we are fully to understand where our true security lies, we must look to our moral and spiritual defences. Then we must act, resolutely and intelligently to establish those defences.[15]

The world is slow to realise that the spiritual is more powerful than the material; that God's plan for the world is infinitely greater and more perfect than any imposed by a government on its people; that what we need is the dictatorship of the Holy Spirit.[16]

Buchman certainly knew that politics in both East and West are governed by the dictatorship of materialism. In spite of that, he believed in the possibility of ushering in a new era of spiritual force in our age of material perfection, and thereby a true democracy. His belief rested on the fact that he had the same experience of God's control which he had found in Abraham Lincoln. Like him, he could say, "I have had so many evidences of God's direction that I cannot doubt this power comes from above."[17] Buchman's spiritually-founded view of democracy assumes a creative interplay between personal freedom, leadership and obedience.

"We live in an age of pollution, pollution of the air, water and earth. But what about inner pollution, pollution of the personality?" a Danish letter writer asked in 1970. Buchman had already given the answer in 1938. "Men and nations suffer from the numbing disease of auto-intoxication," he said. "The world is drugged with its own sin and blinded with its own selfishness. People have accepted standards lower than they know they ought to accept."[18]

Together with his realistic insight into human nature, however, Buchman, in spite of everything, firmly believed in man's, especially the ordinary man's, inner receptiveness to God's voice and in the possibility that sufficient numbers of ordinary people would hear and obey the challenge to an inner

revolution so that a crumbling civilization could be saved. In 1939 he said:

> Three great tasks confront this generation. To keep the peace and make it permanent. To make the wealth and work of the world available to all and for the exploitation of none. And with peace and prosperity as our servants and not our masters, to build a new world, create a new culture, and change the age of gold into the Golden Age . . . What this age needs is a new pattern of democracy, designed by God and worked by everyone.[19]

"There is enough in the world for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed. Suppose everybody cared enough, everybody shared enough, wouldn't everybody have enough?"[20] Buchman put his question in the thirties. If anything, it is even more appropriate in the seventies. Probably no one would give "no" for an answer.

Buchman's view of economics could be summed up in the pithy phrase, "Where God guides, He provides." This is a sentence which, when radically applied in Buchman's way, is a merciless challenge both to Christians and to materialists. It shakes the very foundations of ordinary, worldly and economic planning and security. Can we take such a challenge seriously?

In Luke 9: 3, when Jesus sent out the twelve to preach and heal, he gave them the same challenge. St. Francis of Assisi followed it in 1208 and his namesake, Frank of Allentown, did the same in 1921 and lived that way for the rest of his life.

In that year, 1921, Buchman was invited to Washington by a senior officer attending the Disarmament Conference there. On the train through the night, as he listened to the rhythmic clang of the wheels and also to the inner voice, one thought

came again and again — "Resign, resign, resign." It would mean committing violence on himself to the extent of giving up the safe, salaried position which he then held at a New England college. It would mean giving up human security and depending on God entirely. He resigned and became aware that God was calling him to "generate a moral and spiritual force that is powerful enough to remake the world".[21]

"Frank never offered anyone a good position, security or a future. He never asked anyone to join him," writes Gabriel Marcel in his book *Fresh Hope for the World*. "He placed each one face to face with the needs of the world and face to face with himself, and left him to the decision of his own conscience."[22]

"None of these whole-time workers is paid a salary, nor are any of its world-wide enterprises budgeted on the basis of what money is in hand," writes Garth Lean, who has worked at Buchman's side since 1932, in his book *Christian Counter-attack*.

> Both individuals and its travelling forces, which may comprise dozens or hundreds of people on any one mission, undertake what is, as far as they can see, the most daring will of God in the confident hope that money will be provided on time. So far, these hopes have not been disappointed, although there are many days and moments when the issue seems in doubt. Such experience has been so common in the history of Christianity as to suggest a universal truth.[23]

Another of those who began to work with Buchman years ago is Alan Thornhill, the playwright. "Most men tend inevitably to develop their work along the lines of the things they themselves can do well," Thornhill writes. "Buchman's work

develops along the lines of the things which he can inspire others to do better."[24]

Buchman's view of leadership, authority and obedience is bound up with his firm belief in God as the Creator of the world, Who rules His world in love. In the general order of creation, which is not within the power of man to alter, His plan functions according to His laws. But when God created man "in His own image", His plan here was concerned with a personal relationship of love. Love desires a responding love. But God, Almighty as He is, does not compel or force man to love Him. He gives man freedom to love or not to love, freedom voluntarily to obey God's plan or rebel against it, freedom to recognise God's authority or to reject it, freedom even to make man himself god — and take the consequences.

The only obedience for which Buchman called, and which he followed, was to God's leadership and authority. Hence, he, a convinced democrat, dared to speak of the dictatorship of the Holy Spirit and of the moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love as absolute standards. The point is, as he said, that "the more men, under God, govern themselves, the less do they need government from outside."[25] Do we not see today the danger that even the democracies can become police states or computer-run, bureaucratic dictatorships, if they abandon objective moral standards just when technology is demanding co-ordination and subordination into bigger and bigger units?

Buchman recognised no other authoritative leadership except God's guidance. So he did not want himself, or any of his collaborators, to become established leaders. When, on occasion, others wanted to regard him as the leader he used to say — "It is God Who leads, not I." He must have been aware of the risk that the world-spanning movement which he had initiated might, in the wrong hands, be changed from a God-led organism into a leader-directed organisation. Indeed,

more than once he was very brusque and would have nothing to do with colleagues who showed tendencies towards pushing themselves forward as leaders or tried to put their personal stamp on the message. Buchman never tried to do this himself, either in his speeches, in any publicity, or in plays or films.

He considered that the motivation for real leadership could only come from being oneself led by God with the sole aim of inspiring others to seek and obey God's guidance. To be a leader in that sense is totally different from trying to make people over in one's own image or trying to exercise control or human authority over others. God Himself respects the individual's freedom and integrity so much that He is willing to risk His whole creation by giving each person the choice between good and evil. Buchman had the same respect for the freedom of the individual, together with a steady faith in everyone's deep-down desire to make the right choice and decide to be a fellow worker with God. Thereby each would realise his own best possibilities and would find his true destiny.

He had the firm conviction that everyone under God's guidance could live a greater and richer life than the life of compromise which shackles most of us, when we are not living up to our best and are accepting lower standards than we should have done.

One of the chief things Buchman did was to arouse this deadened voice of conscience in people and make them feel they had come to a crossroads. What made the challenge so hard to ignore was the fact that he never made demands on anyone but placed before them a tremendous invitation which could immediately be tested by simple, radical experiment in one's own life. It was never too late to begin. Years ago Buchman found himself at a dinner-party in Edinburgh next to an eighty-year-old lady who confided to him that she was

"getting ready to die". "Ready to die!" said Buchman. "Why not start to live?" It set her thinking and a few weeks later she reserved a hundred rooms in a Geneva hotel for Buchman and a group of his friends. With the help of her son, who held a responsible post in the League of Nations Secretariat, she invited them to come and speak to the statesmen assembled there.

The reason why some Christians reacted — and still react — against Buchman's challenge was that he saw a long way further than spiritual revival. He was out for personal revolution and world renaissance. To him it was clear that faith without radical works is dead. "All genuine religion has a moral backbone." There can be no contradiction between faith and works for anyone who reckons with God's guidance in his own life and in the lives of others. The starting-point is my listening, the personal "vertical" contact with God. But after that I face the "horizontal", how I live with and for others.

"When man obeys, God acts." That is a tremendous assertion. It implies that when a person dares to rely more on God and His guidance than on his own calculations and security, he is lifted to a new level to undertake greater and more rewarding tasks and to find a deeper security and joy than he believed possible.

Buchman saw overwhelming evidence of these great truths in his own life and in the lives of thousands of others. His experience of the Cross in Keswick in 1908 when he decided to do violence to himself and accept a revolutionary way of life, involved him in one of the most remarkable waves of life-changing in the history of world missions. His decision on the train to Washington in 1921 to give up material security and to live entirely under God's guidance and providence, set off in Oxford the world movement which the Norwegian Bishop Berggrav, from the perspective of the North, has called "the greatest spiritual movement since the Reformation".

6

The Oxford Group

> Go out into all the world. Take an apostolic group. A solo effort is a false principle. We are facing the breakdown of civilisation. It is a selfish, sex-mad age. The question is not whether other ages were better or worse. We have to deal with present facts. Sin is alluring. We must make goodness attractive and interesting. You must become prophets of a new age.[1]

Such was Frank Buchman's call to the Oxford Group in 1924 as the movement began to spread all over the world. Not that he was under any illusion that the advance would be simple and easy. "We will be lied about," he said in 1926, "but nevertheless a steadily growing number of people will come to an intelligent understanding of the power of the Gospel."[2]

There is very little in writing about the activities of the Oxford Group in the first ten years following 1921. The glimpses one gets from its literature are strongly reminiscent of the Acts of the Apostles — faith, borne out in practice, in the guidance of the Holy Spirit making miracles possible through change in men.

As A. J. Russell explains in *For Sinners Only*, Buchman informed him:

> The group were not seeking publicity; they were prepared to give information if published correctly and the subject treated with respect. Newspaper controversies on religion were never satisfactory. The New Testament was against this. It aroused interest for a time, but did little real good. People whose interest had been quickened were left stranded, while the newspaper went back to its daily task of purveying news. That sort of publicity was useless for the deeply spiritual movement to which he [Buchman] was committed.[3]

In 1922, indeed, Harold Begbie in *Life Changers* wrote that Buchman, whom he had got to know, "regards publicity as a great danger".

> His genius, I think, lies in thinking with intense preoccupation of individual persons [Begbie records]. To him the man is much more than the multitude, which is probably true in the spiritual sphere. Any idea of "mass production" in his work is to him dreadfully repellent. Therefore, it is that he shuns publicity of any kind, and never for one moment dreams of calculating gains in terms of statistics.[4]

In 1931 when Russell, a London journalist, began to investigate the Oxford Group, he found that though it had existed for several years it was only vaguely known in Fleet Street and had only been casually referred to in his own paper. However, after interviewing three representatives of the Group, he noted in his book that already

> Groups were coming into existence in many places, in many countries: England, Scotland, Holland, Germany, India, South Africa, China, Egypt, Switzerland, North and

South America. They were urging Christians, congregations and clergy alike, to expel sin from their midst, as the Apostles did too, stressing the need to surrender entirely to God, and to trust His guidance and support in every circumstance and vicissitude of life. Emphatically were they against being another religious "order" or "cult", "sect" or "organisation".[5]

Of Buchman's work in all this expansion Russell wrote:

> He rarely stays in one country for a long period. Here, there and everywhere he is being used to start groups of changed people; then he hurries away to another town or country, according to the leading of the Spirit. When first I heard of him he was travelling through South America; he knows China like the Chinese; he is thoroughly at home in Germany, the Netherlands, India, America, Africa and Australia.[6]

Buchman seldom worked alone. Always he aimed to train others to take responsibility. Always he listened to others' ideas and never insisted on being the one to make the final decision. His way was to take up questions in a group and have a time of quiet together. If they were not of one mind they would listen again until unity came, according to Russell.

> Guidance must be thought of as not mechanical, but as becoming clear through reason, evidence, and luminous thinking. God speaks to us in all the ways of our human understanding. No man or group of men is infallible, but a group of people each individually seeking God's will and closely united together is most likely to receive the clearest consistent guidance. Often God reveals only one step at a

time. Sometimes we have to go ahead on what seems probably right instead of acting on certainty. Guidance ultimately rests on a basis of faith, and if we act sincerely on what God gives us, He never lets us down, say the Group. "All things work together for good to them that love God," is the guiding slogan.[7]

Buchman based everything on God's guidance. "God streams in wherever sin is not blocking Him," he would say, giving to sin its comprehensive meaning of everything that must be fought against and conquered in our own lives, in the lives of others, in the community and in the world. In the Group, however, as Russell observed, "rigidity over details is unpopular. There are principles in the Fellowship but no rigid rules. Throw a question at the Group and it comes back to you . . . I heard a newcomer ask for a ruling on liquor. The reply: 'What do *you* think?' " They would present the facts, Russell goes on, and then add: "Interpret them as you think best under God's guidance. 'Do anything God lets you.' That is the guiding theory of the Group, and that gives freedom."[8]

Buchman's view was that sin meant "anything that separates me from God and the other fellow, anything that prevents me from being available to God and for others". He himself did not smoke, did not drink alcohol. "He knew," one of his friends wrote, "that both these things were the occasion of compromise and defeat for others. Nor had he ever found that these habits helped to change people. He made no rules about such questions and he did not condemn others." None the less those who accepted his aims sooner or later saw the sense of living in the same disciplined way as he did. It was a part of training for living accepted as purposefully as a sportsman accepts training for a big race.

Though Buchman was unquestionably the leader of the

Oxford Group, his leadership was never in the least authoritarian. Begbie writes that he had an exceptional gift for teaching and that his associates regarded him above all as a great teacher.

> It is impossible in their company to doubt any longer that the man who had changed their lives, and had made them also changers of other men's lives, was a person of very considerable importance. Yet — and this was perhaps the thought which most influenced me in those first moments of hesitation — some of these men spoke to me with troubled criticism of their leader, disliking some of his pet phrases, but all sticking to him with an unconquerable loyalty as the man who had worked a great miracle in their lives, and who was by far the most remarkable man of their experience in spite of anything which troubles their taste or their judgment.[9]

It was no easy life to be close to Buchman. As one of his fellow workers put it, "It was something like a mixture of a Christmas party and the Day of Judgment."

Buchman travelled a very great deal, visiting nearly every part of the world — and that in the years before people went by air. He kept in touch with old friends on every continent and was constantly making new friends, many of the world's spiritual leaders and statesmen among them. One of these was Nathan Söderblom whose early ecumenical inspiration had also sprung from the World Missionary Christian Student Movement. In 1926 the Swedish Archbishop invited Buchman to the opening session of the League of Nations in Geneva. There Buchman heard Söderblom's inaugural sermon and had lunch with him together with Jawaharlal Nehru.

During these years of travel Buchman often stayed at

Brown's Hotel in London and a stream of visitors would come to meet him there. Among the crowds who attended the big summer gatherings in Oxford and the larger and smaller "house parties" and meetings in Switzerland and elsewhere, there came a great many from Scandinavia. One was the President of the Norwegian Parliament, C. J. Hambro, who wrote an illuminating foreword on Dr. Buchman's leadership, in a war-time edition of Buchman's speeches, published in 1944. In writing the foreword, he said,

> My thoughts go back to that first house party in Norway [at Hösbjör], in 1934, to my wife whose great-hearted conception of hospitality, whose tremendous sense of humour, indomitable energy and sovereign disregard of any disbelief in difficulties and obstacles made those first house parties in Norway possible. My thoughts go to Frank Buchman, the catalyst who made possible the united church front in Norway in this war, my thoughts go to Frank, the untiring, open-hearted, smiling friend, in gratitude for all that he has been and done. We know that whenever we have been true to him we have been true to ourselves.[10]

The work of the Oxford Group in Scandinavia is copiously documented both in press accounts and in literary works. That holds true for Sweden too, although, as the Danish paper *Social-Demokraten* remarked in 1938, in Sweden "the movement moves from man to man, while in Norway and Denmark it began with huge meetings. Now all over Sweden, as in Denmark and Norway too, a network of living, vital cells has been built up." Some of the high points of these great years of the Oxford Group in Scandinavia were marked by Buchman's speeches, for example, at the memorable meeting in Kronborg Castle in Denmark at Whitsun, 1935, with over

10,000 people present, and at the great Visby gathering in 1938.

At Kronborg Frank Buchman said:

> At the first Whitsun God spoke to a group of ordinary men. They changed the course of history. May He not today have a plan which can solve the problems of a troubled world? Divine guidance must become the normal experience of ordinary men and women. Any man can pick up divine messages if he will put his receiving set in order. Definite, accurate, adequate information can come from the Mind of God to the minds of men. This is normal prayer. There must come a spiritual dynamic which will change human nature and remake men and nations. There must come a spiritual authority which will be accepted everywhere by everyone. Only so will order come out of chaos in national and international affairs.[11]

"We are very ordinary men," Buchman said in 1934, "but we are trying to put into modern language the truths that made the first Christians into revolutionaries."

At the same time as the Oxford Group was spreading in Scandinavia, Europe, Britain, America and other parts of the world, and was inspiring writers, artists, teachers, clergy, politicians, as well as ordinary men, with new hope and the vision of a renaissance of the spirit, there was a stepping up of propaganda from the ideologies of violence and an increasing arms race among the great powers. Buchman's speeches took on a more and more prophetic note of warning in an effort to bring men and nations to their senses before world catastrophe overtook them.

In the spring of 1938, Buchman was walking in the Black Forest near Freudenstadt in Germany and, according to one of his colleagues, "was searching for an idea simple enough to

be understood by everyone and far-reaching enough to be proclaimed by the nations' leaders. He got the seed of the thought he was looking for from a Swedish author, Harry Blomberg."

The key expression had appeared in the Oxford Group's illustrated magazine *Rising Tide*. Harry Blomberg had written the text of a Swedish page in it and, with the thought in mind of Swedish steel which was being exported to the re-arming nations, he had composed the headline: "Sweden — Reconciler of the Nations. We must re-arm morally." That headline gave Frank Buchman the clue he was looking for. "The next great world movement will be a movement for moral and spiritual re-armament."

That same spring Hitler's troops marched into Austria. The democracies began to wake up to the impending catastrophe and pushed forward their military re-armament. On June 4th that year, his sixtieth birthday, Buchman made his historic speech calling for a world movement of moral and spiritual re-armament. Immediately afterwards, in a message to friends in Greece, he recalled how in the past Greece had thwarted the enemies of civilisation, and went on:

> Other enemies are on the march today. But they can no longer be overthrown on a single battlefield, and even those cultural forces which once saved Europe are in many countries in danger of turning traitor to the cause. The enemies today are selfish materialism and moral apathy. Against these moral and spiritual foes we must launch a moral and spiritual offensive. The soul of the nations is at stake.[12]

Only the power of God-inspired men is strong enough to oppose these enemies, Buchman said. It was his unshakable conviction that spiritual power was the greatest force in the world. "We need a whole new creative force let loose in the

world — a religious experience so dynamic, so wholly adequate that, in the words of Isaiah, 'Nations shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God.' "[13]

In his B.B.C. broadcast "Chaos against God", he summed up his programme and the rich experience of the years following Keswick, 1908: "Some expression of religious experience greater than ever before must be called into being. We have been so long on the low levels of religious experience that we cannot readily grasp what an Alpine range of experience could be ours if all our thinking, acting and planning were God-controlled and not man-controlled."[14]

His Visby speech earlier in 1938 had made clear his conviction that a religious revival in traditional form would not be enough to prevent war and ensure lasting peace. That autumn in Europe he gave a series of talks, re-emphasising his basic message with prophetic vision. In several countries there was a striking response. Reporting the first World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament in Interlaken, Switzerland, in September 1938, the French paper *L'Illustration* commented:

> The meetings were of special interest because of the people who came. There were politicians and diplomats from both sides of the Atlantic. There were the Speakers of several parliaments, foreign ministers, church leaders, former anarchists and representatives of many nations who had seemed a few weeks earlier about to go to war with one another. All these men of goodwill from so many different backgrounds are convinced that violence will never solve the conflicts that threaten world peace and that the answer to the most acute divisions can only be found on a spiritual plane.

When the Second World War broke out, Buchman was

already back in America. He had launched Moral Re-Armament in the Constitutional Hall, Washington, where Senator Harry S. Truman read a message from President Roosevelt. For the second time in his life a spiritual world movement with visions and promises of a dawning renaissance had been checked by world catastrophe. At the start of the century the World Student Mission had been interrupted by the First World War. As it turned out, however, this time Buchman and his friends were able to keep alive the flame of the Spirit and preserve their fellowship across the closed frontiers. At the end of the war they were able to kindle new hope of reconciliation and renaissance for a world in ruins, a world hopeless and bitter from its hate-controlled ideologies.

7

A Superior Ideology

FROM THE SPRING of 1939 to the spring of 1946, Buchman was at work in the United States. The international force with him was reduced in numbers because most of his young full-time colleagues in America, as in Britain, were serving in the armed forces. Between them they won almost every decoration from the Victoria Cross downwards, and those in the American forces had been released by the order of General Marshall to resume their full-time work for Moral Re-Armament. So Buchman prepared to re-enter war-torn Europe.

"Great truths have been revealed to us," he said on the eve of sailing for Europe. "It is a great ideology. It is the full message of Jesus Christ. It is putting the message in a way that the world will understand. Only a superior ideology which speaks to the whole world can unite a world split by opposing ideologies."[1]

Buchman the American felt deeply the tragedy of America. "A nation's thinking is in ruins before a nation is in ruins. And America's thinking is in ruins,"[2] he had said in 1943. "America must discover her rightful ideology. It springs from her Christian heritage and is her only adequate answer in the battle against materialism and all the other 'isms'. But America does not hate materialism. Think of America

destroying herself with the very force that she condemns in others."[3]

After the war ended, hope of a lasting peace seemed further away than ever. Ideologically the victorious powers were deadly enemies and the world hovered on a balance of terror with the apocalyptic mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb looming on the horizon of the future.

"The truth is that our problem goes deeper than economics or politics . . . Divisive ideologies strive for the mastery of men's minds . . . Men today are being stretched consciously or unconsciously into new moulds of thinking,"[4] said Buchman who constantly speaks of the need for new thinking. Like Marx, he calls for a thinking which can change the world. He saw in Marx an example of the power of thinking to influence the masses and of the possibility of an ideology to change the world. "Sixty and more years ago you didn't hear much about the Communist Party," Buchman pointed out in 1943. "To begin with there was one man — Karl Marx. Then for a long time only a small group. Eventually world conditions made it possible for Karl Marx to do his work — and communism is the result."[5]

Buchman and Marx were both genuine revolutionaries, and their visions of a just society had much in common. Marx could have signed Buchman's programme — "to make the wealth and work of the world available to all and for the exploitation of none."[6] In their views of revolution and of the way to change the world, however, they differed radically. Marx regarded capitalist and communist as irreconcilable enemies locked in a class struggle. Buchman, like Lindhagen, saw that there is both a capitalist and a communist in the heart of every person. The communist in us wants to have and then hold on to what he lacks. The capitalist in us has to do violence to himself if he is to share what he wants to hold on to. Without the inner, personal and permanent revolution the

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capitalist survives every exterior revolution, which just becomes a change to a new ruling class.

That Christianity and other religions have largely failed to set the world free from materialism may be because those who proclaim the message are trying to pass on something they themselves do not possess. Buchman felt that we must rethink and relive our whole conception of religious experience.

> Much, admittedly, has not been valid experience. Oftentimes it has been religious invalidism — a crass, insipid, dull, tepid, unimaginative maladaption of what ought to be great life-giving, nation-forming experiences. It has been a warped conception, marred by moral twists. Due to our spiritually poverty-stricken lives, we even glibly admit that business and politics do not mix with religion.[7]

Buchman himself had found as early as 1908 that a revolutionary religious experience had immediate effect in the lives of others when that experience was shared with them. It was not a matter of words — from his theological training Buchman had known all the words and the woman's simple sermon on the Cross in the little Keswick church contained nothing he had not already heard many times over. Now there was a new power, new life that was infectious and brought change. It became his fundamental conviction, borne out by years of practical experience, that a revolutionary, personal faith, based on absolute moral standards, would always be effective in the lives of others as well.

Indeed, the passing on of this life-changing power from man to man is the only effective way of making the world Christian. If such a chain reaction really works, it will soon "reach the millions". Where it fails to work, no amount of increased "religious" activity can repair the breakdown. A Christian who is not bringing others to listen for and obey

God's guidance, can blame only himself. The temptation to spiritual violence must be turned inwards towards a personal revolution.

Such a revolution in the life of the individual, Buchman was convinced, would bear fruit in a renaissance of society. "We haven't begun to experience the spiritual revolution we need," he said in a talk to Christians in 1943. "You need revolution, and then when you come into the clear light of God's presence, you will experience a glorious renaissance. You will come to see what Christ means this old world to be."[8]

Buchman's vision of a renaissance has its parallel in Jesus's words about the Kingdom of God in the Gospel. The similarity is that it works like yeast or the mustard seed. It is a question of birth and growing, of organic life formed from within, nourished by earth and sun, always at risk of withering and dying. Renaissance is the work of the Spirit, whom "eye hath not seen". It cannot be brought into being by organisation or external structures. "The Kingdom of God is within you."

There is a reference in Matthew 11: 12 which brings together violence and the kingdom of heaven, rather similar to Buchman's connecting revolution and renaissance in his Visby speech. Jesus is speaking of the greatness of John the Baptist — "yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he". Then He goes on — "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force' (R.V.). How this is to be interpreted is a much debated subject, but it indicates how radical such a vision is and how closely connected revolution and renaissance, in the true sense, are. Material, external radicalism attempts with revolutionary violence to bring about a heaven on earth — thus doing violence to God's kingdom. But God's kingdom, renaissance, also

demands violence or hardness to bring it to birth, only here it is what John the Baptist called change of heart or repentance, and what Buchman called revolution, i.e. the individual committing violence on himself as the step to listening to God and obeying His will. Renaissance springs from God's action through such revolutionaries.

The dynamic in each revolution is quite different. In Luke 16: 16 — the parallel passage to Matthew 11: 12 — Jesus says: "The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and every one enters it violently" (R.V.).

It is easy enough to understand that the poor and oppressed should want to storm out, shaking off all law and order, to try to seize their heaven on earth. It is more difficult to imagine people in our affluent society so longing for God's kingdom that we are prepared to enter it violently. Can we think that, after two thousand years, the change of heart which John the Baptist said was the threshold of the kingdom of heaven, and the revolution of being violent towards oneself to the point of doing God's will rather than our own, can we think that this will suddenly become popular?

"Sin is attractive." That was just the first point in Buchman's call to his fellow workers in 1924 to "become prophets of a new age". It sounds obvious enough, but that self-evident "truth" is the illusion in mankind's history since the Fall. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," John the Baptist said. "The kingdom of God is within you," Jesus said. The tragedy is that ever since the Fall we have sought ourselves, our lost paradise, outside ourselves. We have barred ourselves out of the best and highest in our own inner being. While we try to find ourselves on sin's road, we flee from ourselves on heaven's road. That is what people suddenly saw when they met Buchman, and it placed them at the crossroads of their lives.

"Goodness must become attractive and interesting" was the other point of Buchman's appeal to this "selfish, sex-mad age". Did he really think that people in general would be willing to pay the price of personal revolution in order to bring in a moral and spiritual renaissance?

"Law" by itself is neither attractive nor interesting. That was the experience of the Old Testament prophets and until John the Baptist. What can be, and really ought to be, attractive, however, is the vision and opportunity of a renaissance. When God's kingdom is rightly proclaimed, then every one will want to enter it, even violently.

Buchman was sure that the ordinary man possesses extraordinary potentialities when honesty, purity, unselfishness and love become the motive power of his life. "The world is anxiously waiting to see what Jesus Christ can do in, by, for and through one man wholly given to Him — God-led. You can be that man." He was also sure that "there is tremendous power in a minority guided by God". He used to quote Ignatius Loyola: "Give me twelve men wholly given to God and I will change the world."

8

Enemies into Friends

IN AN INTERNATIONAL broadcast in 1947 Buchman could note with hope, "Thank God there is now at work a world force of people, ideologically equipped, who know how a new moral climate can be produced because of what has happened in their own lives."[1] This speech, sent out over the Swiss Radio, was broadcast from Caux, the new world conference centre in the mountains overlooking Lake Geneva. Certain Swiss families had, at great personal sacrifice, acquired a group of hotels which occupy a beautiful position high up on the mountain-side above Montreux. These Swiss, grateful that their land had been spared the horrors of war, took this initiative to create a centre where Buchman, himself of Swiss ancestry, and his associates could bring their experience to all in a programme of reconciliation, rebuilding and peaceful co-operation between men and nations.

People from M.R.A. in different countries, separated from one another through the war, had already begun to gather in Caux in 1946. During the winter and spring a team of volunteers from several different countries worked at reconditioning the neglected buildings of Mountain House and getting them into working order. When Buchman arrived in July for the first large European conference in Caux and met

those already there, he asked immediately, "Where are the Germans?" Then 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." In response to his insistence, approaches were made to the occupation authorities in Germany and in 1947 a group of about 150, mostly men who had suffered under the Nazis and who were to become leaders of the new Germany, were permitted to visit Caux.

To that conference there also came Madame Irène Laure, Secretary-General of the Socialist Women of France, member of the French Parliament, and one of the women active in the French Resistance. She had seen her son tortured by the Gestapo before her eyes, and in her heart was a burning hatred of the Germans. In Caux she met Frank Buchman for the first time. "We talked of European unity," she said later. "He asked me a simple question, 'What kind of unity do you want for Europe?' I had so great a hate of Germany that I had worked for her complete destruction . . . 'What kind of unity do you want for Europe?' For the first time I considered how hate can destroy but not construct and that my own hatred was a negative force." There were days of inner battle. A week later Madame Laure asked to speak at one of the main meetings. She said three sentences. "I have so hated Germany that I wanted to see her erased from the map of Europe. But I have seen here that my hatred was wrong. I wish to ask the forgiveness of all the Germans present."

Among the group of 150 Germans present was a young German, trained to be a fanatical Nazi by the Hitler Youth.

> When I heard Madame Laure's words, I was dumbfounded [he said]. For several nights I couldn't sleep. All my past rose up in revolt against the courage of this woman. But we knew, my friends and I, that she showed us

the only way open to Germany if that country wanted to join in the reconstruction of Europe. The foundations of this Europe should be — Madame Laure had shown us this — forgiveness. One day we went to her and expressed our deep sorrow and shame at what she herself and her people had suffered through our fault. We promised her that we would consecrate our lives and work so that nothing of the kind could ever happen again in any part of the world.[2]

Events like this proved to be the starting-point for visits by international teams to West Germany, to the Ruhr area especially, and to France, and the stories of these visits read like new chapters of the Book of Acts. While the Iron Curtain was coming down in the East, a sign of the Cold War, a network of personal friendships in the pattern of Caux was being woven in Western Europe across the frontiers of ancient enmities. One of the statesmen who took a lively interest in these happenings was Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister. He took the initiative in meeting Dr. Buchman in Paris in the summer of 1948. Earlier that same summer, Dr. Konrad Adenauer, whose name at that time was hardly known outside Germany, had spent several days at the World Assembly in Caux. He said afterwards, "On the second day — after sorting out my first impressions — I was convinced of the greatness of the work being done at Caux." That autumn Buchman and an international force of 260 people began a journey through West Germany at Adenauer's invitation. There were meetings in all the West German States, together with presentations of the musical revue *The Good Road*. How much these pioneer international contacts after the war meant for Germany in her isolation can be gathered from the statement of the West German Government's official bulletin on Dr. Buchman's death in 1961:

> Since 1947 Caux has been the symbol of Dr. Buchman's work for the German people. Through Caux he brought Germany back into the circle of civilised nations, after Hitler had banned him from Germany and had earned the distrust and contempt of other nations for our country. It was at Caux that Germans of all sorts, politicians and scientists, industrialists and workers, met those who had been their enemies during the war. Thus Caux became one of the great moral forces to which we owe our new position in the world.

Buchman's friendship with both Adenauer and Schuman led to the developing and cementing of contacts and friendship between these two statesmen and among many of their close colleagues. At the beginning of 1950 Schuman wrote the foreword for the French edition of Buchman's speeches.

> If we were being presented with some new scheme for the public welfare or another theory to be added to the many already put forward, I should remain sceptical. But what Moral Re-Armament brings us is a philosophy of life applied in action ... It is not a question of a change of policy; it is a question of changing men. Dr. Buchman has declared war on materialism and individualism, twin generators of our selfish divisions and social injustices.[3]

Then in 1951, following the signing of the European Coal and Steel Union, Adenauer, as German Federal Chancellor, stated to the press, "In recent months we have seen the conclusion of important international agreements. Moral Re-Armament has played an unseen but effective part in bridging differences of opinion between the negotiating parties, and has kept before them the aim of peaceful agreement in the search for the common good."[4]

When Adenauer spoke of the influence of Caux as playing "an unseen but effective part", he gave expression to the characteristic mark of "renaissance" in Buchman's sense, about which we have been speaking. Such renaissance cannot necessarily be perceived in signed agreements and political documents. Rather, it provides the initiative and the inspiration towards these accords, like the action of yeast, through bringing about change and reconciliation in the hearts of individuals. It was when the publicity for and against Frank Buchman and M.R.A. paid too little attention to these unseen, still-in-process, delicately-balanced elements in their effectiveness that it could be made to seem exaggerated and too good to be true. But now, in our larger persepective, the way is clear for a truer understanding of Buchman's life work and the movement he inspired. For these are among the very few "markings" (to use Dag Hammerskjöld's expression) which give hope for the future.

These unseen but essential effects can never be hard and fast, can never be stored up. They grow, they flower, they bear fruit in individual people and groups through change and a quality of life. That life must receive power, must be renewed day by day through quietness, guidance and discipline. Even when the effects do become apparent in personal change, in new relationships in family life, in the solving of conflicts in industry and in the political sphere, the validity of these effects still ultimately depends always on the quality of life of individual men and women and on their unremitting taking of responsibility. Failure in responsibility can lead to the breakdown of a promising situation or the collapse of a solution almost reached. Many — perhaps the majority — of those who have met Frank Buchman's challenge and experienced the call to personal commitment and co-responsibility have failed at one time or another, and then have found it

difficult to see the way back even though, deep inside, they have longed to do so.

On the other hand an unknown but considerable number of people in Scandinavia, in Europe and around the world have loyally kept the faith through the inspiration brought by Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group. Without establishing any organisation they have continued the "experiment with God" in their lives and in fellowship with others. Some of these have felt themselves called to live without salary or material security, just as Buchman did himself, depending entirely on God's provision. The majority have continued in their occupations and tasks, living under God's guidance in the family, in the factory, in the Church, in the community, in the nation. The work of Buchman and the Oxford Group in Scandinavia has been the inspiration of other organisations, however. One is the Daughters of Mary in the Evangelical Order of the Sisters of Mary with communities in Vallby and Vadstena in Sweden and in Kollund in Denmark. The Daughters of Mary have contacts with other communities and groups throughout Europe, and here again is an example of the "unseen but effective part" of Buchman's work.

We have already referred to the visible, documented, historical results of the "unseen" effects of Caux in the German-French reconciliation in the post-war years. Many other examples of the solving of greater or lesser conflicts around the world through the inspiration of Caux could be given, but here we summarise only one more — this time from the Far East.

In the summer of 1950 a large delegation from Japan came to Caux by charter plane. The members of the delegations had been chosen by the Japanese Government. Among those who came were the Mayors of the atom-bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, seven Governors of provinces, a group of Members of Parliament, and the representatives of

management and trade unions. On their way home to Japan from Caux the delegation visited the United Nations Building in New York and the United States Senate and House of Representatives in Washington. In the American Senate the personal representative of the Japanese Prime Minister, one of the delegation, was invited to address the Senators. It was the first occasion since the war on which a Japanese has spoken publicly in the United States and he offered the apologies of his people for what Japan had done during the war. Then the Japanese speaker went on, "We went to Caux in search of the content of democracy. We found the ideology which will feed democracy in Japan and which is at the same time the powerful answer to communism." There was a similar scene in the House of Representatives, which broke all traditions by receiving the delegation inside the chamber. One of the Japanese Members of Parliament spoke on behalf of his countrymen. He too apologised, as his colleagues had done in the Senate, and added. "We undertook the journey to Caux because the programme of Moral Re-Armament seems to us to offer the only possible basis for a genuine rehabilitation." The *New York Times* commented next day in an editorial — "The enemies of yesterday may not be enemies today ... For a moment one could see out of the present darkness into the years when all men may be brothers."

When the peace treaty with Japan was signed in San Francisco in 1952, Robert Schuman, who was there representing France, said to Frank Buchman, "You made peace with Japan two years before we signed it."[5]

The effects of the inspiration of Caux in Japan and the Far East convinced the French Catholic philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, of the historic world work Frank Buchman was doing. During a visit to Tokyo in 1957 he collected "incontrovertible evidence that the movement had profoundly

influenced policies in several countries in the Far East and that statesmen like the President of the Philippines and the Prime Minister of Japan publicly and gratefully acknowledged this".

What Gabriel Marcel had noted in Caux was the unique combination of the global and the intimate. A Swiss writer, Philippe Mottu, in his book *The Story of Caux*, says of Marcel's observation, "That is probably the best definition of the mark which Frank Buchman left on Caux, for it was in the context of the world's needs that he always placed the need for change in men."[6]

In recent years there have been many examples of reconciliation taking place in the spirit of Frank Buchman through the continuing Assemblies in Caux and at the new M.R.A. Conference Centre in Panchgani in India. Typical are the solutions to the political crises in the South Tyrol in Italy and in Assam in India to which tribute has been paid by responsible political leaders from all sides.

Mottu, one of the Swiss responsible for establishing Caux, writes:

> The themes of the conferences at Caux are always topical and relevant, for they are chosen to answer the requirements of the men present and the nations represented. The originality of Caux lies in its insistence that there exists a practical solution, tried and tested in experience, and that the crux of the matter is to be found in the decisive transition from the idea to its realisation, from theory to practice. To arrive at an effective solution the basic necessity is for someone, as an individual, to come to a decision, and Caux tries to create the climate in which such decisions can be taken.
>
> That is why so many visitors to Caux comment on the range and diversity of the problems discussed and on the

complementary character of the situations, which shed light on one another in a surprising way. Speakers follow one another in rapid succession, telling stories of concrete experience or personal decision. Day after day those who attend these meetings can see the reality of the contemporary world taking shape before their eyes, revealing every aspect of what has to be changed if a just human society is to be born.

The working parties, meals and chance encounters are all opportunities of establishing human contacts which, in the ordinary way of things, would be unlikely to occur. In this way a leading industrialist meets workers who can open his eyes to the facts of their conditions, while trade unionists at Caux learn at first hand what employers are up against and what they are trying to do. Preconceived or narrow ideas, unshakable points of view and fixed ideological positions — all these are called in question by this mingling of men and ideas. Yet there is nothing sentimental about Caux, for each person is faced with new demands which force him to look into himself before going forward again in a more effective way.

Neither is there anything austere about Caux. A day there can cover a whole range of human feelings. The comic side of a situation can produce much laughter where inner defences go down and people can recognise their true selves and take themselves a little less seriously. The chains of the past which prevent so much from happening fall away and are replaced with an inner freedom and true happiness.[7]

Anyone who has taken part in these conferences and in the practical daily work in which all can join, will agree with Mottu's description. From every point of view Caux is one of the most distinctive meeting places in the world. It is a

practical working model of Buchman's vision of a moral and spiritual renaissance on a worldwide scale.

The big buildings of Mountain House and the Grand Hotel can house up to one thousand guests at a time. The work of keeping them going is done voluntarily and without pay by those who take part in the conferences. Apart from a permanent group of about thirty paid maintenance men — masons, plasterers, painters, carpenters, electricians, gardeners and cleaners — who work all the year round to keep the buildings in repair, none of the permanent staff of Caux receives any salary, and indeed those who can, contribute to their own living expenses. The menus and service are of international standard. The meals, planned with the greatest care, play a great part in the establishing of friendships, and the whole atmosphere is one of unusual openness, interest and understanding where people of widely varied backgrounds can talk of the real problems in their lives in an environment which mirrors both the world's troubles and its joys.

From the economic aspect as well, Caux is a model and a proof of Frank Buchman's conviction that "Where God guides, He provides." The Swiss who adventurously took on the acquiring of the big Caux hotels, made the initial decision to go forward in faith that God would help them find the necessary money. Following that, as Mottu records, "there are many families in Switzerland who, week by week, month by month, year by year, help to finance Caux with regular gifts which rarely come from surplus, and often represent real sacrifice".[8]

Cash, fittings, furniture, tableware, hours of work freely given — in all these ways there have been considerable contributions to Caux from the Scandinavian countries, among others. A contribution of lasting value was made by the noted Finnish painter Lennart Segerstråle who executed a great

fresco, "Water of Life", on the wall of the main dining-room in Mountain House.

From Sweden and from the other Nordic countries large numbers of individuals, delegations and groups of all kinds have been to Caux World Assemblies, among them men from industry, political leaders, teachers, clergy, and young people. There have also been many larger and smaller conferences, in the spirit of Frank Buchman, held in Scandinavia.

"Division is the mark of our age," Frank Buchman said. "Union is the grace of rebirth. We have lost the art of uniting because we have forgotten the secret of change and rebirth."[9] That forgotten art is the heritage he left to Caux and today men are learning that art there. It is a very simple secret. There people, with the four absolutes as their starting-point and listening in quietness to the voice of their conscience, begin to ask not WHO is right but WHAT is right. There people, even those who do not admit to any religious faith, become conscious that if we want to remake the world we must begin with ourselves. It was T. S. Eliot who said that "when a person sees the need of changing himself as well as the world, he is coming close to a religious standpoint". Or, as Frank Buchman put it, "Religion has a moral backbone."

> It is a fact [writes Gabriel Marcel], that almost all those who, after meeting Buchman or one of his followers, have felt the need for a new level of thinking and living, even if they may have begun by interpreting this experience in terms of conscience only, have eventually come to recognise that they could not stop there; they have had to admit their dependence on a higher authority which they have called God. And those who have had a religious upbringing in their childhood have almost always gone back to their own Church, while the rest have chosen, I presume, the Church whose spirit most closely matched the new direction they

had found for their lives. In any case they have considered their religious choice as following, or perhaps I should say crowning, their inner change. I feel it essential to emphasise this point, to put an end once and for all to the false idea which makes this out to be a new religion or a sect.[10]

Buchman's goal was much more than a religious revival because he knew that most revivals become new sects which only increase the divisions among denominations and religions and are a scandal against the unity for which Christ lived and died. Buchman, Marcel writes,

believes that each person, in the framework of his own faith, can discover what part he should play in rebuilding the world, if he accepts this faith to the end. "To those of us who belong to Islam," says a Pakistani, "the work of Frank Buchman teaches us to rediscover and apply afresh the moral principles of our faith."[11] Christians, Buddhists, Shintoists, all maintain the same.

The venerable U Rewata, one of the chief abbots of Burma, after meeting Frank Buchman, stated, "In Buddhism we have the four moral standards which are the basis of M.R.A.; the most important thing is that we learn to live by them all the time. We must bring Moral Re-Armament to every nation."[12] Asia has turned to the West to ask for technical aid, but has never expected to receive spiritual aid from that quarter. These moral absolutes represent the spiritual aid Asia will gladly accept from the West.

That would be a response deeply longed for by Christian ecumenical movements but it is a dimension so rare as to be almost ignored. Buchman's prophetic message and pioneering work in Caux with the ever increasing evidence of reconcili-

ation and renaissance, will make this dimension more and more clear. He was personally unshakeably anchored in a saving experience of Christ and His Cross. More than any other spiritual leader, however, he had also experienced and made plain the universal content and scope of the Christian Gospel. Of course, he had a 400-year-old tradition of the ecumenical dimension from his own family to follow. One of his ancestors, Theodor Bibliander (the Greek form of the name Buchman), was a contemporary of Luther's, a professor in exegetics in Zürich and made the first translation of the Koran from Arabic to Latin.

"We cannot properly evaluate Frank's work," wrote an African youth leader in a message for Buchman's eightieth birthday.

> Coming generations will value him rightly and give his work its rightful place. The world of today, blinded by lack of ideological clarity, is not ready to give him bouquets and crowns of laurel. But in the hearts of all true revolutionaries he is greatly valued and respected. I thank God for a man who gave my life a new direction.[13]

In his long life Frank Buchman twice saw a growing moral and spiritual renaissance interrupted by world catastrophe. Instead of being discouraged, he still foresaw a new pattern of freedom for all nations. "Why should there be catastrophe again when, with God, renaissance is inevitable?" he asked at a World Assembly in California in 1948. "Shall it be a new Dark Age for Europe and the world? Or shall it be a world-wide Renaissance of the moral and spiritual forces everywhere, bursting into life and bringing at the last moment a miracle to mankind?"[14]

These questions burned in Frank Buchman's heart until his last breath. He died on August 7th, 1961, in Freudenstadt in

the Black Forest, the very town where he had been given the key thought for his vision of the future — "The next great world movement will be a movement for moral and spiritual re-armament." His passing was not accorded any great publicity, at least not in Scandinavia. He died as he had lived, a man for others.

Those who try to silence Frank Buchman's voice can claim some success. But that voice can never be silenced for those of us who have ever heard it, or rather, those of us who, through Frank Buchman, learned to experiment with God — to listen to "the sound of a Voice coming from something not ourselves, in the existence of which we cannot disbelieve. Without it we are no more capable of saving the world than we were capable of creating it in the first place."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

BILL PICKLE

FRANK BUCHMAN always described State College, Pennsylvania, as the "Laboratory" where he worked out the principles on which his worldwide work was based. The following account of his arrival there and how things developed is given by A.J. Russell in *For Sinners Only* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), pages 189–204.

During my American travels with the Oxford Group I was constantly hearing the comic name Bill Pickle in relation to some marvellous work that Frank had done at Penn State University, following his vital experience in a Cumberland church.

I intended to run over to the University to meet the famous Bill Pickle, but was prevented by circumstances. So I induced Frank to tell me the whole story in his own inimitable way with the fullest details, for it is something of a spiritual classic. A rollicking story, it captivates all sorts — pagans as well as Christians. Frank started and established the Group in Oxford by telling a series of stories such as this and inspiring others to do the same. Frank is a born raconteur. His aim is to inculcate principle while keeping his narrative as bright and human as possible. Principle with interest.

One of the forces in the religious world, John R. Mott,

invited Frank to take charge of the religious education in Penn State University at the time when there was a difference between the staff and the students, who did not seem to understand each other. The atmosphere was antagonistic, suggestive of those student strikes which have since developed in many parts of the world. The life of the students reflected the godlessness of the place. There was a great deal of drinking. There were nineteen drinking-parties in progress on the night of Frank's arrival; so much drink was consumed that the proverbial battleship might have been floated on it.

The man who supplied the drink is the hero of the story, boasting the priceless name of Bill Pickle, a bootlegger, employed by a local doctor by day and by the students by night. Frank used to see Bill's stealthy figure sneaking about the spiral staircases leading to the students' rooms at all hours of dark nights — a Deadwood Dick in University life. At these times, of course, all the masters were in bed; only Bill and the students were awake and merry.

Bill is the son of a Colonel. He has a strong, stocky figure, a terrible walrus moustache, and looks a roaring pirate. Bill soon knew of Frank's arrival, and expressed immediate dislike of him. He published abroad his desire to knife Frank, but usually darted into a side-alley when there was a chance of an encounter.

Frank surveyed his difficult new job. To turn this University Godwards — here was the problem. The solution, if he could find it, would be a miracle.

He sought direction, and the names of three men came to him. Later these three proved to be the strategic points in changing that University. They were:

(1) Bill Pickle the bootlegger.

(2) A cultured and popular graduate student possessing every physical grace and charm.

(3) The College Dean, a frank agnostic, whose wife was an earnest Christian.

The graduate student brought a letter of introduction to Frank which disclosed that he was the son of a Supreme Court judge and grandson of a State Governor. He seemed to be clever, but dissatisfied. Frank felt that this handsome and influential youth should be approached with intelligent restraint and nonchalant reserve.

They became friendly. The student frequently visited Frank's house, and showed his fondness for the Southern cooking, including the inevitable fried chicken and "beaten" biscuits for breakfast.

Often they would ride together, but for a long time Frank said nothing about the things that meant most to him. Meanwhile the student was getting more interested and pleased with the atmosphere that Frank radiated. One sleety day, when the streets were slippery with ice, and the rain was frozen on the telegraph wires, the student came into his room and said, "Let's ride."

Frank said, "All right," although concerned for the horses' legs, feeling they could not possibly venture out.

For fifteen miles they walked their horses in the cold, biting wind, and then settled into a hostelry for a good dinner, followed by much hot coffee over the fire. The driving wind had made them drowsy; they retired and would soon have been asleep, had the coffee not begun to act. Frank heard the clock strike eleven, twelve, one, two, when his friend said:

"Are you asleep?'

"No."

"Would you like to talk?"

"Yes. What about?"

"Will you tell me what Christ means to you?"

At last Frank's chance had come. He had played his cards right. They talked on and on for several hours, when

finally the student said: "I'm not going to be a Christian."

"Who asked you?" rejoined Frank.

"You didn't. I know you're much too prudent to push religion down anyone's throat."

Then Frank asked him what he believed.

"Confucius," came the unusual answer.

"Wonderful!" said Frank, deciding to humour him. "Tell me about Confucius."

Frank says his friend did not seem to know much on that subject. But Frank had been to China, and knew that Confucius said he could tell people how to be righteous, but he hadn't the power to make them righteous. Moreover, he had been to Confucius' grave, and been entertained at tea by the seventy-sixth descendant of the Chinese sage and seen the seventy-seventh descendant on the day when he had to wear four coats because of the cold. But Frank's principle is "Argument is not profitable, but possession is."

"So I said to him: 'Try your Confucianism on a chicken-thief, who is a friend of mine, his wife and five children, and see how it works.' "

The student agreed. He gave money to the chicken-thief's wife, who washed herself thin over the wash-tub; more money to keep the eldest daughter off the streets; paid for picnics for Elizabeth, Robert and Danny the dwarf, a town delivery-boy. (Recently Frank was at Danny's grave. "He died a beautiful Christian.")

The student spoke to the chicken-thief himself, but to no purpose. This worthy soon found himself in gaol for catching chickens by the neat method of pressing a sponge soaked in chloroform under their beaks, and whisking them noiselessly away when stupefied. He was accompanied by one of his sons, who worked with him. And for two months the student worked with the family, read to them, gave them money and treats, and tried to behave as their true Confucian friend.

At the end of that time he came to Frank in utter despair and said, "I give it up. The more I give them the more they want."

"The reason being," says Frank, "that he was trying to solve the whole problem of social service without Christ, and treating the immediate surface conditions without touching the root cause."

And now the Confucian said he was willing to try Frank's plan.

"What is my plan?"

"I suppose you pray about it?"

So Frank suggested that, since he had been unsuccessful with the chicken-thief, now in prison, they try praying for Bill Pickle the bootlegger, who was free and very much alive.

The student readily agreed.

"Very well, you pray," said Frank, still believing in getting other people to do the praying whenever possible.

The student prayed: "Oh God, if there be a God, help us to change Bill Pickle, Mrs. Pickle, and all the little Pickles." An unorthodox prayer. But this unorthodox prayer soon brought an answer.

The next day was a holiday, and Bill went away to play baseball with a team which he managed. That evening the Confucian and Frank were on their way to dine with the Chinese Minister when, passing through the town, they saw Bill celebrating the victory of his team by challenging everybody to fight. He had consumed much liquor.

"There's Bill!" whispered the Confucian.

"I see him," said Frank, as though having no time to waste.

The student protested: "We've been praying for him. Now let's do something."

"All right. You do it."

"No fear! You do it."

When Frank reaches this point in the story he injects a little principle by asking, What would you do in this situation? Here was the problem of the wife and the drunken husband. He once asked this question of a Chinese friend, who said, "Approach him from his blind side."

Fearing that the muscular Bill would regard him as the Heaven-sent answer to his challenge to fight, and that, possessing a good-sized nose, he might lose the round, Frank approached Bill from his blind side, putting a firm hand on his biceps as a measure of protection. What should he do next? The thought flashed: "Give him the deepest message you've got."

"I looked him straight in the eye," says Frank, "and whispered, 'Bill, we've been praying for you.' "

To his surprise, Bill melted. The fight went clean out of him. Tears came. He pointed to a church. "See that church over there?"

"Yes, Bill."

"I was there when the corner-stone was laid. There's a penny of mine under it." There seemed to come before Bill at that instant a memory of his home and his early associations through the perspective of his ill-spent years. "Do you know, I had a good mother and used to be happy once?"

Frank was glad to hear it, followed up his advantage and introduced the Confucian.

"Here's my friend. He's praying for you too."

"That's decent of him. He's a gentleman." Whereupon Bill invited them both to call on him at any time at his house on the hill, which a student wag, adapting the name of a famous preserve, had appropriately christened "Heinz Heights".

"Any time's no time, Bill," said Frank, pressing his advantage further. "Make it some time."

"Then come next Thursday at seven."

As no real duties in life conflict, according to Frank, the

two went on to their dinner with the Chinese Minister.

Thursday night came, and the two went up to see Bill in his unpainted house on the top of "Heinz Heights". Anticipating them, Bill had also anticipated his customary Saturday shave by a few days. When they arrived, all the neighbours (invisible themselves) were out gazing at the visitors through the fences, assured they had come to change the redoubtable Bill, who was now ill at ease, as most people are when they think another has come to convert them. But as they talked of little besides the weather, and said nothing about religion, Bill lost his self-consciousness, and they parted good friends. The bootlegger was able to go straight out and boast to his neighbours that they hadn't changed him. Nevertheless, Bill's spiritual appetite was whetted. He developed a deep hunger for fellowship with the two friends who were praying for him.

Bill knew a good deal about many things besides liquor, and all there was to be known about horses. One day the Confucian took him to see a horse-show on the Varsity grounds. They spent all the afternoon talking about horses, and Bill voted it to be his best afternoon ever. To think that a young gentleman should spend all the afternoon with him talking about horses!

Meanwhile a remarkable change was being effected in the young Confucian. Bill's new attitude suggested to him that God was really answering prayer, and so when he prayed he left out the proviso "if there be a God" from his invocation. The following Sunday a Bishop arrived at the University and nine hundred students turned up to hear him. During the meeting he inquired of Frank if he should ask the students to make a decision. Had the Bishop asked him outside, he would have said, "Decidedly not, as the State University is not a Christian institution." In those days Frank's idea of the Holy Spirit was limited to a kind of five-by-eight picture, and he

did not expect Him to be very active at a meeting addressed so formally. Nevertheless, the Bishop went ahead, and the unexpected happened. After the usual tense silence, the first person on his feet to announce the surrender of his life to Christ was the young Confucian. As he was the most popular man in the University, this created a stir, and one could feel the whispered surprise circulating round the building as his example was followed by eighty others.

Frank's comment on this situation is that a great many people would feel this was the end of a successful meeting. That was where the old evangelism sometimes collapsed. The changed student came to Frank after that meeting and said he didn't know anything about the Bible, praying or winning people. What suggestion had he to make?

"We will spend the summer together," replied Frank.

So they went riding through the great national parks of America, a peripatetic school of Christian development. On the way home they stopped at New York, where Frank bought a fine new beaver hat, unusually expensive for him. He was wearing this magnificent hat on the night of his return as he walked down the University town, when he met Bill Pickle, who immediately showed that he liked the hat as much as its owner did. Instead of greeting Frank and enquiring as to how he had spent the summer holiday, Bill walked silently and admiringly round him.

"Where did you get that hat?" he demanded.

Smiling, Frank told him.

"How much did you pay for it?"

Ashamed, Frank told him.

Bill observed that he could keep his family for a week on the price of that hat, adding that he would do anything for one like it.

Frank was on the spot for the opportunity. "The hat's yours, Bill, on one condition."

"What's that?"

Bill waited, breathless.

"That you go with me and a few others to a big student convention at Toronto."

Of course Bill was delighted to do that. He would go at once and get leave of absence.

"There you are, Bill," said Frank, handing him the prize.

Bill strutted away with the coveted hat on his head.

Next morning Frank saw Bill in his doorway.

"Can't go," said Bill dismally.

"Too bad! Why's that?"

"Nothing to put my clothes in," said Bill sheepishly. Evidently this was one of the noes that meant yes.

Frank offered Bill a bag, which he refused, saying the people on the hill would see to that.

Presently the Dean arrived and said, "I hear you are going to take Bill to Toronto?"

"Yes," said Frank, not knowing what frame of mind the Dean was in, and thinking he would be regarded as not a fool for Christ's sake, but merely foolish. But the Dean was in favour. Bill's daughter was a maid in his house, where, said the Dean, his wife did the praying for the family. This excursion of Bill's he believed to be in answer to his wife's prayers. He thought a miracle was impending. As he left, the Dean asked, "Who's going to pay for the journey?"

"I shall," said Frank.

But the Dean insisted on paying. "Do you think the other fellows will object to Bill in the team?"

Frank thought not, and the next morning the party of nineteen (including Bill) left the University for Toronto. Bill's wife and most of his twelve children were at the station in full war-paint to see him off. The occasion was impressive. So was Bill's attire. He wore the beaver hat, leggings, and a

stock-tie which made Frank think of a poodle's legs crossed. He carried a little cheap bag made of alligator skin containing the few articles he needed for the journey.

What were Bill's motives in going to Toronto? asked Frank. Of course, one motive was the hat. Then he had heard that the liquor was good in Toronto. The trip was another attraction. And the good-fellowship. All natural reasons. There was a fifth reason which Frank discovered later. Bill was longing for a fur overcoat to match the beaver hat, and somehow expecting that to come his way in Toronto.

Frank tried to make Bill feel at home on the first stage of the railway journey, and suggested that he must have something to eat. For some odd reason, Bill seemed against food, and told Frank not to be extravagant when he saw him taking a cup of coffee and a bun. Bill was planning how to get a drink when they arrived at the first junction. His eager eye looked over the party, at last alighting on one to whom Bill used to sell liquor.

"There's Bonehead," thought Bill. "I know he's thirsty."

When Bill saw Frank was busy with the tickets, he decided to follow Bonehead. The latter, true to Bill's surmise, made straight for the swinging doors. He saw there was a bar only and no dining-room, the place he really sought.

"This is no place for us," said Bonehead.

Bill thought exactly the opposite, and said so. But Bonehead resisted and through that resistance, said Bill later, he laid the foundation-stone of Bill's Christian life. For if Bill had taken one drink, he would have required many others to quench that particular train thirst he had developed. He consumed a heavy lunch, and the party started safely on their way again, the bootlegger now firmly convinced that it was no use planning for himself, because everybody had their eyes on him. Here Frank comments that "Bill's awakened conscience was at work."

The evening meal was served in the restaurant-car, and one of the party, a former agnostic, suggested to Frank that he thank God for the food.

"All right. Go ahead," said Frank.

Here Bill suddenly intervened.

"What's the matter this time, Bill?"

"That fellow" — pointing to the former agnostic — "has spoiled my dinner."

At first Frank thought he meant the coloured waiter, but Bill insisted that it was the man who had said grace. He didn't bargain for that sort of thing on a College party. It recalled his early home and it took away his appetite.

Bill jibbed again later when they reached Niagara Falls and he found they were going to spend the night in a temperance hotel! Of all places! The bootlegger was told that it would be less expensive, but he shrewdly doubted. How could a hotel-keeper make his place pay without a bar? He must get his expenses somehow. Besides, what would his fellow-bootleggers say if they heard he had slept in a temperance hotel?

Frank humoured him, took him up to his room and showed him how to operate a folding-bed, of which he was also chary at first.

"Now, do you want a bath?"

The bootlegger's walrus moustache supported the glare in his eyes.

"What! In the winter-time?"

"Why not?"

"Do you want me to catch my death-cold?"

"No, Bill."

"Don't you know we sew up down our way in November and don't unsew again until March?"

Still a little suspicious of the folding-bed, Bill tucked himself in for the night, when Frank, coming in again, told him he

had forgotten something. Bill searched under his pillow for his watch and money and then demanded, "What?"

"Prayers."

"I can't do them things."

"You come out and I'll help you."

Weak in this form of exercise through long disuse, and suffering from temporary ague, the bootlegger came out of his folding-bed and knelt down in his night-shirt.

"You begin," said Bill.

"Our Father," began Frank.

"Our Father," followed Bill.

"Who art in Heaven," continued Frank.

'Who are in Heaven," continued Bill, and then stopped his mentor with, "I used to know that."

'All right. Go ahead."

"No, you go ahead. I'll follow after."

And so they went through the Lord's Prayer, after which Bill re-entered his folding-bed sighing hugely as though to say, "It's hard work living with these Christians."

Next morning they started again for Toronto. The porter was carrying the luggage when Frank saw the bags of the ex-Confucian plastered with labels of the Niagara Falls Temperance Hotel. There were at least five of them on the handle, and crowds elsewhere. The student had been one of Bill's best customers; he turned to Frank and asked if he had done that. Frank said, "No," and smiled. Bill was playing "possum" grandly. Presently Bill owned up. They had reached a point of contact when Bill felt so much at ease that he could play with them. The first wall which separated Bill from the classes was breaking down.

They had settled themselves in a Toronto hotel when the time came for the first meeting of the convention, but Bill didn't think he would go.

"What are you going to do?"

Bill thought he'd like to go and look at the fur shops. Perhaps he could find something to match the hat. The additional motive that had brought Bill to Toronto was now clearly revealed. Frank said Bill must go to the meeting, cajoling him with the news that the Governor-General and six thousand people would be present. Bill replied that the Governor came sometimes to Penn State College, and he wasn't any more interested in him than he in Bill. Presently he agreed, on condition they sat in the rear seat. Arrived in the hall, Bill showed no signs of interest in the meeting save to count the number of people present. Not unlike a great many church-goers, who prefer to figure out the profits of the week while waiting for the service to end, says Frank.

But Bill's attention was quickly arrested when the second speaker came along, a coloured man, who, according to Bill, was so black that charcoal would make a white mark on him! All the time he was speaking, Bill was nodding in agreement or registering violent disagreement, to the amusement of everyone around him. But Bill was blissfully unmindful of anyone save the coloured man, who was hitting him between the eyes with every shot. Afterwards he accused Frank of taking him there specially to hear the coloured man, and of telling the speaker about him. Nevertheless, he rather liked that sort of speaker. A Group meeting held later in their hotel added to Bill's reviving interest in religion, especially the story told by a Rugger player of how a foster-child had disowned his foster-parents, which somehow greatly moved the bootlegger. When this man had finished, Bill jumped up like a shot from a gun, as Frank puts it, and announced that he wanted to say something.

"Go ahead, Bill. It's a free country," observed Frank, not knowing what on earth Bill would do next. Speaking with great solemnity, Bill announced:

"I'm an old man of sixty-two, and I've decided to change my life. I have grandchildren, and I can't bear to think of them turning on their grandfather like that foster-child I've just been hearing about, because all my life I've been disobedient to my Heavenly Father."

After that outburst Bill went out of the room, beckoning Frank to follow him. "For what?" asks Frank. Bill desired his help in writing a letter to his wife and son, as he wanted them to know at once of his determination to change his life.

From that time onwards Bill developed amazingly. He became one of the great figures of the Convention: one of those miracles which make conventions occasionally interesting and memorable.

After a strenuous week they returned to the University, but when they reached the junction were met by a liquor missionary supported by a pair of Bill's old-time friends, two quart bottles of liquor. Bill's old associates, finding it impossible to believe that he had changed his way of life (for the news had flared through the town), had brought two bottles of the choicest for his benefit. As Frank saw the tempter surreptitiously handing Bill a bottle, his heart wobbled. As Bill let it slip through his fingers, he gave a great sigh of relief. It smashed on the pavement. The next attempt was more subtle. The liquor missionary unstoppered the second bottle and held it under Bill's nose so that he could savour the old familiar bouquet. This time Bill gave a swift tap on the missionary's wrist, and again a bottle of the best was smashed to smithereens.

Bill's change and Bill's resistance to the tempter were the talk of the town for a long time to come. Would this astonishing miracle last? Even the clergy weren't enthusiastic in believing that it would. One told Frank that he did not want Bill in his church.

"Don't worry," said Frank. "He likes a church where he

can take part and talk back if necessary and say an occasional Amen or Hallelujah."

On the next Monday, which Bill was to spend with Frank, he came in looking very aggrieved.

"Heard what's happened?" he growled.

Frank tried to wave the question aside, for gossip had already brought a whisper of trouble.

"They won't have me in church," stormed Bill.

Frank felt he had been stabbed. Now surely Bill would not be able to hold out.

"Don't worry, Bill," he soothed, thinking hard.

"I'm not," said Bill, and then suddenly announced: "We've got a church of our own all planned. We want you to take charge of it."

Here Bill produced a list of twenty men, mostly his old bootlegger friends, whom he had already collected under his new Christian banner. They were to be the nucleus of a new church to meet in the old porter's lodge. Frank is still in possession of that treasured list. Before consenting to be the minister, Frank said that Bill must find out from the others what they wanted him to speak about.

"Don't worry," said Bill. "We've thought of that!"

"Well, what is it?"

"The Apostles' Creed."

Of all the subjects for a bootlegger to choose!

And so, Saturday night after Saturday night, Frank met with Bill the Bootlegger and his old associates, one of whom was once so accomplished a swearer that one could almost smell the sulphur. Saturday night was chosen to avoid conflict with church services. Everything went well with the Apostles' Creed talks until Frank came to the part about Christ going down into Hell, at which Bill jumped up and suddenly interposed:

"I've believed everything so far, but that's too much."

Apparently the preacher had overstepped himself. For a time Frank and Bill cogitated on a way out, until at last Frank said:

"Well, how do you explain it?"

"I don't know," said Bill. "I guess He went down there to clean things up."

That answer satisfied everyone. Peace again. They proceeded. But the upshot of those Saturday nights was that all attending eventually became forces in the Church life of the district, including Bill, who grew into a good Wesleyan Methodist, and occasionally turns up at one of Frank's house parties to confirm all the details as Frank narrates the true story of the change in Bill Pickle the Bootlegger.

The miracle of Bill's changed life, and the changed lives of his family and friends which followed, became a standing witness to the dons and the graduates who were in the habit of returning yearly to celebrate the liquor they once received in the Varsity from the hands of Bill. But Bill now refused to grace their parties if they had liquor. As they preferred an interesting character, even to the exclusion of the liquor, they fell in with Bill's new ideas, and so Bill appeared and told his old-time stories with a new zest and a new restraint, on a new plane.

Bill still treasures the hat which he earned at Toronto, and though he has retired from work — he is over eighty — he still remembers the mighty movement of the Spirit of God which spread throughout the Varsity and other Varsities that season when he was changed.

Not only were Bill Pickle and the Confucian and the Dean, the three strategic points of that University, transformed through personal evangelism, but before Frank left there were over twelve hundred men in voluntary Bible-study. Thus, after three years' work, it was no longer good form to have drinking-parties. Athletics improved and there were winning

teams. The scholarship, too, improved, and a new relation between Faculty and students changed the old-time factional spirit of the University.

The change in Bill's family life was equally marvellous.

"What a dinner Bill's wife used to cook for the reformed bootlegger and their children!" exclaims Frank.

Most significant fact of all was the improvement in the Varsity discipline. So radical was the change that the salary of an extra disciplinary Dean was saved, and Bill, the ex-bootlegger who knew everybody, was given a seat on certain disciplinary committees — *for maintaining order*!

APPENDIX II

FRANK BUCHMAN'S LEADERSHIP

THE HON. C. J. HAMBRO, then President of the Norwegian Parliament, invited Frank Buchman to Norway in 1932. I have several times quoted from his assessment of Dr. Buchman which appeared as a foreword to a wartime edition of Buchman's speeches. The full text is below:

Dr. Buchman's leadership is not explained by his words alone. His strength, the strength given to him, is to create an atmosphere, to make a small group of men and women or a tremendous gathering eager to listen to God, and willing, at least for the moment, to yield their own selves, and open their hearts to God's plans for them.

This atmosphere is not created by any kind of mystic rites, by ceremonies, incense or music. No stage is set; there are no paraphernalia. Frank's approach is realistic; it is factual; it is businesslike. He is more like a scientist or a physician than a priest or a mystic. He has as deep a distrust of sentimentalism and emotionalism as he has of authoritative pompousness and clerical unction. He has a stronger belief in silence than in words; and the secret of his power lies in the "quiet time", in the disciplined effort to sweep the mind clean of all things trivial and temporal and make the soul ready to listen to the voice of God. He knows that God is not in the wind and not in

the earthquake and not in the fire, but in the still small voice.

And the miracle happens that by appealing, not to emotion, but to reason, to common horse-sense — and by the compelling strength of his spiritual conviction — he communicates this knowledge to nearly all those who are present at his meetings. The sceptic, the cynic, the infidel, the atheist — even the journalist — who has attended one of those gatherings, sometimes unwillingly, reluctantly, shamefacedly has to admit that he has felt, at least for a fleeting moment, what, for want of a better explanation, he agrees to call the presence of God.

It is quite simple, and at the same time it is not easy to explain. The Oxford Group did not bring any new message; for it was all there. But they made aggressively alive what had been dormant; they ploughed and harrowed and disseminated the good seed over a soil that had lain fallow for so long a time that people had forgotten that it should bear fruit.

Frank Buchman and his team did not pretend to re-create people. They tried to change them. And wherever the Group went there was this same stirring of the deep waters.

As we were looking on this modern Christian brotherhood, there came to many of us some words written by G. K. Chesterton in his beautiful little book on St. Francis of Assisi:

"The servants of God who had been a besieged garrison became a marching army; the ways of the world were filled as with thunder with the trampling of their feet, and far ahead of that ever-swelling host went a man singing."

Now, between Frank from Assisi and Frank from Allentown there is as much difference as between daily life in Italy in the twelfth century and daily life in the U.S.A. in the twentieth century. And still there is this deep spiritual kinship, a connecting dream, a vision, an action.

For under Frank Buchman's very serious consciousness of responsibility, behind his often quite stern efficiency, behind his keen and sometimes ironic sense of humour, there is the lovable little boy who more than anything else would like to go singing far ahead of an ever-swelling crowd. And as a matter of fact, that is what Frank has been doing for a number of years, followed by men and women, who through him have been liberated and are no longer besieged by the forces of egotism and selfishness, people who are living in a new spirit of fellowship and in a complete freedom from fear, because they have nothing to hide.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." And the fruits of the Oxford Group were very sweet. Those who saw with an open mind and an open soul how Frank Buchman's team worked, felt about them something that might have been articulated in the words Chesterton used about the Crusaders:

"They were renounced by their children and refuted by their biographers; they were exposed, they were exploded, they were ridiculed, and they were right."

These men and women came, and no matter how critical we were, no matter how easy it was to be sarcastic at their expense, there were some things that could not be laughed away. They had a quality of life which we were lacking; they had succeeded in forgetting their own egos; they were always eager to help and to serve; they could talk quite openly and naturally about things that we stored away in the secret places of the heart until we could not find them when we wanted them, because we had lost the key to our own treasury. They could gladly admit their mistakes and apologise for them; they could openly make restitution if they had wronged anybody. And, the most obvious thing of all — they were happy; there were no secret burdens weighing on their minds.

As I am trying to do what my friends have asked me and

write some introductory words to this book, my thoughts go back to that first house party in Norway, in 1934, to my wife whose great-hearted conception of hospitality, whose tremendous sense of humour, indomitable energy and sovereign disregard of and disbelief in difficulties and obstacles made those first house parties in Norway possible. My thoughts go to Frank Buchman, the catalyst who made possible the united church front in Norway in this war, my thoughts go to Frank, the untiring, open-hearted, smiling friend, in gratitude for all that he has been and done. We know that whenever we have been true to him we have been true to ourselves.

My thoughts go to all those who came — in curiosity, in disbelief, in suspicious longing. I see Freddie Ramm, whose life in the prisons of Germany burst through the walls of Nazism as a hymn of triumph. I see Ronald Fangen who came out a victor after two years of solitary confinement in dungeons and dark cells; Bishop Berggrav, who was confined to a log cabin in the woods with his Gestapo bodyguard. I see men and women who were in concentration camps, some who have died and some who have lived a dangerous life to the tune of "A Mighty Fortress is our God" — which some of them had never sung until they came to that house party at Hösbjör. To all of them Frank Buchman meant something important. Not all of them who came were changed — and we all need constant change — but all of them were in some way altered; life was never again exactly what it had been before that experience.

The Germans decreed in Norway that the Oxford Group was a part of the British Intelligence Service and should be harshly suppressed — a most flattering and slightly ridiculous compliment to the British Intelligence Service. The Gestapo feared and hated the Oxford Group as they could never fear and hate the British Intelligence Service. They hated them as men hate and fear the ideals they have lost and prostituted,

the faith they have betrayed. They feared them because instinctively they knew the Oxford Group was part of God's Intelligence Service preparing the way for an ultimate defeat of the principles of evil.

APPENDIX III

AN UNSEEN BUT EFFECTIVE ROLE

I HAVE, IN the last section of my text, given a brief account of the part which Dr. Buchman and Moral Re-Armament played in the reconciliation of France and Germany after the Second World War. Here is printed a more detailed account by one who took part in many of these events. It is by M. Philippe Mottu and appears in his book, *The Story of Caux.*

The two world wars, together with the racist police state established by Hitler, and his attempt to conquer Europe, created an abyss of hatred between France and Germany which it seemed impossible to bridge.

In 1947, in response to Frank Buchman's insistence, approaches were made to the occupation authorities to permit a selected group of Germans to visit Caux.

A preliminary list of 150 names was drawn up with the help of Dr. Hans Schönfeld, a German representative on the Ecumenical Council at Geneva. General Marshall, then U.S. Secretary of State, Lord Pakenham, the British Minister responsible for German affairs, and the military commanders, General Clay and General Robertson, supported this attempt to answer the moral and spiritual need of Germany. With the consent of the Swiss authorities, this first group visited Caux in the summer of 1947.

It was a varied and representative delegation, including survivors from Nazi concentration camps, widows of officers executed after the July 20th, 1944 attempt on Hitler's life, and German personalities who were co-operating with the Allies in the administration of Germany, which since May 1945 had had no government except the *de facto* government of the occupying troops. In fact, this first German delegation contained a high proportion of the men, many virtually unknown at the time, who were to play a decisive role in establishing post-war German democracy. They included most of the future Ministers-President of the West German *Länder*, future Ambassadors, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, trade union and industrial leaders, educationists and newspaper editors.

They decided to issue to their fellow countrymen a handbook explaining what they had discovered at Caux. They chose as the title: *Es muss alles anders werden* — everything must be different. It is a direct and simple manual, describing the moral basis essential for democracy and the possibility of a radical change in men and nations. It showed Germany's responsibility for her past and her hope for the future through profound change and renewal. A Swedish industrialist, whom these Germans had met at Caux, offered 100 tons of paper for printing one and a half million copies, which were sold in all the occupation zones of Germany, including 450,000 copies which were distributed in the Soviet zone.

One member of that first delegation was Herr Hans-Heinrich Herwarth von Bittenfeld, later first post-war German Ambassador to Britain, who said, "At Caux we found a democracy that works, and in the light of what we discovered there we had the courage to see ourselves and our country as we really are. We experienced profound personal and national remorse. Many of us who were anti-Nazi had made the mistake of blaming everything on Hitler. We learnt at Caux that

we were responsible too. The absence of a positive ideology helped to bring Hitler to power."

In September that same year, Madame Irène Laure, Secretary-General of the Socialist women of France and Member of the Constituent Assembly for the Bouches-du-Rhône, accepted an invitation to attend Caux. Her first impression was unfavourable. To begin with, the imposing setting of the former Caux-Palace made her suspicious. Secondly, she found the presence of the Germans at Caux unbearable, and whenever one of them got up to speak she left the hall. Lastly, there was a good deal of talk about God, and she considered that religion was a matter of personal belief which had nothing to do with the problems of the world. She was on her way to her room to pack her bags to depart when she met Dr. Buchman. He asked her: "What sort of unity do you want for Europe?"

> I felt such hatred towards Germany [Irène Laure wrote later] that I had hoped she would be completely destroyed. During the war I rejoiced whenever I heard the waves of bombers flying overhead on their way to the German towns. I could never forget the day I watched the opening of a common grave and had seen the bodies of my old comrades in the Resistance horribly mutilated by torture.
>
> At Caux I realised for the first time that hatred destroys and never builds, and that my own hatred was a negative force.

Hatred and hope, confidence and doubt fought together for first place in her heart. Finally she was convinced that the change she could see in the Germans was genuine. Her suspicions disappeared. After a fierce inner struggle the day came when, without anyone asking her to do so, she went on to

the platform and publicly apologised to the Germans for her previous attitude.

At the beginning of 1948, accompanied by her husband and son, she set off for Germany. For over two months she toured the Western Zones, meeting representatives of the different political parties in eleven out of the twelve provincial governments.

> Can you imagine [she wrote later] how much I had to change to be able to go to Germany? I am a mother and a grandmother, I am a socialist, I have talked of brotherhood all my life, and yet I had willed the devastation that I saw around me. True, I cannot forget the devastation in France or in the other countries occupied by the Germans, but what I can do is to look my own hatred in the face and ask forgiveness for it. The change which occurred in me produced a change in a great many Germans.

In the spring of 1948 Robert Schuman, then Prime Minister of France, met a Lille industrialist, Louis Boucquey, on a train journey. In the course of conversation, Boucquey told the Prime Minister that a remarkable change of heart was taking place in industrial circles in the North of France, as the result of a change in attitude in the Secretary of the Employers' Federation, Robert Tilge, who had been to Caux in the autumn of 1947. As a result, several hundred Frenchmen, mainly from the mines and textile factories of the North of France, had met at Le Touquet to create a new climate of opinion after the tragic events which had at that time brought France to the brink of civil war.

Schuman was so interested that he asked Boucquey to arrange for Buchman to meet him when next in France. Buchman and Schuman met for the first time in Paris the following August.

A profound political transformation was then taking place in Europe. A year before, on June 5th, 1947, the American Secretary of State, General Marshall, had drawn the broad outlines of an economic plan to speed up the rebuilding of Europe. Stalin saw these proposals as an attempt by the United States to win over the countries of eastern Europe. The U.S.S.R. accordingly blocked the participation of the Communist countries, and especially of Czechoslovakia, in the Marshall Plan.

A few months later, in February 1948, the Communist *coup d'état* in Prague brought the Iron Curtain down for good and put an end to co-operation between the United States and the U.S.S.R. The Cold War had begun.

In the spring of 1948 the United States, Great Britain and France, discussed the future constitution of Federal Germany and prepared the reform of the German monetary system. The decision of the Western powers to go ahead whether the Soviets agreed or not was seized on by the U.S.S.R. as a pretext to leave the four-power Berlin council.

In 1948, 450 Germans attended the Caux conference. Among them was Dr. Konrad Adenauer, then almost unknown outside Germany. He declared at the time:

> I must tell you frankly that when I arrived at Caux I looked at things with a certain scepticism; but I must tell you just as frankly that on the second day — after sorting out my first impressions — I was convinced of the greatness of the work being done at Caux.
>
> It is very important, at a time when evil is particularly active in the world, for people to have the courage to stand up as champions of good, of God, and for each person to begin with himself.
>
> I believe and hope with all my heart that the effort being

made by Caux will bear fruit. For this is a fight to the death between good and evil.

Later no less than eleven members of his family visited Caux. Adenauer joined with other German personalities in an invitation to Buchman to visit Germany with a large Moral Re-Armament force. He returned to Bonn and in September was elected President of the Parliamentary Council appointed to prepare the new German constitution.

As a result of the invitation by Adenauer and his colleagues, which was endorsed by the occupation authorities, 260 people from thirty countries left Caux to visit Germany in October 1948, travelling in coaches supplied with the help of the Swiss Post Office. This was the largest group of civilians to visit Germany since the war. *The Good Road*, a musical presenting the historic and dynamic faith of democracy, was presented in all the major West German cities, and drew large crowds from end to end of Germany.

In each of the provincial capitals the governments of the *Länder* held official receptions for Dr. Buchman and the Moral Re-Armament task force. Many years later, after Buchman's death, the German Government Official Bulletin wrote:

> Since 1947 Caux has been the symbol of Dr. Buchman's work for the German people. Through Caux he brought Germany back into the circle of civilised nations, after Hitler had banned him from Germany and earned the distrust and contempt of other nations for our country. It was at Caux that Germans of all sorts, politicians and scientists, industrialists and workers, met those who had been their enemies during the war. It was Dr. Buchman who made possible the first German visits to Caux. Thus Caux

became one of the great moral forces to which we owe our new position in the world.

Following the tour of *The Good Road* through the ruined cities of Germany, many of the men from industrial and political life who had been to Caux asked Buchman to send a strong force of Moral Re-Armament into the Ruhr, for a longer period. This group took with them the industrial drama *The Forgotten Factor* as a means of drawing in large numbers from this crucial industrial area, and dramatising for them the central truths of Moral Re-Armament.

In November *The Forgotten Factor* was produced in German at the theatre in Essen and began a tour of the principal cities of the Ruhr. This play, translated into German by the Socialist Minister of Labour in the Rhineland, Herr Halbfell, was particularly addressed to the miners, who came in tens of thousands to see it. Eighty per cent of German heavy industry was concentrated in this area, which had been pounded by the Allied air forces during the war. The moral transformation which took place at that time in the mines, the trade unions and even the cells of the Communist Party, as well as the boards of directors, became a significant factor in the recovery of post-war Germany.

For more than a century the Ruhr, the centre of the German metal industry, had been a stronghold of Marxism. In 1945, after thirteen years of persecution by the Hitler regime and amidst the chaotic situation of a defeated Germany, communism was gaining rapidly in the Ruhr.

But the situation in the Soviet zone of occupation, and the stories of the prisoners of war who had returned from the U.S.S.R. had begun to sow doubt in many minds. Many men who had suffered terribly under the Nazi regime became aware of the conflict between theory and practice among their communist comrades. It was at this moment that Moral

Re-Armament arrived, bringing no new theory or system, but a new concept, valid for both communists and non-communists, a concept more revolutionary and more profound than anything they had known before. As one of the hard-core communists of the Ruhr coalfields, Paul Kurowski, said at Caux in 1951: "What if we plant the red banners on the Atlantic coast, and all Europe lies in ruins behind us — what have we gained for the workers of the world? For twenty-five years I have sung the *Internationale*. Here at Caux for the first time I have seen it lived." When he and his friends went back from Caux to the Ruhr, they said publicly and privately, "We have found an ideology greater than communism."

Hundreds of meetings were held in factories, union buildings, works canteens, making possible a forthright exchange of views between members of the Communist Party, trade union leaders and militants of Moral Re-Armament.

These events attracted the attention of Dr. Hans Böckler, the President of the German Trade Union Congress. Böckler said at Caux:

> If men are to be free from the old and the outmoded, it can only happen as they set themselves a new goal, and place in the forefront humanity and moral values. I believe that Moral Re-Armament can bring about a definitive improvement for mankind in many areas of life. When men change, the structure of society changes, and when the structure of society changes, men change. Both go together and both are necessary. The goal which Moral Re-Armament strives to reach is the same as that for which I am fighting as a trade unionist.

Adenauer, also, was taking the keenest interest in the progress of Moral Re-Armament in the Ruhr, among both workers and employers. In the spring of 1949 he personally

introduced *The Forgotten Factor* when the play was put on for a conference of his party at Königswinter.

The winter of 1948-49 marked a turning point in the German situation. The Berlin airlift was working at full pressure, and succeeding in sustaining Berlin. In March 1949, at Berne, Adenauer made his first political speech outside Germany. After speaking of difficulties with the Western Powers which still existed, he pointed to the new attitude of certain French statesmen, and concluded: "In large sectors of the German public there is a profound conviction that only a union of the countries of western Europe can save the old continent. If France behaves wisely and generously towards Germany, she will render a historic service to Europe."

Two months later, in May 1949, the basic law drafted by the Parliamentary Council was promulgated, setting up the new constitution of Federal Germany.

It was at this time that Louis Boucquey invited Robert Schuman, then Foreign Minister of France, to dine at his house at Saint-Cloud with some of his friends from Caux. Schuman spoke at length about the North Atlantic Treaty which was going to be signed in April. The Marshall Plan, he said, made possible a degree of European integration needed to rebuild and develop the means of production destroyed by the war. The North Atlantic Treaty gave the United States the opportunity to protect Western Europe against a Soviet attack or Communist *coups d'êtat* from within. It was the weakening of Europe that had made these American initiatives necessary, and the Europeans could only be grateful for them. Schuman, however, considered that now an inner change had to take place in the life of the European nations to give the continent a new ideological concept, in which even the nations which had long been in conflict could unite. Considerable courage was needed, he said, if Frenchmen and Germans were to begin working together on a new basis to find a solution to

the problems which divided them. But it was clear from the conversation that Schuman's mind was searching how to bring this about. And that Moral Re-Armament could give content to these new developments.

In September 1949 the Bundestag, the new German Parliament, met for the first time and Konrad Adenauer was elected Chancellor of Federal Germany by a majority of one.

In October 1949, Louis Boucquey invited Schuman and Buchman to dine together at his house. It was a memorable meeting which lasted far into the night. Schuman was very discouraged and wanted to retire from political life, but he felt a profound conviction that the essential task in his life still lay ahead: putting an end to the antagonism and hatred which separated France and Germany.

"One of my difficulties," said Schuman, "is that I don't know whom I can trust among the German politicians. For example, I've only met Adenauer once."

"I can give you a list of a dozen Germans who have been to Caux," replied Buchman, "and whom you can trust completely."

In December of the same year Buchman was invited to lunch at Bonn by the President of the Federal German Republic with several members of the government. Afterwards he was received by Chancellor Adenauer at the Schaumburg Palace. Adenauer thanked Buchman for what he had done for Germany, and was extremely interested by his account of his conversation with Schuman about the relations which ought to exist between France and Germany.

A month later, in January 1950, Schuman came to Bonn on his first official visit to Chancellor Adenauer. The two statesmen discussed the question of the Saar. It was not easy to find a solution, but both men spoke completely frankly, and they agreed on the broad lines of general policy to be followed by their respective countries.

In February, Schuman had to take to his bed for a few days and took the opportunity to read carefully the new French translation of *Remaking the World*, the collected volume of Frank Buchman's speeches. In response to an invitation made a few months earlier, he wrote a preface to the French edition, in which he said:

> If we were being presented with some new scheme for the public welfare or another theory to be added to the many already put forward, I should remain sceptical. But what Moral Re-Armament brings us is a philosophy of life applied in action.
>
> To begin by creating a moral climate in which true brotherly unity can flourish, over-arching all that today tears the world apart — that is the immediate goal.
>
> To provide teams of trained men, ready for the service of the state, apostles of reconciliation and builders of a new world, that is the beginning of a far-reaching transformation of society in which, during fifteen war-ravaged years, the first steps have already been made.
>
> It is not a question of a change of policy; it is a question of changing men. Democracy and her freedoms can be saved only by the quality of the men who speak in her name.
>
> That is what Dr. Buchman expresses in simple and moving words. He has declared war on materialism and individualism, twin generators of our selfish divisions and social injustices.
>
> May he be heard and followed more and more, in all nations of the world, by those who today still clash in fratricidal hatred.

During the following months, Schuman and Adenauer continued to make public statements about the co-operation

which they believed might be established between France and Germany.

Meanwhile, in France, in the greatest secrecy, Jean Monnet and his team were working out plans for the creation of a European coal and steel community. Monnet's initiative thus prepared the way for Schuman's political policy.

Schuman's basic idea in the *Schuman Plan* was a practical approach to the long-continued conflict between France and Germany, and it was essentially simple in its concept. Schuman's idea was so to integrate the steel and coal industries of France and Germany — and of any other European country which cared to join the coal and steel community — that war between them would forever be impossible.

The Schuman Plan was accepted by the French Government on May 9th, 1950, on the eve of the Foreign Ministers Conference which was to define the position of the Federal German Republic in the context of the North Atlantic Treaty. That same morning a personal message from Schuman to Adenauer had informed him of the action France was going to take. Schuman's letter began with these words:

> World peace cannot be preserved without efforts in proportion to the dangers threatening us. Europe cannot be made in a single day. It will be built by means of a series of concrete achievements which will create a real solidarity. That requires the elimination of the age-old opposition between France and Germany. In any action we undertake, those two countries have to be at the centre of our preoccupations.

Adenauer promptly replied that he gave his entire support to Schuman's proposal and assured him of his agreement with both the basic concept and the general tendency of the Schuman Plan.

For the first time since the war, Europe, through France

and with Germany's support, was taking the initiative again and no longer trailing after the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R.

When, a few weeks later, on the initiative of the Minister-President of West Rhine-Westphalia, Karl Arnold, and other German leaders, a Moral Re-Armament Assembly was held in the Ruhr, Robert Schuman chose this occasion to send a member of the French Senate to Germany to invest Frank Buchman with the insignia of Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. It was conferred in recognition of the unique part Buchman and Moral Re-Armament had played in helping to create the climate in which the new relationship between France and Germany had been rendered possible.

At Gelsenkirchen, in the presence of an audience of 2,600 people — miners and metalworkers, employers and workers, industrialists and politicians — Buchman spoke on the radio to millions on both sides of the Iron Curtain. He concluded with these words: "Everyone agrees that unity is our only hope. It is the true destiny of France and of Germany today. It is the destiny of East and West. The alternative is divide and die. Moral Re-Armament offers the world the last chance for every nation to change and survive, to unite and live."

In 1951, two months after the signing of the treaty creating the European Coal and Steel Community, Chancellor Adenauer made this statement to the press:

> The nations of the world will only have stable relations with one another when they have been inwardly prepared for them. In this respect Moral Re-Armament has rendered great and fruitful services. During these last few months we have witnessed the success of difficult negotiations and the signing of important international agreements. Moral Re-Armament has played an unseen but effective role in reducing the differences of opinion between the negotiating parties and has guided them towards a peaceful agreement by helping them to seek the common good.

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I particularly wish to recommend Professor Theophil Spoerri's new book, *Dynamik aus der Stille—die Aktualität Frank Buchmans*, Ausaats-verlag, Wuppertal 1971, which is shortly to be published in English translation. Dr. Spoerri was Professor of French and Italian Literature at Zurich University from 1922–56 and Rector from 1948–50.