A LIFE IN C MAJOR

By

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Cover design: Reinet Blignaut

Cover photo: A Class 19D sets off for a long run: Courtesy of David Benn.

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FOR PIERRE, REINET AND CAROL

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I have been blessed by my children's interest in my past. It is in response to their questions that I have written this account. It is the story of how Christ became the major influence on my life, and what happened as a result, hence the title of this book.

C major is also a musical term and my favourite key when playing the oboe – a key without sharps or flats. It also mirrors my desire to live for the Lord without my own discordant ‚sharps' or ‚flats'.

My daughter Reinet had asked me to describe my early years, "leaving nothing out." I have therefore concentrated on my history *before* marriage – after that my children were there, so they knew what happened! Nevertheless, I have added a brief overview of experiences from marriage to the present, just to round things off.

As I grew up in the Age of Steam, trains have always been a part of my life – hence the cover photo.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Reinet put in much hard work in improving some of the text, and also the art work for the cover design, for which I am very grateful.

I am indebted to my wife, Milly, for editing, for encouragement and for tolerance. Likewise my brother, Bill, helped with editing and suggestions, often recalling shared experiences from our childhood until the present.

I wish to acknowledge the help received from my son, Pierre, with unfriendly computer programs. He was very patient with his slow-brained father. Daughter Carol also contributed expertise on matters *Microsoft* – thank you. Then Mark Kirby, friend and professional I.T. boffin, responded frequently to computer emergencies, for which many thanks.

My mother, bless her, had kept many of the letters and postcards which I had written from countries foreign. These were great memory-joggers. Fortunately I had also retained various documents from the time of the events when they occurred, including my own diaries from 1949 to 1952. I have listed some of the important published literature I consulted, at the end of the book. Unfortunately most items are likely to be out of print, but possibly available on the internet.

Since studying together, Angus Wilson and I have climbed many mountains and have remained close friends. My thanks to him for permission to describe some of the crazy things we did.

My thanks also to Andrew Peppetta for permission to describe our teamwork during travels in foreign countries..

Despite efforts to obtain permission from others whose names or quotes appear in the text, some could not be traced. To them I apologise.

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CHAPTER 1

EARLY YEARS

I was walking up Newlands Road in the small hours of the morning cold, carrying a bag. There was no traffic, the street lights were dim (a war time precaution) and the world was completely silent. I was eight years old. Inside the bag were sausages. Eventually I reached the construction site where the road was being upgraded, marked by dim, flickering, red paraffin lanterns. The elderly night watchman, warming his hands over the glowing coals of a brazier outside his hut, was expecting me. He immediately produced a frying pan and we started to cook the sausages. I don't think we talked that much – we just enjoyed each other's company, and eventually the sausages. I revelled in the atmosphere – just the two of us, surrounded by the silence of night and the world still asleep. As it grew light, I helped him collect and extinguish all the red lanterns. Then back home for breakfast. Mom's sausage bill must have increased, as I did this over several week-ends, but with her blessing.

Our home, *Edenside*, near the lower end of Newlands Road in the Cape Town suburb of Claremont, was the first home that I could remember.

The family

My arrival on the 24th February 1933 at a house in Alma Road, Rosebank, Cape Town had apparently not been greeted with enthusiasm. My parents were Willem and Jessie Georgina Schutz, and my brother, Rudolf Wilhelm ("Billy" as a boy, now "Bill") had been born 16 months before. My earliest recollection of him was at the age of about two years, when we were both sitting on the beach at Sea Point while I was eating sea sand with enjoyment!

My father, a civil engineer, eventually became Chief Engineer of the Cape Divisional Council. He was born in Colesberg in December, 1902, where his father, Wilhelmus Lodevicus Fourie Schutz, had founded the law

firm Schutz & de Jager in 1900. Wilhelmus had married Maria Catharina van Rooyen. I never knew my grandfather, as he had died in the 1918 Spanish Influenza epidemic at the age of 45. But I do remember Ouma, as a stern, imposing figure dressed in black. We children were rather afraid of her, but she left money for our university education – bless her. According to a recent book on country law firms ("Gentlemen of the Law" by George Randell), my Oupa had been Sir Abe Bailey's attorney, and this wealthy and influential client, when passing through Colesberg frequently telegraphed his legal adviser requiring a consultation. Schutz would then board the side-line train known as the "Coffee Pot" at Colesberg and travel the two or three miles to Colesberg Junction station to meet Sir Abe. On several occasions Schutz acted as the auctioneer at the sale of Sir Abe's farm properties. This was a tremendous honour for a country attorney. Until recently the law firm was still known as *Schutz & de Jager*.

My father had three sisters: My Aunt Dolly (Christine) was a respected Afrikaans teacher who never married. Also a teacher, Aunt Hettie married Johnnie Loock, a Karoo farmer. Aunt Irene married Vernon Jenvey who worked for the Railways, but sadly eventually to die of asthma. She then settled in Colesberg where she was a wonderful carer for the elderly of the town.

Further back in our ancestry it would be nice to believe that we are descended from the greatest German composer of the 17th century, Heinrich Schütz (1585-1782), but we are unable to trace our ancestry before 1767. Schutz with or without the *umlaut* is a very common surname in the German speaking countries. The first Schutz to settle in South Africa was Johannes Augustus Schutz, 1767 – 1821, born in Harburg, Germany. In 1803 as a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church he was on his way to China, mainly because of the Napoleonic wars. Due to the shortage of ministers at the Cape and the ill health of his wife, he was easily persuaded by the Governor to make the Cape his permanent home. Ministers of the D.R.Church were government employees at that time, and he was appointed to Swellendam. In his unpublished book „J.A.Schutz' (1994), Judge W. P Schutz believes that

J.A. was "intelligent, cultured, well educated....one of the leaders of the community, but often bored by the frontier that he had never really chosen, and bored by many of its bigoted and uneducated people." Judge Schutz adds that "his especial weakness, however, was a disposition anxious for contention. (This gene is not yet wholly lost after the dilutions of many generations)." Although not an alcoholic, his drinking was at times excessive. This led to his suspension without pay, for two years. Upon promise of reform, he was appointed to Graaff-Reinet in 1816, and moved with his family as the first residents of the newly built Reinet House pastorie (now the Graaff-Reinet Museum). There are silhouettes of him in the museum and in the consistory of the big D.R.Church. There had been no minister for quite a while before his arrival, resulting in a backlog of weddings and christenings. Sadly then by 1818 he had resumed his drinking habits, and was dismissed from the church. He then settled in Paarl, where he died three years later.

My mother, Jessie Georgina Schutz, had worked in the Income Tax office before she married. She was a keen hiker and member of the Mountain Club. She was born in Cape Town on 6th February, 1901. Her father, Frederick William Hobbs, had been born in England in 1870. His father had been a piano tuner, and FW was a talented violinist. As a technician in the British Post Office, he was transferred to Cape Town in 1890 (civil servants in those days could be transferred to any outpost in the British Empire). He also played his violin in the orchestra in the Cape Town Opera House. After installing the first telephone exchange in Kimberley, he returned to London in about 1898 to marry Jessie Georgina Goldsworthy, born in 1869, a highly rated dressmaker. They settled in Cape Town and eventually moved to a house in Tennant Road, Kenilworth. They had four children. My Aunt Freda married Eric Gurney, a sugar farmer near Umbumbulu in Natal. Sadly Auntie Freda died when her children were still at school. Mom was the next eldest. As teenagers during the First World War she and Freda were so keen on the navy that in 1917 they filled a manuscript book with a collection of British naval memorabilia and beautiful paintings of their own, which they titled "The Naval Scrap Book." It is still a treasured possession. F.W., an enthusiastic

musician, soon had Freda learning the violin and Mom the piano. Every Friday the family would rehearse, and on Sunday evenings they were joined by a cellist, a Mr Gordon, to have a concert. They were talented performers, as Freda and Jessie were later broadcast on radio. The two of them were very close and both loved mountaineering. They were also both gifted artists. By diligent saving of money they were able to undertake a walking tour of England in 1926. We boys never tired of hearing Mom repeat again and again stories of events on their tour.

Uncle Harry came next in the family. His ambition was to study dentistry, but when the family fell on hard times financially, he had to work in the Post Office. Sadly because of his perceived menial job, he felt that he could not propose to the girl he loved, and he never married. He nevertheless had a wonderful sense of humour and we boys loved him.

Auntie Phyllis was the youngest. She married William Lagrange, a town clerk (municipal manager), and four children were born. Uncle William died soon after retirement.

FW was a keen walker and took the children on hikes, usually up Table Mountain, every week-end. The two eldest loved it; the two youngest hated it! In about 1923 FW undertook a walk on his own from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth. He stayed overnight with farmers along the way. When he reached Assegaaibosch in the Longkloof, he was offered a lift on an inspection trolley running on the narrow gauge railway. Reluctantly he accepted the offer, but a disaster occurred - the trolley went out of control down a hill and overturned. One man was killed, and FW seriously injured his leg. The Post Office (GPO) authorities sent a special train to take him to the provincial hospital in Port Elizabeth, where the leg had to be amputated above the knee. He was in the hospital for six months. His wife was sent there by the GPO, who paid for her to stay in a boarding house during this time. All the medical expenses, including three operations, were paid for by the GPO. FW never complained. Thereafter he was dependant on an artificial leg or crutches, the latter being his preference. He was able to drive his car after a hand-throttle was fitted.

Our branch of the Schutz family tree is shown in Appendix 3.

Edenside

I do not remember the Alma Rd house, as we apparently did not stay there long. My first memory is of our house *Edenside* near the lower end of Newlands Road, Claremont. No houses in the road had numbers, only names (no headache for the postman, as he knew them all). The house is still there, but now as number 11. We rented our house from Mr Visser across the road – his house had a large garden. So did ours, a double plot in fact, which many years after we left, was subdivided and built on. Mr Visser took an interest in our garden and sometimes came with trees to plant. He left money to Stellenbosch University, and a men's residence was named after him - Huis Visser, where Bill was to reside when he went to the university. Part of the large back garden was filled with fruit trees and vines. We enjoyed different kinds of plums and pears, apricots, almonds, loquats and different varieties of grapes. Half of the back garden was left undeveloped, providing ample scope for messing around in, for games, digging holes, sand castles and toys.

Newlands Road was our link with the outside world. The passing parade provided great entertainment for little boys. Horse-drawn traffic had not yet disappeared and the municipal horse cart came regularly by, picking up all the manure off the road surface that had been dropped by horses. Tied to this horse's head there was usually a nose bag containing fodder for it to munch en route (padkos). Then from afar, one could hear the famous fish horn blown by the driver of a Cape cart (big wheels, sometimes called a Scotch cart) to announce fresh fish for sale. The popular weekly radio programme "*Snoektown Calling*" was heralded by the sound of one of these fish horns. The regular E4 double-decker bus which we often used to get to Cape Town was not horse-drawn, but one bus was so old that it had the stairs on the outside. I always hoped for a ride on this one, but somehow always missed it. A popular vehicle was the ice cream cart, but most exciting of all was the thrilling sound of the bell of an approaching fire engine (fires were common in the bush area beyond the end of the road). The bell was tolled vigorously and continuously by a fireman riding in the open cab. Somehow this seemed louder and more effective than a siren, which these vehicles did not have. This

bright red vehicle with its shiny brass fittings was awe-inspiring. At least one of them had solid rubber tyres.

As supermarkets had not yet been invented, much of the traffic on Newlands Road comprised bicycles and vans delivering groceries or meat. All my Mom had to do was phone through her orders, and they would soon arrive at the door (traditionally always the *back* door).

Newlands Road was the route to my grandparents' home in Tennant Road, Kenilworth. For a small boy the one-mile walk with my mother was very tiring, but we had to do it often, as Granny would be making dresses for Mom. She and Grandpa lived in an old wood-and-iron cottage, quite incongruous in this area of large, wealthy homes, but it was very neat, and cosy inside. This area of Kenilworth used to be a huge estate belonging to the well-known Searle family, called "Highlands." My grandparents' house had been the gardener's cottage before the estate was sold and cut up. There was a high myrtle hedge along one boundary, with a hidden hollow space along the inside, typical of these common hedges. We boys enjoyed crawling into it and inspecting other people's gardens from inside our secret tunnel. When we were a little bit older, we would walk alone from home to the cottage and Grandpa would drive us, with his dog Rajah, to the sea at Muizenberg, St James or Kalk Bay. He did these trips regularly, walking around on his artificial leg, and it was a lot of fun. He always called me "*Toff*." He loved singing old music hall ditties wherever he was, and spent hours beside the open sash window of the bedroom playing those old tunes on his violin, which passers by in the street could enjoy. We missed them when they passed away, Granny at 90 and Grandpa at 92. They had been placed fourth in a competition to find the oldest couple in Cape Town.

When I was about eight years old I found an exciting new activity. A construction crew arrived and started upgrading Newlands Road, which until then had had no pavements / sidewalks, only ditches on either side. I spent a lot of time watching, as it was a major undertaking. When work stopped in the late afternoon, my interest did not cease, as the night watchman started preparing his red lanterns for lighting up when darkness came. He was an

elderly man, and I made good friends with him, although I did not know his name. Eventually I started to join him at about 4 a.m., as already described.

My father was a keen and tireless model railway engineer. All his spare time was spent in his workshop, first constructing two suburban type coaches and then six perfect replicas of South African Railways (SAR) mainline passenger coaches of gauge 1 size. There were even little photos of country scenes in the 1st class compartments (as was the norm in real trains) and vases of flowers on the tables in the dining car. He would sometimes put this train together on short lengths of rail track on the back lawn at night, with the coach interiors illuminated with little pea-lamps powered from batteries in the guard's van - a beautiful spectacle that thrilled us boys. Meanwhile Dad was hard at work constructing three steam powered engines, of Classes 8A, 8F and 10B. They were completed after some thirteen years of hard and meticulous work. We spent many hours watching him in his workshop. He would occasionally sing short songs while he worked, like "My mother and father are so kind to me, and so are the rest of the fa-mi-ly...." Eventually he completed quite a long, raised track of elongated oval shape, with loop lines in a station and a tunnel through the rockery. There were many visitors to view the spectacular display of both passenger and goods trains being hauled by the puffing engines. Dad was a master craftsman indeed.

After a morning at his office he would often take us with him on his inspection trips of district road engineering works in the country north of the city. On the way there was a level crossing over the double mainline beyond Pinelands, and we often stopped to watch the steam trains roaring past – a great thrill.

Schooling

I attended a nursery school two blocks away from home, but was not happy there, so I changed to another one in Protea Road which was much better, with generous perks of chocolate fudge and coconut ice. My next school was Rondebosch Boys' Preparatory School (RBPS). It was widely held that these letters stood for "Roast Beef Pork Sausages", whereas the rival

Western Province Preparatory School (WPPS) was known as "Wet Pups Pea Soup").

To assess my education so far, the principal asked me to spell "was." I said "W. O. S." This landed me in Sub A (Grade 1) for six months until the authorities realised their mistake, and I was promoted to Sub B (Grade 2). Miss Gaul was the class teacher. We soon felt inspired to create poetry, so we came up with "*Miss Gaul is so tall, she stands in the hall.*"

Billy was two years ahead of me, and we usually travelled the two miles to school together on the E4 bus, but there was quite a long walk (for little boys) from the nearest bus stop. Walking to the stop after school one day I accidentally dropped my bus fare of one penny down a drain. The result was a long, weary walk home, and I was more careful thereafter.

Eventually we were able to use our bicycles to get to school, via Protea and Campground Roads. As there was no bridge over the railway lines at Campground Road, there was often quite a wait for passing trains. This provided the opportunity for studying the beautiful little green saddle-tank steam engine with polished brass fittings as it shunted trucks in and out of the yard at Ohlsson's Brewery. The engine carried the sign "LION BEER." The booms at the level crossing were laboriously raised and lowered by a man in a box turning a big wheel. There was a blacksmith in Protea Road, and on the way home I would sneak a look at the forge being used to make horseshoes. I distinctly remember the pleasant smell of the straw that was often strewn across the road from the bales being stored.

All schools in the Peninsula started at five minutes past nine in the morning, and came out at five past three in the afternoon for standards one upwards. This meant taking sandwiches for the lunch break. On rainy days in winter all the boys would gather in the quad at lunch time to demonstrate, by yelling in unison, "*We want half day! We want half day!*" This did indeed sometimes lead to the cancellation of classes for the rest of the day. Little did we know that we were pioneering a common form of protest in today's world!

I remained at RBPS until the end of the first term of Std 4 (Grade 6), with a teacher nicknamed "*Screechie.*"

Play

Billy and I each had our own friends, but we played a lot with the Harrison brothers who lived a block away, sometimes playing cricket with them on the open piece of land below Protea Road (which now has a church on it). But we were not really keen on sport, as Mom had taught us to love the mountain and walking. I tried Cubs once, but all they seemed to do was play games, whereas all I wanted to do was to go camping and exploring.

From a bay window in our house there was a magnificent view onto the eastern cliffs of Table Mountain, particularly when the rain produced many waterfalls. With Mom we would often walk to Kirstenbosch and up to the contour path. Dad was not averse to walking, but spent all his spare time in his workshop.

Once I was playing with a friend among some rocks in a kloof on the contour path, when a party of hikers came along. They were led by a rather imposing looking elderly gentleman with a short beard, carrying a stick. Sternly he addressed us, *"Don't roll stones down the mountain!" "No Sir!"* we replied, very nervously indeed, as we recognized who he was – none other than the Prime Minister of South Africa, Field Marshall Smuts. Jannie Smuts was a keen mountaineer and often climbed Table Mountain, even in old age. This event took place a bit further south along the contour path from what is today known as the *Smuts Track* to the top of the mountain.

We frequently travelled to the city centre by train. I always tried to find a seat next to a window on the right hand side of a coach, because the railway workshops were on that side of the tracks after Salt River station. The Salt River Works were huge. The first section we passed must have been the foundry, because giant, pounding steam hammers were vaguely visible through the murky windows, with exhaust steam blowing out of chimneys on the roof, a great thrill to see. Further on there were the coach-building workshops. Coaches in various stages of completion (all of wooden construction in those days) were to be seen standing in the yards. As they were mostly mainline stock, the passing vista created in me a longing to travel in them to unknown far-off places up-country.

Upon arrival in Cape Town we would often make a bee-line for the shop which sold Dinky cars and Hornby gauge 0 trains, where we could spend our carefully saved pocket money to augment our collection. Mom always took us to Cleghorns tea room balcony, from where there was a great view of the passing parade in busy Adderley Sreet. There was no need to look at a menu, as all we ever wanted was lemonade and a cream cake, while Mom sipped her tea.

Mom's schoolmate, Doris Taylor, had a holiday shack at Cape Point. She was the divorced wife of the well-known musician and composer Colin Taylor. We had many visits to this piece of paradise – it was a very rough structure just above what today has become known as *Taylor's Beach*. Cape Point was a relatively unfrequented nature reserve and we rarely met other people. The tarred road to the *Cape of Good Hope* did not exist and a sandy track ended 100m from the shack. Sometimes we would spend a night or two, which would enable us to explore the wild coastline, together with Doris's daughter, Kit, a real tomboy. More later about her brother, Hugh, who influenced my career choice and became a life-long friend.

Music

Mom and Dad both liked music, but while Dad no longer played his violin, Mom loved her piano. Grandpa's brother, our Great Uncle Henry, lived in India and was reputedly the only person ever to have won the Calcutta Sweepstake more than once, so he bought Mom a good upright piano, a *Carl Albrecht* made in Berlin. This must have been in the early 1930's. When Aunt Dolly came to visit, they played Beethoven duets together. Mom was a brilliant sight-reader, and until the day she died she was accompanying singers and instrumentalists effortlessly.

I think some of the music genes were passed on to me, as from an early age it was obvious that I liked music. I was always whistling. The sound of the many church bells in the district which filled the air every Sunday morning inspired me. The piano was not my favourite instrument, but I enjoyed listening through the closed lounge door when my father switched on the

Boeremusiek radio programme nightly at 6 p.m. When old enough, I loved to take the bus by myself to Rondebosch, to the home of Mrs Johnson, who had a collection of classical music records. I would play these 78 rpm records on her wind-up gramophone. Many of them had either cracks or bites out of them, which was particularly frustrating with my favourite one, which I always saved for last – *The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers.*

Mom and Dad sometimes took us to symphony concerts and even operas in the City Hall. The audience was always very formally attired, the gentlemen in black tie and the ladies with long, swishing evening dresses.

Eventually the day came when it was decided that I should learn the piano. A Miss Maritz would come to the house to give me lessons. Apparently I played well, but thoroughly disliked the piano and always wanted to learn some other instrument.

Holidays

There were short holidays to places like Gordon's Bay and Hout Bay, where my father had hired a house for our stay. Hout Bay was quite undeveloped except for the small fishing harbour, so we felt that we had really left Cape Town for the country, and there were only two little shops on the east side of the bay.

Train trips were inevitable, and a ride over Sir Lowry's Pass to Bot River and back was fun. Dad once drove an engine for a short distance on the now-closed branch line from Fort Beaufort, during our stay at the country hotel at Tidbury's Toll.

To visit the Gurney's in Natal involved a long train trip of two days and three nights. Uncle Eric would meet us at Durban station and take us to his sugar cane farm, Roseleigh, in the hills near Umbumbulu. Aunt Freda was very kind to us and there were our four cousins to play with. The eldest, Peter, was my own age, followed by Dick, David and Gillian. The boys were enthusiastic about all things mechanical – tractors, trucks and cars, whereas Billy and I preferred trains. Nevertheless we had fun together. I particularly enjoyed eating sugar cane, but less so having to eat porridge for breakfast and

again for supper. What also fascinated me were the steam-powered lorries of the brick company in Pietermaritzburg.

More frequently we visited Uncle Johnnie's farm in the Karoo, to which we travelled by car. It was a two-day trip, as there were no freeways and few tarred roads. The slow Bain's Kloof Pass was the quickest way across the mountains, but Mom and Billy were usually car sick, while Dad and I enjoyed chewing *droëwors*! Beaufort West was the usual overnight stop at a hotel, followed by the long, bad gravel road to Aberdeen. Many gates had to be opened and closed on this route. Most of them carried the advertisement "Please shut the gate and use Cooper's Dip." Sometimes there were farm children who would do the job for a reward, in the form of sweets or biscuits. For this purpose the Pyott's Biscuit Co. had produced a small packet of biscuits called "*Gate Openers*."

Uncle Johnnie's farm, Bluegum House, was north of Graaff-Reinet at the foot of the Wapadsberg range in the wide basin surrounded by mountains, south of the Lootsberg. Bethesda Road railway station was in the middle of the basin. There was a really lovely avenue of tall bluegums (*Eucalyptus globulus)* as one approached the farmhouse. Sadly most of these trees died of drought, but that was many years later.

I was a bit nervous of Auntie Hettie, but we had unforgettably wonderful times on this farm. Cousins Johan and Willem were still too young to figure in Billy's and my activities. This was the one time when Dad would love to go for walks, and it was fun exploring the wild environment with him and Mom. With her background in art, she loved to sketch farm scenes in ordinary crayons, producing some really lovely pictures.

This was paradise for us kids. There were water furrows to play in, catching crabs or frogs, tortoises to be found under bushes, dry river beds to explore, sheep to watch being sheared or dipped, listening to Uncle Johnnie tell stories in front of the fire in winter with the snow falling outside, horse riding (nervously) and collecting hens' eggs from secret nests for Auntie Hettie. Less enjoyable was an uncomfortable ride on the big oxwagon pulled by a team of oxen, bringing in loads of wheat. Great excitement greeted the

arrival of the threshing machine, on hire to separate the wheat from the straw. This huge stationary machine was powered by a long belt from a tractor, and fairly bristled with spinning pulley wheels of different sizes.

There was no electricity, and the radio was powered from a car battery charged by a wind charger. There was no toilet in the house. The outside pit toilet was quite a long way away, so beautiful porcelain chamber pots were conveniently located under beds.

There were no tractors, bakkies (pickups) or trucks, only horses, horse carts and an oxwagon, but Uncle Johnnie had a "tin lizzie" Ford car. He would drive us up the Wapadsberg Pass (the very old road) to his other farm Ruigtefontein at the top of the mountain. The road up the mountain was so narrow and steep that I was terrified, and would close my eyes until we reached the top.

When the wool clip had been baled and was ready for transport to the market in Port Elizabeth, a railway half-truck and half-bus (*charabanc)* would arrive from the station. All the bales were loaded and transported to the station for railing.

There was one farm activity which I did not enjoy – the springbok shoot. The farm workers would climb high up the mountain on horseback, cracking their whips to chase the buck down a kloof. Dad and Uncle Johnnie would hide behind a mound where the kloof levelled out, their point-303 rifles at the ready. As the leaping buck rushed past (a truly beautiful sight) they opened fire and the noise terrified me. Usually a few buck were brought home for venison and biltong.

I so loved the farm and the Karoo, that more than once I would return to it from Cape Town by train, escorted by Aunt Dolly. There was no doubt in my mind that I would become a farmer when I grew up.

The Second World War

Cape Town did its best to be ready for a possible attack or invasion. At night there were regular black-out drills, with blankets and blinds over the

windows. This had to be completely effective, or there would be a knock at the front door and a warden would demand that we block out "that chink of light showing from your lounge window." Car headlights had to be blacked out and special louvres fitted to deflect the beam downwards. It was exciting watching the play of searchlights as they practised spotting aircraft at night. Air raid sirens were tested every Monday morning, the air filled with a mournful wailing. At 12 noon every day the gun on Signal Hill announced a two-minute pause to pray and think of the fighting troops. It was remarkable to be in the city and see how everything came to a standstill. All vehicles including buses stopped dead, and there was an uncanny silence.

Petrol was rationed, and worst of all, chocolate was unobtainable. White flour could not be bought, and Mom used to sift brown flour to make cakes.

At school trenches were dug and we were drilled in how to enter them after vacating our classrooms in an orderly manner when an air raid warning went off. Fortunately there was never an air raid. We were taught to knit woollen squares to be sewn together to make blankets for the troops, and were enthusiastic about collecting scrap iron and paper for the cause. Toys for boys were all related to the war. It was exciting to sit in front of the radio to explore the shortwaves. There were non-stop Morse-code messages coming through all the time, conjuring up a vision of spies and ships talking to one another.

Many boys had fathers who had enlisted and had "gone up North." There was a slowly increasing number of boys with black patches sewn on the upper sleeve, indicating a father killed in action.

Everyone followed the news with intense interest. One day at school there was an announcement that the Germans had been driven out of North Africa, and I rushed home to eagerly break the news to my parents. I was mystified at Dad's reaction – he was very angry. It was many years later that I began to understand why. He had been born in Colesberg only months after the end of the Boer War, and grew up when strong anti-British feelings were still very prevalent as a result of the concentration camps. Even in 1945 there was still so much bitterness towards Britain that South Africa's entry into the

war was voted by Parliament with only a small majority. If only he had explained this to me I think I would have understood. But if only I had asked.

Our Prime Minister, General (later Field Marshal) Smuts, played an important role in advising Churchill and his cabinet, and spent a lot of time in Britain. What is generally not known was the fact that during one of Churchill's absences, Jannie Smuts was apparently acting Prime Minister of Britain!

There were large signboards on approach roads to the city, warning "**DON'T TALK ABOUT SHIPS OR SHIPPING.**" Officers and sailors from visiting warships who were walking the streets of Cape Town had their cap labels blanked out so that the name of their ship would be secret. Simonstown was a British naval base and very busy at this time. The public could only enter the town with a permit. When we went there to visit the Taylors, we had to have one, which was checked on the train before it left Glencairn station. The mountainside above the town was bristling with guns and cannons. The three big ones are still there, but the public are mostly unaware of them. Remnants of the many gun emplacements and observation posts along the west coast of the Peninsula can still be seen, as well as shrapnel from cannon exercises near Cape Point.

What was kept from the news was the apparent fact that during the war more than 100 ships had been sunk off the coast of South Africa by German U-boats, and more than 20 by Japanese submarines. There were rumours of U-boats anchoring off the deserted Cape Agulhas coastline to pick up supplies from sympathetic supporters. Once a U-boat surfaced between the boats of trek-fishermen near Fish Hoek. They purchased the catch off the nets and paid for it in pounds sterling – later found to be counterfeit! Soon after the war an ex U-boat commander visited Cape Town with a photo of the lights of the city taken offshore through the conning tower of his sub, during the war. I remember seeing the photo on the front page of the newspaper next day.

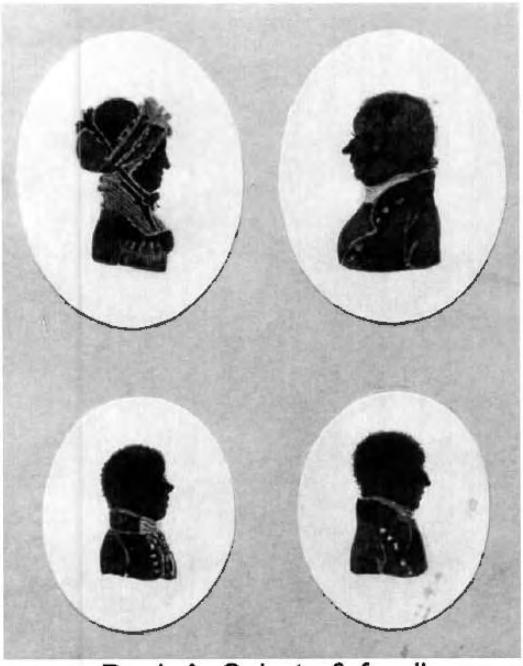
Mom's cousin, Captain James Breaks R.N., had commanded the battleship H.M.S. Neptune during the war. Soon afterwards he brought this impressive ship into Cape Town. (There is a press clipping in Mom's "The

Naval Scrapbook"). Uncle Jim came to our home and we saw a lot of him. What I particularly enjoyed was walking with him, in full captain's uniform, and Mom down Adderley Sreet, causing all passing ship's officers and sailors to salute "us" (as I liked to think). When he departed he gave Billy and me a beautiful Hornby clockwork steam engine, which gave us years of pleasure.

Asthma

From an early age I suffered badly from asthma. I will never forget those desperate struggles to breathe, denying me sleep at night. Mom was a huge comfort. She would take me in her arms, gently rocking me while she sang soothing songs for me. When it got very bad, the doctor would be summoned to give me an adrenaline injection. This did help. Otherwise some relief, though very little, was obtained by breathing in the smoke from some slowly burning special powder. But the attacks continued, and I missed weeks of school. Our bedroom was moved to the sunny side of the house with that wonderful view onto the mountain, but I'm sure that the damp conditions from the high rainfall so close to the mountain where we lived, was a problem.

The cause of this chronic and crippling illness is not clear. Certainly we were not aware of any asthma sufferers among either my mother's or my father's side of the family from whom I could have inherited the genes. However, a definite contributing factor was the family situation. Dad had a terrible temper and I was always afraid of him. His continual verbal abuse of my mother made me desperately unhappy, afraid, and very bitter towards him. Many years later Mom admitted that she had contemplated divorcing him. But to her great credit she stuck with my father, who calmed down as he grew older. Nearly all his spare time was spent in his workshop, and it was only when we went away on holiday that he would spend time with us. Although Billy and I had fun playing together, we frequently quarrelled and fought. Being a younger brother, inevitably I would come off second best, and became resentful, even though I was probably to blame many times. I was amused to find amongst old papers a "List of Rules" for the hut which Billy, a friend of his and I were building in the back garden. Written in pencil it stated "*Boss:*



Ds J. A. Schutz & family

Paternal grandfather

Maternal grandfather

Father

Mother & Grandmother

Billy & me

Billy, Dad & me

Me & Mom . 1946

Billy S. 2nd Boss: Niel B." (Billy's friend). One of the rules which followed was "*You must do what your first boss or your second boss tells you to.*" (!) The inferiority complex which I developed did not help my asthma.

In a vague sort of way I believed in a distant God, but we were not a Christian family and I had only set foot in a church once, when Mom took me to St Saviour's in Claremont. All that I can recall was the pleasant sound of the three bells in the belfry, being rung in a sort of a tune by two gentlemen pulling ropes at the back of the church. So I never thought of asking the Lord to help our divided family and my health. But I was later to discover that He nevertheless had a plan for me, all along.

By the time I had reached the age of eleven, I had missed too much school. The many doctors whom we had consulted were unable to help. In desperation my parents then came up with an inspired remedy – to send me to boarding school in the Karoo. And what better place than Graaff-Reinet, where Aunt Hettie and Uncle Johnnie could keep an eye on me, their farm being less than an hour's drive from the town. I thought this was a really great idea. My excitement knew no bounds. The prospect of going to school in the Karoo which I so loved, and being away from the tensions at home, was thrilling. At the time I did not realise that Graaff-Reinet had been the home of our forefather 150 years previously.

CHAPTER 2

UNION HIGH SCHOOL

Arrival

At the end of the first term of 1944 at Rondebosch Prep School I said good-bye to Screechie, my Std 4 class teacher, the Principal (with some relief), and my pals. On the first Sunday of the holidays Dad and I departed from Cape Town bound for Graaff-Reinet. We went by train so that I could familiarise myself with this mode of travel, which I would be using to and from Union High School in future. But on this trip we went beyond Graaff-Reinet to Bethesda Road station, where we were met by Uncle Johnnie, who took us to the farm for the remaining week of the holidays.

As usual it was wonderful to be there, and to go for long walks with Dad. I had been presented with a gift of a new fountain pen, and distinctly remember the date of the letter I wrote to Mom: ‚4-4-44'.

When I went to bed on my last night before going to school, Dad came into the room and said that we should pray. Together we kneeled down beside the bed and Dad prayed that I would be safe, happy and healthy at my new school. This was the first time in my life that I had ever kneeled down, or to pray, and although this loving act of my father meant little to me at the time, I have never, ever forgotten it. God was to answer that prayer in an unexpected way.

The next day Uncle Johnnie drove us to Graaff-Reinet in his recent model Ford (CAZ 46). With my baggage I was deposited at the boys' hostel at no. 79 Somerset Street, and said good-bye to Dad and Uncle Johnnie. As they drove off I suddenly realised that at age 11, I was alone, not knowing anyone. I had so looked forward to this new life, but now the reality was very different from what I had expected.

First term

Homesickness was an entirely new experience for me. Other new boys were crying unashamedly, but I managed to hold back the tears until bed time. Then I buried my face in my pillow and wept every night for that first week. I felt as if I was thousands of kilometres from home and friends.

The hostel consisted of an old house at the corner of Stockenström and Somerset Streets, located on what must have been a farm or a smallholding, as there was an odd collection of outbuildings converted into quite rough dormitories. One half of the grounds consisted of a lawn for play, with trees to climb, and the other half was covered by trellises of grapevines. There were no flush toilets, only pit toilets quite a distance away.

There were 63 boys in the hostel, most of them the sons of farmers in the district, with a few asthmatics like me, from Port Elizabeth. As the war was still in progress, there were a number of refugees, mostly from England. Two brothers from Scotland insisted on, or were ordered to, attend the Dutch Reformed Church, as they were Presbyterians, although they could not understand a word of Afrikaans! The youngest refugee was Henkie Leerink from Holland, aged six. This poor kid had a really unhappy time, away from his home at such a young age. Miss Seager, our patient matron, had to mother him, as well as some of the other younger boys, called "squeakers".

Authority was wielded by two house masters, assisted by prefects. One housemaster lived with his family in a house next door. He was a good father figure, but he was passionate about boxing, which we all had to learn.

I was assigned to a small dormitory. The squeakers were in an adjoining bigger one. Our prefect, John Watermeyer, was very strict but fair. I was in awe of him as he was very tall. But when I met him again some 60 years later I was surprised to discover that he was really quite short! Cold showers every morning were compulsory, even in winter. Hot water for bathing was only available after a fire was made under a 200 litre former petrol drum – the usual system on farms, called "the donkey."

The food took some getting used to. Because of the war, we had dripping on our bread instead of butter. There was never enough to eat. I got

so hungry that whenever we were given oranges, I would eat the peels as well. Because of the drought, the water did not taste good either.

My first day at school, two blocks' walk away from the hostel, did not help my homesickness. Our teacher was a real terror. The whole class (boys and girls) was really afraid of him. Neither was the school particularly well run, as the principal, McGaffin (called "Goof"), was eagerly awaiting his pending retirement. Being a small school (a total of 300 pupils), there were no separate buildings for primary and secondary classes. Neither were there electric lights in the classrooms.

Having started before 8 a.m., classes were over by a late lunch time and I would stagger back to the hostel in a state of semi-starvation to face a dinner that took some getting used to.

Sport was compulsory, but due to my asthma I was exempted from playing rugby. Instead I played tennis, which involved endlessly hitting the ball against the wall, as there was no tuition for beginners. This was because almost all children were experienced players, having been raised on farms where tennis was always a major social pastime. Every farm had a tennis court, made from termite mounds, which provided the best surface.

My father had arranged for me to have piano lessons at the Convent. So early on in that first week I trudged nervously to my first lesson. By this time I was so homesick that when I was confronted by the nun, in typical penguin-like uniform, and the piano, the tears just rolled down my cheeks. But Sister Sieglinde was very sympathetic and caring, and I soon grew to like her.

For the first few weeks of my stay, Uncle Johnnie's elderly parents would invite me to spend Saturdays with them. They lived in a "broekie lace" old house in Bourke Street, with a large back garden. I was left to my own resources, and after a walk down town to look at the shops, I was very happy just to stay on the premises, "far from the madding crowd" of the hostel. Most farmers came to town on Saturdays, and sometimes Uncle Johnnie and Aunt Hettie would be there as well. Aunt Hettie took it upon herself to see to my welfare, and throughout my seven years at school there she was like a second mother to me.

Soon after my arrival I was moved to the upstairs dorm, which must have been a large hay loft for the farm. There were big cracks between the floorboards, through which one could see the "recreation room" below. These boys were more my own age, and I began to make some good friends. But on my first night I was in for a big surprise. Immediately after "lights out", every boy clambered out of bed and kneeled down to say his prayers. No one had told them to do so - it was clearly a habit. I was faced with a dilemma, as I had never before prayed by myself, but what would they think of me if I did not? So from then on I kneeled down every night, not really knowing how to pray other than to say "*God bless Mom and Dad.....*" Well, I was sincere about that, and I now know that He heard my prayer, and that this was a very slow beginning to a growing relationship with Him.

Afternoon tea was a time to look forward to. We were then allowed to raid our tuck boxes, mostly used paraffin tins that had been converted into strong containers, with padlocks. At the end of school holidays mothers would fill these boxes with goodies for the term – rusks, biscuits, sweets and other confectionery. Mom knew that I craved peanuts, unshelled, so my box was half-filled with them and the remaining space with sweet things. We quickly learned self-discipline and careful long term planning to ensure availability of tuck right up to the end of term, but sympathetic parents might replenish supplies in the event of unavoidable depletion. Bartering was popular.

The best time of the day was before supper, when we could play games or do whatever we liked. There were definite seasons for marbles and tops, but games like *Bok-bok-staan-styf, Blikkie-I-spy, Kennetjie* and *Kleilat* were popular. Being a new boy, I mostly just watched. I was terribly impressed by these farm boys' ability to crack their long, leather whips with a noise as loud as a big rifle shot. I often tried to master the art, but without success. What I did learn from them was how to make a water pistol from a .303 *doppie* (spent cartridge case) – remove the cap, which exposes two small holes, and at the open end opposite, insert a roofing-screw with a bit of cloth wrapped

around it. It worked perfectly and we had many fights. (I am sure that this is a lost art in the current toy age of "technology").

Gradually I became familiar with the "Karoo English" spoken by everyone - English peppered with Afrikaans words, for example "*Ag* no *jong*, don't do that!"

Games were interrupted once a week by our *leibeurt* – flood irrigation of the grounds by water from the furrows which lined all the streets of the town. It was pleasant to be able to wade through the running water, catching crabs and frogs, and sailing home-made boats.

We were confined to the area of the town west of the street next to the hostel during the week. East of Stockenström Street was out of bounds until Saturday morning. Then there was a general exodus from the hostel to go "up town", armed with pocket money to spend on ice-cream soda floats, more sweets, toiletries and whatever other sundry requirements were necessary for the kind of life we were living. There were some very big co-op shops which stocked everything from clothes, groceries and hardware to agricultural implements. They were well-patronised by the farming community as well as the townspeople. Sadly they have all gone, replaced by soulless national chain stores found in every town and city.

Attendance of sports events against other schools on Saturday afternoons was compulsory, but we were allowed to see two movies per term when there were no such events. The Plaza was the more dignified cinema, but as the Gem always showed a full-length cowboy film before the interval, this was preferred, in spite of the rowdy audiences. Whenever the hero won a skirmish with the crooks, the audience erupted. A big, flashing red sign on the stage demanding "***SILENCE***" was totally ignored, while missiles (anything throwable, like orange peels, peanuts or sucker sticks) flew through the air amid yells and screams of delight, until they were out-shouted by those who wanted silence so that they could continue to follow the story on the screen. What fun!

Sundays were special. There were eggs for breakfast, after a week of porridge only. This was followed by letter prep, compulsory for all. I always

tried to illustrate my letters home, which was much appreciated, but sadly none of these were kept. Church was compulsory. Mom had allocated me to the Anglican Church of St James, and I enjoyed being part of the large group of boys attending the evening services, a pleasant walk to the other side of town. Once a month there was an early morning Communion service before breakfast.

Sunday afternoons saw many of us migrate to the foothills of the mountains west of the town, where we played games like cowboys and crooks, or just explored the rugged terrain. But first the Sundays River had to be crossed. Although it was said that it had derived its name from the fact that it had once upon a time had water in it on a Sunday, nevertheless it was nowadays frequently in flood, when water was released from the dam above town for the purpose of irrigating the agricultural lands of the Kendrew Estates some distance to the south. There were large stepping stones at least a metre in height, but they were rather far apart, making the crossing hazardous. There was a real danger of being swept away by the torrent.

When the aloes were flowering and the stamens full of pollen, I joined my farm-boy friends in breaking off an inflorescence and sucking all the florets along the stem to drink the sweet nectar. By the time we had sucked several in this way and spat out occasional beetles, our faces were yellow with pollen. It was difficult to remove this pollen without soap and water, and on our return to the hostel our yellow faces betrayed where we had been.

There were two leave-out week-ends per term when all the farmers' sons went home, usually taking friends with them. But in my first term I was invited to the Loock's farm ‚Bluegum House', given a lift by an Aunt of Uncle Johnnie's who lived in town. What a joy it was to escape from the hostel to be with family. Although my cousins Johan and Willem were much younger than me, we became inseparable friends (Flippie was only born later). Together we played in the sand with sheep *dolosse* (knuckle bones) for toy motor cars. We roamed the veld in search of tortoises, dassies, birds' nests, ‚precious' stones and anything of interest, armed with home-made catapults to shoot at anything that moved. At night we would sit in front of the fire (winter was approaching)

listening with rapt attention to Uncle Johnnie's stories of *Wolf en Jakkals*, or *Oom Kaspaas en Neefie*. But as bed time approached, it was his ghost stories that made me really nervous. The fact that my bedroom was at the deserted front of the house and far away down the passage, through double doors with a keyhole that whistled mournfully in the *droogtewind* (drought wind), did nothing for my self-confidence. The bedroom was very big, with a high ceiling, rather like a hall. My bed was at the far end, and a large expanse of floor had to be crossed, with my candle flickering in my trembling hand while the dark cypress trees sighed fitfully in the wind outside. I made a rush for the bed and dived under the covers as quickly as possible to avoid being caught by a possible apparition lurking underneath. But all that was under the bed was a big porcelain chamber pot, which fortunately remained stationary (the only toilet was outside, quite a distance from the house). Sometimes there would be a thunderstorm. Coming from Cape Town where such storms are rare, I would be doubly afraid, covering my head to avoid seeing the flashes of lightning. What a pleasure in the morning to have survived the night and to be woken by my cousins urging me to "*Opstaan, Kippike!*" (They could not pronounce "Christopher").

All too soon it was back to school.

But before long there was a public holiday, on which I was introduced to my first experience of the annual hostel picnic. Compulsory, of course (as everything seemed to be), but great fun. There was a long walk on a path towards the gap between the main western mountain and the prominent symbol of Graaff-Reinet, Spandaukop. On the other side of the gap there was a wooded kloof, called Eerstefontein, sometimes with water in the stream. All along the route I was shown which berries on the scraggly bushes could be eaten – a surprising number, and very useful to allay persistent hunger pains. Like goats we would munch Spekboom (*Portulacaria afra*) leaves, but I drew the line at eating the gum oozing from cracks in the bark of Mimosa trees (*Acacia karoo*), which others enjoyed but I found tasted like glue. We continued along to the next kloof, called Tweedefontein, our destination for the day. Far above we could see the formidable cliffs of the Valley of

Desolation. There was a windpump here, and if there was no wind, someone would climb up and turn the vaned wheel until water came out of the pipe – much needed to quench our thirst as we played vigorous games amongst the bushes and rocks on the mountain slope. It was fun attacking an opposing side by throwing cactus leaves at them. After a braai lunch the games continued, until the master in charge marshalled us for the hike back to town at the end of the day. All this land was municipal commonage, until it recently became part of the new Camdeboo National Park.

Soon I was introduced to another compulsory activity – the hostel dance. This took place once a term, alternating between the boys' hostel and the girls' hostel. At our hostel we moved the dining room tables aside and danced to the music of 78 rpm records played on the radiogram. At the girls' hostel the music was provided by Mrs Esterhuyse on the piano. She and her husband were the hostel ‚parents'. (He had been the principal of the Nieu Bethesda School until it closed, after which he taught maths and history at Union High – a much loved teacher). Mrs Es thumped that piano wonderfully. I had never danced before, and no one taught me how to do it, but I did learn that the proper way to approach a girl to dance with me was to politely ask, "May I have the pleasure of this dance, please?" Why any girl ever agreed to dance with me is a mystery. I would shunt my partner (she backwards) around the room in a sort of stumbling shuffle, vaguely in time with the music, and often treading on her toes and tripping. Throughout my school career this was an ordeal for me, and I have never danced since.

At last my first term came to an end. Because of the "very long distance between Graaff-Reinet and Cape Town" I was always allowed to leave on the Wednesday of the last week. As I stood on the station platform that evening waiting for the arrival of my train, I felt an amazing sense of freedom and happiness. As the two beautifully polished steam engines struggled up the steep bend in clouds of smoke and steam, dragging their long train into the station, I felt delirious with excitement. I will never forget that thrill. These memorable train trips are described in Chapter 3. And what a joy it was to be re-united with Mom and Dad and Billy. Boarding school had certainly given

me a new respect and love of home. And very important, I had completely outgrown my asthma. It recurred neither during the wet winter weather at home, nor over the next many years.

The three weeks' holiday was of course far too short, and too soon I was headed back to school. It took another couple of years before I was able to overcome my bouts of homesickness when departing from home.

No longer a "new boy"

I began to make good friends and to enjoy some fun, like the night we had a pillow fight. The inevitable happened. I broke a pillow over someone's head. The dorm was filled with a snowstorm of feathers, augmented from other leaking pillows. Hastily we collected them and stuffed them back into the broken pillows, then stealthily conveyed them in the darkness to deposit in the deep pit toilets – evidence destroyed. I cannot recall how we managed to avoid discovery by the prefects.

The grape season provided new temptations to break the rules. Huge bunches of grapes of different kinds hung like many-coloured stalactites from the trellises. Until the appointed day came when we would be allowed to each pick a bunch, it was strictly against the rules to pick even one "korrel." Nevertheless the bottom few grapes on each bunch gradually decreased in number. We felt that it was worth being awarded a "black mark" by a spying prefect (one black mark meant half an hour extra prep. on a Saturday morning). Bunch-picking day was one of the highlights on the hostel calendar. Each boy was allowed to pick one bunch. The bunches were enormous, and inevitably the squeakers could seldom finish theirs. Because of the climate and soil, the grapes had a sweetness and flavour unrivalled by table grapes of today.

Another event on the calendar which we looked forward to was the school Sports Day, not only the athletics competitions (in which I never excelled), but the side shows which formed part of the day. Farmers came to the school with a variety of produce and meat for the braai, and sometimes with a cow to be raffled. Stalls were erected for the selling of cakes, sweets

and a variety of useful knick-knacks. There were competitions with prizes to be won, and the atmosphere was that of a fun fair. Most popular of all was the braai at lunch time. Long, shallow trenches were dug and filled with firewood, slowly burned to produce perfect coals. The delicious aroma of boerewors, chops and sosaties sizzling, was irresistible. For the sosaties (city slickers call them "kebabs") we boys had to prepare sticks beforehand. These were collected from quince hedges which lined the water furrows ("vrygange") between the many "erven" (small holdings) on the outskirts of the town. Regrettably these erven have since all been built on. We cut the sticks to the required length and stripped off the bark to make good sosatie sticks. After the feast and the athletics programme for the day, we all gathered (outside) for the prize-giving ceremony, ending a perfect day.

Temptations once more assailed us during the hunt for sosatie sticks. It was so easy to nip through a boundary fence inside the quince hedge to steal fruit from an adjoining erf. Most of these erven were prolific producers of peaches, apricots, plums, pears, apples and pomegranates. There were strict rules about this, however. If caught, we would have to face the consequences. But one erf belonged to a rather poor family, and we were honour-bound not to steal from them. Erf owners sold their produce by auction in the market hall on Saturday mornings. A few of us boys would club together and bid for a watermelon. We generally acquired one for about sixpence (five cents). This would then be eagerly transported to the municipal swimming pool where there were lawns and shade. Here we gorged ourselves and then dived into the pool to wash.

Another sporting event of note was the twice-yearly rugby and netball showdown with our rival school, the Hoër Volkskool. This was apparently the first school in the country to teach through the medium of Afrikaans. We called this clash "intervarsity." Those not in the 1st rugby team had to learn songs to be sung from the grandstand during the match, as encouragement for our players. "*Cheer the Union First Team, the best team in the land.....*" for example. The Volkskool did likewise. All this bored me to tears, but it was, as

usual, compulsory. There was considerable enmity between our two schools, but fortunately our matric classes became friends.

Colin Matthew, in the class above me, became a good friend. He often invited me to the family farm "Kareehoek", near Pearston, for leave-out week-ends. I was fortunate to be invited to the farms of other friends, in the districts of Aberdeen, Murraysburg, Jansenville and some farms closer to Graaff-Reinet. As the short holidays were regarded as too short for the long train trips to and from Cape Town, I really only went home for the longer breaks, twice a year. The short holidays were ideal for visits to Bluegum House. The older my cousins Johan and Willem became, the further from the house we would range on our hikes of exploration. There was an orchard near the homestead with walnut trees, peaches, apricots, pears and other delicious fruits. The problem, however, was the frequent late frost in spring which prevented the fruit from ripening. But there were good years, when Aunt Hettie would deliver a huge box of fruit to me at the hostel.

Another good friend was Roger Aspeling, in the class below me. As he was quite short, his nickname was "Duimpie." For the short holidays he would sometimes invite me to his home in Walmer, Port Elizabeth, which meant an overnight train trip.

A serious problem

One leave-out week-end tragedy struck. Dickie Hobson, a hostel boy in the class above me, went home on the Friday. His classmates had noticed that his handwriting had become very shaky, and that he didn't look very well. Overnight at home on his farm he developed a creeping paralysis, and by that Saturday afternoon he suffocated and died. This was the start of the terrifying poliomyelitis epidemic. It was then known only as "infantile paralysis", for which there was no cure, and neither had any preventive vaccine yet been developed. In a huge panic all the schools in the town were immediately closed. It was really frightening, as one by one, children and also some young adults, fell ill with this dreaded disease. There were no more immediate deaths, but some were crippled for life.

Quite a number of us had not gone to farms for that leave-out week-end, and so stayed at the hostel. We were now warned to be alert for flu symptoms accompanied by a sore neck, and to report to the matron immediately should such occur. We enjoyed having no school, and entertained ourselves in various ways like playing games on the mountain slopes, but underneath there was this fear about who would be the next to crash. One day, to my horror, I began to have the dreaded symptoms. I tried desperately to avoid being noticed, but before long my friends looked at me and said, "What's wrong with *you*?" Immediately the matron put me to bed in an isolated dormitory, as I began to deteriorate. I was terrified. It wasn't long before the ambulance arrived. On a stretcher I was passed through a window, so as to avoid contact with my friends. I looked up, and there from the windows of the upstairs dorm were all my friends peering down at me with very worried looks on their faces. I wondered if I would ever see them again, as I embarked on what might be my last ride....

I do not remember my first days in the hospital, as I was in a coma much of the time. There were pains in my arms and legs, but as I began to regain consciousness the pains subsided. Gradually the fever lessened, and to my huge relief, with no after effects. To this day I thank the Lord for His very great and loving mercy.

I was very weak, and remained in the hospital for a long time. Some of my less fortunate friends were also there. In most patients paralysis spread no further once they had recovered from the fever, but by that time the damage had been done. Many were in plaster casts (why, I don't know). A boy younger than me, from the hostel, was almost completely paralysed. He survived, but sadly he died at a young age.

As I began to recover, I enjoyed teasing the nurses and giving them funny nicknames – a lot of cheek from a 12-year old. In turn they entertained me by showing me the operating theatres and all the sinister tools.

Then came the day when, as I was sitting on a bench outside under a pepper tree, a window opened and Matron leaned out. "*Christopher,*" she called, "*You are going home*!" I jumped up in excitement. It had been decided

that all the polio patients would be brought to Cape Town for care by more experienced medical staff. We were to travel by train, in a special coach. Making these crippled people comfortable in the compartments was not easy, as many were in their plaster casts. We left on the P.E. train and during the night our coach was detached at Klipplaat to wait for the Cape Town train. What a joy and huge relief it was to be met at Cape Town station by my parents (Billy was at school), and to realise that I had actually survived the ordeal.

By now I was quite fit, so was able to enjoy a wonderful holiday at home, as the Graaff-Reinet schools were still closed. All the patients who had come down by train were hospitalised together with other polio victims in the old Montebello manor house off Newlands Avenue. I went to visit them there. They were in a hall with a large window at one end onto a huge indoor greenhouse with beautiful plants. I continued my holiday until that unhappy day when there was a phone call from my principal to say that school was re-opening. Dad was very sympathetic and allowed me to push the gauge-1 train on its tracks around the garden, something that had never been allowed before. So once more I was on the train to Graaff-Reinet.

Back at school

Miss de Villiers ("Kiep"), our Std 5 teacher, welcomed us back. At the end of Std 4 the previous year, we had been warned that Kiep was a teacher to be feared. But after suffering under the sadist in Std 4, we loved Kiep. She was indeed strict, but a really good teacher. Academically I was usually near the bottom of the class, and the polio episode did not help. Kiep wanted to discuss this with my mother, so Mom came up by train specially, and they had a confab. I don't know what they planned, but until the end of Std 6 I showed little improvement.

Another school activity in which I did not shine was gardening. In Std 5 each boy was allocated a small plot of land in an undeveloped part of the property which could be flood-irrigated, and in one period per week we had to work at producing vegetables off it. But the clay soil was so hard that it took

me weeks to dig it over before I could plant anything. Most boys opted for something simple, like mealies. I wanted to be different and raise cucumbers, but by the time I was ready to sow the seed, the season was wrong. I don't think I grew anything, and Kiep was not amused.

Goof, the principal, retired and was replaced by A. D. Dodd. We were not impressed. Whenever he addressed the school he would say, "*Mrs Dodd and I have decided...*, so inevitably he became known as "Mrs Dodd's husband."

The Second World War ended in 1945. There was a huge gathering at the municipal sports grounds, a joyous but solemn occasion, with prayers, choirs and hymn singing. I felt very moved, as I think everyone did. There was, for us, an important spin-off. For years we had suffered from the total absence of chocolates from the shop shelves. One day there was a shout – "*There are chocolates in the shop up the road!*" This caused a stampede, for those who had pocket money. What a thrill!

But in Germany the civilian population who had lost their homes and families in the bombing raids, were starving. Mom, Aunt Dolly and many others were organised to send food parcels to these desperate people. We regularly helped a Frau Dobrogoisky in this way. As Aunt Dolly was fluent in German, she made many trips to Germany where she had many friends.

High school

Standard 7 (Grade 9) was the first year of high school. Subject choices were limited to Latin and Mathematics, or Bookkeeping and Commercial Arithmetic. As the school was so small, there were no other possibilities. Of course most of us chose the former, although we realised that this meant four years of suffering trying to learn Latin, compounded by the fact that the teacher ruled by fear. Although not young, H. F. le Roux was an energetic, dominating, over-strict driver, tolerating no nonsense or poor work. When he strode into the classroom, nose in the air, we trembled. A pompous man, he was very proud of his big black horse, which he paraded through the streets in

week-ends. But in spite of all this he achieved results. I did well in Latin, achieving an A in matric, but certainly did not enjoy it.

In fact I began to do well in all subjects. In every exam from then on right up to matric I was top of the class, unlike in my primary school career. Another big improvement was the replacement of our principal, Mrs Dodd's husband, by Herbie Arnot, a young, dynamic leader, who turned the school around into a leading educational institution. He remained at the helm until his retirement, becoming a legend, a book having been written about him ("Herby Arnot" by Prozesky, 2009). He earned the respect of everyone, pupils and parents alike. He worked tirelessly to achieve the building of new hostels for boys and for girls, which, sadly for me, came about only after I had left.

Herbie was not happy with the fact that the school had only one sports field. The undeveloped land where the Std 5's had their vegetable gardens was big enough for an extra sports field, so this became a project in which we were all involved. Trees and bushes had to be removed before the land could be levelled, and we boys put in hours and days of hard work at this. There were some accidents and injuries, but in the end the farmer who had promised to level the site with his tractor and scraper was able to make a start. Once the land was levelled, we had to plant the grass. This led to another problem – the mower that had always been used to cut the grass was no longer adequate. The mower used to be dragged slowly across the field by a team of donkeys. So this system was scrapped, the school investing in a bakkie to tow a better mower and do it faster. There was, however, yet another problem. The bakkie acquired was a seriously vintage Ford, which had to be pushed to start it. Once it was going, it did the job adequately and was also very useful as a delivery vehicle. We loved to ride on it. So our new sports field was soon ready, and we named it the Murray Field after the farmer who had helped.

Next Herbie started school cadets. After much drilling and training of the band, we were able to parade the streets of the town for special occasions, attracting considerable admiration from the citizens. I enjoyed it. Once we were transported by the army to their shooting range outside the town, where they endeavoured to train us in the firing of bren guns. Quite scary at first, but

satisfying to hit small metal plate targets far away in spite of closing my eyes in fear when firing a burst.

Another achievement of Herbie's was a successful boycott. When the municipality greatly increased the price of an entry ticket to the town swimming pool, Herbie urged us to boycott the pool. We did. The price came down! And the school built its own pool (after I had left).

On the music front, however, things were not going so well. I continued to dislike the piano as an instrument, but what was worse was the departure of Sister Sieglinde and my assignment to Sister Camella. How her many pupils stuck it out, I do not know. She was a terror. For errors she would clout me hard on the back of my head and hit my offending fingers with the sharp edge of a ruler. I warned my parents that I would run away from school unless they let me drop music. This they reluctantly agreed to. What a relief.

1947 was the year of the Royal Visit. The King and Queen, with their two Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret, travelled the length and breadth of South Africa in a specially constructed "White Train", hauled, of course, by steam locomotives. They honoured us by a brief visit. Their Daimler car, open-roofed so that everyone could see them, drove past our school. We had made a huge sign at the side of the road, saying "WELCOME" in brightly coloured flowers. The queen stood up in the car to have a look, a big smile on her face, which we appreciated, but the king remained seated, staring straight ahead. Of course, he was not well, and did not live much longer. But to his credit, he did something unexpected. At the corner of Somerset and Donkin Streets (on the way to school from our hostel) there is a statue in honour of those who gave their lives in defence of the Republics during the Boer War. Seated on chairs at the roadside next to the statue were a number of elderly people of whom some were Boer War veterans. As the royal car turned the corner, the king stood up and saluted. This surprising gesture caused these people to stand up out of respect and appreciation. Reconciliation without a word spoken!

The next interesting event was that the big dam above the town overflowed. Not since its construction had this ever happened. To our great

delight the town decided that this merited the declaration of a public holiday. Schools and businesses closed while everyone went to see the wonderful sight. It was our own version of the Victoria Falls – really impressive.

At the hostel I now moved to the biggest dormitory, called "The Porch." In the old days it must have been an open-sided, roofed shelter for livestock, as it was very long. The outside wall had long windows, but without glass – they were enclosed with gauze netting wire. It was bitterly cold in winter, particularly when it snowed, in spite of the canvas blinds being rolled down. To make matters worse, early morning cold showers remained compulsory. The best-contrived plans to avoid this always failed, as the prefects were merciless. On the positive side, though, in summer while lying in bed after lights-out, I enjoyed the fine view of the mountains bathed in moonlight, thinking pleasant thoughts like the approaching end of term and back home. In the early morning I would wake up before nearly everyone else, to the sound of a thousand cocks crowing, echoing in the mountains (most residents kept fowls). I loved it.

One night after lights out, the municipal power station started blowing its steam whistle to sound an alarm. I yelled "*FIRE*!" The boys from the upstairs dorm came down in a rush to shout "*The Volkskool's on fire!!*" In a second we were all upstairs looking through the windows. Sure enough, we saw sparks, flames and jet black smoke boiling into the night sky, only a block away. Herbie came over to say that we could go and watch, but we had already gone. The whole of the town seemed to be arriving, most, like us, in pyjamas. The roof upstairs was burning like match-wood, and in a second it collapsed with a roar to set the first floor ablaze, forcing the crowd to retreat. Soon the tower collapsed, carrying half the wall with it, setting the ground floor alight. It was an awesome spectacle. The wood floor of the upstairs caved in and the principal's office went up in flames. We watched the silver cups and trophies in the display cabinets simply melt down, clearly visible through the French Windows. Only now did the "fire engine" arrive. It was a small trailer, and after a struggle it started pumping water through several hoses, but the nozzles flew off. After fixing them back on, the operators didn't

really know what to do, spraying first in one direction and then in another. At 11-30 Herbie called us back to bed, but in our excitement we could not quickly get to sleep. Early next morning we were back at the scene, to find the remains of the building still smouldering. The whole main block of the school had been destroyed. That afternoon we were made to catch up on our lost sleep. On the positive side, this disaster enabled a smart new high school to be built on a different site from the primary school.

Although there was a good boy scout troop in town, our trio of Colin, Duimpie and I preferred to climb the mountains in the week-ends, building stone forts and signalling to one another from hill top to hill top in semaphore with home-made flags. They would also help me catch butterflies for my collection. We became three philatelists, ordering stamps from overseas dealers for our albums. Sometimes we would walk three miles along the dusty road to the local aerodrome to admire the two or three little planes based there – a Tiger Moth (biplane with two open cockpits), a Fairchild and often an Avro-Anson used for spraying locust swarms. We sadly could never raise the 10 shillings (R1) needed for a 15-minute flip.

But some things were not such fun. There were many quarrels and fights, as boys will be boys. One guy used to tease me about my surname, and this annoyed me so much that I began to beat him up. This, however, was the signal for a large crowd to rush out to demand a fair fight, with boxing gloves. This was the way fights were always settled, and it was not a bad idea. So the gloves were tied on, and we squared up to start the match. All of us had received some training in boxing from our enthusiastic housemaster, Bernie Pitman, but I did not enjoy it, especially not on an occasion such as this. The fight did not last long. It so happened that my opponent had shorter arms than mine, and while I was a reluctant fighter, I found that all I had to do was hold out my left, and he just ran into it repeatedly until I was pronounced the winner, amid the cheers of the crowd. I really did not enjoy this episode, but at least I was no longer teased.

Another disappointment for me was the camping trip planned for a large number of us more senior boys to climb Nadouwsberg, the second highest

peak, after Kompasberg, in the Sneeuberg range. I was hugely looking forward to this trip, but was stopped by the housemaster who decided that I would not make it because of my asthma. What a huge disappointment, and a mistake, as I had already outgrown my asthma, and did a lot of mountain climbing in the week-ends anyway. My protests were in vain.

Then I went down with chickenpox. Trevor Kingwill also had it, and when we had recovered enough but had to go into quarantine, he invited me to his farm „Grootplaas' near Murraysburg, for a week or two. But it was not such an enjoyable time, because all that Trevor wanted to do was play "*kleilat*", while all I wanted to do was climb the hills and explore the farm.

But good things also happened. The Drostdy Hotel decided to offer free dinners every Sunday to two boys from the hostel, obviously to encourage business from parents. A roster was drawn up, and for a long time and repeatedly we more senior boys enjoyed this privilege. After the poor hostel food, this was heaven, as the Drostdy dinners had become famous.

I also enjoyed church. Apart from being able to get away from the hostel, we also had some fun. From an early age we were required to join the choir. As I loved music, this was good, but we got up to all sorts of mischief, like deliberately dropping our heavy pennies on the wooden floor during the sermon. The organ was good and strong, but had to be pumped manually. There was a long pump lever in a room behind the organ, operated by the caretaker, but sometimes when he did not show up, two of us would have to perform this task. When the organist wanted to play, he would press a button which flashed a light in the pump room to start pumping. There was a lead weight on the end of a string which had to hang between two painted white lines. If the weight dropped below the bottom line, we were pumping too hard and the bellows might burst. If the weight went above the top line, the organ wouldn't have enough wind to play. The temptation was too great. Deliberately we stopped pumping and watched the weight move above the line. The organ literally expired with a sad decrescendo, the notes falling down the scale. The light flashed frantically, and to avoid too much suspicion

we quickly restored the air supply. We knew that it would be dangerous (to us) to repeat this trick too often, so we didn't.

Another duty we were called upon to perform in the absence of the caretaker was to ring the bell at the required times before a service. The rope hung down through a hole in the ceiling, and as it was a large, heavy bell, it took some effort to get it going. Once ringing, it was very dangerous not to let the rope go at the right moment, or one would be pulled up to hit the ceiling. The bell actually had a beautiful tone.

A large number of us were confirmed by the Bishop, who had come up from George. Again, it was a vaguely spiritual experience for me, but without any challenge to my way of life or commitment. Neither were the "SCA" meetings which were occasionally held in one of the dormitories by a housemaster. He told us some wonderful Christian stories which inspired us, but again, I don't think it made much difference to the way I was living.

Holidays

Leave-out week-ends were always a welcome break. At Bluegum House Johan and Willem were doing home schooling, and now old enough to walk long distances. We wandered up kloofs in the Wapadsberg mountain range, delighting in the discovery of hidden springs ("fountains" in Karoo English) and pools amongst the rocks and cliffs. We would report problems that we found, like lambs that were sick, and broken fences. Uncle Johnnie entrusted me with a .22 rifle, and we three boys went dassie hunting. Dassies were regarded as a pest, and the local councils paid a standard reward of sixpence for each pelt. After many misses I managed to shoot one. I often went horse riding alone, but mostly with J and W. We had our duties with sheep, helping to bring the flocks into the kraals and catching them one by one by their back legs for „dosing' or shearing. Otherwise we played lots of tennis.

Mom, Dad and Billy would occasionally visit the Loock's farm during the shorter school holidays, so it was great to be together. One warm summer evening we decided to play a trick on Johan and Willem. There was a small, very old cemetery surrounded by stone walls, with tall, dark church-yard

cypresses. It was located other side a field about 300 metres from the house. The plan was for me to hide in the cemetery as darkness began to fall. Dad then invited J and W to go for a walk. They agreed. When they got near to the cemetery I clanked a piece of iron and started playing mournful music on my recorder (I had taken up recorder-playing since dropping the piano). The plan worked perfectly. J and W let out terrified screams and ran back home as fast as they could. They were not amused when I confessed later.

Karoo farmers were always battling with drought. Water was so important that every time it rained, Aunt Hettie would phone me at the hostel to tell me the good news and the exact amount of rain measured.

With one of the longer holidays approaching, I invited Duimpie to come with me, but we decided to travel by ship. We took the overnight train to P.E. and embarked on the Warwick Castle, one of the smaller ships of the Union Castle Line. We really enjoyed the three-day trip to Cape Town. By this time I had made good friends with Hugh Taylor, son of previously-mentioned Doris Taylor who had "The Shack" at Cape Point. Hugh worked for the Department of Forestry and was District Forest Officer for the Langeberg / Cape Agulhas area. Duimpie and I went on a trip with him to inspect boundary beacons in the mountains, camping out in the wild at night. Round the campfires we would listen with rapt attention to Forester van Rooyen tell stories of encounters with leopards in the Cederberg and other interesting experiences from his long life. Another interesting trip was an inspection of the sand dune reclamation work at Quoin Point, between Gansbaai and Cape Agulhas. There was no road to Quoin Point from Gansbaai. We embarked on a horse-drawn Cape cart and rode the 30 km all along the beach, past Pearly Beach (no houses there in those days) until we reached Quoin Point. Here the foreman's temporary dwelling was a sort of tent made of thatch grass. The trip had been an unforgettable experience.

But all too soon the holiday came to an end, and we had to return to school, this time with the Winchester Castle back to P.E. and on the train again.

For one of the short holidays I took Johan and Willem with me on the train to and from Cape Town, and we had good times together.

At home Billy and I did a lot of hiking on the mountain, and when we moved house in 1949 from Newlands Road to Bergvliet, there was a whole new environment to explore, on bicycle and on foot. There were many unfenced vineyards close by, through which we could cycle. Today most have been replaced by housing estates. We particularly enjoyed cycling in the late afternoon up to Constantia Nek, down to Hout Bay and around Chapman's Peak, from where we would admire the sunset over the ocean, silhouetting Hangberg. Then back home via Fish Hoek, in the dark, with our dynamos working overtime to light the way. These trips took about three hours.

On the music front, although I had given up the piano, I had taken up recorder playing and now had bought myself a fife. I practiced diligently, but it was difficult to find a quiet place to do so at the hostel. One Saturday night I walked into the dorm to get ready for bed, to find a crowd of boys having a chat with Herbie. According to my diary, "*They called for me to play my fife, but that was too embarrassing so I fled outside. But someone eventually caught me and dragged me back. They forced me at "sword point" to play for Herbie, so I played Sarie Marais, which they liked – my first appearance in public!*"

Some other extracts from my 1949 diary (age 15/16):

"*Thismorning we spent a whole period pushing the croc (the school lorry) to start it. At the end of the period we found that the petrol tank was empty....*

"*Our class photo was taken again 'cos Herbie said we broke the camera last time...*

"*There is a swallow's nest in the corner of the quad with 3 babies in it. They all lean over and open their ugly mugs wide when we walk past....*

"Last night at 10 past 9 matron got a heart attack and passed away. So now we are without a matron.....

"Today nothing happened 'tall....

"Thisevo the new matron arrived, a miss (mrs) somebody-or-other. She looks quite nice....

"Thisavo I tried to practise my flute, but each time I took it out a crowd gathered and I had to oblige them with the few tunes I could play.

"Thisavo I went to the fort to practice my flute to get away from the crowds. But the fort was too windy, so I go a few paces behind, where I have a music stand out of an aloe stem!

Sports Day: "I had 6 chops and 2 sausages for lunch, and had to decline the Matthews' invitation for lunch as we were a bit full....

"Aunty Hettie took me to tea and we had as much cake as we could eat – it was in aid of something.....

"Aunty Hettie phoned to say she was bringing a cake for the exams.....

"Thismorning I had 4 fried eggs for breakfast and we beat Grey School at cricket...

"Ate so many grapes (stolen off the vines when the prefects weren't around) that I have the itchy bumps....

"Herbie said that those that pinch apricots musn't report a tum ache, 'cos Matron will chase them away, and he hopes they die a slow, agonising death....

*"Mr Meyer (*English teacher*) has given me a free Public Library subscription for 1949!*

"There were so many cows in the shed that when they chewed, it was one roar....

"Thisavo Herbie made us queue up on the lawn, and demanded catapults. The owners had to bend over, while the squeakers took the catties and shot them. They missed (most of them), and so Herbie had a shot himself!"

CHAPTER 3

TRAINS

This was at the time when the principal means of long distance travel was by train. Roads were mostly untarred, and infested with farm gates which had to be opened and closed. Air travel was in its infancy, whereas most destinations could be reached by train.

Trains have always been an important part of my life. My father's models, as well as train trips often undertaken by the family, made this inevitable. But boarding school gave this a new meaning. It was agony or ecstasy, depending on which way I was travelling. From Cape Town to Graaff-Reinet took more than a day and two nights, ensuring plenty of time for apprehension to grow. But the return trip was sheer joy.

Cape Town to Graaff-Reinet

The daily Cape Town to Port Elizabeth (P.E.) train included a through-coach to Graaff-Reinet once a week only, departing Cape Town on Sundays at 4 p.m. This meant arriving at school a day late, which for seven years was a great source of satisfaction!

Departure

On Sunday morning my big trunk would be packed, locked, roped for security and loaded into my father's 1941 Chevrolet. Off we went to Claremont station to buy my ticket (Claremont-Graaff-Reinet return) and hand in the trunk for transport in the guard's van. Back at home I packed my other bags and tuck box (a padlocked paraffin tin full of goodies for the term). After changing into white shirt and tie, grey shorts and school blazer, my apprehension grew exponentially as the time for our departure to Cape Town station approached. As we drove, I would often announce from the back seat,

"I've forgotten something...." In rising anger my parents would demand "What?" My reply lowered the temperature. "My manners," I said.

Parking was always difficult to find at the old Cape Town station, but once secured, a porter had to be found for my baggage. The porter's number was taken and we followed him through the entrance gates to platform 14, where my parents had to purchase their sixpenny platform tickets. Platform 14 was a hive of activity. It was packed with passengers and families to see them off, and with porters shouting, "Mind the barrow!" It was difficult passing the guard's van while mail bags were being loaded. As each bag was thrown in, its destination was shouted out for the guard to record – places like "Robertson!" "Swellendam!" "Mossel Bay!" and virtually all stations to P.E. and Graaff-Reinet.

We checked the notice board to find the number of my coach and compartment, to be confirmed by the card clipped on the outside of the coach. We actually needn't have looked, as the Graaff-Reinet composite 1st and 2nd class coach was always the last one of the train, right next to the guard's van.

The entire train consisted of clerestoried, wooden, balcony coaches. New or renovated coaches looked particularly smart with their silver, bitumen-painted roof tops and varnished woodwork. In the compartments wash basins were only in 1st class, and there were no showers.

Once my luggage was installed in the compartment we would stroll towards the front of the train, stopping to check the dining car. These were always single diners, each named after a river, e.g. *Liesbeek.* On departure the black-uniformed waiters would stand at attention, evenly spaced down the aisle and facing the platform. This was a rather pointless but nice tradition which, of course, is no more. During the war years waiters were replaced by waitresses, looking rather sombre in black.

We resumed our walk the length of the train to await the arrival of the engine enveloped in clouds of steam and smoke, always a class 23. Once it had coupled onto the train, my father, being a model engineer (his class 16DA no. 844 is on display in the Outeniqua Railway Museum), would usually chat

with the driver, until near departure time when we had to walk back to my coach. By this time I was beginning to feel very unhappy indeed.

The first bell rang at 5 minutes to 4, resulting in a surge of activity and farewells as passengers took their places on the train. The second bell went, whistles blew and the train began to move slowly out of the station. I would lean far out of the window to wave to my parents and brother for as long as possible until they had finally faded from view. Then, in my younger years, I would rush to the toilet, lock the door and cry my heart out. After a minute or two I would feel better, and return to my compartment. I was always grateful that my father paid for me to travel first class, sharing a compartment with three others instead of five. In earlier years I was the only pupil of Union High School to travel all the way from Cape Town.

First afternoon en route

Once settled in I would immediately take up station on the nearest balcony at the end of the coach. The passing rail-side scenes and scenery always held my intense interest. Here I would remain until too tired to stand any longer, returning to the compartment for a brief rest.

Slowly gathering speed as we made our way through seemingly endless lines of stationary coaches, goods trucks, shunting engines and the huge Paarden Eiland loco sheds, we proceeded via the relief mainline to avoid Salt River. The tracks were not welded end to end, with the result that there was considerable "wheel talk." Bellville was our first stop.

After Kraaifontein the train would stop at every single station and siding all the way to Graaff-Reinet. This would explain why it took two nights and a day to make the trip! However, the frequent stops were no problem for me, as the longer it took to get to school, the better, as far as I was concerned.. Stops were also necessary to allow for the passing of frequent trains from the opposite direction or for passing goods trains in the same direction.

Some two hours after departure from Cape Town we stopped at Sodendal (now Soetendal), a small siding soon after Wellington. From this spot it was possible to catch a last view of Table Mountain, appearing briefly

in the far distance between the hills. This was usually a traumatic moment for me, as my last connection with home now disappeared. I must emphasize that although I was happy at boarding school, I suffered intense homesickness on these train trips in the earlier years.

Soon after Hermon (junction for Porterville) the chimes would announce the call to dinner. As my pocket money did not stretch to more than two meals in the dining car, I was given sandwiches for the first meal on the train, but I made sure I was on the balcony as the train passed through the scenic Tulbaghkloof. It was fun watching cars on the road below. The new road on the opposite side of the valley had not yet been constructed.

Having passed through Wolseley (junction for Ceres), the orange street lights of Worcester (they are still orange) appeared ahead. We very slowly entered the station to allow for wheel tapping, which is no longer done here. This was our first long stop. At 9 p.m. this was the last chance to buy sweets before bed time. Here our class 23 locomotive was replaced by two class 14CR's. Double-heading with these small-wheeled engines was necessary for the hilly country ahead with sharp bends and steep gradients.

Monday

Dawn would find us round about Riversdale. Soon the chimes would announce breakfast, and I would rush down to find a good seat. Being under 12 years of age, breakfast was one shilling and ninepence (17½ cents). This being my last good breakfast until the end of term, I ate slowly, savouring each mouthful of cereal, baked fish, fried egg and bacon, "savoury mince on toast," toast and marmalade, and coffee. These old dining cars were so poorly sprung that they bounced like a bucking horse, which made getting a cup of coffee to your mouth quite a hazardous operation.

There was a water stop at Albertinia, then a long descent to the Gouritz (spelt with a "z" in those days) River Bridge, which was impressive when viewed from my usual position on the balcony. As we crossed the bridge our 14CR's opened their regulators wide to attack the daunting gradient and hairpin bends out of the valley. We gradually lost momentum, until on a sharp

bend in a deep cutting the train shuddered to a halt. This always happened. Slowly we reversed back to the bridge and tried again. Occasionally this manouvre was crowned with success, but mostly we struggled to another juddering halt. The only solution to this problem was to wait for the next train coming from behind and borrow its engine to push the train to the top of the hill. We usually had to wait about half an hour for this kind of service. My hope was always that it would take much longer, to ensure a late arrival at school, but as the Graaff-Reinet coach would in any case have to wait 3 hours for the next train at Klipplaat, this little delay was of no help to me.

From the top of the hill there was an easy run, with stops at sidings such as Cooper, to pick up school children for Mossel Bay schools. The line took us straight into Mossel Bay. Today the line cuts out the town and proceeds straight to Hartenbos. We arrived in the island platform at 10 a.m. and our pair of 14CR's left the train for the loco sheds located at the end of the harbour. Water tanks under the coaches were topped up and gravity tanks in the roof filled by means of hand pumps in the toilets. As the train had to be reversed, there was plenty of time to stock up on sweets from the station café. A single GD Garratt engine now arrived to shunt the guard's van and third class coaches to the other end of the train, and soon we resumed our journey in the reverse direction, pulled by this little engine. In later years the GD was replaced by the larger and more powerful class GEA. Passing the siding of Hartenbos on the way, the next stop was Little Brak. In later years two of my classmates, twin sisters, boarded the train here. A long water stop at Great Brak provided the usual opportunity for me to walk to the front of the train to inspect the engine.

This small Garratt was not capable of great speeds, and it took more than two hours to reach George. "*Panther shoes - for the lady who cares*" proclaimed a large advertisement on the platform. In later years another of my schoolmates boarded the train here. A number of passengers now left the train to board the Knysna passenger train waiting alongside Platform 3. Sometimes if our train was late, we had to await the arrival of the P.E.-Cape Town train along Platform 2. I would look longingly at this train, wishing I

could jump across to join it and go home. But three passenger trains in the station was an impressive sight, considering how derelict the station now is.

Having watered the GD, we were now ready to depart. But there was no ways that a GD could pull a long train over Montagu Pass, so an ancient 7th class engine attached itself to the rear of the train to push. Off we went, both engines whistling repeatedly as we wound our way through level crossings (no bridges over the line) and between houses with people waving. Standing on the balcony I always found this performance thrilling. Soon we started the very slow ascent of the Pass in an easterly direction, exhaust sounds from both ends of the train echoing in the forests.

Eventually we reached the sharp hairpin bend taking the route westwards. The curve was negotiated at a very slow pace, with wheel flanges screaming – why do they no longer scream on this curve with today's trains? Subsequent curves produced more screaming, echoing in the deep cuttings. Every time we entered one of the seven tunnels, suffocating coal smoke soon forced me off the balcony to seek breathable air inside the compartment.

It took one hour to do the 14 km from George to the stop at Power, with a climb of 280 metres above the town. Here the tired locos took on water. Power was also the usual crossing point for the P.E. – Cape Town train. By now lunch was in progress in the dining car, but I had my sandwiches supplied from home.

The route from Power becomes more spectacular, tunnels alternating with gushing mountain streams and views of the old road constructed by Thomas Baines far below. In my earlier years of travel this was still the main road between George and Oudtshoorn. It was only in the late 1940's that I was able to watch the gradual construction of the new Outeniqua Pass road proceeding up the mountains far across the valley.

Eventually we reached Topping, the highest point of the pass at 742 m above sea level, from where I had my last good look at the disappearing sea on the far horizon. The train stopped here briefly, with our two engines on either side of the tunnel, to allow the class 7 to uncouple and return to George. As

we began our long descent towards Oudtshoorn, with the vegetation gradually changing from fynbos to Karoo, I began to feel that a part of me had been left behind, knowing that I would be stuck in the Karoo now for a long time.

After a water stop at Camfer, we reached Oudtshoorn between 4 and 5 p.m. At the main road level crossing (no overhead bridge) just before the station, there were no flashing red lights to warn traffic of the approaching train, only a large bell which tolled mournfully as we passed. This sound did nothing for my low spirits at this point! The station café was my last chance to buy sweets (no chocolates during World War 2). By this time I was usually alone in my compartment, other passengers having alighted at previous stations along the way. Our GD was exchanged for a class 19D, and we set off for the long, fairly level run alongside the Olifants River.

Passing the famous red conglomerate cliffs on the left, we stopped at the small but busy stations of Le Roux, Vlakteplaas, and Rooiloop, the Swartberg mountain range drawing steadily closer. We usually passed a goods train from the opposite direction at Snyberg, a water stop. In the summer months there were often spectacular thunderstorms brewing darkly in the mountains above us, reflecting my mood of growing nervousness about school the next day.

As darkness fell, the chimes summoned me to the dining car for my last decent meal. Dinner was two shillings and one penny (22 cents). Soon afterwards we stopped at Uniondale Road (now Barandas) where three of my friends boarded the train. They were the sons of apple farmers in the Langkloof, so boxes of apples formed a large part of their luggage.

Next stop was Toverwater (now Toorwater), after which we entered the spectacular Poort through the Swartberg mountain range. Standing on the balcony I never ceased to be thrilled by the flickering orange glow from the open firebox door of the engine, reflected on the towering, folded quartzite cliffs above. A pale moon would illuminate ghostly pools in the river below. All too soon we emerged from the Poort and stopped at Vondeling. Bed time.

Tuesday

Sometime after midnight I was awakend by the "gasp" of vacuum pipes being disconnected as my coach was shunted off the train at Klipplaat junction, the train proceeding on the P.E. line. Some hours later the same sound woke me again, as the coach was picked up by the train from Mossel Bay to Johannesburg. After another three hours I was vaguely aware of a repeat performance as my coach was finally deposited in the siding adjoining the main platform of Graaff-Reinet station. A very lonely silence followed, until I was awoken at about 6 a.m. by the sound of a bugle from the nearby army camp (this was during the war years). In later years this train ran on different days, and my coach was then joined to the nightly P.E. – Graaff-Reinet passenger and fast goods train. Then I would awake at dawn, in time to see Spandau's Kop on the horizon, indicating the position of the town still an hour's run ahead. As the mountain slowly drew nearer my spirits would sink very low indeed, until at 7 a.m. we pulled into the platform and my trip was at an end. The train was seldom late.

A fast taxi whisked me off to school, and once settled, I was very happy there, all traces of homesickness evaporating once I was with my pals.

Train trips from Graaff-Reinet

The nightly passenger trains between Graaff-Reinet and P.E. were regularly used by our own and visiting sports teams over week-ends. When the MCC cricket team were playing the Springboks in P.E., the train had 15 coaches and before departure the kindly train driver invited us into the cab – 30 of us accepted! There were a fair number of asthma sufferers from P.E. at Union High, and I would spend some of the short holidays with friends in P.E., travelling by train. The roads between the two centres were bad and untarred, so train was the preferred means of travel.

For the two "leave-out" week-ends per term I was nearly always invited by friends to their farms. One friend was from a farm near Jansenville, which involved taking the P.E. train as far as Oatlands siding and being driven from

there at night. The return trip meant an early rise in order to catch the train at 4 a.m. back to school.

But more frequently I would visit Uncle Johnnie's farm in the wide valley near the Lootsberg Pass. The daily goods pick-up train to Rosmead, with a single composite class passenger coach/guards van, would leave the town at 9 a.m. on Saturday morning. I always enjoyed the scenery through Pretoriuskloof and past the "oasis" of Coloniesplaats, until we arrived at Bethesda Road station at 12. This was a busy time of the day for this station, as the southbound goods train usually arrived at the same time. Mail and parcels were offloaded, and collected by local farmers or the railway bus for Nieu Bethesda. There was a shop (good sweets), a hand-operated petrol pump, and the local manual telephone exchange. I was met by Jonas with a mule cart, and arrived at the farm just in time for lunch. It was a short week-end, however, as I had to be back at the station to catch the train back to town at midday the next day.

Graaff-Reinet station was often a place to visit if there were no other events during a week-end. In 1950 it was awarded the Lady Duncan Trophy for the best kept station in South Africa. (Sadly now the line is closed, the buildings derelict and the tracks being stolen). A group of us would walk there to watch the shunting operations performed by the resident 8th class engine, similar to one of my father's models. There was usually a 19D parked in the shed, and sometimes a goods train would depart. I could never help looking longingly down the line to the south. We usually concluded the outing with a visit to the power station across the tracks. The three massive boilers, and the electric generators (one large turbine and two enormous reciprocating engines) never ceased to impress us.

At school (where I rapidly outgrew my asthma problem) a high point for me was the day when the list for train bookings for the end of term was circulated – a brief moment of excitement. Another was the Sunday morning church early Communion service, as this often coincided with the passing of the northbound Johannesburg train a few blocks away. There was almost something spiritual about kneeling at the communion rail, with the sun

streaming through the beautiful stained-glass windows and the train roaring through the town to get up enough speed to tackle the steep gradient north of the town, and echoing in the surrounding mountains.

Graaff-Reinet to Cape Town

Wednesday

As Cape Town was regarded as too far from Graaff-Reinet to justify my returning home for the short holidays, I usually went home only twice a year. But because of the long train journey, my school always allowed me to leave on the Wednesday of the last week of term, as the Mossel Bay trains only passed through the town on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The through-coach to Cape Town only left on Sundays. So Wednesday was the great day. In a frenzy of excitement I would rush back from school to pack my big trunk and tie it up with ropes (the locks didn't work). At 4 p.m. the taxi (usually a Hudson "*Terraplane*") arrived to take me and my trunk to the station to book it into the guard's van. I walked back to the hostel and after an early supper I said good-bye to my jealous pals and loaded my portmanteau, blankets in rug-straps, and tuck box into the waiting taxi, bound for the station.

The train was never late, and at 7 p.m. I would nearly faint with excitement as the class 19B plus 19D steam locomotives stormed up the hill into the station with the long Johannesburg – Mossel Bay train.

I joined the crowd at the "preekstoel" ("pulpit") for the conductor to assign me to my coach and compartment number. This usually took some time, as my name was always spelt incorrectly on his list. Invariably I was assigned to an empty 4-berth compartment, which was a real privilege. These old balcony coaches might have had drab exteriors, but the ornate interiors were something else. The smell of the teak and mahogany varnished panelling, the green leather seats, the many little round light bulbs (one green) and the row of sepia photos of South African scenery in far-away places unknown to me, always fascinated me. Immediately I sat on two cushions at the window to await departure

The station foreman rang the brass bell to clear the platform, and waved his lantern towards the rear of the train to confirm readiness for departure. In response the guard waved his green lantern, and with a whistle from up front we were off. Once clear of the station, the green lantern from the guard confirmed that all was well, this signal being acknowledged by another whistle.

As soon as the conductor had checked my ticket and the attendant had made my bed, I put off the lights and sat at the window to watch the moonlit veld passing by, with a feeling of indescribable contentment. A source of huge satisfaction was to watch Spandau's Kop slowly receding to the rear. After passing through sleeping stations like Kendrew, a distant light became visible far ahead over the dark vlaktes (plains). It took some time to reach this light – a single pressure lantern as the sole illumination of Aberdeen Road station. Passengers and mail were exchanged at this brief stop.

Some three hours after leaving Graaff-Reinet the lights of Klipplaat town became visible ahead. We were always held up briefly at the outer home signal, but soon we drew alongside the island platform of this important junction. The impression gained was that this was a huge railway centre. There seemed to be a great many locos shunting, their dynamos whistling, and a hive of activity. (Having recently seen this centre in the daylight for the first time, I couldn't believe the ruin and desecration of the former station and the town as well). I would immediately jump onto the platform and go straight up to the thick mahogany counter of the station café, where there was always a pot of delicious soup bubbling away on the primus stove. At sixpence a mug this was a real treat. Thereafter I would retire to bed, while the locos were changed for the journey ahead.

Thursday

After months of porridge-and-bread breakfasts, what a pleasure it was to have a scrumptious full breakfast in the twin dining car the next morning! This was soon after leaving Oudtshoorn. And as the train began its slow ascent of the north slopes of Montagu Pass, it was so good to see the dry Karoo

vegetation gradually being replaced by the greener fynbos. Then there was the thrill of seeing the sea again after the summit.

On the descent there was less smoke, so I could remain on the balcony as we passed through the seven tunnels.

At Power siding we stopped for water and apparently to let the brakes cool. Once I took my pal Colin Matthew with me for the holidays, and we both got out here to climb up the bank to walk through the flowering fynbos, knowing that it would, as usual, be a long stop. Colin, having been raised on a Karoo farm, was so enchanted by the greenery that he wandered further up the slope, while I ambled slowly back to the train, clambered aboard and watched him from the balcony. Suddenly with a short whistle the train started moving off – without him. I was frantic. How would Colin now get to Cape Town still a day and a half away? Would he get lost in the mountains trying to find his way? Suddenly the guard saw him, and waving his red flag, brought the train to a halt. "Buck up! We haven't got all day, man!" yelled the angry conductor as a very repentant schoolboy sheepishly climbed back on board. What a relief!

For the first few years I found the conductors quite intimidating. They always seemed very tall, uniformed in black, with a white peaked cap, silver braid and horn-rimmed spectacles. The English-speaking ones were as gruff as the Afrikaners. They would enter the compartment with their passenger list and look at me with a disapproving stare. There was never small talk, perhaps because they struggled to find my name on their list. My name was always spelt wrongly.

After George the views of the sea were a tonic, and at midday the train reached its destination of Mossel Bay. Here I had to change trains, with a 3-hour wait for the P.E. – Cape Town train. In later years the train from Johannesburg arrived at 10 a.m., which meant a 5-hour wait.

After checking my baggage into the cloak room I was off to explore the town. I particularly enjoyed walking to The Point, as Point High School was on the way, and I was able to gloat at seeing the children through the windows, hard at work, while I was free.

At 3 p.m. the Cape Town train pulled in and the GD was replaced by two 14CR's. This train was always full. But I did not mind having to share a compartment with three gentlemen, as they would invariably take me to the dining car for a lemonade – apparently I created a good impression in my school uniform.

Also travelling on the train one time were Colin Matthew's sister, Gene, and friends. The closer we got to Cape Town, the more nervous and homesick they became, as they were on their way to attend the nurses' training college there. This I could not understand. Surely no one travelling to Cape Town could be anything but happy!

With the small-wheeled 14CR's the run to Riversdale was less interesting, with stops at all sidings. The Gouritz River Bridge, however, was worth waiting for. With my friends (in later years) I would collect a good supply of stones at the stop before the bridge, and hurl them off the balcony to watch their long descent to the river far below.

The Reisiesbaan siding was of interest. On one side of the hill there was always a mountain of yellow ochre waiting to be loaded, while on the other side there was a mountain of white kaolin, both being mined / quarried in the same area. Today the ochre is still mined, but no longer the kaolin. After Reisiesbaan the country became more hilly, with sharp bends in the track, enabling frequent glimpses of the dining car ahead. By this time smoke began to come from its chimney as dinner was being prepared, accompanied by the most mouth-watering cooking aromas. The prospects of a non-boarding school dinner always set my tummy rumbling.

I enjoyed the approach to Riversdale, as the track fence was lined by waving, dancing, shouting children for a long distance, obviously enjoying the impressive double-headed 14CR's panting up the hill. It was now 6 p.m. and there was a one-hour stop at Riversdale for the loco's to be serviced. The station picket fence was adorned with advertisements announcing "*Germiston for factory sites*", "*Le Portrait, Cape Town's leading photographers*", and more. Just to see the word "*Cape Town*" was enough to remind me that the next day I would be home at last. Soon the chimes announced dinner, and

what a pleasure that was for a half-starved boy. The train was still in the station, but eventually our two serviced, beautifully polished and glistening 14CR's glided slowly down the hill next to us, drain cocks open and shrouded in clouds of steam. I always sat at a table on the left side so as not to miss this truly memorable sight. They quickly coupled on, and with darkness falling we were once more on our way.

Progress was slow in this hilly country at the foot of the Langeberg, with continuous sharp curves and steep gradients. The positive aspect of these conditions was the ever-changing vistas of the labouring locos, their headlights and the flickering glow from open firebox doors reflecting on steep hillsides. The lights of Heidelberg eventually became visible in a valley far below. It was now 9 p.m. and time to retire after a great day.

Friday

A mighty class 23 was setting a fast pace when I awoke around Wolseley. The train was much longer, but from where the extra coaches had come I did not know. The green of the vineyards and the blue of the mountains were a pleasure to see, after months in the Karoo, particularly when viewed from the breakfast table in the dining car.

Soon we entered the suburbs of Cape Town. I felt very proud as we hurtled past local and suburban trains waiting for us to pass. In clouds of steam and smoke, with whistle blowing, we thundered past station platforms where waiting crowds stepped back in awe – truly a thrilling experience!

We pulled into Cape Town station at 9 a.m. I cannot describe the feelings of unspeakable happiness and joy with which I met my parents and brother at last!

(Chapter 3 was published in 2009, with more technical detail, in **S A Rail Magazine** Vol. 47 no's 3 and 4, as **Part 1** and **Part 2** under the title **"Memories of Cape Town to Graaff-Reinet 1944 – 1950.")**

CHAPTER 4

FINAL SCHOOL YEAR

Our matric class of 1950 was small, only seventeen0. Many had left school at the end of Std 8 to work. We had travelled a long academic road together and now we were enjoying the respect of the school and some special privileges. We eagerly looked forward to finishing our school career, but were nervous of the final hurdle of the matric exams.

At the hostel I had been made a prefect. I enjoyed the special meetings we had with Herbie, in which he would take us into his confidence on many issues affecting morale. But of course we had duties and now had to behave ourselves.

On the music front I had bought an old eight-keyed military band flute from a pawn shop, but it was in bad condition. In spite of the struggle to coax music out of it, I very much wanted to enter for the Midlands Eisteddfod. My English teacher, Jack Meyer, was an excellent tenor soloist. He gave me lots of encouragement and introduced me to Mrs Labuschagne, a good piano teacher and leading musician in the town. She took me on, and we worked hard on a suitable piece, she as my accompanist. Jack was also entering for the eisteddfod, as a member of a men's quartet. I loved to listen to them as they rehearsed with Mrs L. Finally the day dawned, and I was very nervous. I duly performed before the adjudicator, Professor D.J. Roode from the University of the Free State, and an audience in the town hall, including my pals. The adjudicator made encouraging remarks about "this unusual talent in the Karoo" and awarded me 79%. I was thrilled. And later in the day Jack Meyer's quartet was judged "perfect." Prof. Roode said that this was the first time that he had enjoyed an eisteddfod. At a later school assembly I was called up by Herbie to be presented with a nice certificate confirming my achievement. I was very nervous to be called up in front of the whole school, but there were loud cheers.

However, this eisteddfod was only the "heats" in each of the towns of the Midlands, and I was required to perform again in the finals to be held in Middelburg. There were 39 girls and 4 boys who had to go there from Graaff-Reinet, mostly pianists. A kind local farmer generously provided transport – an open sheep truck with a canvas hood to keep out the wind and cold, which it didn't. It was mid-winter and we arrived in Middelburg frozen. The result was that my stiff fingers failed to perform well, and I failed to win any certificate. A miserable day. But nevertheless I had an encouragement - Grandpa sent me a special gift as a reward – a watch! My first one – I had never had one before. Unfortunately it was a very cheap one and lasted only two months. But for the matric exams Dad lent me a better one.

Later in the year the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra came to Graaff-Reinet to present a symphony concert. It was on a weekday night, and for a hostel boy to be allowed out, was unheard of. But Herbie, bless him, gave me permission and encouragement to attend. How I enjoyed that privilege and the wonderful concert! The programme started with Rossini's "Overture to the Thieving Magpie" *(La gazza ladra)*. I have never forgotten it. To this day it remains my favourite of all Rossini's wonderful, happy overtures.

Meanwhile back at home Dad had completed the construction of a rail track around the garden for his five-inch gauge class 16DA locomotive. "Train parties" became regular events for visitors, children and fellow model engineers to enjoy train rides, while Mom served teas. Once there were fifty visitors! Seventeen times round the garden were the equivalent of one mile, and Dad was doing an imaginative trip to Johannesburg, so at the end of a day's run he would chalk up on a board what station he had reached. Naturally he wanted to accumulate distance, and becoming oblivious of his passengers who had had enough and wanted to get off, he would keep shovelling coal into the firebox to keep going for as long as possible.

My school holidays did not always coincide with Bill's university holidays. On one occasion he was staying at The Shack with the Taylor's at Cape Point when I decided to join them. Lack of transport was no problem. I took a train to Fish Hoek, a bus to Kommetjie, and then walked from there to

Scarborough for a quick tea and scones before continuing on to Cape Point. I made a diversion to Buffels Bay to avoid an aggressive troupe of baboons, and then walked over the hill to the shack, which I reached at 6 p.m. But as Bill was not there I then *ran* an extra 3-or-so km (no road) to Diaz Beach, where I found him. We arrived back at the shack at 8 p.m. According to my diary I had walked about 24 miles, but I think it must have been about 30 km. Needless to say, I slept well that night

The choice of a career now became urgent, as I was still undecided well into the year. But after more trips in school holidays to the mountains, forests and plantations with Hugh Taylor, I realised that forestry was definitely what I wanted to do. My father tried to talk me out of it, as he had hoped that I would follow in his father's footsteps by studying law. But I was adamant. Bill had by this time already entered Stellenbosch University to do civil engineering, and I think Dad had still hoped that at least one of us would go into law. But having decided on forestry, I enjoyed Dad's full support.

I now had a new appreciation for the plants and trees growing in wooded kloofs of the mountains around Graaff-Reinet. Nearly every Sunday afternoon I would do a long hike, mostly alone, to Eerstefontein, up the kloof to the Valley of Desolation, and back to town. Eerstefontein kloof had some interesting indigenous trees, and Hugh Taylor identified them for me during a trip he made to Graaff- Reinet. There was one small tree high up on the mountainside which framed a spectacular view of the town far below. Although I had never had art lessons at school, I was determined to try to paint a picture of this scene. So I set off to climb the mountain one Sunday morning. Herbie saw me and asked me where I was going, so I told him. "Very good," he said. "Keep it up." With that encouragement I climbed fast. It took many trips to complete a small painting in watercolours, but I had it framed and kept it.

Herbie now introduced an annual cross-country race, junior and senior, and compulsory as usual. The circular route crossed the river (could be a challenge), went along paths and tracks of the lower mountain slopes, and after 4 or 5 kilometres returned to school. Not being a runner, it was hard work

for me, but I was determined to finish the course. Painfully I jogged onto the field at the end of the race, and was very surprised at the cheers of the crowd, as I was third last. I think that they respected me for finishing at all, knowing my poor athletic record!

Another sports dubious achievement for me was in cricket. Being compulsory, there were some really hopeless players, including me. We were placed in a special team and I was made captain! We even enjoyed playing.

Now that our matric class was more ‚mature', we no longer regarded the Volkskool as enemies, and on their side there was a similar change of attitude. Their matric class invited us to a social, and we were somewhat surprised to find them such a friendly bunch. Naturally we reciprocated, and it was a pleasure to later meet some of them as fellow students at Stellenbosch University. Cousin Johan was now at the Volkskool Primary, boarding with friends of his parents. I would see him often, sometimes helping him with his school work.

There was a leave-out week-end in which some of us stayed at the hostel. Herbie temporarily set aside the out-of-bounds restriction to allow us matrics free range of the town. A day-boy, John de Villiers, decided to entertain us one night. He led us to the municipal swimming pool, which was closed at night. Stealthily we scaled the high fence into the park. Very quietly, so as not to arouse the suspicions of neighbouring houses, we slipped into the pool for a skinny-dip. But while we were ever-so-quietly enjoying the water, there was suddenly a huge splash and noise - one idiot did a bomb-drop from the diving board. Aghast we fled out of the water, expecting alarm bells to sound, pulled on our clothes, quickly climbed the fence, and ran away down the road. But all was quiet. So we could have stayed longer. Nearly forty years later John de Villiers, as Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Natal, was to become the promoter for my Ph.D degree.

Life change

At the hostel there was a special dormitory reserved for prefects, so we soon got to know one another better. One of my colleagues was Fred Rubidge,

who was also Head Boy of the school. One Sunday afternoon he said to me, "Let's go for a walk." I was surprised, as up to then we had little in common – he was the sport champion of the school, whereas I preferred mountains. So we set off towards the school, chatting of this and that.

Suddenly, to my great surprise, he said that he had decided to let God run his life. This was a subject that was never talked about amongst ourselves in the hostel, although we all went to church and most of us kneeled down beside our beds every night to silently say our prayers after lights out. Fred continued. He said that God has a plan for our lives, and that if we listen to His voice and obey what He says, then we can find that plan and have a relationship with Him. "The trouble is," he said, "sin is the barrier between us and Him." He then proceeded to share with me what this meant in his own life, that he had measured his life against Christ's standards of absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love and realised what a mess his life was in. He shared with me the details of what God had told him was wrong in his life. I was stunned. Firstly because one simply does not talk about such private matters, and secondly because I was smitten to the heart in realising that I was guilty of exactly the same sins, including the ones that I did not want anyone to know about. He then told how he had decided to put right these wrongs and to make a conscious decision to let God run his life from then on. He had been honest with his father about the kind of son he had been, and had apologised to those whom he had wronged. After my initial shock, this all made so much sense to me that I found myself admitting to him that I had exactly the same problems. I desperately wanted what he had – a sense of purpose and direction in life, and to let God take control. "Then you had better tell Him so," he said.

By this time we had reached the school playing fields, which were deserted at that time. We got down on our knees at the side of the Murray Field, and I asked the Lord to take control of my life. We were spotted doing this by Toppies, the cantankerous and irascible old school caretaker who was on his way to milk his goats, grazing beyond the field. What he thought, I

don't know, but his attitude toward us in the ensuing weeks changed completely.

Fred taught me how to listen to God, instead of always asking Him what *I* wanted from *Him*. By simply writing down my thoughts during a time of quiet, I began to recognize His voice more clearly. I soon learned that the more I obeyed and acted on the thoughts that He gave me, the clearer His voice became. Also that what God says to me is more important than what I say to Him, or as someone said, "God has given us two ears and one mouth, so we should listen to Him twice as much as we talk to Him." Every day we would read to each other what we had written down. We called this "sharing guidance." In the crowded hostel environment it was difficult to find a private place in order to do this. Sometimes we would meet in the bathroom, sometimes in the street!

It became clear to me that what separates man from God is sin. Frank Buchman, the founder of Moral Re-Armament, said that "*Sin binds, blinds, deadens and deafens.... Hate it, forsake it, get honest about it and restore for it.*" So I wrote down where I had fallen short of Christ's standards of absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love. It was not a pretty picture, but I learnt that "a small sense of sin is a small sense of Christ." With real repentance Jesus willingly forgives, but many Christians stop there without facing the cost of their sin in the lives of people around them, as sin is never a private matter – it always affects someone else. I was especially convicted of my bitterness towards my father. I both feared him and hated him, mostly because of the way he treated my mother. But I also realised that I was no angel myself, and that I needed to be honest with him about the type of son I had really been up to now. My guidance from God was to do just that, and to ask his forgiveness. For a long time I agonised over the letter which I needed to write to him. It was the most difficult thing I had ever done in my life. But finally I put pen to paper. Eventually I posted it, with fear and trembling at what his reaction might be. His reply came a week later. I wish I had kept that letter. It was full of love, understanding, forgiveness and honesty, and a new relationship was born. This was so faith-building that I felt

on top of the world. This is precisely what the "prodigal son" did, as Jesus advised through telling that parable in Luke Ch.15 (verses 18, 19).

There were other things that I needed to put right. The minister of our Anglican Church had the unfortunate name of Rev. Leslie Lovely. Small wonder that we boys gave him a rough time. He had organized a picnic for the boarders of the school, in the wild and bushy country above the town dam. When it was time to return home, by pre-arrangement he was to blow a whistle to get us all together. But when the whistle blew, we were nowhere to be found. We were quietly hiding in the bushes, greatly enjoying his frantic efforts to find us. After a long time we eventually assembled, claiming that we had not heard the whistle. He was furious. God reminded me of this episode and I felt really bad about it. I knew that I should apologise to Rev. Lovely, but I wasn't the only one -what about the rest of us? Then I realised that God was speaking to ME, and that He would say the same to any of the others if they were to listen to Him. I found it a hard apology to make, but when I did, a new relationship developed between us. This was one of the many things that I needed to put right, finding in the process that the more I listened and obeyed, the clearer God's voice (the Holy Spirit, if you like) became.

My new-found freedom and reason for living was not something that I could keep to myself, and before long we had a growing group of boys in the hostel who had likewise committed their lives to the Lord. Duimpie was one of them. We found it essential to meet regularly and share the "guidance" we had received from God, checking it with the Bible and with each other. The trouble was, where could we find privacy in our overcrowded and noisy hostel environment? The solution was – the kitchen when not in use. So here we had great times together, and our lives were enriched as we helped one another, in complete honesty about our temptations (as Jesus was about His), failings and victories, having great fun doing so. We found that honesty was the beginning of victory over sin. I had written in my diary in June of that year: "*O Lord, how can I thank You enough for all that Fred has done for me?*"

The Bible took on a new meaning to us, and we learnt a lot from Fred's Dad, Charles. When he came to town from the farm we would meet at his

town house, and when a "leave-out" week-end came up, those of us who did not have a farm home to go to, would be invited to Fred's farm Zoetvlei, near Richmond. What wonderful times we had with the family and doing the exciting things one can always do on a farm. We learnt from Fred's Dad about his own change of heart regarding the farm. This was at the time of the "Wool Boom", when Karoo farmers were increasing their stock to take advantage of the record high wool prices, resulting in large scale overgrazing. But God said to Charles that he should not only NOT increase his stock, but actually REDUCE his stock, to improve the typically eroded veld. Supported by the family, at great sacrifice he had obeyed this guidance. He took us around the farm to show us the early results which were plain to see – grass was appearing where previously there had been none, and the erosion works he had installed were improving the moisture-holding capacity of the soil, thus checking donga formation. New springs were developing, resulting in an increase in water availability. All this eventually led to improved productivity. Charles used every opportunity to fight for sound farming practices in the country. For his efforts he received numerous national awards from the Agricultural Authorities.

(The "Wool Boom" enabled farmers to capitalise and purchase new vehicles. It was said that Rolls-Royce cars were popular, as there was a glass panel between the driver and the back seat, preventing the sheep from licking the farmer's neck!)

Back at school there was a growing group of girls at the girls' hostel who had also become involved in this new way of life, mainly thanks to the initiative of two of Fred's sisters (of whom he had five). One of them, Stella, was later to become the wife of my brother.

We began to encounter opposition from those who did not want to change. My girl friend, with whom I had a very detached sort of relationship, immediately dumped me. She had always been my partner at school dances, which were compulsory. I enjoyed her company because she loved to talk, and I was content just to listen. My reaction to being dumped was one of revenge – I decided not to ask her to be my partner at the matric farewell

dance as I knew that no one else would ask her. But God said that I should swallow my pride and nevertheless invite her, which I rather reluctantly did. She accepted, and so we were able to attend the function on a friendly basis.

By this time we learnt that we had become part of the worldwide action of Moral Re-Armament (MRA), a dynamic and challenging movement for creating a better world by changing people's fundamental motives. It was not another church – "you are in it or out of it according to the way you live", and it was not trying to get people *into* something, but rather something into people. (It was just before the Second World War, when nations were focussing on "re-armament" in response to the crisis, that Frank Buchman stated the need for "*moral* and *spiritual* re-armament". From then on the name "Moral Re-Armament" stuck). The news that was pouring in, of miracles in the lives of people and nations, was so amazing that I knew that this was something to live for, something that would demand my all.

School ends

Matric exams were written, and I was pleased with my „A' symbol for Latin.

The school prize-giving ceremony was held in the town hall. As I was to receive a number of book prizes for various subjects, as well as the Dux Medal for academics and the Goedhals and Papenfus bursaries, Mom and Dad and Bill came up specially for the occasion. Sir De Villiers Graaff (Leader of the Opposition United Party in Parliament) was guest speaker and handed out the prizes. When I was called up, he spoke to me. When I returned to my seat, my parents asked me what he had said. "I don't know," I said. Truth was, I was so nervous that I simply did not listen to him!

My name appears on the school honours board for these achievements in 1950. Typically, my name was spelt wrongly, but when I happened to mention this while chatting with the principal during a visit in 2010, he had it corrected at short notice.

Back at home I was not very enthusiastic at the prospect of a three month holiday waiting for the university to start, so I asked Hugh Taylor if he

could arrange temporary employment for me in forestry. A one month position as "labourer" was duly found for me at Garcia State Forest near Riversdale, early in 1951. Hugh said that he would take me there if I could meet him in Bredasdorp. I arrived there at the end of a very long, one-day train trip from Cape Town, the train seeming to get lost among the endless hills beyond Caledon.

Garcia is not a large plantation, but there were vast areas of mountain catchment in the Langeberg range to be managed. There were no inspection quarters, so a bed was installed in the office for my accommodation. Fortunately there was a fireplace I could use to boil water for coffee. There being no bathroom, I had to wash in the river, but this was no problem for me as there was a very beautiful secluded pool, and the weather was hot. For meals I had to walk a kilometre to the house of the Gerber family. He was a foreman on the staff. For lunch I was given sandwiches and a bottle of cold black coffee to take with me on my daily field excursions. The forester in charge was Oom Salie de Swardt, newly transferred to Garcia. I think my presence was a bit of an embarrassment, as the staff didn't quite know what do to with me.

Whenever they could not think of reasonable work for me I was assigned to Oom Piet, the nursery foreman. He was a short, thickset man with a wide-brimmed hat, shorts and boots without socks, but he was not unfriendly. My job was to prick out *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* seedlings and plant them 25 to a tray. I lost count of the thousands I transplanted, but it was infuriatingly boring work.

Fortunately there was more interesting work for me. I was assigned a government bicycle, and often had to pedal up a steep mountain pass to work in the plantation. I joined a man measuring trees and logs, work which I very much enjoyed. He insisted on addressing me as "Meneer", but at age seventeen this was embarrassing, so I felt compelled to address *him* as "Meneer", as he was old enough to be my father. So we "Meneered" each other from then on, but I learnt a lot from him.

The burning of firebreaks on the mountain slopes above the trees was an interesting project, involving the entire staff. My inexperience prevented any useful participation, and I just stood and watched.

I enjoyed fetching the post from Riversdale, a 12 km cycle ride past farms and smallholdings. I had to pedal very fast to avoid being overtaken by many angry dogs on the way.

The week-ends I spent exploring the beautiful kloofs and mountain slopes, along patrol paths which have now become part of a hiking trail system. I revelled in the beauty of God's creation.

Fred and I kept contact through letters in the post, a fellowship which I really valued.

The Gerbers looked after me very well, regarding me as really too young to be doing this kind of work. They were very disappointed when I had to leave at the end of my time of employment. They wanted me to stay "forever", and promised to find a suitable girl friend for me if I did!

Oom Salie invited me to come and "gesels" (chat) one evening, and I got on so well with him and his wife that I was invited repeatedly. It was a pleasure to renew this friendship twenty years later when I was stationed at Saasveld Forestry College, of which he was the much respected house father and a lecturer.

All too soon my term of employment came to an end, and I returned home. In spite of the hard and sometimes monotonous work, I had enjoyed the experience.

Trying to start the school croc, but no petrol!

My contribution to the school magazine

The Shack, Cape Point

Hunting party. Willem, Johan, dassie, me, .22 rifle

1950 matrics. Me back row 3rd left, Fred Rubidge 6th left,Loël front 3rd left. Class teacher Barnard

CHAPTER 5

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

A first year student, 1951

This was the only university in the country offering a forestry course, leading to a B.Sc Forestry degree after four years of study. Bill had already been here for two years, doing the five-year Civil Engineering course. He resided in Huis Visser, but I opted for Dagbreek, the biggest men's residence, housing at that time 350 students. The building is in the shape of a closed square, three and four storeys high with a huge quadrangle in the middle. First and second-year students were assigned double rooms and mine faced the inside of the quad. The noise level was high, with occasional brief silences until someone would yell a funny remark, producing a loud reaction. I became so used to the noise that I found it quite impossible to study when I occasionally went home for a week-end – it was too quiet!

Having survived the first week of initiation, I began to make friends. There were a number of English-speaking students, and a group of us sat at one table in the dining hall. Angus Wilson, also studying forestry, became a life-long friend, as did Keith Dally.

I soon discovered that there were seventeen first year forestry students. There were four first-year subjects – botany, chemistry, geology (physics as an alternative) and mathematics. I struggled terribly with algebra, compounded by my unfamiliarity with the Afrikaans terminology, and frequently worried Bill for help, until I finally gave up in despair, attending classes but knowing that I was not likely to pass at the end of the year. All the forestry students were in the same boat.

Dress was quite formal and compulsory for classes – jacket, tie and longs. Stellenbosch is a hot place in summer, but permission to take off one's jacket had to be obtained from the lecturer. He in turn would ask the women students if the gentlemen might remove their jackets, and usually they would

grant their permission. But sometimes for fun they would object, and we would suffer, but eagerly look forward to revenge. Few students had cars, only allowed under very special dispensation, so nearly everyone had a bicycle. So, sweet revenge was to remove the women's bikes and pile them up in a huge heap, so high that it could take days if your bike happened to be at the bottom of the pile!

A great relief from the stress of academics was the Dagbreek choir. We rehearsed daily after dinner for 15 minutes before departing for the afternoon's practical classes. Every residence had a choir, and later in the year we would combine with one of the women's residences to form a balanced ensemble to prepare for the annual *„Sangfees'* in the Town Hall. When the soprano's and alto's from a women's residence joined us for rehearsal, the only way for them to reach our hall was to walk across the quad. This produced wolf whistles and shouting in increasing volume, from all the windows. The girls loved it. The Sangfees was one of the great traditions of the university, with marvellous concerts presented by the many different choirs formed in this way.

A third year student, Paul Mellet, discovered that I was keen on classical music and invited me to room with him. He was a *"Tokkelok"* (theology student). Hi-fi long-playing records had just been invented to replace the old 78's, and Paul had put together a good amplification system. He built up an impressive collection of symphonies, concertos and piano music, playing them at full volume. I loved it, except when I wanted to sleep. He would often study until the small hours of the morning with background music while he practised his Greek in a loud voice. He was a heavily built wrestler, so whenever I objected, he would wrestle me under my bed despite my best efforts to beat him up. We had these regular confrontations, done in a spirit of fun. By this time I was regularly practising my newly purchased metal flute to replace the faulty old one, so a great deal of music emanated from our room. Often the music was so loud that guys in nearby rooms would bang on the door and come into the room to object. Paul had merely to glare at them and they would retreat in fear. All of this made rooming with Paul a bit of an ordeal, and fortunately I was later able to move to a single room.

At home we also acquired a long-playing record player. I will always remember the winter evenings when we would listen to music with the lounge lights off and with a log fire burning. And whenever I hear Schubert's 9th Symphony, the "Great" C Major, (my favourite key!), I especially enjoy the part of the last movement which Mom so loved, as it made her feel that she was walking along a beautiful footpath on Table Mountain.

Very soon it was "Intervarsity", the annual rugby clash between us („Maties') and our arch-rivals, Cape Town University („Ikeys'). A week or two before the day, war was declared. There were raids between the two campuses to capture trophies and prisoners. Several Ikey prisoners were interred at Dagbreek. Whoever had captured one usually took him to lectures and made him take notes for him. We had three in our Maths class. They made speeches at dinner time to thank Dagbreek for their hospitality when they departed in a prisoner exchange protocol.

Being first year students, we were required to do guard duty through the night. Dagbreek had at least six entrances to the quad through which raiding parties could attack, and we were assigned to each of the roof top turrets above these entrances. Anyone entering was challenged by us yelling, "*WIE?*" (Who?) If the response was a torrent of swearing , this was accepted as the correct password and entrance was allowed.

Unfortunately as in all wars, bad things happened, and these raids were eventually stopped. But the rugby matches remained important gala occasions for which we rehearsed many specially composed songs to be sung from the grandstands.

Dagbreek had a special spirit amongst its inmates and funny things often happened. The House Committee had invested in a beautiful little sculpture of a steenbok with its lamb, and installed it in the dining hall. As we marched in and saw it, we all started bleating like sheep. 350 sheep are quite a big flock, and the sound was so authentic that momentarily I felt I was back on Uncle Johnnie's farm.

Dad gave Bill and me enough pocket money for monthly necessities and an occasional visit to the cinema or café. Frequently we would return

home for week-ends, travelling by train. But eventually I decided rather to save the trainfare by doing the trip by bicycle. My bike had no gears – it was an uncomplicated sedan model. The trip took about three hours, depending on the wind direction, which somehow always seemed to be strongly against me regardless of the direction in which I was travelling. But I enjoyed the challenge, as well as the pocket money saved.

But as time and events moved on, I desperately missed my MRA friends from school. Although Fred, Duimpie and I were keeping close touch by mail, regularly sharing our convictions and guidance, it was not the same as having friends close by with whom I could chat. I tried attending SCA small group meetings in Dagbreek, but found them very superficial and rather self-centred. I was also regularly going to the Presbyterian Church with the Wilson brothers. Suddenly one Sunday at church a miracle happened. The minister was away and the service was taken by a visiting one. When he started with his sermon, it was immediately obvious that he was in MRA. I became very excited and rushed up to him afterwards to discover that he was Rev. Vossie Becker, from Cape Town. What joy! He invited me to spend the afternoon with him and we had a good talk. He helped me a lot. Then he preached again in church that night.

Through Vossie I began to meet other MRA people in Cape Town whenever I went home for week-ends or holidays. There were frequent big meetings held in the then famous restaurant "Die Koffiehuis", usually chaired by Gordon Guthrie, a lawyer. Fifty-three years later I was able to unexpectedly renew the relationship when I retired and we bought a house in Fish Hoek across the road from the Guthrie's, now very elderly. In the meantime there were two men, Hugo van Rooyen and Dick Swart, who took me on and we kept close touch during my study years. There was also Ian Gillespie, a recent graduate from UCT who was working for Shell, and used every opportunity to persuade whoever might be listening that Shell was the best company in the world! (Now in his eighties, he has fallen silent on this issue at last!).

But the most exciting event of all was the arrival of Fred. He and his sister Loël were on their way to Caux, the MRA world conference centre in Switzerland, and the only way get to Europe was by ship from Cape Town. Most of the Rubidge family had come to see them off. As it was the university holidays, I was able to spend lots of time with them. It was so wonderful to catch up on things with Fred. As there were others also on their way to Caux, they were given a big send-off at a Koffiehuis meeting. As the Edinburgh Castle departed, all Fred's sisters were in tears! I longed to go to Caux myself one day, as the news of what was happening there to change the lives of men and nations was miraculous.

Less than a month later, someone else arrived on his way to Caux. Neil Sheard was a young farmer from the Nieu Bethesda district, older than me, but whom I had got to know in my last year at school. Neil spent a few days with us at our home. I took him on long cycle rides and we had great times of fellowship. On the day of his departure we installed his luggage in his cabin on the ship Pretoria Castle, to find a telegram there for him from Duimpie! Once again, it was sad taking leave of another friend. sixty years later we are still friends.

Back at Dagbreek I encountered increasing opposition from a surprising source – fellow Christians, and particularly tokkeloks, who claimed that MRA was not "Christian" enough. I found them superficial, unreal, and uninterested in a lifetime commitment to obey the Lord. They loved long, irrelevant theological arguments. My best defence was to share with them how I had changed my life and motives for living. I also discovered that the more pious they were, the more likely it was that all their talk was a smokescreen to hide personal moral defeat – often they were living in sin. This was obvious in the case of one ‚tokkelok', and another was honest with me that he really needed help. Vossie Becker, who once again preached in the Presby church, gave me much support and encouragement. He would say, "Theology is a methodical process whereby you confuse yourself"!

At the end of the year exams were written. I was pleased to be awarded a *cum laude* for Chemistry, but I failed Maths. In fact, all seventeen first year

forestry students failed it. This was a huge embarrassment for the Forestry Faculty, as it meant that there would be no second-year class. Angus and I had done reasonably well in the other subjects, so we were pushed through to the second year. Sadly all the others either changed course or left the university. From then on Maths 1 was no longer a requirement for forestry – it was replaced by a new simplified course called Special Maths.

During the long three months holiday Bill and I did a lot of exploring. We discovered the many caves in the mountain ridges above Kalk Bay. These caves had been named and listed by a group of enthusiasts who called themselves "The Moles." Every cave was given a name which they neatly painted on the rock. Some are still vaguely visible. Picnic spots were also labelled, with names like "*Wandering Willie's Weary Wait*" and *"Hungry Harry's Halfway Halt."*

I went to visit Duimpie in Port Elizabeth. Together we hitch-hiked back to Cape Town, spending a night at a hotel in Worcester on the way. According to my diary, "The Cumberland Hotel is very posh – a telephone in each room!"..... We arrived home to find the entire Gurney family from Natal installed – Uncle Eric and cousins Peter, Dick, David and Gillian. Dick was in bed with flu, and it was a bit of a squash. How Mom coped with the cooking for so many hungry youngsters, I do not know. We took this big crowd sight-seeing over the next week, to the shack at Cape Point, Tokai forest and all our favourite haunts.

After the Gurneys' departure, Duimpie and I continued our active holiday, climbing mountains, catching butterflies for my collection and going for a sail in a yacht on Zeekoe Vlei, where MRA friends lived and invited us for a braai, with twenty-five others; a great time of fellowship.

On Duimpie's last day we went to the docks for him to check into his cabin on the Edinburgh Castle bound for P.E. We then took a taxi to the City Hall to attend a wonderful symphony concert, then back to the ship. We talked at length in his cabin until we had to say good-bye. I would not see him again for another 25 years. I took the last train home, arriving there at 1 a.m.

Before returning to university, Hugh Taylor and I decided to hike to Cape Point. We started climbing the mountain at St James, went through several caves, then to the top of Constantia Peak. Thirsty work, in mid-summer and the streams dry. Here Hugh showed me how to find water on a mountain top, provided it is subject to south east cloud, and also provided that the salmon-pink *Watsonia tabularis* (not the earlier pink ones) are in flower. The leaves form long ‚cups' around the stem which fill with water from condensation of the mist. All one has to do is lie down, bite the bases of the leaf cups and suck. A wonderful thirst quencher, with the additional bonus of an occasional small insect included.

From Constantia Peak we resumed our hike until we reached Sandy Bay on the west coast. This idyllic spot was still relatively unknown and unfrequented. We set up camp under the milkwood trees, and after supper walked along the beach, spellbound by the phosphorescence. When I brushed my teeth with sea water, my brush was aglow – a fascinating experience. The next day we tried to reach Hout Bay by skirting around Karbonkelberg above the sea. The path disappeared and we had to struggle through thick bush on very steep slopes in the heat. By the time we reached Hout Bay we were so exhausted that we lost all interest in continuing over the mountains and all the way to Cape Point – mission abandoned.

Remaining years at university

At the forestry faculty we were now only two in the classes. I think the lecturers found it difficult addressing so small a group. We certainly found it difficult, especially when Prof. Wicht ("Pop") would ask a question. He had a glass eye which looked in a different direction from his sound eye, so at first we did not know whether he was looking at me or Angus for a response. We enjoyed our lecturers, particularly Lieutenant-Colonel C.R.F. Williams from the Punjab, retired from the Indian Forest Service, who made us enthusiastic about forest botany. We called him "Fats."

I loved our forestry subjects, but there were still external courses to be tolerated, like organic chemistry. Traditionally forestry students always failed

this subject, and sure enough, we did. Fortunately we passed the supplementary exam the following year.

We had to do a year of German. This was ostensibly because the oldest forestry literature (which we would certainly never read) was in German, but Pop Wicht told us it was to prevent us from becoming too narrow-minded. I must admit I enjoyed the course. One of the lecturers was Dr Hoge. According to my diary "He is very fat, short, round and symmetrical! He looks like a rugby ball. But he teaches well....."

Angus and his brother, Gavin, had constructed a tandem by welding two bicycles together. So the entire 2nd year forestry class rode to and from lectures on this vehicle. In those days a tandem was a **very** unusual sight, so we attracted a great deal of attention, not all of it so welcome. There was a 10 minute break between classes during which crowds of students thronged Victoria Avenue. Those who had their next class in the same building would stand outside, watching this passing parade. The engineering students (the old building) were notorious for the tricks they played, like warning the women students coming down the opposite street who never stopped their bikes at the stop street, that there was a traffic cop hiding behind the hedge ready to pounce. The cops then realised that their efforts were not worth it, and abandoned this location. Well, one day we were pedalling up the road on our tandem, when we spied a paper bag lying in the road. Our suspicions should have been aroused by the crowd of engineering students intently watching. A normal reaction to a paper bag in the road is to ride over it, so we did. Unfortunately we had not noticed that there was a brick inside! We came a cropper, to the great delight of the onlookers. (Bill claims he was not one of them!)

On the tandem we explored the countryside around Stellenbosch. Following farm roads and mountain roads we revelled in the beautiful scenery. We were not put off by repeated breakdowns with the tandem, sometimes having to walk a long way back. It was, after all, of home made construction, and the rear chain just couldn't take the strain, but we kept repairing and riding.

In April of 1952 there were huge celebrations to mark the 300th anniversary of the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape. The reclaiming of the foreshore had just been completed, and no buildings had yet been erected, the first structure being huge, temporary grandstands surrounding an arena for the festivities. There was a week of float parades, concerts, exhibitions and all sorts of activities to draw the crowds. Albert Coates, a well-known Russian musician (despite his English name), had composed an opera especially for the festival about the Devil and van Hunks, whose smoking competition was reputed to have caused the famous cloud on Table Mountain. Unfortunately I did not see it. There were vast crowds in the city, almost as large as the soccer World Cup. The Loock family stayed with us for the celebrations.

For the Easter week-end which followed soon after, I was invited to Zoetvlei, the Rubidge's farm. On the Thursday evening I took a train to Paarl where I was picked up by Johnnie Becker (Vossie Becker's brother) and other friends, and we drove through the night. Johnnie was a lively joker who had us in fits of laughter all the trip. Reaching the farm next morning, many families had already arrived and our numbers grew to 47. During the days which followed we participated in farming activities, played in a tennis championship, walked in the veld, or just had fellowship with one another. In the evenings we met together and shared our Christian experiences. Fred was back from Caux, and the first night after the meeting he and I walked up the koppie in the moonlight and admired the view and the quietness. We talked until midnight and prayed together. Then on the Sunday there was an Easter church service out on the lawn, together with the farm workers. Someone shared a poem they had written, with translation into Afrikaans for the workers. They were deeply moved by the proceedings and sang *Nkosi sikekele i' Afrika*. At the end of the service as "Amen" was said, down came the rain! Much needed on the farm. We left the next day, and my diary says, "The most glorious week-end God could ever give me, or all of us."

Back at Stellentbosch, Dr Herman Malan of the Chemistry Department had arrived back from a year's sabbatical overseas, during which he had been to Caux. He and his wife, Helen, opened their home to me and this was the

beginning of a wonderful relationship which lasted until they passed away, Tannie Helen recently at age 97. I was frequently invited to dinner and had fun with their little children. Herman and I met regularly for fellowship and planning on how to affect the university, the students in particular, with a new motive for living. This proved to be an uphill battle, but I was *almost* successful in persuading the chairman of the Students' Representative Council to attend a MRA conference in Johannesburg. He was interested, but had another commitment. But soon there were four of us meeting frequently at the Malan's home.

With my new flute there was progress on the music front. I began to take lessons from Reginald Clay, first flute of the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra, during university holidays. He was very good to me, often giving me two-hour lessons but charging me for only one. He used to quote (erroneously!) from the Bible, "By their *flutes* ye shall judge them… ." One of his hobbies was pottery, and he gave me a nice large brown pot which he had just made, and which I still have. Then I made good friends with another student at Stellenbosch who was an accomplished flute player. He persuaded me to join the Conservatorium Orchestra, quite a small ensemble, but it was a big thrill for me. We often gave public concerts.

Also on the music front, Angus and I continued to enjoy singing in the Dagbreek choir. In the chorus "Einzug der Gestern" (Entrance of the Guests) from Wagner's opera "Tannhauser", I was singing first tenor (very difficult – typical Wagner) and Angus second tenor. One day we climbed to the top of Table Mountain and enjoyed a rest on the edge of the cliff overlooking Platteklip Gorge. Peering into the depths below, we decided that the prospect of a good echo was worth testing. So we launched into the Wagner chorus, singing our two parts as loudly as we could (you can't sing Wagner softly anyway), and were greeted by a satisfactory echo. There was no applause from hikers out of sight down the gorge, but perhaps there weren't any. Nevertheless we felt that our two-part harmony sounded really great.

The forestry course required a great deal of practical work. One project was the drafting of an accurate map of a large area of very broken,

undeveloped municipal land to the left of the Helshoogte Pass. This we had to do using a plane table and alidade. It involved many trips, awkwardly ferrying the equipment which I held, riding on the pillion of Gavin Wilson's motor bike – neither comfortable nor safe, but there were no accidents. The following year we had to draw up a Planting Plan for the area we had surveyed. This involved much holiday work. The area had to be divided into management units with allocation of species for planting, a road system and a fire protection plan with fire look-out. The municipality offered a prize of £5 (R10) for the best plan. We had now been joined by Apies du Toit, who had failed the previous year (too much rugby), and we agreed that as we were all working so hard on the project, whoever won the award would divide it equally among the three (democracy). I was the winner, and happy with my share.

Events in the Dagbreek quad continued to be interesting. I had acquired a single room with a window into the quad. One night, in a deep sleep, I heard the beautiful voices of angels singing – am I on my way to Heaven, I wondered. Slowly I woke up, to discover that a small group of women students were singing quiet songs incredibly beautifully below my window. I then learnt that this was one of the important traditions of student life – small groups of men or women singers would visit residences of the opposite sex in the middle of the night to sing lullabies and other soothing songs. I joined our Dagbreek group and enjoyed this activity. Tradition also demanded that the listeners thus awakened should flash their lights in acknowledgement. Fun.

There were no classes in the week before the start of the year-end examinations. This was known as "*bloktyd*", giving the students time to prepare. Naturally it was impossible for students to meekly stay in their rooms without doing something else to break the monotony. In Dagbreek this was water bomb time. Anyone trying to cross the quad would be pelted with water bombs from the windows and roof tops. A cooling experience in the summer heat.

In the holidays we were taken on study tours to different parts of the country in different years. In the southern Cape we visited plantations,

sawmills and other wood-using industries, and the indigenous forests with their long history of exploitation, conservation and research. Similar aspects were studied in Natal, from the Drakensberg to the Zululand coastal lowlands, but I recall that my most memorable experience was scaling the tall chimney of the State sawmill under construction at Weza plantation near Harding. There were rungs all the way to the top, so Angus and I couldn't resist the temptation to climb it – a scary height, but with a worthwhile view of forests and mountains.

In week-ends and holidays when there was no practical work, I would join the Wilson brothers and one or two friends in climbing the mountains around Stellenbosch. With Bill we conquered Victoria Peak, highest in the range, having to walk through snow.

Another snowy day we decided to climb the *Pieke* (Twin Peaks), so we set off for Jonkershoek on our bikes, parking them on the highest road. The climb was very steep, and the higher we climbed the deeper the snow became, until further progress was not really possible. By this time we were half frozen, and decided to abandon the attempt. By the time we reached our bicycles again it was getting dark. We had to ride fast in order to get out of the plantation, as we had no lights. Down a particularly steep incline I was riding in front at full speed (showing off!), when out of the gloom there suddenly appeared a closed gate. It had been open when we went up. It was a low gate and fence to keep the pigs within the plantation – pigs had been introduced to dig out the pupae of the pine tree Emperor moths which were causing much damage to the trees. It was too late to brake. I hit a pole at speed. The bike wrapped itself around the pole and I went soaring high through the air over the fence. Flying was actually a surprisingly pleasant experience, but I panicked as to how I was going to land – was I going to break my neck, legs or head? But with intervention from Heaven I landed comfortably on my shoulder in a soft bed of pine needles. Now we had to carry the ruined bike, and me, back to Stellenbosch. We arrived very late. The next problem was that the bike was not my own – I had borrowed it. The owner was not amused. But fortunately it

was not a complete write off, and at considerable expense to me it was repaired at the bike shop, so "all's well that ends well"!

We did a lot of rock climbing on Table Mountain. Upper Arrow Face, the near vertical cliff below the upper cableway station, was hair-raising. Angus's brother, Gavin, led up this cliff face. He fixed safe belays for Angus and me to come up at the other end of the rope. The climb was awesomely exposed (don't look down, or even right or left), but we enjoyed the remarks of passengers in the cable cars passing overhead. "*They shouldn't be allowed to do it!*" someone yelled. Quite so. Another rock climb was Paulsberg face at Cape Point. When I look at it today I shake my head in disbelief. We must have been crazy.

In the long holidays of one year, Bill, Angus and I took temporary jobs at Schoongezicht farm outside Stellenbosch. We were accommodated in a very comfortable cottage and fed wonderful meals. In the week-ends we were invited to dine with the Houston's, owners of the farm, in their beautiful Dutch-style house, a national monument. The work was varied but hard. Before breakfast we usually had to pick and pack peaches. Being inexperienced we had difficulty in assessing the ripeness of the fruit, so we would squeeze them to see if they were soft enough. This would, of course, immediately disqualify them for packing, so they had to be eaten! We consumed vast quantities. After breakfast there would be odd jobs, but mostly heavy work like loading hay onto wagons, with pitch forks. By the end of the day we were totally exhausted. It was mainly a dairy farm, and assistance had to be given taking the milk register. Up at 4 a.m. on a Sunday, I had to take the register alone. Buckets of milk were weighed, and I had to enter the results under the names of the cows individually. The problem was that when a name was shouted out at me, with a Xhosa accent, I first had to understand what was being said before I could find the name in the register to enter the weight. As there were about 100 cows, the queue of labourers waiting for me grew longer and longer. Finally I gave up, and entered the weights just anywhere! The errors were apparently never discovered, but today Schoongezicht is no longer

a dairy farm – due to me? Nevertheless we were paid £5 each at the end of our time there.

During another holiday the Wilson's and I decided to drive to Graaff-Reinet. They had family on a farm near there, and I wanted to check on my old pals at school, as their holidays had not yet started. We set off in their old Vauxhall, with a top speed of 60 kph. By the end of the first day we had reached Touws River. We slept the night in a dry river bed north of the town. To keep the car going in the Karoo heat the next day, we had to keep topping up the radiator every time we could find a wind pump with water near the fence. I was dropped off at my school boys' hostel in Graaff-Reinet in time for supper. It was great meeting old friends, particularly Charles Maasdorp, who had been in my class but had had to repeat a year. I was wearing my new Matie striped blazer, and I think they felt (rightly) that I was a bit of a show-off, because when I went to bed (provided for me in the sick room), I found that it had been apple-pied! When Milly and I visited the town some 45 years later, I decided to look in the phone book to see if any of my old friends were still around. I found Charles Maasdorp's name, so phoned. He was so pleased that he immediately came to fetch us from our paid accommodation, insisting that we come and stay with him and his wife in their home. He was very eager to tell me something, so I listened attentively. He said that ever since the night when I had visited the hostel 45 years before, he had had a guilty conscience – it was *he* who had apple-pied my bed, and now wanted to apologise!

Back in Cape Town a big MRA meeting was being planned to take place in the city hall. I was invited to join a small choir to learn some songs for the programme. One of them had been put to music by the famous Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius. Our rehearsals took place at the Anglican Church in Kenilworth, where the minister was an MRA stalwart. But all I can remember of the city hall event was the black man who mounted the platform to speak. I'm sure special permission had to be obtained for a non-white to be in the city hall, and the miracle was that it was granted. He was Dr William Nkomo, fiery black nationalist, who had been the leader of the group who proposed the formation of the African National Congress Youth League and became its first

Vice President. He shook the audience with his convictions. He told of his hatred of the Afrikaners (he used very strong language), but that God had showed him that bitterness could not rebuild the country and the continent.

"I have seen white men change," he said, "I have seen black men change. And I myself have decided to change. I am no less a revolutionary because I now believe in God. I am fighting with greater passion for a hate-free, fear-free, greed-free Africa, peopled by free men and women."

Standing with Nkomo when he spoke was ds (Rev.) George Daneel, a former rugby Springbok ‚great'. He and Nkomo made common cause for the rest of their lives. The next morning the Afrikaans daily paper, *Die Burger*, carried the headline "MRA bevry hom van Afrikanerhaat" (MRA frees him from Afrikaner hatred).

Nkomo's change had been brought about in an amazing way. Four students of the University of Pretoria had guidance from God to visit Dr Nkomo. With apartheid in the process of being made law at that time in the early 1950's, contact between black and white was being discouraged and frowned upon. To enter the black township and meet the revolutionary Dr Nkomo took some courage. They shared their convictions with him and apologised for their attitudes and arrogance. He was so touched by their visit that it led to him making a fundamental decision to change his life. While never relinquishing his political aims, Nkomo's methods of working towards them altered considerably over the next years. Working closely with George Daneel, Frank Buchman and others, he became a real statesman, enlisting many in Africa and other continents in the fight to build a new world. Before he died in the 1970's he used every occasion to speak for the continent he wanted to see:

".....I believe Africa is confused. There is a crisis in character. Men who were united when they fought for the freedom of their continent and countries have now allowed self-interest to take precedence in their lives. Unless we can get an incorruptible type of leader who will not be bought with money, with position, with success and with the promise of other things then Africa will be

doomed. Other ideologies are dividing us. We need the ideology that begins when a man listens to God and and begins to live by absolute moral standards. Then he need no longer have a blueprint because he needs to know nothing more except to be sure that he lives at the Cross and moves as God guides".

It was after the city hall event that God spoke to me about my relationship with my brother. Although we had had good times together since childhood, our quarrels had been frequent. Some would say that that was natural between two boys. As Billy was bigger and stronger than me, I always came off second best in fights, as described earlier. I harboured considerable resentment because of this, in spite of the fact that confrontations were sometimes provoked by me. Now the Lord was saying to me that I needed to make restitution and apologise for my anger. This was not a comfortable prospect due to my pride, and I argued that *he* had been in the wrong. But God gently reminded me of what I had once heard someone say "Even if the other person is 90% in the wrong, and you only 10% wrong, that makes it much easier for you to put right your 10% than for him to put right his 90%, *so you are the one to start...* , or words to that effect. I now knew that I should do what God was telling me to do. It was not easy. Bill and I went for a walk. I think it was his final year at university. I said to myself, "When we reach the next street I'll do what I have to do." But my courage failed me. Then I thought I would wait till that next telephone pole – still no start! I think we were already on our way back when I started the conversation about our relationship and apologised for my resentment. I now felt completely free of the past.

Up to this time Bill had not had a faith. He had never opposed what I was doing through MRA, but had not taken much interest in matters spiritual. I felt I should introduce him to the Malan's, which I did. I then used opportunities for him to meet some other MRA friends, including some full-time workers from other countries who were currently in Cape Town. Through his contact with these people he decided to let God run his life. In his own words to me:

"Up to the point when you came home after matric, I had avoided the Christian activities at school, but was intrigued by what you told about MRA and some of the people you introduced me to. I began to want this purpose and freedom for myself. You, with Herman and Helen Malan, gave me my first Bible, for my 21st birthday in 1952, which I still treasure.

"However, it didn't become truly real to me until one of the MRA men said to me "Bill, you will never find what you are looking for until you make Jesus the Lord of your life and of every decision you make", and he gave me the verse:

'Jesus, I my Cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee,
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be.'

"I was daunted by this challenge, but just could not get around it, so eventually I made this decision, to give up being my old very selfish me. It made a new person of me, to the extent that someone asked "what has happened to you, you look so different?", and indeed I felt new and free.

"It gave me a purpose and a boldness to obey God in ways I could never have dreamed of before, and it goes on and on, in people I have been led to meet and challenge for God's purposes.

"It also drew us closer as brothers, and furthermore this new motive in my life led to the great joy of marriage with Stella.

"For all this I am indeed grateful."

It wasn't long before our mother also became involved, and found new life. Then many years later our father made his peace with the Lord and began to care for our mother in a way so different from the past.

End of studies

In the final year for our forestry class we were joined by Neil Loveday, who had had to repeat his fourth year. Since our second year the class had doubled! We were required to spend the second half of the year producing a type of thesis called a Working Plan for a plantation. This is a Management

plan to ensure a constant yield of timber over a five or ten year period, but also includes silvicutural and fire protection plans. We were assigned a plantation in the former Transkei near Mount Frere, with the name of Amanzimnyama, which we had certainly never heard of before.

So we set off on the long train trip to Umtata (now Mthatha). When we reached Amabele junction near East London we changed to the Mthatha train in the late afternoon. This was a mixed train, with a few coaches and a goods guards van. There was no conductor on the train, only the guard (a different uniform). After an hour he came to our compartment and asked us what we wanted for dinner. "But there's no dining car on the train," we exclaimed. "That doesn't matter," he said, "just tell me whether you want a mixed grill, or fish and chips, or whatever" (no hamburgers in those days). Mystified we waited to see what was going to happen. At the next siding we observed him unlocking a box on a telephone pole and making a call. The train then continued on its way and after a while we reached Komgha. There, at the station café, several tables had been laid for the passengers who had placed orders, and our mixed grills were waiting, nice and hot. Perfect timing! Now we knew what the phone call from the earlier stop had been about. As we approached the end of our meal the guard appeared, looked pointedly at his watch and asked everyone to please hurry as the train would be ready to depart, as soon as we were finished. Those were the days!

Arriving in Umtata the next morning, we had to resume our journey by bus to Mount Frere. There we enquired about the phone number for Amanzimnyama, only to be told that there was no telephone! As it was many kilometers away, we could not walk there, so all we could do was sit and wait for something to happen. Sure enough, it did – a few hours later. A Landrover arrived to fetch the mail, and there was room for us as well.

Amanzimnyama was a fair-sized pine plantation covering steep terrain, with indigenous forests in the kloofs. Like most Transkei plantations, it had been established as a protection measure for the indigenous forests, in order to justify the appointment of the necessary staff and to provide an alternative source of firewood for the rural population.

The forester provided accommodation and meals for us for our long stay. Our work was supervised and guided by the Dept of Forestry's Working Plans Officer for the region, Jock Cawse. We were quite a wild bunch, but Jock was very patient with us as we laboriously dragged measuring chains and took the necessary measurements to assess the standing volumes of timber on the entire area. It was heavy work, but we enjoyed some trips with Jock to see some smaller plantations in the district, situated in country accessible only by sledge tracks serving as roads. They were quite a challenge even for the Landrover. I was impressed with the trading stores in this wild country, and the families who ran them in such isolation. They played an important role in the community.

Angus and I were not prepared to sit and do nothing during the week-ends, and we enthusiastically explored the indigenous forests. The white stinkwoods (*Celtis africana*) in these forests were an impressive sight, towering straight up like the biggest and straightest gum trees ever seen. Nowhere else in the country do they ever attain such heights.

At last the field work was completed and we would need the next few months to do the complicated calculations and writing up, each having to do his own Working Plan. Apies and Neil took off to go and do this back at Stellenbosch, but Angus and I felt less confident about working on our own – we needed someone to be available for advice when, rather than if, we encountered problems. So we decided to stick with Jock. As he had to do work elsewhere, we had to move with him to Insizwa, a plantation on the slopes of a mountain range between Mt Frere and Kokstad. We occupied a newly built, furnished foreman's house which we found quite comfortable, but we had to do our own catering.

During the day Jock would be out on field work, while we laboured with our computations and documentations. By the end of the each day we desperately needed to get out for some exercise. What gave us most satisfaction was felling giant Eucalyptus trees with an axe (they were due for felling anyway). Hard work, but greatly enjoyed.

The week-ends were opportunities for exploration. One day we climbed to the top of the mountain range, to discover that it was more like an escarpment, with rolling hills on top. We followed a footpath through attractive grasslands for quite a distance, while our movements were broadcast from hilltop to hilltop by Xhosa observers as we walked. Everyone we met was friendly.

Another day we explored a forested kloof until progress was blocked by a waterfall and cliffs. We noticed some unusually flat terrain above the river bank, and climbed up to investigate. To our surprise we found a dark tunnel into the cliff face - obviously an old mine. Could this be the fabled King Solomon's lost mines? Of course not, but the atmosphere was certainly one of mystery – dense forest, moss-covered cliffs and the nearby waterfall. Overgrown with weeds was a network of cocopan rail lines merging into the tunnel. The tunnel entrance drew us like a magnet – we *had* to get inside to explore. The trouble was that it was sealed with a locked gate. Nothing daunted, we felt there might just be another entrance, so we followed the cliff line. Great was our excitement when we discovered a dark, unbarred tunnel opening right next to the waterfall – a really beautiful scene. But as we had no lights, we had to return with torches another day, which we did as soon as possible. Creeping into the tunnel with our lights, we followed it until there was a junction, obviously the main shaft. The way to the right led us to the inside of the locked gate. Retracing our steps we followed the main shaft deep into the mountain. I cannot recall how far, or along how many side tunnels, but this was certainly one of the highlights of our stay at Insizwa.

Another highlight was the privilege of being able to share these experiences with a fellow Christian. Angus and I had good times of prayer and sharing together, and have remained friends on this basis ever since.

Armed with mountains of notes we returned to Stellenbosch to finalise our Working Plans. All four of us then graduated successfully. I was awarded the Sir William Schlich Forestry Prize, in the form of a gold medal, for outstanding achievement, to my very great surprise.

CHAPTER 6

FORESTRY

As I had received study bursaries from the Department of Forestry, I was obliged to work for them for a certain period of time, but in any case I had no desire to work for any other employer. The Department was active across a wide field of disciplines, including plantation management, sawmilling, research and conservation (indigenous forests and mountain catchments), in all the high rainfall regions of the country. The prospects were exciting. On the other hand private companies were at this stage relatively small and few in number. I had set my heart on becoming a district forest officer, but was informed that there was a greater need in the forest research division. So early in 1955 I was sent to Pietermaritzburg as Assistant Forest Research Officer, not knowing what to expect.

I found accommodation at the YMCA in Longmarket Street (in the heart of the CBD), and set off to report for duty at the forestry offices. I met my boss, A.D. van Rensburg, and all the other research staff, comprising two foresters (technicians), Anton Keyter and Steve Brent, and a typist. As a team of five we were responsible for conducting research through the establishment, maintenance and measurement of experiments in plantations covering Natal and the then Transkei – a vast area. Most of the field work had to be undertaken by Keyter, Brent and myself, necessitating absences from Maritzburg for periods of up to a month at a time.

Zululand field trip

Very soon after my appointment the three of us set off for a month's field work in the plantations of the Zululand coast belt, flat country with high rainfall. With no freeways and the tar ending at Stanger, it took a whole day to reach Kwambonambi State Forest, about 10 km from the small village of Kwambonambi. On the way we had stopped briefly for a break at Richard's

Bay, a tiny coastal resort with a few dwellings. For our long stay in the forestry area we based at the inspection quarters, a type of guest house available at state forests all over the country, for the use of visiting staff such as we were. Sometimes a "cook boy" would be available for a small fee, but at Kwambonambi he didn't know how to cook, so we prepared our own meals instead. Later we were able to board with the forester in charge.

In Zululand plantations work started early because of the climate. Labourers preferred "task work", which meant that as soon as they had completed the work assignment for the day, they could go home. For example, the exploitation team would be given a fixed number of trees to fell, so they started at 4 a.m. and worked as fast as they could, to finish by 9 a.m. so that they had the rest of the day off. Trees were felled by two-man saws (power saws were not yet in use in the country), and these guys were muscular giants who tackled their work with enthusiasm. I doubt if the unions would allow task work as it would be perceived as degrading, but this is what both workers and employers preferred. There were no cranes for loading logs onto trucks. A team of about ten labourers would roll the log up pole supports onto the bed of the truck – an exceedingly dangerous operation often resulting in serious accidents. Safety action campaigns came into the forestry industry much later.

So whenever it was possible to assign task work, we fell in with our labour before dawn broke. As usual on our field trips, we had to bargain with the plantation forester for labour. Sometimes there was good co-operation, but here we were always given poor quality assistance, and our presence was clearly an irritation. Coupled with the drudgery of the work over the next weeks, this was not a good beginning for me.

Literally hundreds of trees in large experiments had to be measured very accurately, usually for diameters and heights, treatments applied, and the data recorded for later analysis in the office. But here at Kwambonambi we had to climb the trees as well. Twenty-year-old pines in two thinning experiments required diameter and bark thickness measurements at the mid point of 3 m sections from the top down, altogether 280 trees, each about 30 metres in height. This was a popular job among the labourers, as all they had to do was

carry the 9 m ladder from tree to tree and extend it to reach, if possible, the lowest climbable branches, then to hold it steady while we three "bosses" had to do the exhausting and dangerous work. We really suffered. Under the extreme conditions of heat and humidity, accompanied by myriads of flying insects and profuse perspiration, and without any official protective clothing such as overalls, boots or gloves, we had the physical exertion of climbing from branch to branch to reach the highest point in the crown that could be safely reached, then do all the necessary measurements on the way down. It was extremely tiring so we took turns: A climbed 5 trees, B recorded the shouted measurements, while C lay flat on his back to rest and recover.

Apart from the problem of the top of the ladder tending to move round the trunk, there were other hazards such as branches breaking when stepped on. Sometimes there would be a swarm of bees bunched around the stem (March was swarming season), often not seen until too late because of blinding perspiration, and the descent from the tree was dangerously fast indeed. This meant that the tree had been climbed in vain and had to be replaced by another. Apart from scratches from the rough and prickly branches, there were also wounds caused by the sharp point of the bark gauge.

The work was so unpleasant that we worked fast so as to finish the job as soon as possible. It happened on several occasions that we were so tired after a day of exertion that we collapsed on our beds when we reached the inspection quarters, and only woke up the following morning, very hungry and still unwashed, only to prepare for another day of the same!

Efforts to obtain some form of danger allowance added to the daily climatic allowance of three shillings (30 cents) were regarded as impertinence by the authorities in their comfortable offices in Pretoria. Scant comfort was derived from reassurances that the work was essential for the construction of volume tables "for which future generations would be grateful." Inevitably the result was the rapid turnover of technical staff and my own doubts about my chosen career. However, Anton and Steve stuck it out a bit longer, and when the climbing of standing sample trees was eventually stopped, I found the prospects brighter.

Week-ends spent at the inspection quarters were not exciting. We could not use the GG vehicle for private purposes, so we were marooned. Sometimes we would just carry on working, but there was also a pleasant five kilometer walk to the beach. Beyond the boundary of the plantation there was a wide strip of tribal land with green grass, scattered huts and patches of cultivation. There were many ponds and lakelets of crystal clear water with blue water lilies on the surface - really beautiful. In spite of the heat, we dared not drink the inviting water because of bilharzia (and an occasional crocodile or hippo). After climbing the very high coastal dune covered with indigenous forest, we dropped down to the steeply shelving beach. But the sea was only for looking at, as there was a dangerous backwash and the threat of sharks, not to mention an occasional crocodile (probably from St Lucia Lake). The beach sand was black – titanium. It was many years later that the dune mining operations began there.

When at last the climbing of sample trees was finished, we were able to depart, with great relief, from Kwambonambi Plantation. Our next task was on the adjoining plantation of Langepan. Here the situation was different. We were the guests of the forester "Tas" Tasmer, who was not yet married, so he valued our company on this lonely outpost. He was a real friend, as the following episode reveals.

I had arrived in Natal not only with a brand new B Sc. degree, but also with a brand new driver's licence. Kwambonambi plantation had fairly good roads, but Langepan was a new plantation, much of it still unafforested, and the roads were usually sandy tracks with a "middelmannetjie." Here I wanted to test my driving skills and create a good impression on my assistants Anton and Steve. On just about the first curve I negotiated in our big *International* panel van, I felt the vehicle sliding far more than I had anticipated, so at the next bend I decided to take it wider and avoid the loose sand by driving with my left wheels on the grass at the side. I did not know that this type of grass typically implied a vlei with concealed standing water. When the outside wheels went into the vlei the van gently slid over onto its side, leaving the three of us in a pile against the lower door with water trickling in and wheels

still turning in the sky. How embarrassing! I opened the door above my head and we all climbed out. Help was now sought from Tas, who thought this a huge joke. He had no vehicle or tractor with which to drag the van out of the swamp, so he inspanned a large team of oxen, and they did the job beautifully. Fortunately no one was injured and there was not even a scratch on the van. It was only my dignity which had been impaired.

This had happened on our way to a very large field experiment, about a hectare in size, which we had to check for readiness to be measured and thinning treatments to be applied. Walking between the tree rows carrying a heavy *Facit* calculating machine, we had to process certain preliminary measurements to determine whether thinning treatments were due. If not, then we could go home and come back six months later. If so, it meant a two to three week stay for a complete enumeration, which is what happened this time around.

The *Eucalyptus grandis* trees were three years old, quite tall already, and with leafy branches at man-height reducing visibility. In fact, without a map each of us would get disoriented and lost. Masses of spider webs necessitated waving a stick in front of one's face as one walked, but it was also important to always be alert so as to avoid confrontation with an Egyptian cobra, of which there were many. We each carried a cane knife with which to kill these snakes. As we were constantly walking the same routes the risk was too great. Conservationists would no doubt have been appalled, but our safety was paramount. Time and again I would be walking along, looking up at the tree crowns (as foresters do), when something would suddenly tell me to look down, and there in front of me would be a cobra, poised and ready to strike. It was quite uncanny. What was it that always gave me this warning – instinct or God? I decided to always give God the credit.

This experimental area was surrounded by as yet unafforested grassland, and it was always a pleasure to emerge from the trees for a lunch break in the open. For lunch Tas had provided one large cooked sweet potato each, and coffee. For variety we would hunt for some of the pleasant edible

berries to be found in the natural vegetation, sometimes being frightened by the deep hiss of a likkewaan (iguana).

About 25 years later it was my privilege to address a group of visiting forest scientists from around the world as we stood under these trees, which by then had become real giants. This experiment had become famous, and visitors were always impressed by the fact that continuous remeasurements had taken place for the previous 30 years.

On a subsequent field trip we had work to do in plantations north of the Umfolosi River and in the St Lucia area. We based at a cheap boarding house in Mtubatuba. The main street was untarred and very sandy, and at night when walking to the station café for refreshments we had to take care not to tread on a night adder, often lying in ruts in the road. Quite a wild place; once a rhinoceros came galloping down the main street.

Other funny things happened in Mtubatuba. On a later visit I had to take the overnight train back to Durban. When I had settled in my compartment the station master rang the bell and flashed his "all clear" lantern to the guard, who then gave the green light for departure. The engine gave an enthusiastic and long whistle, the onlookers stood back, and amid clouds of steam and smoke we were off – an impressive departure. Until the driver discovered that he had left half the train behind! Coaches not properly coupled, apparently. Highly embarrassing for them. So the front of the train reversed to retrieve the lost part, and the departure process had to be repeated.

Most of our work was on Dukuduku State Forest, some distance to the north of Mtuba on the road to St Lucia, if road it could be called. In the rainy season it was a mud bath, sometimes spinning our van back the way we had come. Dukuduku was slightly less isolated from civilisation than it had been when first established. Apparently the first forester stationed there went mad from loneliness and had to be rescued from sitting on the roof of his house. During the Second World War there was an important air force base there, but now all that remained was a very long concrete runway. On our way to the forest station we drove down this runway to see what our *maximum* speed could be. That was fun, but somehow it was not fast enough for take-off!

Back to civilisation

After such a long spell in the wilds it was a huge relief to be back in Maritzburg.

Subsequent trips to Zululand did not require me to be with Anton and Steve for such long periods, and when necessary I would join them by travelling by bus to Durban and an overnight train to Kwambonambi or Mtubatuba. But I now thoroughly enjoyed a period of city life and settling in at the YMCA.

The "Y" was a rather picturesque old Victorian building with shops and the King's Cinema on the ground floor. Offices, meeting halls, tuck shop, dining room and kitchen were on the second floor, and residents' rooms on the top floor. It was run by the ‚Secretary', Bill Sykes, a good Christian leader affectionately addressed by the residents as "Squire", assisted by a residents' committee. Squire lived on the premises with his family. There were many clubs and societies, attracting residents as well as non-residents. The residents were young guys of varying backgrounds and activities ranging from apprentices through students to some in new employment like me – a good cross section of society who got on well together and enjoyed life. It was nevertheless quite an adjustment for me after four years of association exclusively with university students and intellectuals.

At the office it took many weeks of work to process and analyse the data collected from the Zululand field trip, using "*Facit*" manual calculators – work which could have been done in a matter of hours had computers existed in those days. We did have one electric calculator which worked slightly more easily , but this was a luxury.

After work I would rush back to the Y and jump on my bicycle to explore the attractive countryside on the north-western outskirts of the city. There were narrow, winding roads past small farms and citrus orchards, leading up to the forested slopes of the escarpment. Photography had just taken a huge leap forward in the form of 35 mm cameras to produce beautiful colour slides. I had bought a camera and took it with me on these trips of exploration.

All government offices worked Saturday mornings, so week-ends only started after lunch. With only a bicycle it was not possible to visit Uncle Eric and my cousins on their farm "Roseleigh" near Umbumbulu, about 50 km from the city, but with the exception of Peter (my own age), my other cousins were at boarding school in Maritzburg. So when they were fetched for leave-out week-ends I would often join them for two days of fun on the farm.

Otherwise nearly every Saturday I would cycle out to the dairy farm of Edwin and Ruth Morris, a wonderful MRA family who became close friends. They had four sons still at school, and we would spend the whole afternoon playing non-stop tennis, and the evening playing games and having good fellowship. Early on Sunday I would return to town in time for the service at St Peter's Anglican Church.

Southern Natal field trip

After a month in the office, with occasional one-day visits to nearby plantations in the Natal Midlands, it was time for another long field trip, this time to Weza State Forest near Harding, at that time the biggest plantation in the country. In sharp contrast to Zululand it was attractive, mountainous country, with plantations and indigenous forests covering the lower slopes of the Ingeli Mountains.

As always, our first task was to arrange for labour. After greeting Oom Kampies Steenkamp, the forester in charge, we knew that we could not immediately make our request, but first allow the conversation to go around in circles. His passionate interest was rugby, and for up to half an hour we had to patiently sit and listen to his strong opinions on the national team, then suddenly he would ask how much labour we would need.

Because of the cold weather in winter, the climbing of sample trees and field work in general were much more pleasant than in Zululand. We also found the inspection quarters much more habitable. It was an old wood and iron building, with a pleasant view across the valley, and an excellent cook, Elias. Whenever we arrived back tired at the end of a day's work, we would

collapse on the basket chairs on the stoep. Before serving us tea, Elias insisted on first taking off our boots for us! Very embarrassing.

There was also more to do over week-ends. Once we climbed to the summit of the Ingeli Mountains to look for the remains of the S.A A. airliner which had crashed there some years before. We found the site, but there was not much left to see.

In summer there were nice swimming pools in the streams and rivers, but on Saturday afternoons there was always tennis. A large community of staff lived in 'Old Weza' and tennis was a popular social pastime. The lorry drivers, foremen and the like all lived in rows of old corrugated iron houses spread out along the contour on the side of a hill. Anton Keyter was a very sociable type, and he would do the rounds, going from house to house, socializing. Steve and I were dragged along to meet all the interesting people who lived there, chatting in the kitchen warmed by the wood stove with cups of coffee to hand.

It was a place of quaint character. One of the houses had a baboon which lived on a pole in the yard. It would wave at anyone who arrived at the house. Another yard was home to a horse which used the stable door of the kitchen as just that. When we were visiting, it would spend all evening standing at the door with its head inside the kitchen, and it had to be pushed aside if one wanted to actually use the door for the purpose for which it was intended.

On Saturday evenings the three of us would be summoned by Oom Kampies to his house, with specific instructions that I was to bring my flute. We gathered in the large kitchen which was warmed by a wood stove, under which there was a large, fat dog asleep, apparently permanently installed. Also present was one of the foremen, with his guitar. His daughter sat at the honky-tonk piano, ready to start. When I had assembled my flute, we were compelled to play *boeremusiek* all evening, interspersed with mugs of coffee and discussions about rugby! This was Oom Kampies' Saturday evening entertainment, bringing the concert to his kitchen.

On subsequent visits when it was no longer necessary to spend a long time with Anton and Steve, I would return to Maritzburg by railway bus. It was on its way from Kokstad on the N2 untarred main road, and stopped at the Stafford's Post trading store, on the outskirts of Weza, to pick me up.

But on this, my first visit to Weza, we packed up after completing the field work and then drove down to one of the Transkei plantations between Lusikisiki and the coast, for work to be done there. We stayed at Mbotyi on the coast, a really delightful little spot. Every day we drove past the impressive Magwa Falls on our way to work at Ntsubane State Forest. Many years later this plantation was converted to a tea estate.

In and out of the city

Life was developing into a pattern of city life alternating with country life, which was very pleasant although somewhat disruptive. I hugely enjoyed playing second flute for the Pietermaritzburg Philharmonic Orchestra, but sometimes having to miss concerts because of field trips.

At the YMCA I was making good friends. Often a group of us would go for a long jog through the suburbs at 10 p.m. There were a number of German-speakers (from communities like Harburg and Wartburg north of Maritzburg). I joined a small group of them getting great enjoyment out of practising old German folksongs. Eventually we sang these at a concert.

Some guys experienced a life change and became a small MRA team with me. I also became more involved in "Y" activities. There was a weekly chapel service, which I occasionally led. I was quite impressed with the ideals of the Y, "That all may be one", and enjoyed participation in a national YMCA conference held at a resort in the Drakensberg. Eventually I was made a member of the Board of Management of the Maritzburg Y, as a representative of the residents. The Board comprised leading citizens of the town.

Edwin Morris and I met regularly to have fellowship and to find God's plan for what we should do. The thought came to arrange a premiere showing in the city of the movie "*Freedom.*"

It had originally been written as a play, by Africans from several countries who were meeting at Caux. It depicts all the challenges facing an African country on the road to independence and how answers can be found when people change. With colonialism coming to an end, this play was so relevant that it was decided to create a full-length movie. This was done in Nigeria. One of many leading Africans who acted in it was Dr William Nkomo (Chapter 5), along with Manasseh Moerane, who was the President of the African Teachers' Federation in Natal and later editor of the newspaper *The World*. In one scene there is a cast of 10 000, and finance was provided by the sacrificial giving of many around the world. The world premiere took place in Hollywood to rave audiences. Dubbed into many languages it was to dynamically challenge the thinking and living of people around the world.

We obtained an appointment with the Administrator (Premier) of Natal Province, the Hon. D.G.Shepstone, to propose that the showing be under his patronage. To this he readily agreed. (He was the direct descendant, perhaps grandson, of the famous, or infamous, Natal Colony Secretary for "Native Affairs", Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who also temporarily annexed the Transvaal to Britain in the late 1800's. Of course the local *boere* population found it quite impossible to pronounce his name, so they called him *"Sir Stoffel Slypsteen"!)* The showing duly took place in the 20th Century Cinema (a large one) on a Sunday evening. Some MRA full-time folk came down from Johannesburg to introduce the movie, speaking from the platform. There was a big audience of whites only (apartheid law), but I cannot remember what the response was. A showing for a black audience was unfortunately not feasible, as the film was only available in 35 mm at that time, and there were no cinemas in Edendale township.

At work Anton and Steve had resigned, as expected. They were replaced by George Slabbert, and Peter Rist, son of a Methodist missionary. Peter did not last long, and was replaced by Ian Crabtree, but George stuck it out and later made an impressive contribution to research by establishing the Futululu Forest Research Station for pioneering tree-breeding technology. I suffered endless teasing from these forester colleagues about MRA, which I

couldn't resist telling them about. It was good-natured banter and we remained friends.

It wasn't long before my boss was transferred and I was offered his position, which I accepted with some trepidation. I found the work challenging, but hugely satisfying. In fact, when I took the Orange Express train home on leave, I so missed my work that after a few days I longed to go back. My immediate superior was now Dr Hilmar Lückhoff, based in Pretoria, for whom I was to develop a great respect.

A new friend settled in Pietermaritzburg – John Mallory. He had been full-time with MRA, but as a civil engineer he now took employment with the municipality. John's father was the famous George Mallory who, with Sandy Irvine, had lost their lives in attempting to summit Mount Everest in 1924. John could not resist the urge to climb in the Drakensberg, so the two of us often hurtled up to Royal Natal National Park in his Volkswagen "beetle" to do as much climbing as possible in week-ends. His beetle so impressed me that I decided to buy one as my first car. But unfortunately there was a waiting list of 18 months for new ones! So instead I acquired a shiny new, powder blue, 1957 Austin, of which I was exceedingly proud. More about John Mallory later.

Now life speeded up, as I just wanted to drive everywhere. I no longer needed lifts, and could easily visit Uncle Eric and my cousins on the farm whenever I liked. Down to Cape Town I drove, for a holiday. The N2 through the Tsitsikamma was quite challenging, as none of the deep gorges had been bridged yet, and the Storms River pass was a gravel road. My return route was via Johannesburg, and Bill travelled with me. I was also asked by the Malan's in Stellenbosch to give a lift to a student, Milly Silberbauer, as far as Zoetvlei, where we broke our journey. Little did I know that 11 years later she was to become my wife - I do not know why I waited so long! But we had a good time at Zoetvlei, catching up with the Rubidges again. I had brought my slide projector and some colour slides with me, and was determined to show them this new technological invention. As the farm had no electricity, I had to run a cable from my car battery – it worked!

Back in Maritzburg my work alternated between the office and field trips as usual. The Forest Department came up with some hair-brained scheme to find conifers suitable for afforesting the lower slopes of the Drakensberg. Suitable sites for testing tree species able to survive the harsh conditions of icy winters and spring dryness had to be found. The highest human habitation in the Drakensberg was at Highmoor, where a forester was stationed, on top of the "Little Berg", so this was where an experimental site was selected. When George Slabbert and I duly arrived there, we had to share accommodation with the forester, Jaap Ferreira, as his prefab house was the only dwelling. We surveyed lines over the hills for plots to be planted up later. It was exceedingly cold. When it snowed we thought, "how nice, it will not stop us working." But after an hour we were frozen, and fled back to the house, where Jaap had a fire burning in the stove permanently. It was hard to keep warm at night. As the building was on stilts, an icy wind blew underneath. Newspapers between the blankets and underneath the mattress helped a bit. Further work was impossible, so next day we packed up and left.

Later a brick house and outbuildings, including an inspection quarters, were built. The afforestation scheme was abandoned, and the main function of the station was the management and protection of the mountain slopes. Many years later when our family lived in Maritzburg, we were able to hire the inspection quarters for many week-ends of horse riding, hiking, and swimming (in summer) - a wonderful place.

Disaster no.1

As often as possible I would share in the load of monotonous work which the technical staff had to do. So when a particularly difficult experiment at Sarnia State Forest near Donnybrook became due for measurement, I accompanied Ian Crabtree for the task. Stem and branch diameters in a vast number of 10 year-old trees had to be measured and recorded. Although there was a sound reason for having to do this, the prospect was daunting. We lodged at the Bulwer Hotel and drove out to Sarnia every day. The work was awkward, strenuous and incredibly monotonous, day after day. The only thing

that kept me sane was the daily lunch break, when I would disappear into the nearest hollow to practice my flute for the next symphony orchestra concert. I don't think Ian appreciated this very much.

When the first week-end arrived, we simply had to do something to get away. Ian invited me to go with him to Kokstad, where his parents lived. As we could not use the GG vehicle to get there, we had to hitch-hike, via Underberg. It took a long time, but I was made welcome in his home when we finally arrived. The next day we enjoyed climbing Mount Currie, a high mountain close to the town.

Back at Sarnia the torture continued. The next week-end we went for a walk in the beautiful Xumeni indigenous forest, which had many knobwood trees. I was so intrigued by these knobbly-stemmed trees that 13 years later, after I was married, I returned to cut down a sapling to take home for a standing lamp. It is still in use to this day.

But in the third week our spirits were so low, that we fervently wished a fire would come and burn down the experiment to relieve our misery. After giving vent to our feelings it was not long before a typical Natal *berg wind* started up, blowing hot and dry from the northwest, making the climbing of trees even more unpleasant. Before long the sky became very smoky from the windward side, and we jokingly wondered if our wish might be realised. There was a big hill to the windward side preventing us from seeing what was happening, but before long the smoke grew thicker and showers of ash began to fall. We were not really concerned as there was a fire look-out on the top of the hill, and if there were a serious fire threat, the forester would surely come to warn us or ask for our assistance, but there was no sign of any activity at all.

It did not take long before it was obvious that there was indeed a big fire coming straight for the plantation. We dropped our tools and headed for the hill obstructing our view. We had not yet reached the foot of the hill when we saw flames coming over the top of it, with burning material being carried well ahead by the wind, now at gale force. Only a counter-fire could now stop a catastrophe, so we started to set one, running along a road at the foot of the hill. But soon it was obvious that we were far too late. Burning pine cones

were flying overhead, igniting the plantation behind us. The plantation behind us, of course, was the experiment which we had shortly before been wishing would be incinerated!

There was no opportunity for glee though, as we had to get out of there as quickly as we could. Although the smoke and heat were becoming intolerable, the worst danger was lack of oxygen, and as we ran back up the road there were pockets devoid of air – really terrifying. We managed to get to our panel van and rescue that just before the whole forest erupted in a massive conflagration. There were *Eucalyptus* gum belts flaring with flames well over 20 metres in height. Naturally all our equipment could not be retrieved in time. Fortunately for some or other reason it happened to be the only day in which I had not brought my flute along, so I really thanked the Lord that it was safe.

We raced to the forester's house, only to find his wife alone and in a state of panic. We had already started to load her furniture into a truck when help arrived, and it so happened that the house was spared, although the entire plantation burned, within the span of half an hour, such was the velocity of the wind. It took days to contain the fire, with help coming from as far afield as Weza. It duly transpired that the lack of warning had been due to the lookout having fun at a shebeen near the local trading store, while the forester in charge was having fun in the bar at the Bulwer Hotel (he resigned the following day).

As far as the experiment was concerned, it had been totally destroyed, together with all the data which had been collected over the previous weeks.

Disaster no. 2

There was little reason for joy, however, as instructions now arrived from Head Office that although the experiment had been destroyed, the trees were still standing, and although devoid of leaves (needles), at least their heights could still be measured, more easily in fact! We were shocked beyond belief. Wearily and angrily we shuffled through the ash to resume the work, ending up blackened in filth. Inevitably Ian decided he'd had enough, and

resigned. I couldn't blame him. He eventually became the owner of a popular private game reserve in Mpumulanga.

This was not the end of the matter. Instructions now arrived that a site was to be found for a replacement experiment, in fact *two* such experiments in two different species of pine. The only possibility of finding a suitable site lay in a new, unafforested area of mountain land west of the village of Umzimkulu. A forest station had already been established at Ben Cairnie, but a road network had not yet been laid out. Therefore the only way I could reconnoitre the area for a suitable, uniform area of land large enough to accommodate the two experiments was on horseback. What a pleasure! I revelled in the beauty of the rolling grasslands along the mountain slopes. A day's searching produced the perfect location, but a day in the saddle produced great agony!

Disaster no. 3

Plants of the two species had to be raised at Dargle State Forest nursery, and when ready a year later, had to be transported by rail to the nearest station to Ben Cairnie. But in the course of loading and unloading, the two species became mixed, and as they were very similar in appearance it proved impossible to separate them. At last everybody conceded defeat and the effort was abandoned, never to be tried again! But I did enjoy the day on my horse.

(Note: A number of the forestry episodes related in this chapter were published in Brian Bredenkamp's book "With a beer in the hand - Anecdotes from the forest industry" (1997)).

MRA conferences

Back in Maritzburg I was able to take time off to attend MRA conferences, usually held annually in Johannesburg or elsewhere. Under the *apartheid* regime virtually the only platform in the country upon which black and white could meet on an equal footing was the conferences held by MRA. They took place at least once a year, mostly in Johannesburg, but also in

countries north of the border. At these assemblies I was privileged to hear and meet prominent leaders like William Nkomo, Manasseh Moerane, Judge Claassen, Advocate Trengove, Bremer Hofmeyr, Rev. George Daneel, P.Q.Vundla, Nico Ferreira and many others from all walks of life, committed to finding God's plan for their lives and country. Also present were always a number of full-time MRA workers from other countries, adding an international flavour. These conferences and the ongoing programme of MRA were financed by the sacrificial giving of ordinary people like myself. We knew that this was an important investment in the future of our country and beyond.

Philip Vundla was a prominent personality at these conferences. A fiery political leader from Soweto, whom the police once described as "the most dangerous man in South Africa", his manner of speaking rivetted one's attention. He was a passionate fighter, disarmingly honest and direct, no matter to whom he was speaking. How he changed the direction of his life is a gripping story, described in the book "In Case Anyone Asks" by Loël Ferreira (2006, Unpublished). To quote a brief extract:

"Right in the middle of the troubles in Sophiatown, when people were being removed from their homes, a young white nationalist, Nico Ferreira, went to Vundla and apologised for his attitude of superiority and for his callous disregard for other races in South Africa.

"Vundla was shaken. No white man had ever shown such honesty and humility. At that moment, two new factors came into Vundla's reckoning. First, that white men could change. Second, that he himself could be rid of hate and bitterness. He started to think afresh of what he was fighting for and how he had been doing it. He was clear he was right in his fight for his people, but he saw he had been wrong in his hatreds harboured against individuals that twisted his mind against the entire race.

"Speaking to black power leaders in London, he talked of his own experience: "*South Africa*," he told them, *"is being used to divide men all over the world on a basis of colour. But the real issue in the world today is not*

colour, but character. Violence is not the answer today. What you achieve through violence you will need to maintain through greater violence."

On another occasion he spoke of his new commitment: *"I will be guided by God, and tackle big things that only God can handle...."*

Philip and Nico began to work together to bring an answer to the division between men and nations.

Meanwhile a new house was built for Philip. My brother supervised its construction.

At these conferences people's lives were changed, and this I found very challenging. I learnt that *"It's not the size of the dog in the fight that counts, but the size of the fight in the dog...."* Seeking God's guidance for whom I should invite to attend the next conference, I discovered that the Chairman of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), Trevor Coombe, was a student at the university in Maritzburg. I went to see him, told him about the conference and invited him to attend. He accepted. (NUSAS was the organisation to which English-speaking students belonged. It was in bitter opposition politically to the Afrikaans students' organisation, the Afrikaanse Studentebond (ASB)). We drove through the night to Johannesburg. On our arrival I was amazed to discover that someone had brought the Chairman of the ASB, Jan Loubser, along as well! He was a student at Stellenbosch University. It was very interesting to observe their reaction to the proceedings. By the end of the conference there had been a dramatic reconciliation between Coombe and Loubser, and standing together on the platform they pledged themselves to work together for the good of the country. My brother recalls having given Jan a lift back to Stellenbosch.

Drakensberg tragedy

Angus Wilson and I became involved in rescue operations in the Drakensberg. A light-hearted party of 15 students from Johannesburg had set out to climb to the hut at the top of Mont-Aux-Sources. In spite of the sunny weather, they were advised to cancel their climb as a cold front was on the

way with the probability of heavy snow that night. They ignored the warning in spite of having no warm clothing. In those days there was no road nearby and they had set out from the Royal Natal Hotel at the foot of the mountain.

As they climbed, the party became strung out. When those in front reached Sentinel Peak in the late afternoon, the storm struck with driving rain, heavy snow and freezing mist, reducing visibility to less than 2 metres. They made a dash for the chain ladder up the cliff to the summit, most just managing to reach the hut two and a half kilometres further on. But some of the tail-enders of the party had been unable to make the chain ladder in the blizzard and darkness, and were in a serious condition.

What transpired is vividly described in a whole chapter of R. O. Pearse and J. Byrom's book "Dragon's Wrath", published in 1986 by Macmillan S.A. They describe it as "one of the biggest rescue operations the Drakensberg has ever seen", in which Angus Wilson and I became involved.

Soon after the students had settled into the hut, a small group of experienced mountaineers arrived from the Lesotho side, well equipped with blankets and food. One of them, Dick Reed, immediately took charge to take blankets and food to the party stranded below. Finding the way in the blizzard was not easy. They made it just in time as two of the girls were already in a coma. They sheltered them in a cave for the night, but one of the students was missing. Reed went back for more help. But he slipped near the top of the ice-covered chain ladder and fell – fortunately his boot caught and he hung upside down until he could carefully climb back. At the hut he organised another rescue party, but they could not find the top of the chain ladder and were lost for two hours. Miraculously they found the hut again. Now Reed organised another group to go down. Luckily they found the way.

Meanwhile one of the students below, Peter Christensen, went back along the path to look for the missing climber. He found him unconscious at the side of the path. Peter took off his lumber jacket to keep him warm, and set off back up the chain ladder to fetch more help. He never arrived at the hut. The student he had tried to help also died.

The Mountain Club in Maritzburg sent out an appeal for help to try and trace Peter. They contacted me and I agreed to join the effort. But first I had to meet Angus Wilson arriving by train on transfer from Pretoria to Maritzburg. According to Angus, I whisked him off the train and rushed up to the Drakensberg where we joined a large search party setting out from the hotel for the summit. It was late when we reached the hut where we were packed like sardines while it snowed outside. I stepped out of the door into the falling snow and was not surprised that Peter had not been able to find the hut – visibility was less than two metres. The next day the weather cleared enough for us to search a wide area for the body, but because of the deep snow we were unsuccessful. Later other search parties combed the mountain top, but Peter's body was not found until two months later after the snow had melted, 600m from the hut. A very sad story - and a warning to climbers to take no chances.

Last days in Maritzburg

As I had now reached the age of 25, I felt that it was time move out of the YMCA and find more appropriate accommodation. Angus Wilson and I decided to rent a flat, together with Peter Hurd, a nephew of Edwin Morris. A three-bedroom flat on the top floor of Raldor Court was available, so we furnished it and moved in. It had a pleasant view over the park.

Someone else who was transferred to Maritzburg was Hugh Taylor, now married. I found a nice house for them near the Botanical Gardens

Ever since first meeting MRA I had been intrigued and excited by stories of miracles in the lives of people and of nations, emanating from Caux, the MRA world conference centre in Switzerland. So in 1959 I decided to take a month's leave and visit Caux to find out for myself what was happening there.

Climbing sample trees at Kwambonambi

I survey my achievement

Inspection quarters at Weza forest

Experiment after fire at Sarnia

Lunch time at Ben Cairnie, two of my team.

A PLUS tree selected for breeding.

CHAPTER 7

CAUX

I had never been out of the country before, so I was a little nervous at the prospect. Departure was from Jan Smuts (now O. R Tambo) Airport one evening in June, 1959. The largest passenger aircraft of the time stood ready to receive me – an impressive Boeing 7C ("Seven Seas") with four piston engines, belonging to Sabena (Belgian) Airlines. Exciting stuff. As we flew through the night sky the blue exhaust flames from the engines outside my window worried me at first, but I soon relaxed as this was apparently normal. Compared to modern day jets, there was considerable vibration, which one had to get used to.

There was a long stop for refuelling at Leopoldville (now Kinshasa), where it was interesting to hear all the French being spoken by people in the airport reception area. Then off again and a chance to sleep (no such thing as in-flight movies). The next morning found us over the dry and dusty Sahara desert. Eventually by midday we reached Rome, where we disembarked for a spaghetti lunch at the airport restaurant. Finally at 3 p.m. we landed at Geneva airport. A train trip along the shores of Lake Geneva brought me to Montreux. From here there is a narrow-gauge, steep rack-railway up to the top of the mountain peak Rochers de Naye. However, on the way up I disembarked at Caux Station, a short distance from Mountain House, the MRA conference centre.

I was spell-bound by the beauty of this massive, fairy-tale like building with its turrets, rolling lawns and magnificent views of Lake Geneva far below and the mountains opposite. Formerly a hotel, it had been used as a refugee centre during the Second World War. It was then in poor condition, when a group of patriotic Swiss had the vision that it could become a MRA centre for the rebuilding of Europe and the world. They raised the funds to buy it, and then restored it themselves. To accommodate the large numbers of people

flocking to the conferences, two other hotels situated behind Mountain House, the Grand Hotel and the Maria, were also purchased.

Arriving in the middle of the ongoing conference sessions I was awestruck by the crowds of people from so many countries of the world, some even in their national costumes. As this was my first visit to a foreign country, here at Caux I immediately became aware how isolated South Africa was in the light of the big world issues. It was mind-blowing. I felt very insecure and far away from home, but caring friends quickly took me on and I became involved in what was happening.

At Caux lives had been changed, resulting in miracles and dramatic reconciliations between deeply divided people and nations, ever since Caux was established immediately after the Second World War. These have been well-documented in many MRA publications (for example *Garth Lean*, 1988). Statesmen like the Chancellor of the then West Germany (Konrad Adenauer and the Foreign Minister of France (Robert Schuman) had been there. Germany and France found a new unity at the end of the war through Caux (for which Frank Buchman was decorated by both governments). At the height of Communism, efforts by the party to take over Germany were thwarted, largely through MRA.

I met Mme Irene Laure, a leader of the three million socialist women of France. Because of her role in the French resistance during the war (only 14 years previously), the Gestapo had tortured her son in front of her. She was filled with hatred. She came to Caux, but when a German spoke in a meeting, she walked out. She packed her bags to leave, but in the corridor she met Frank Buchman. "What kind of unity do you want for Europe?" he asked her. The question plagued her so much that she decided to stay on. Through sleepless nights she struggled with her hatred. There was a German-speaking session. Irene walked up to the platform to speak. She said, "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.*" The effect on the Germans was electric. "*I was dumbfounded,*" said one of them. "*For several nights it was impossible for me*

to sleep. All my past rose up in revolt against the courage of that woman. But we knew, my friends and I, that she had shown us the only way open to Germany if we wanted to join in the reconstruction of Europe."

This paved the way for the two nations to work together for this purpose.

MRA has also been accredited with bringing Japan back into the family of nations after the war, and Prime Minister Kishi spent time at Caux. He visited several Asian nations to apologise for what Japan had done to them during the War.

At the time I was at Caux, Communism had been making worrying advances in their bid to control the minds of men and nations. Moscow Radio had frequently attacked MRA. In one broadcast it said, *„Moral Re-Armament is a global ideology with bridgeheads in every continent... It has the power to capture radical, revolutionary minds'*. Frank Buchman believed the need of the age to be *'the greatest revolution of all time whereby the Cross of Christ will transform the world'*.

In Germany the Ruhr coal mining region was under Communist control. Some miners came to Caux and found in MRA „a greater revolution than Communism'. This so upset the Party in the Ruhr that they sent their best leaders to fetch these miners back. But they also changed and stayed, as did others who came. MRA stage plays were taken to the Ruhr and the Communist Party eventually lost control of this key industrial area.

At Caux the variey of people from so many countries and from all walks of life who addressed the conference sessions made a great impression on me. They reported on solutions to problems and conflicts that had taken place when the principles of MRA had been applied (such as „it is not *who* is right, but *what* is right...'). A frequent speaker was the brilliant British journalist, Peter Howard, later to become the world leader of MRA after Frank Buchman died. What he said was always a huge challenge to me, but also the way in which he said it – very directly, but with disarming honesty, a great sense of humour and wonderfully picturesque speech.

I was also deeply impressed, and challenged, by the care and dedication of the MRA workers who were involved in the running of Caux. Whether full-time or on leave from employment, they worked as a united team. Standards of care and service: for example the perfection with which dining tables were laid, were so high that this was often the first step towards winning the hearts and minds of people. Every visitor, whether prince or pauper, was cared for in detail. For example, the visit of a cabinet minister or other leader would be prepared beforehand with intense thought, prayer and the guidance of God. What would that person's main concerns be, and perhaps his problems? There would be a vision of what he could do for his country (and other countries) if he were guided by God. One or more persons would assume responsibility for him or her for the duration of stay. Matters like accommodation and whom he or she should meet between sessions and at meals were carefully planned. The structure and programme of assembly sessions were always planned at set-up meetings beforehand, with the needs of a specific person or people in mind, but always being alert to the promptings of the Holy Spirit during a session.

What I found at Caux was like a sledgehammer blow to my selfish, comfort-loving way of life and attitudes. For the first time I caught a vision of a future new world where the prayer would be answered: **"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven**." I could see lives being changed, through which national and international divisions were being healed. I wanted to be part of this revolution.

There were delegates from many African countries present. This was at the height of *apartheid* and many of them did not want to associate with me. I began to feel ashamed of the way South Africa was causing so much bitterness in the continent. I faced the fact that my own attitude towards people of other races was wrong, that I was arrogant and proud, and that I would have to change. Someone who helped me face this problem in my life was a young black activist from South Africa, Andrew Peppetta. When his father had died through the neglect of the white hospital authorities he was filled with bitterness. But he found an answer to that hatred and committed his life to the Lord in the fight to build a new world.

I asked to speak at a meeting. I was honest about my failings, made a sincere apology to the Africans present, and committed my life to work under God's guidance for change in the lives of all whom I would meet. This laid the basis for new relationships. I began to work closely with Andrew Peppetta. One day he and I stood together on the platform and spoke. He said, "I am prepared to accept a white prime minister of South Africa, if he were trained in MRA." I immediately responded "And I am prepared to accept a black prime minister, if he were trained in MRA." Against the background of the situation in South Africa at the time, this caused quite a stir.

Caux was run mostly by volunteers. I did a regular stint on the dish wash machine. With nearly a thousand delegates it needed a fair-sized team of people, and we worked hard. I remember one occasion when for some or other reason the allocated team did not show up. There were many people walking past the machine located in the vast kitchen. Pop Saul, a retired American cowboy, was the captain of the team. He climbed on top of the machine and kneeled. People passing by couldn't make this out, and inevitably they asked, "*What are you doing, Pop?*" He said *"I'm praying for a dish-wash team!"* Well, who could ignore such an appeal, and in no time Pop had a big team!

I was invited to join the press team. We had to get the daily news out to the media world-wide. Fast writing of press releases was not my scene, however, and I felt that this was not what God wanted me to do.

I joined the international chorus of young people who sang appropriate songs at intervals during meetings. Rehearsals would always start with a time of quiet and seeking the guidance of God. We knew that we would not be effective as a team if there was any disunity or "feelings" among us, and in such cases honesty and apology would bind us together in our commitment. We would also review who would be the key people in the audience whom we should bear in mind while singing – our purpose was to care for and change people by the way we sang. And the way we sang had a remarkable effect on people. They said it was not so much the music or words (we were really good), but the intensity and conviction with which we sang. We often sang for

arriving or departing VIP's, usually outside the main entrance beneath the flag poles with flags of the nations in attendance.

Then there were the Colwell Brothers, three young Americans with guitar, banjo or mandolin, and double bass, singing their fun songs with very direct challenges, like *„Oh you can't live crooked and think straight, whether you're a chauffeur or a chief of state…..'* or *„Isn't it, isn't it, terribly sad, that I'm so good and the world so bad…'*. Interspersed as they were between often serious speeches, they certainly relieved stress levels. They would also often write a song especially for some important visitor.

There were early morning training sessions during which dynamic leaders would share their convictions, which were often very challenging. As many of us were sometimes faced with the temptation to try to emulate or copy them, and using the clichés that were current, much emphasis was placed upon the need to have an independent relationship with God and not be unduly influenced by what others did, said or thought. The Colwell brothers often sang a funny song about this, the chorus of which went

'Be yourself, be yourself,
How simple life can be!
If I was meant to be somebody else,
Why in the heck am I me!'

Every night there was a stage play or movie in the theatre. These were life-changing productions written by inspired playwrights. Peter Howard was a prolific writer of plays. Subsequently these plays would run continuously at the Westminster Theatre in London, and elsewhere in the world. At Caux I was given a minor role in the play *„Pickle Hill'*, which brilliantly portrayed the way in which Frank Buchman cleaned up Penn State College in the early 20th Century. The play was deeply challenging but full of fun and song. Music was provided by a double grand piano, with a player at both ends. Before each performance the cast and stage crew would hold a ‚green room' meeting in which we would have a quiet time to seek God's direction for the production. As in the case of the international chorus, it was a time for honesty, sharing

and focus on the needs of key individuals expected to be in the audience. This would ensure that we went on stage as a united and motivated team.

I regularly did duty as a runner. This involved ferrying food and dishes between the kitchens and dining rooms. The perfectly prepared meals were carefully placed upon dressers, from where dedicated volunteer waitresses would serve the seated guests. Food was prepared with total commitment to perfection. Once I had to carry a dessert dish especially prepared for ex-King Michael of Rumania, who was seated at what was known as "Frank's Table." This was a long table where Frank (had he been there) would have seated specially invited guests. This dessert was amazing. It was an ice cream meringue trifle combination in the shape of a magnificent crown, complete with strawberries for rubies. I wished I could have photographed it. But I will never forget what happened next. As I passed behind the king with this precious load, I tripped on the edge of the carpet. I would have dropped the crown on the King's head, had God not reached down from Heaven and saved me from falling! A potential "international incident" had been averted!

MRA was actively working in crisis areas all around the world where there were great thrusts of action, bridging national, racial, class and religious barriers. So there was a constant stream of visitors to Caux from so many countries arriving and departing, some for short visits, some for long. The language problem was addressed through simultaneous translation during conference sessions.

The pace and intensity of proceedings were exciting for me, but hugely demanding. I just didn't want to miss anything. After a few weeks I grew tired, and a bit unhappy that for my first visit to Europe I had been confined to Caux and not seen anything of Switzerland. But God spoke to someone I did not even know. Don Libby was a former plumber in the U.S.A., now full-time at Caux. One day he came to me and said, "Let me show you a bit of the country". He also invited two others from Africa, and we set off for a wonderful day's driving through mountains and villages, with strawberries and cream at Gruyere Castle. I was so grateful, and will always remember his care. One simply had to have a break every now and again. A couple of us

frequently climbed to the top of the Rochers de Naye mountain, sometimes to watch the sunrise. It was quite a long climb, and I will always remember the simple Swiss bread and cheese that we would invariably enjoy in the restaurant at the summit. Sometimes I would walk alone along the many footpaths, inspired by the wonderful forests and scenery, with the background of cowbells echoing in the valleys. Along with other South Africans I visited the house at Clarens on Lake Geneva, where ex-President Paul Kruger had lived out his last years after banishment at the end of the Boer War. In his last letter to his people he had written *„Take the best from the past and build on that...* .' My future wife's grandfather had also lived in this house for a while.

Since committing my life to serve the Lord I have always tried to listen to God for decisions big and small, starting at the beginning of each day during my quiet time and writing my thoughts down. (Nowadays churches call this ‚journalling'). "*When man listens, God speaks. When men change, nations change.*" We found it a good practice to share these thoughts with a close friend who would hold one to the highest commitment. One morning at Caux I had a revolutionary thought. "*Resign from your job and take up this calling full-time.*" This was such a shock to me that I neither wrote down this guidance, nor told anyone else about it. My work meant everything to me. I loved forestry and had enjoyed rapid promotion in my five-and-a-half years since graduation. Whenever I took leave I would want to return to work after only a week – the work was so exciting and challenging. To have to give up this lifestyle, and to have to work in a totally different field, in different countries, without salary, was simply unthinkable. This was the start of a period of great mental anguish. Day after day this thought would come to me, often many times during the day. Was this really God's guidance, or just my own reaction to the miracles happening at Caux?

I desperately needed to get away from the crowds and activity in order to think. Outside Mountain House in the village of Caux there were two churches, one Catholic, the other Protestant. Day after day I would go to the Catholic church (where I somehow felt closer to God), kneel down and say to the Lord "Surely this is not what You want me to do?" I tried to rationalise by

persuading myself that all God wanted was my *willingness* to obey Him, and that once I said "Yes", He would (hopefully) say "*I am only testing your obedience to Me. I don't really want you to take this step.*" Instead He said "*Do it.*" And this I could not accept. I began to develop a guilt complex – every time people looked at me I felt that they knew what I was thinking, and I had no peace. In one of the early morning training sessions a speaker said "*When you seek God's guidance, what is the one thing you will NOT do?*" Surely this guy was speaking directly to me! Then one day there was the question from a man I hardly new. He asked me, "*Have you ever considered leaving your job and going full-time?*" "*No,*" I replied. He walked on without comment. This lie made me realise that I could no longer avoid a decision, one way or the other.

I now faced the fact that the issue was not full-time or not, but God's will versus my will. I had committed my life to obeying Him, but this was the acid test – was I practising what I preached? Do I quit when the going gets tough? I thought of Jonah, and the consequences of a wrong decision. I thought of Jesus facing the cross, and the mental agony He went through before He said to His Father, "*Your will, not mine.*" And I began to understand the meaning of the Cross – when God's will crosses my will, and I choose His will. I also realised that what I would have to *give up* was not as important as what I would *take on.* My decision was finally therefore "*Yes, Lord.*" My inner turmoil ended, although I certainly felt very insecure.

Of course my first thought was to immediately go back to South Africa to wind up my affairs. But the Lord reminded me of Luke 9: 61-62, "*Still another said, 'I will follow You, Lord, but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.' Jesus replied, 'No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.*" Clearly I should not go back. In fact, was I willing perhaps *never* to go back to my own country if that would be His will? Yet I knew that I would be taking this step for the sake of my country. Tough decisions, but tough times. To seal the deal I wrote to my parents and to my employer, the Department of Forestry.

Having made the right decision, I announced this in the assembly. It was a challenge to many people, including Judge Claassen of the South African Supreme Court, with whom I was then invited to have lunch at Frank's table.

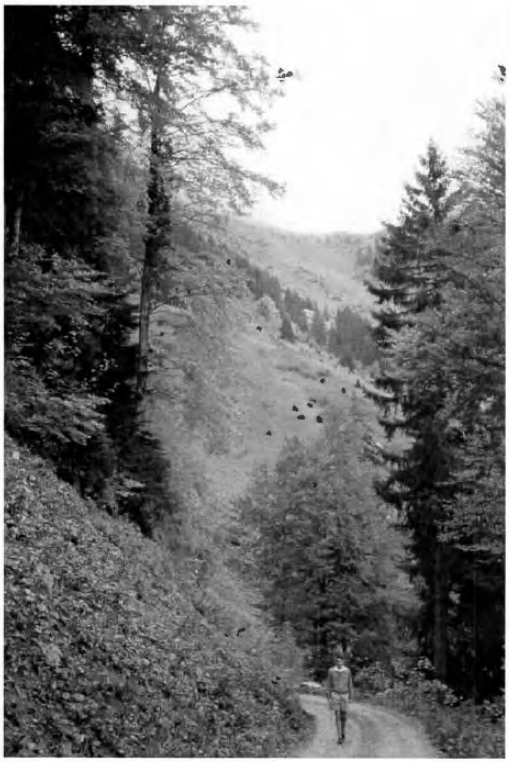
Although I was free of the inner conflict, I was nevertheless nervous of the implications. The first shock was an angry letter from my father, who wrote, "*If you are going to put blacks and Chinese before your own family, I will disinherit you.*" This was a real test of my commitment. Had I made the wrong decision? "*No*" said the Lord, and He reminded me of Matthew 10: 34-39, "*...I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father...anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, ...and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me...*" . Then He encouraged me through Luke 18: 29-30, "*No one who has left home ... or parents for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life.*" And indeed, God has since blessed me so much in this life, with a wonderful wife and Christian children, and in every other way.

Many years later I was eventually accepted back by my father, who late in life made his peace with the Lord. Both my mother and brother had already committed their lives to Him. I think my Mom found it hard, though. She later told me that she found comfort from listening to a recording of Menotti's opera "*Amahl and the Night Visitors*", in which the destitute cripple boy gave his crutch to Jesus as a gift, but I felt that my action was not worthy of comparison. My resignation caused consternation in the Forest Department, and when Angus Wilson also later visited Caux, there was a real fear that they were going to lose more staff! But God had a different plan for Angus.

Soon after all these events there was a dramatic development. The Caux conferences were now approaching finality for the summer. The American MRA conference centre at Mackinac (pronounced ‚Mackinaw'), Michigan, was hosting assemblies simultaneously with those at Caux. Frank Buchman, now very old, was there. He had the vision that the Caux conference should combine with the Mackinac conference and that we should all go there.

Caux

Entrance to Caux



A stroll above Caux

Self ('Brylcreem' shine)
with friends from
Somalia, Uganda,
New York, & Ethiopia

Farewell for an African
delegate by the
Colwells and friends

Rochers de Naye from
my bedroom window

CHAPTER 8

MACKINAC AND U.S.A.

A large team of people departed from Caux in October of 1959, bound for Mackinac. A chartered Lockheed Constellation with its 4 piston engines flew us from London, departing at midnight. Lockheed airliners looked very different from any other, having a wide body at the front, tapering to a very thin rear section, with a distinctive triple tail. This gave it a really graceful appearance.

After a refuelling stop at Keflavik in Iceland at 6 a.m., we reached the American mainland in the late afternoon, in very stormy weather. Our destination was Mackinaw City, a small coastal ‚dorp' (village) at the northern tip of the Michigan peninsula in the Great Lakes. (I soon learned that in the USA even the smallest town is a ‚city'). By now it was dark, with gale-force winds, driving rain and sleet. Although the single runway was lit up for us, the pilot was clearly not happy. We came in to land, but just before touch-down the pilot changed his mind, and off we went up into the clouds again. Eventually we landed safely, but got very wet walking from the plane to the small, single-storey terminal building. A short bus trip brought us to the jetty where a ferry was waiting. The heated interior was a relief, and after a rather rough half hour on Lake Huron we arrived safely at Mackinac Island.

The island is situated in the straits of Mackinac, which separate Michigan's southern peninsula from the northern one. There is a road bridge between the two, reputed to be the longest suspension bridge in the world (10 kilometres). Long, bulk-carrier ships pass close to Mackinac Island, transporting iron ore from the western end of Lake Superior to Chicago. The island is not large, only a few kilometres in circumference and covered mostly with forest. There is a village on the southern side, and a narrow road runs around the island. It has a rich history and attracts many tourists in the summer. No motor vehicles are allowed and all transport is by horse-drawn

vehicles and bicycles. Most buildings are constructed of wood, including the large and famous Grand Hotel. The MRA centre was located at Cedar Point, on the south-eastern tip of the island.

It was now late at night, and walking the few hundred metres from the jetty to Cedar Point in the driving rain and sleet was not pleasant. Great was our surprise when we walked through the front entrance, to be met by Frank Buchman himself, now frail and elderly, seated on a chair at the door. Each of us was introduced to him, and this formed a lasting impression. Our American colleagues gave us a really warm welcome, and after hot refreshments we retired exhausted to our allocated rooms.

Frank Buchman had been a personal friend of Henry Ford. His wife had suggested Mackinac Island as a good venue for MRA meetings. These then had taken place in the Grand Hotel since 1942. When the accommodation eventually proved too small, work began on the centre at Cedar Point, completed in 1954, just a few years before our arrival. People gave sacrificially for its construction. The great hall was impressive; shaped like a giant tepee. Whole tree trunks were floated on the lake from forests further away, and after the bark was stripped off they formed the main supports, meeting at the apex far above. After completion of the buildings, local Indians told of the legend that one day a giant *teepee* would be built in which the *Great Spirit* would be present. The main buildings were of split levels due to the slope of the land down to the lakeside. In addition to modern kitchens and dining rooms there was a large, comfortable coffee lounge with picture windows onto the lake. A special feature was a long, mural painting by the artist Erling Roberts, of personalities who had played key roles in affecting their nations and communities through MRA.

The conference that had been in session before our arrival continued in like manner to that at Caux, with delegates from all over the world. These included many Americans such as. Gerald Ford, who was to become President of the United States after Lyndon B. Johnson.

One thing that really impressed me was the stage play "*The Crowning Experience*", which was the story of Emma Tremaine, founder of the first

college for blacks in America. In old age she said that meeting MRA was the "crowning experience" of her life. It was a musical, with the lead role played by the well-known opera singer Muriel Smith. To hear her sing the aria "*Wade out*" was a very moving experience. Soon after this a film was made of the story shown shown widely around the world.

In between conference activities I was able to take walks through the forest towards the interior of the island. The autumn („fall') colours were a totally mind-blowing experience for me. I will never forget them. That the locals never seemed to notice them was puzzling, until I realised that they see this spectacle every year, like some South Africans who live in the Western Cape who do not seem to appreciate our remarkable environment.

Towards the end of October most visitors to the MRA centre had departed, leaving mostly the full-time workers. Frank Buchman, very frail, left for the warmer climate of Arizona. The time was used to deepen our commitment to God in changing the world. With Communism making inroads all over the world by exploiting the moral weaknesses of key people in the West, we naturally considered strategies to address this.

Building a film studio

During the filming of "*The Crowning Experience*", much of which was done on the island, a Canadian movie director was so impressed by the expertise and dedication of some of the young people doing the technical work that he suggested to Buchman that he build a studio to make films, rather than remain dependant on commercial studios. MRA plays and films were having such an impact everywhere that Buchman responded with characteristic enthusiasm. The decision was taken to build the studio on the island. By the time I had arrived at Mackinac, the plans had been drawn up by architects without charge, and all we needed to do was to start building. About 100 mostly young people of the fulltime team there at the time enthusiastically committed themselves to the job.

With winter approaching it was a race against time. Big buildings in South Africa are built with reinforced concrete, but in USA structural steel is

used. Unfortunately to complicate matters there was a national steel strike, so bad that even the motor industry had come to a standstill. But the United States Steel Corporation stepped in to make the supply of steel to us a top priority. Apart from the steel, all the necessary building materials and equipment, not to mention the food to feed so many people, had to be brought from the mainland before the lake froze up. Our motorised barge, the *Beaver,* had a bridge and a flat-topped deck capable of carrying six loaded trucks, looking rather like a mini container ship. The supplies had to be loaded at the small port town of St Ignace on the mainland, about half an hour's sailing under normal conditions. I made many trips, as I was one of the tip-truck drivers. By this time of the year the lake surface conditions were so rough and dangerous that all passenger ships and ore carriers had ceased to operate. I remember one night returning from St Ignace when we had to butt against huge waves coming straight at us, driven by storm winds. This was scary enough, but as we approached our dock on the island we had to choose just the right moment to make a right-angle turn to port, between the waves. If this manoeuvre were not precisely timed, we risked being overturned and sunk. Fortunately we had a good skipper and we docked safely.

As one of the truck drivers, I had to transport the steel beams and huge steel roof trusses from the dock to the building site. Once when I was parked in the queue waiting to offload, I decided to stretch my legs until my turn came. I had no sooner touched ground when the truck started to roll backwards – I had forgotten to lock it in low gear! In a huge panic I managed (just) to clamber back into the cab and avert what would have been a serious disaster. Truly the Lord was merciful, and a valuable lesson learnt.

I found the central heating indoors to be stifling, and often sought relief by walking a short distance outside at night. On one such occasion I was startled to see the night sky full of weird, moving curtains of coloured light. It was really quite scary, until I realised that I was seeing the *Aurora Borealis*, the northern lights, for the first time in my life; truly a magnificent spectacle.

By this time freezing temperatures had set in, and all building activity in northern Michigan came to a halt until spring. But we were determined to

fight the elements right through the winter. Steam pipes were run through the piles of sand and stone for concrete, to prevent them freezing rock-hard solid. All concrete had to be covered with sheeting, using flame-throwers to ensure that it would set without freezing and crumbling.

The howling winds prevented the lake from freezing solid, but usually at night when the wind dropped, ice would form on the surface. The next day the ice would be broken up by the wind and driven into bays and inlets along the shore, where it began to build up into mini icebergs. Quite impressive. Eventually the temperature had dropped so low that surface ice could no longer be broken up by the wind, and the whole lake began to freeze over. Apart from a rare U.S.Coastguard ice-breaker, only two vessels continued to operate. One was the railway ferry, a large, black, coal-burning ship named the *Chief Wawatam*, operating between the two Michigan peninsulas. It managed to keep a channel open through the ice field until it, too, had to cease operation. The other was our barge the *Beaver*. The only way we could keep a channel open through the ice was by running non-stop day and night. This necessitated two crews.

The thickness of the ice off the mainland had by this time increased enough for local fishermen to cut holes through it and drop their lines down into the water below. The bay was dotted with little huts in which they sat to seek shelter from the biting wind while they waited for a bite. We had managed to keep a channel open through this ice field so that we could reach the dockside. But we were not popular with the fishermen - as we slowly made our way through the channel, the propeller would encounter loose blocks of ice and shoot them along under the ice cap to often pop up through the holes which the fishermen had made! This was fun, as far as we were concerned.

As the temperatures continued to fall it became more and more difficult to keep our channel open, until the ice eventually became so thick that we could no longer cut through it. But the Lord had a plan to keep us going for a while longer. The Beaver was a flat-bottomed boat. Theoretically therefore, if we could lessen the load at the bows sufficiently, it should be possible to drive the front of the boat on top of the ice, and by shifting the cargo forwards

again, to crush the ice beneath. It worked! Instead of carrying the usual six trucks, we had to reduce them to three, so that they could be driven forward when the vessel ran up onto the ice shelf, and then reversing them towards the stern again after the ice had been broken. The Beaver would then be reversed to give sufficient clear-water space to get up enough speed again for the next attack. Progress was, of course, painfully slow. Before freeze-up the trip to the mainland would take half an hour. Now it took many hours, but it enabled us to finally complete the transport of all the supplies needed from the mainland. We had brought 4 000 pieces of steel weighing 602 tons, from 25 railway trucks, safely to the island. Now the island was inaccessible other than by small single-engined aircraft fitted with skis instead of wheels.

My next job was with the team bolting the steel beams in place. Sitting on a beam high above ground level, being nearly blown off in the frequent blizzards, was no joke. With temperatures down to 30 degrees (F) below freezing, I have never been so cold in all my life, neither before nor since, despite both special winter clothing and insulated boots. In spite of a mid-morning mug of hot cocoa with a marsh-mallow floating in it, the conditions would remain extreme. Eventually my toes would start to go numb, then my feet, and by midday I had no feeling in my legs up to my knees. Relief came at lunch time in the heated cafeteria. What a pleasure, as we began to thaw out. But by the time we had to return to work, we were sweating in the overheated environment. Back on the steel beams this perspiration began to freeze inside our clothing!

Yet we remained committed, because we knew why we were doing this. In fact, this daring project received wide publicity.People were also wondering what motivated a white and a black South African (myself and Andrew Peppetta) to work together, under these conditions and far from home.

We all rose early each morning to spend an hour studying our Bibles, listening to God for His guidance, and in prayer. Each of us found benefit in having a "co-agitator", a friend in whom one could confide, share thoughts, pray with and generally hold one to the highest, this of course being a reciprocal arrangement. Naturally with such a large group of people working

together, disagreements, reactions or jealousies sometimes occurred, but these were quickly resolved through honesty, apologies where necessary and listening for God's guidance. At 7 a.m. there was a meeting which we were free to attend, in which we shared the convictions God had given us, and exchanged items of news from the countries from which we had come. The building of the TV studio was by no means the "front page news" of MRA advances taking places across the world – new conference centres were being built in India, and also in Japan, where there were important developments very shortly to involve many of us currently at Mackinac. MRA plays were beginning to run continuously at the Westminster Theatre in London, and things were happening in Europe and Africa. This greatly inspired us to work even faster.

It was now a race to have the building enclosed as soon as possible so that all interior work could be done in the comfort of a heated environment. All the floors first had to be completed. This involved welding "Coroform" corrugated iron sheeting to the steel beams, after which concrete was poured over the surface and levelled. All the time icy winds were blowing through the shell of the building. Under the harsh conditions illness was unavoidable, and when I went down with „flu it was very severe. There was an infirmary in an old, wooden three-storey building, staffed by a doctor and nurses from our own crowd. I really appreciated this as it was a huge relief to come out of the cold and to be able to rest.

Unless there was essential work to be done during the night, we were able to relax after the evening meal. There was no work on Sundays, but a morning meeting similar to the daily 7 a.m. one took place. We really looked forward to Saturday nights when we were often entertained by two brilliant comedians in our crowd. Dick Hadden was a concert pianist, and Cecil Broadhurst a writer of stage musicals. They sang funny, "music hall"- style songs they had written about events that had happened the previous week on the job. They had us in fits of laughter.

Eventually we reached the critical milestone of completing the exterior walls and putting the roof on. The next challenge was to pour the concrete

floor of the main stage, an area as big as a large hall. One of the problems in the construction of TV and film studios everywhere is the avoidance of joins in the floor, as this can interfere with the jolt-free running of camera dollies. So we boldly decided to concrete the whole floor in one operation. It involved virtually the whole work force. We started in the morning, worked right through the day without stopping, through the night, and most of the next day. Tiring, but hugely satisfying. TV and film personalities who visited us the next summer were amazed at this achievement, knowing what the attitude of trade unions would be should such an attempt be made in the commercial world.

By the grace of God we had no serious accidents. With slippery ice and the exposed heights at which we often had to work, opportunities were aplenty. Minor accidents and mishaps were not uncommon, however, which we attributed, with some justification, to sin. One of my jobs was to widen bolt holes in badly fitting steel beams with an acetylene torch, to allow the bolts to be inserted. One day I was sitting on a beam high above the sound stage, and molten droplets were dropping like a waterfall onto the concrete floor far below. Unfortunately I did not realise that there was some loose hessian lying there, which soon caught fire. This small fire was quickly extinguished by those working nearby, and it wasn't long before some of them came up to have a little talk with me. They didn't have to ask me why it had happened, as I already knew. So I was honest with them. I had been indulging in some self-pity about the fact that I could have been in my beloved forests in South Africa instead of doing manual work in a cold place in the USA, and this had prevented me from first checking the conditions below before lighting up my torch. Lesson learnt!

But actually, now that the building was enclosed, I found that the whole operation had lost some of the challenge and excitement of battling the elements. I joined the lowered-ceiling team, but found the work tedious. I accepted that the job was very important, but I found it less enjoyable. On top of this, although I wrote regularly to my parents, there was no response whatsoever from my father. This was hard. But I was hugely grateful for the

regular replies from my mother. After her death I found that she had kept all my letters from that period of my life.

Construction proceeded apace, and there were moments of interest, such as when I was crawling inside one of the large cold-air ducts in the ceiling above the sound stage in order to line the inside with thick slabs of fibre glass for sound proofing. I happened to glance at the manufacturer's logo on the steel plating, and was very surprised to see "YSKOR" – it had been imported from South Africa!

The lake was still frozen and our supplies were getting low. Of the 2400 bags of cement which we had had guidance from God to bring to the island before freeze-up, there were only 12 bags left by early in March. We could not expect the thaw until April. But the Lord intervened. Suddenly an open patch of water appeared right in front of the dock, as if by magic. The ice loosened and began to move. But the Beaver remained firmly wedged in, 50 metres from the open water. So we set to work with dynamite, a pit saw, a tractor and plough, allowing the Beaver to emerge from hibernation and advance towards St Ignace, the first ship afloat. This became known as "The March Miracle." But not far from the island we encountered solid ice all the way to St Ignace. Another miracle appeared in the form of the U.S. Coast Guard ice breaker, which kindly opened a channel for us all the way, free of charge.

We maintained a high standard of construction. When the lift shaft was completed, the manager of the Otis Elevator Co. in Chicago appeared unannounced. He took the measurements necessary for the installation of the lift, and could not believe what he found – the walls were vertical, not barrel-shaped. Apparently it is very rare to find this standard of perfection in the building industry.

The advent of summer was a great relief, also because we were now able to leave the island on various "outreaches" to nearby states and communities. This was done in small groups so as not to delay building construction unduly. Andrew Peppetta and I were interviewed on television in northern Michigan, which was quite an experience, as we had never before even seen TV, South Africa having none then.

One trip I particularly enjoyed was a tour with Alex Drysdale through the states of Ohio and Kentucky, visiting TV stations and newspapers to get publicity for a particular aspect of the MRA programme. I will never forget Alex. He was a cheerful and great humorist, always laughing, and a real challenge to me. P.R. people simply could not say "no" to his requests. Travelling between towns was also a real pleasure, as the rolling green hills of farmland were particularly beautiful. Every farmstead had the same outbuilding - a very large wooden barn with an advertisement on one wall, urging everyone to "*Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco.*"

Back on the island, work continued, but I enjoyed some walks and cycle rides around the island next to the turquoise-blue water of the lake. Cruise ships poured out hundreds of tourists, but they soon disappeared with the approach of fall. All too soon the winter arrived again. By now the building was nearing completion, and the work load had begun to decrease. I was then asked to go to New York to help in the offices there. It was a new experience to take off from an icy airstrip in a little plane fitted with ski's instead of wheels, in the winter of early 1961.

Did the studio begin to produce TV and movie films? It did for a while, until it became clear that although this was the right idea, it was the wrong place. We were told as much by a delegation of Hollywood actors and producers who came to see what we were doing.

They were impressed, but said that an island which becomes inaccessible and isolated for half the year due to the freezing of the lake would make production very, very difficult. So a mighty mistake had been made. Not the first made by the human beings of MRA. But had it been wasted effort? I think not. It has been said that God can use mistakes, but he cannot use *no* action for fear of making a mistake! We were indeed disappointed. But it had been a huge character-building operation for all of us. We had learnt how to cope with big challenges of a physical, spiritual, mental and personal nature. We had learnt valuable lessons about teamwork and doing the impossible. We were now far better equipped for the bigger challenges that God was preparing for us very shortly. I personally had no regrets.

New York

I was accommodated in a large and beautiful old home owned by MRA, in Brooklyn. It had a magnificent view across the water to the skyscrapers of the Wall Street area in lower Manhattan. At night all the windows were lit up for a while and reflected in the water with stunning effect. These old buildings with their green copper roofs and spires were a magnificent sight and to me the most attractive part of Manhattan. Our offices were in the "newer" part of the city, with an interesting view of the *art-deco* Chrysler building, and reached from Brooklyn by the subway (tube train),

This was just as well, because on two occasions while I was there, the city was completely paralysed by heavy snowstorms. Everything came to a standstill for days. The only thing that moved was the subway, and the usual columns of steam rising lazily from odd manhole covers in the streets. Cars parked at roadsides were buried under the snow, their shapes hardly discernible. I loved it.

After a while I was invited to stay at Dellwood, a wealthy country estate in the north of the state, owned by the well-known society lady, Mrs Emily Hammond. The large and elegant mansion stood alone on a substantial estate, surrounded by a forest of trees and rolling lawns. Several of us full-time workers based here, including Rajmohan Ghandi, the grandson of Mahatma Ghandi, while working on various projects and campaigns. It was an hour's drive from the city.

A memorable event in the city was attending a performance of the play "Becket." The star performers were Sir Lawrence Olivier and Anthony Quinn, probably the most famous actors in the world at that time. It was a great privilege to see them live on stage.

About this time a request came from Bill Mackintosh, one of our MRA workers in Uganda. There were three kingdoms in Uganda (before President Obote later abolished them), one of them being the Kingdom of Bunyoro. One of the sons of the king, whose name I shall refer to as AB, was due to come to the USA to study at Penn State University. At that time there were many

students coming from Africa to study in America, and there was widespread concern over the fact that they were being deliberately targeted by leftist forces. Many would return to Africa either as committed communists or morally defeated. The King was worried about this trend, and Bill asked if someone could take care of AB when he arrived and look after him until he entered the university. I had clear guidance to fulfil that role, and, after all, he was a fellow African.

I met AB at the airport and we drove to Dellwood where he would stay with me. Over the next days I showed him the sights of New York: The Empire State Building (at that time tallest in the world), the Wall Street Stock Exchange, the World Trade Fair, and many others. In the process we got to know each other better. Eventually he asked me, "Why do you as a white South African do all this for me?" (Apartheid was at its height at this time). This was an opening I had been praying for. I told him how I had decided to let God change my life from being a proud, arrogant, selfish white South African who had always felt superior to people of other races, and that I had decided give my life to build a new Africa under His guidance. I told him that I was sorry for the way people like me had lived and how much bitterness this was causing. I also shared with him how I had faced the bitterness I had had towards my father, that I had apologised to him, and that despite the fact that he had since disinherited me, I had a new attitude and care for him.

AB was very thoughtful, but had little to say. I could tell that he was deeply challenged.

At Dellwood I introduced him to Rajmohan Ghandi and others who had interesting stories to tell of change in their lives. I was expecting some sort of positive response from AB to all this, but he remained silent and morose. Obviously there was something wrong in his life that he was battling with. One can talk about Jesus to a person like this, but until he faced that problem in his life, was honest about it and prepared to change, there would be no progress. I felt I was getting nowhere with him. Finally I asked Rajmohan to help. The three of us sat down together. Raj was very direct and asked AB probing questions ("soul surgery"). Suddenly B broke down and in floods of

tears admitted what was stopping him from committing his life to the Lord – his bitter hatred of his father, and his own weakness for womanising. Together we kneeled down (a black African, a white South African and an Indian) and he gave his life to the Lord. Next he started to put right the things that were wrong in his life. He wrote a letter to his father, as a prodigal son, in which he asked his forgiveness for his bitterness and was honest about his sins. He showed me the letter. I was very moved by it.

AB now had to go to his university. To my great shame I then lost touch with him, as I was suddenly involved up to my eye teeth in working with the Japanese students and their play "*The Tiger.*"

The Tiger

In 1960 U.S. President Eisenhower's proposed visit to Japan had been stopped by widespread riots led by the *Zengakuren* revolutionary students' organization. Some of their ringleaders and members subsequently came into contact with MRA. They came to Caux, where they found something bigger and better to which they could commit their lives. It meant a radical change in the way they were living. When they realised how the Communists had used them for their own ends to divide Japan from the U.S.A., they decided to dramatise their experience in a stage play, which they called "*The Tiger*". It tells the story of the student son of a conservative and deeply divided family. As an escape, the son becomes involved with the student riots against the planned visit of President Eisenhower. There is a convincing riot scene. But through MRA the son decides to change his life. Through honesty and apology the divided family becomes united, and the rioters commit themselves to fight for unity rather than division.

In New York we worked hard preparing for their arrival and performances of the play. In the riot scene of the play the students do a sort of snake dance with arms linked, carrying anti-American placards and yelling "***Kuk! Kai! Kai! San!***" repeatedly. It really was quite impressive. To swell their numbers in the riot scene some of us westerners were invited to join

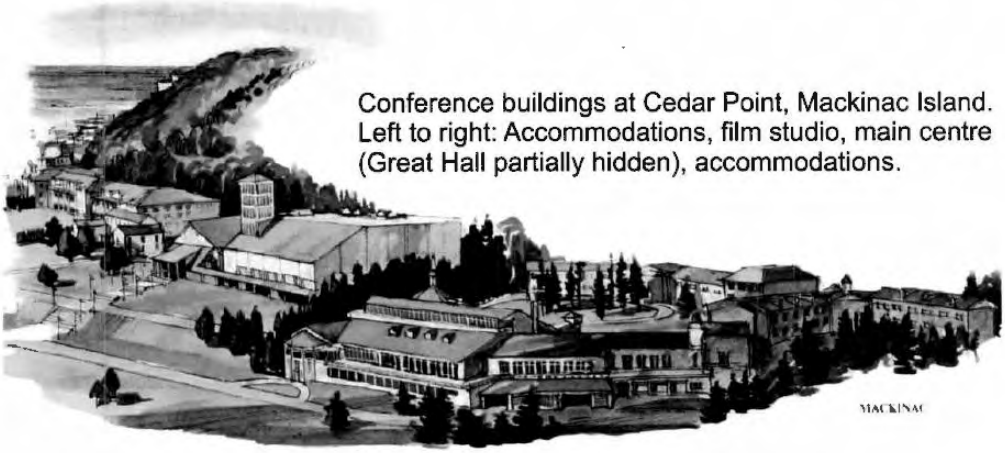
them. What fun! We had to wear headbands with slogans in Japanese written on them. Those who had fair hair had to wear black skull caps to make them look more Japanese! We received a standing ovation from a packed audience in the Carnegie Hall, that world-renowned venue for classical music concerts. (Now it is with a sense of pride that I can boast that I have performed in Carnegie Hall!)

Off to Washington, where the cast met Jim Hagerty, Eisenhower's press secretary who had gone to Japan to arrange the visit. It had been the demonstrations against Hagerty that had led to the cancellation of Eisenhower's visit. The students now apologised to Hagerty for what they had done, and told him how they had changed. Hagerty recognised one of the students when introduced, and said "I remember you clearly – you were on the roof of my car!" He naturally accepted the apologies, and was so moved by a performance of the play that he came to the stage afterwards. He said, "This is more than an apology." It made headline news on national television.

After performances in Detroit and in Los Angeles, we went to Palm Springs (in California) to meet former President Eisenhower. It was a privilege to meet this man under whose leadership the Allies had won the Second World War. We had an hour with him, and he really responded to the Japanese students' convictions and apology for preventing his visit to Japan. I appreciated his firm handshake and the fact that he looked one straight in the eye (the photo appeared in the South African press). He said, "*I expect to see you in South America and other places taking this message there. Mankind is not going to live in peace until they have a higher moral plane on which to conduct their affairs.*"

We spent two nights in Palm Springs. I stayed in the home of Sadie Bunker, who was a pilot and had her own plane. She had achieved fame for being the first great-grandmother ever to fly a jet fighter through the sound barrier! She took me for a flip in her plane over the desert, which I much enjoyed.

While all this was going on, there was much activity in Brazil and other South American countries. Castro was exporting extreme leftist ideas all



Conference buildings at Cedar Point, Mackinac Island. Left to right: Accommodations, film studio, main centre (Great Hall partially hidden), accommodations.

Construction crew, film studio

Andrew Peppetta, self and Rei Jones on construction

I meet ex-President Eisenhower

The Beaver leaves St Ignace

over the sub-continent, and planeloads of Latin American students were being flown to Moscow for training. There was widespread concern. A conference was therefore planned to decide what action should be taken to provide a positive alternative. A large number of delegates from South America duly arrived in Miami, where the conference was held. They were joined by the cast of *The Tiger* and all of us who had been travelling with them. The play was staged. Immediately the delegates decided that this was exactly what was needed, particularly in the light of the announcement by Krushchev (President of the Soviet Union) on May 1st (during our conference), that the Communists were about to launch "*a mighty offensive to capture South America in the next two years*".

General Hugo Bethlem, former Brazilian ambassador and currently a businessman, dropped in on the conference on his way to New York for a holiday. He was stunned. Convinced that this was the answer for the hemisphere, he immediately got into action. He gave the money set aside for his holiday towards bringing *The Tiger* and an international task force of MRA to Brazil. He returned to his country, closed up his office, and addressed a meeting of four hundred business leaders in Sao Paulo, challenging them to change the country, starting with themselves. He said "*I know you businessmen, because I was like you. We ask our wives to live in purity, but we are not pure. We ask our workers to be honest, but we are dishonest. I have changed, and committed my whole life to this fight.*" To Bethlem's surprise these businessmen three times halted his presentation with standing ovations.

Now we packed our bags to join him.

CHAPTER 9

BRAZIL AND *THE TIGER*

In May, 1961 we departed from Miami on a charter flight bound for Sao Paulo, a distance almost as far as from London to Johannesburg. There was a fuelling stop in Suriname, where everyone speaks Dutch with an Afrikaans accent. It was a relief to reach Sao Paulo after the long flight and settle into the homes and hotels to which we had been allocated.

Sao Paulo

Sao Paulo is similar to Johannesburg in that it is the commercial and industrial capital of Brazil, with a population at that time of more than four million. The streets were thronged with crowds of pedestrians and endless traffic. As hooting is illegal, the only resort the driver of a vehicle has, is to slap the outside of his door through the open window. Until I got used to it, it was really quite alarming. Taxis were easily recognizable by the absence of paint on the driver's door – it had all been slapped off!

Other unusual features of Brazil which we had to get used to included the poor standards of hygiene. We had to accept strict rules in this regard, as it was vital that we remain healthy. We could drink only bottled water, and fruit peeled or prepared by hotel or restaurant kitchens was unacceptable – we had to peel them ourselves.

We hit Sao Paulo on the run. Together with the local MRA people we engaged in maximum publicity for *The Tiger ("O Tigre")* for a run in the prestigious „Teatro Municipal'. Newspapers, TV and radio responded enthusiastically. One of the tasks I took on was to collect copies of newspaper articles for forwarding to MRA centres around the world, without realizing what an immense task this was to become. We received many invitations to speak in universities, where the Japanese students made a huge impact. We addressed business and trade unions. We were received by the Governor of the

State. Meanwhile our international chorus (of which I was a member) was being drilled in how to sing the national anthem in faultless Portuguese and with maximum conviction. At the same time we worked on translations of some of our usual songs.

Traffic jams blocked the roads on the opening night and the theatre was packed. The performance started with a fiery speech by General Bethlem who then introduced what we called an "international line-up" – 10 or more key personalities from many countries (for example Rajmohan Ghandi), some in national costume, lined up on stage and addressed the audience in short (often only one-minute), powerful speeches spoken with great conviction. They told how their own lives had changed, how they had been used by God to heal personal and national divisions, and issued a strong challenge to the audiences to do likewise. There was simultaneous translation into Portuguese. Andrew Peppetta and I stepped forward together to speak (*"...the problem of South Africa is not colour, it is character..."*). The audience was quickly given a picture of what MRA had done, and was doing, around the world. At some stage (I can't remember when) we sang the national anthem. This seriously impressed the audience. The performance of *O Tigre* followed, and at the end the audience was on its feet applauding and shouting. Masses stayed to talk until well after midnight. Night after night this was repeated.

Rio de Janeiro

All too soon we left Sao Paulo and headed for Rio. I was not impressed with this famous city. *Favelas* (squatter camps) were everywhere on the outskirts, often on impossibly steep hill slopes. Neither did I enjoy the climate, which was hotter and muggier than Durban, with no winds off the sea to help. The only way to achieve comfort was to take a tram ride. The trams were really museum pieces, built in the Victorian era and still a major form of transport. They had a roof, an undercarriage, but no sides, so they were open and pleasantly breezy. They were usually so choked with passengers hanging on everywhere that all that was visible was a condensed mass of people moving down the street on wheels. The conductor was an acrobat as he had to

climb over bodies to collect fares. I looked in vain to see what sort of electric motor drove the vehicle, but there didn't seem to be anything underneath. This was a standing joke with the locals, who claimed that the trams "ran on tradition."

Our main hosts were the portworkers of the city. They had produced a wonderful full-length movie "*Men of Brazil*", in which they tell the story of how, through MRA, they had cleaned up the port from stealing (10% of all cargoes), strikes, and violence between rival unions, all of which had virtually paralysed the port..

Over 130 members of our team (myself included) stayed in hotels as guests of the Hotel Owners' Association.

The Teatro Municipal was similar to that of Sao Paulo, a beautiful, very ornate opera house. It was packed, night after night, so much so that we were forced to do a performance in the „Maracanázinho' football stadium, before a crowd of 17 000. This was sponsored by the Newspaper Association and widely covered by TV.

The Governor of the State arranged for us to do a performance in Niterói, a city on the other side of the Guanabara Bay, reached by ferry. I will not forget this ferry. It was an ancient, wooden vessel with a steam gantry engine – a single, tall, vertical cylinder with its piston reaching nearly as high as the funnel, linked to a single connecting rod on the other side of the bridge, which slowly turned the paddle wheels. It must have been built in the Victorian age. The ferry had an alarming list to port, which was very worrying. But we made it to Niterói, to find a town almost buried under filth. The beautifully designed, hand-crafted typical Brazilian pavements were invisible under rubbish. We found out that this was due to the city having been paralysed by unrest.

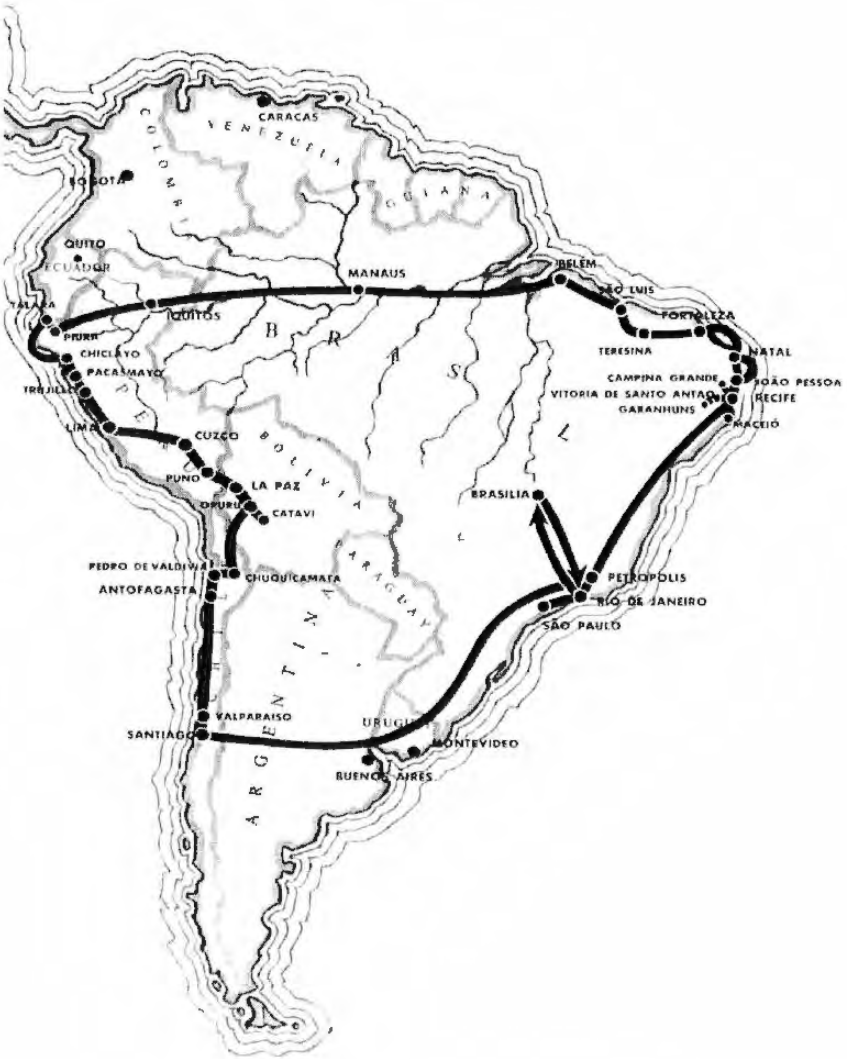
Strikes and riots were so serious that the whole city had been occupied by the army. Employees of the hospital, one of the largest in South America, had walked out as they had not been paid for two months. A meeting to plan further strike action was planned for the night we were scheduled to present *O Tigre*, but the meeting was postponed till midnight so that the union leaders

could see the play. Afterwards the president of the union asked for a showing of the film *Men of Brazil* to open the strike meeting. Next day the union president said to us, "*After what we learned last night, we decided to try a new way – not brute force and pickets, and for this we have no words to thank you.*" The strike was off, and management had agreed to pay the two months' arrears in pay immediately. Soon after, the Archbishop said, "*MRA seems so new, but is nothing more than the commandment Christ gave, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' That love brings unity between race and race, class and class, nation and nation.*"

Meanwhile at this point there was a miracle. Marshal Juarez Távora, national hero of Brazil (marshal is the rank above general), met General Bethlem and the MRA force, and saw *O Tigre*. He was profoundly affected. In the previous forty years he had led six revolutions against corrupt and dictatorial governments. Deeply disillusioned, he realised that what needed to change was the hearts of men. Discovering MRA, he called this "the final revolution" because it deals with the root of the problem. This naturally made headline news.

By now the President of Brazil had heard of our actions, and asked to meet some of our leadership in Brasilia, the capital. Many of us remained in Rio as there was so much to be done. The President saw the film *The Crowning Experience* in his palace, and there were receptions by many ministers of the cabinet. The President then ordered the armed forces to provide transport, accommodation and all assistance to take *O Tigre* to the nation. Invitations poured in from all over the country. Eleven State Governors called urgently for *O Tigre* to come to north-east Brazil and the north, and immediately started arranging programmes and hospitality.

Little did we know that this was the beginning of a major move with *The Tiger* across the entire sub-continent of South America.



Route of *The Tiger*, 1961/1962

North-East Brazil and Amazon

Marshall Távora now took the lead jointly with General Bethlem, and we headed straight for Recife in the north-east state of Pernambuco. All 184 of us from 28 countries were transported by the air force in transport aircraft, but Marshal Távora flew in a B25 bomber escorted by F80 jet fighters. Upon arrival at the airport we were greeted by a reception committee comprising the State Governor, the Mayor, the Archbishop, and the Commanding General of the armed forces, backed by a parade of troops. The army band opened with the national anthem, and the fact that we could sing it so lustily with them created a good impression. Speeches were duly exchanged, General Bethlem usually being a star performer, after which the army buses transported us to our barracks and hotels.

In all the cities and towns which we subsequently visited, this was typical of the welcome we received in each case. I was terribly impressed at the amazing way that God was opening doors.

The north-east of Brazil is an enormous sugar-growing area, but was plagued by unemployment and unrest, upon which Communism was feeding. As we walked the streets handing out leaflets, I was amazed at the masses of people who surrounded us to find out more. Why did this always happen? I think that in spite of their poor circumstances they were desperately looking for a faith and something to live for. The streets in all the towns of the north east were so jam-packed with people that there was hardly room for vehicles. I had never before seen the effect of such unemployment. Just three weeks before our arrival at Recife, tanks had patrolled the streets and warships had their guns pointed at the city. Rioting students had taken over the university, peasant leagues had been organised into armed groups, and Communism threatened to seize control.

Performances of *O Tigre* in the Santa Isabel Theatre were insufficient to meet the demand. We showed the film *Men of Brazil* to the masses who could not get in, while they patiently stood in the rain. Clearly the theatre was not an adequate venue. We then decided to present it in the stadium. 45 000 attended. Ten thousand troops from the army, navy and air force marched in, led by

military police and navy bands, followed by the portworkers of Rio carrying the Brazilian flag, and the 184-strong MRA force in procession. Many of us spoke in the international line-up before the play, but it was Marshal Távora who won the crowd. My limited Portuguese did not allow me to understand what he was saying, but *how* he addressed the crowd moved me greatly, because what came across was his deep love for his people – and the feeling was mutual. They hung on every word he said. And the response was huge; certainly an orator such as I have never heard before or since (See quote later).

The entire students' strike committee who had led the riots before we arrived, were present in the stadium. They were greatly challenged by the student cast of the play, and the President of the Students' Union arranged a special performance in the university. Hardcore Communists attended the play against the orders of the party leaders.

General Bethlem then flew to Brasilia to report to the President, who immediately instructed the mayor to arrange for the play to be brought to the capital. But many of us remained in Recife to do follow-up work after the tremendous response. The Rio portworkers spent time with their Recife colleagues. One of them told how he had decided to be absolutely honest. "*I was a thief", he said. "I once stole 40 alarm clocks. I also used to steal liquor. I decided to stop stealing it, drinking it and buying it. My wife and I are going to get married in the church.*" Another Recife portworker returned to the church after 20 years and decided to marry the mother of his 14 children. Fifteen others immediately took the same step, and many more began to follow their lead.

From Recife we headed north, leaving a number of our people there to do follow-up work. We experienced the same huge responses in Campina Grande, João Pessoa, Natal, Fortaleza (Marshall Távora's home city), San Luis and Belèm. Transport was usually by the air force, except between João Pessoa and Natal when we travelled for a day in two Brazilian navy corvettes. That was fun. I enjoyed chatting with the crew, explaining that I was actually from Natal in South Africa. They were as surprised as I was to learn that there

are two Natals in the southern hemisphere, one a town and the other a province.

We found that if we were not met at the airports by the archbishop of the state, we would be given a reception by him in his palace. Our chorus had many songs in Portuguese ready for such occasions. I was always impressed by the support and encouragement given to us by these church leaders. We continued to do performances in local theatres, but invariably demonstrations in stadiums were necessary.

Our last town in the north-east was Belèm, at the mouth of the Amazon. At first our reception was different. As I described in a postcard to my parents, "Belèm is a corrupt moral centre of subversion and smuggling, and we had a great deal of trouble from people in high places who were against us. But the masses wanted MRA, and 40 000 packed the stadium to see O Tigre – they had walked miles from all directions...."

The amazing response throughout Brazil so far, left us quite exhausted. It was also important not to become so busy doing so many shows that we might not be meeting the deepest moral and spiritual needs of people. To remain focused on the Lord and His plan required that each one of us be immediately honest with one's "co-agitator", or other friend, about temptations, frustrations, and any sin. This was particularly important in the environment of moral decay through which we were travelling. God honoured our commitment, and gave us the strength to continue. We always managed to have a "green room" meeting before each performance, often in difficult venues. This was essential to maintain focus on God's plan for ourselves and for the evening's outreach.

Manaus

Next we took off to fly up the Amazon River to Manaus. The mouth of the river is a few hundred kilometres wide. In more postcards to my parents I tried to explain what I could see from our air force transport plane: "The Amazon is so wide that all you see from horizon to horizon are vast expanses

of water, separated from one another by more water! An amazing sight, also flying over jungle as far as you can see."

After five hours flying time we landed in Manaus, more than 1500 km up the river. The town can only be reached by water or by air as there are no roads to connect it to the rest of the country. This town had been famous as the rubber capital of the world – until rubber plantations began to be established in the Far East. Nevertheless it seemed to me to be quite a busy centre, with ocean-going ships in the port. I was impressed with the tramway system, apparently one of the first in the world. It stops at the edge of the jungle.

The army took us on a trip downriver in boats. Manaus is actually not on the Amazon, but on the Rio Negro and close to the confluence. The Amazon water is muddy, but the Negro is clear brown, just like our Western Cape rivers. The two rivers flow side by side for kilometres without mixing – an interesting sight. Our boats took us past villages of houses floating on the water. Wherever we went we handed out leaflets and magazines about *O Tigre,* and children swam out to our boats to collect them, returning to their homes without getting them wet!

After the usual receptions and meetings we put on the play in the Teatro Amazonas, an exact replica of the famous La Scala opera house in Milan. During the rubber boom the world's most famous opera singers had performed here. The building had been moth-balled for a long time, but the authorities opened it up and restored it to its former glory especially for *O Tigre.* It is regarded as the most beautiful opera house and theatre in all of Brazil, and I was fascinated by the marble staircases, the works of art, the murals, chandeliers, gilt ornamentation, the red soft carpets and velvet curtains everywhere. The tiered galleries up to the ceiling and the curtained private boxes were packed, a glittering occasion.

The last night of our stay we did our usual demonstration in a stadium. There were no grandstands, but a stage, about 7 metres high had been especially built, so all could see clearly. The army marched in, regiment by regiment. We followed, headed by the flags of our 28 nations. The crowds simply stood automatically, and as we sang the national anthem from the

stage, the army general raised the Brazilian flag. An impressive ceremony. It just so happened that this was the 26th of July – the anniversary of the Cuban revolution, and the Communist Party had planned a massive demonstration in a square nearby. Some of us sneaked down to have a look – only about 50 people there. The official army estimate of the numbers at the MRA demonstration was 90 000, certainly the largest crowd we had so far had. Fortunately by this time I was quite used to addressing large crowds!

By this time Marshal Tàvora was really catching the attention of the nation. It's worthwhile quoting from one of his addresses to the crowds (MRA Pictorial no.25, 1961):

"I come to you as a new soldier with a new army.

"I have now found the way to the final revolution which will not spill the blood of innocents and does not want to impose its will by force of arms on anyone anywhere.

"As I grew up, I believed firmly in the values of democracy and I tried to change the way of thinking of the political leaders of my country. I had to travel on foot or on horseback from the extreme south-west of the country to the extreme north-east.

"By 1930 we had managed to awaken the country from what we called her moral apathy – yet our efforts were crowned with eight years of dictatorship. Fifteen years later, as a colonel in the army, I linked up with other friends to overthrow that dictatorship. Again, ten years later, so bad were the fruits of our revolution that we had to think once again of overthrowing a legal government.

"I came to the conclusion that the consciences of men need to be changed. Violent revolution cannot change the human conscience. Men themselves

must change. By thinking quietly about what is wrong they must turn their failings into virtues.

"We must change the people who form the basis of democracy. It means nothing to construct an economic and military power if people remain dissatisfied. Only with the absolute moral standards proclaimed by Moral Re-Armament will we be able to give content to programmes of education, health, and social security for our people.

"Our bourgeois revolutions, even though they changed the political structure by violence, did not change the economic and social structure and even less did they change the hearts of men. Equally the Marxist revolution, which is much more radical, has not managed to make the world a better place, nor will it do so just by brutally liquidating the capitalist class and replacing it by the proletariat.

"The challenge of Moral Re-Armament is a mighty challenge, and our response to it can change the world. Everyone of us – rich or poor, boss or worker, learned or uneducated, black or white – everyone has to take on this battle inside himself.

"MRA acts by changing people. We cannot change the world if we do not begin with ourselves. If each one looks at his own personal life and his family life every day he will see many things that have to be different. Each man can listen to the voice of God through his conscience; and, writing down the inspiration he receives, obey His Will. If we can win this battle over ourselves, we shall win inner peace and through that restore peace within our families and nations, amongst those who lead and those who are led.

"We of Moral Re-Armament want a new world. We want new men, rigorously honest and fearless. We want men who are pure, who can tell their wives and daughters the truth about themselves. We want men free from hate, who first

Marshal Tàvora
(with General Inoue)

On a Brazilian navy corvette.
Self top right, Niketu Iralu and
Isaac Amata, left

I mount the stage behind
Isaac Amata to address
the audience in the
Lima stadium

Sacsayhuaman Fortress,
Cuzco. Arrow to self

Men of Brazil movie showing at Puno

Leonard Crane & Isaac Amata sell MRA Pictorials in Brazil Rio portworker left.

Watching The Tiger In Iquitos

We lay a wreath at the statue of Simon Bolivar, in La Paz

President of the Catavi mineworkers listens to an American apology

President Estenssoro of Bolivia receives us in the palace. General Bethlem right, Rajmohan Ghandi behind him.

Historic reconciliation - Marshalls Lott and Tàvora

RECONCILIAÇÃO HISTÓRICA

Quitandinha Hotel, venue for the Assembly of the Americas

put things right with their brother, then set out to build that new world. We must start with ourselves and clean up the nation.

"If we have the courage to change we will have the power to bring peace. Communists change and find a greater revolution. Capitalists change and use their money to create a new society for all mankind.

"The choice today is the brutal tyranny of Communism, or the common suicide of atomic war, or global renaissance through Moral Re- Armament. Communism will never, never, never win. Our destiny is to unite our country and give MRA to the world. This is the final revolution."

We now prepared to depart for Peru in response to President Prado's request to "do in Peru what you did in Brazil."

CHAPTER 10

PERU

After a six-hour flight further up the Amazon, we arrived in the Peruvian town of Iquitos, the furthest point up the river which sea-going ships could reach. We discovered that the day of our arrival was actually Peru's National Day. So we were escorted to Mass in the Cathedral, attended by sword-carrying naval, air force and army officers in dazzling uniforms. Afterwards we were guests of honour at a colossal march-past of all the armed forces. I was amazed – a small town, but armed to the teeth. It was an impressive parade, but there was something sinister about the goose-stepping troops with their shiny steel helmets – reminiscent of the old Spanish "Conquistadores'. We had already learnt the national anthem of Peru, and were trying hard to master translations of some of our songs. We showed a film that night in the "28th of July Square", with the screen tied to the great statue of San Martin, liberator of Peru.

By this time what became apparent, and soon to be confirmed as we travelled, was the striking difference in character between people of Portuguese descent and those of Spanish descent. The Brazilians are more relaxed and open-hearted, while the Spanish South Americans are far more excitable (short fuses), and more suspicious. This probably explains why Brazil is by far the largest country on the sub-continent while the Spanish-colonised countries broke up into so many smaller ones because they were always fighting each other! There was also a difference in the coffee. All the countries serve thick, black coffee in small cups. In Brazil it tastes marvellous, but all over the rest of South America it does not taste good at all.

Now, having mastered a few essential phrases in Portuguese like "honradez" (honesty), I now had to learn that in Spanish this is "honestidad", and that "and" in English is "e" in Portuguese but "y" in Spanish, although pronounced the same. The two languages are very similar (like Dutch and Afrikaans), with Spanish being the easier. The Peruvians do not call it "Espanñol", but "Castellano" – a matter of pride, I think. I am not good at

learning languages, and for important talks with individuals there was usually an interpreter amongst us I could ask to help.

The next day we met three jungle Indians who had come especially to meet the Canadian Indians in our team. They had marched for 14 days, escorted by the army, and this was the first time they had ever seen a town. My letter to my parents says, *"Very dignified, with noble features, but dangerous!"* One of them demonstrated how he uses his two metre long blowpipe, shooting a poisoned arrow accurately at a target 30 metres away. There are head-shrinking tribes not far from Iquitos. Perhaps this is the reason for the presence of the army. That night we performed *El Tigre* in the town square. The surrounding trees were full of people trying to get a good view.

Next day the Peruvian air force flew us over the Andes Mountains to the west coast. The trip was not comfortable. As the aircrafts were not pressurized, we had to suck oxygen from cylinders as breathing became more difficult. There was lots of turbulence, and I still have a scar on my fingers from hitting the unpadded metal roof when the plane dropped into a particularly awesome air pocket over the Andes. After we had landed at Piura near the coast, we all immediately fell asleep in the airport!

We moved quite rapidly through the towns of Piura, Tallara (oil wells on the coast), and Trujillo, doing one performance of *El Tigre* in each place. Then straight down the long coast to the capital, Lima.

Lima

Between the Andes and the coast, Peru is total desert, but rivers flowing down from the Andes provide water for towns and limited irrigated agriculture. At this time of the year (August) it was very cold, and because of the fog rolling inland from the coast, the sun did not appear once during our stay in Lima. The fog was quite wet at night, but apparently insufficient to support any vegetation. Everything was so different from Brazil. There was such a marked class division between the poverty-stricken masses of Inca descent and the excessively wealthy upper classes of Spanish descent, with

powerful armed forces to maintain the *status quo*. Communism was exploiting the dissatisfaction of the masses, and one felt that the situation was rather unstable.

Even the architecture was different from that of Brazil, the churches and public buildings being exceedingly ornate in comparison with those in Brazil. We stayed in private homes or hotels, but our base was the Hotel Bolivar on the central square (most towns had a "*Plaza de Armas*", or named their squares and streets after dates of revolutions and other historic events).

The other contrast with Brazil was the attitude of the Catholic Church. Here we were attacked by the Church, and as a result everything closed up. The media went silent and no one seemed to know of our arrival.

On top of this Frank Buchman, the founder of MRA, had died in Germany on the 7th of August and people who had known him intimately were very saddened, although he had been ailing in health for quite a while. Frank had always believed that he should train others to do the job better than he could, and it was his wish that Peter Howard should succeed him as world leader of MRA. Howard was an Englishman, who studied at Oxford and excelled in sport, captaining England at rugby. As a journalist he set out in 1940 to write an article attacking Moral Re-Armament, but his investigations changed his life. In his book *Frank Buchman's Secret* (1961) Peter tells of Frank's relentless fight for him to find a relationship with God that would be independent of any person – including Buchman.

But God had a plan for the situation we found ourselves in – the local community of Japanese descendants who had settled in Peru after World War 2, took us on. They printed and distributed one million leaflets announcing *El Tigre* in the Lima football stadium.

We were amazed at the crowd of 60 000 who jammed the stadium, with another 8 000 who could not get in. It was something to see that enormous crowd stand as one man in silent tribute to Frank Buchman, and *Frank Buchman's Secret* sold like hot cakes. Our international line-up had a great impact. It included Admiral Sir Edward Cochrane, a direct descendant of the Lord Cochrane who played a famous role in the liberation of the South

American colonies from Spanish rule. When he stepped forward to speak, the crowd went wild (I loved the way the locals pronounced his name as *"Almirante Kôkrrraanie"*). By this time Andrew Peppetta had left for other MRA work elsewhere, and instead Isaac Amata from Nigeria joined me as spokesmen for Africa. *El Tigre* produced the usual great response, particularly from some students of San Marcos University, whose subsequent action will be described later.

General Bethlem and the Rio portworkers now left for a short visit to Caux to join others in paying tribute to the life of Frank Buchman and to meet U Nu, Prime Minister of Burma (now Myanmar). U Nu had long been a friend of Frank and had travelled from Burma especially for this occasion. (Frank had fought hard for U Nu to be aware of the sinister motives of a member of his cabinet, but U Nu would not believe it. The present military dictatorship of Myanmar may have resulted from his failure to act before it was too late. Frank once said, *"Cabinets to rule well, must learn to read people like a book").*

Meanwhile in Lima, the Director of the National Radio of Peru had been completely won by *El Tigre*. This is a powerful state-owned broadcasting system like the SABC. Two of us felt led to take on this organisation and the 24 other radio stations of Lima. We got Radio Nacional del Peru to broadcast a commentary on the stadium showing, as well as many programmes and interviews with members of the MRA force. Some were done in Quechua, the language of the Inca Indians, mostly in the Andes. Moscow Radio was also broadcasting in Quechua. All of this resulted in floods of letters asking us to come to all corners of the country. I took the daily MRA news bulletins (from Caux and all over) to this and other radio stations, who read it after their news bulletins. Then the two TV stations started showing our films which they did twelve times and often continuously without a break. The press also began to open up. The public couldn't understand why the Archbishop remained opposed to what we were doing, resulting in much criticism of his stance.

I was very impressed with a large room at the National Radio. It was choked with glowing radio valves from floor to ceiling and wall to wall, with a

single clock in the middle. This was the standard method of telling accurate Greenwich Mean Time – no computers in those days!

During our stay in Lima I was able to visit the Inca Museum. The main Inca weapon of war was a club, which they used on the heads of their opponents. Many bashed-in skulls were on display, but what was remarkable was the obvious attempts made by "doctors" to repair the broken bone, and the amazing number of skulls which showed that the inserted bone transplants had actually knit, succeeding in the survival of the patients!

I had to visit a dentist to have two holes filled, but he refused payment, saying "We need MRA."

Due to the fast pace of life, it was not easy to find time to write letters home, but I made it a commitment to write regularly. My letters were addressed to "Dear Mom", as my father refused to read them. I soon discovered, however, that he would read postcards, so I sent as many as I could, all of which my mother kept. My letters home at this time made frequent mention of how much I was looking forward to receiving the socks which my mother promised to send me – more about this later. Also I was so impressed with the beautiful Peruvian alpaca pelts, stitched together to make pictures of Peru, that I arranged with a tourist shop to send one to my parents for Christmas – also more about this later!

San Marcos

Founded in the sixteenth century, San Marcos University is the oldest university in all the Americas. As a prime target of Moscow, riots and demonstrations were regular – "every Friday", we were told. They had rioted against President Nixon and other American visitors to Peru and one faculty had thrown out all their professors (who promptly resigned). Outsiders are prevented from entering the campus to address students, and we heard that the students were planning a demonstration against us. But after *El Tigre,* an interesting thing happened. One at a time and secretly, students began to come to the Bolivar Hotel where we were based, very nervous that other students might find out. They wanted to know more about MRA. Many of them were

Moscow or Havana trained, convinced that the only hope for Latin America was violent revolution. Steadily they came in greater numbers, until the Hotel management became alarmed. But this soon gave way to amazement and co-operation when they saw how the students were beginning to change. Suddenly one day an invitation came for us to show a film in one of the faculties. What furious discussions we had afterwards! We were invited back again for further discussions next day.

Then the President of the medical faculty decided to have a showing of the film *The Crowning Experience* for the whole university. As there were no facilities at the university for this, a commercial cinema had to be hired and leaflets printed. All this and other arrangements were made by the students themselves. But the manager of the cinema became nervous that his cinema would be burned down, and insisted on the payment of an astronomical deposit. Some of us managed to persuade him that there would not be a problem, but the San Marcos students weren't so sure. As the students poured into the cinema our friends checked their identity cards to make sure that it would be safe for us to speak before the film. The curtain opened and our 28 nation force sang the national anthem with great gusto. This floored all opposition. But as our first speaker stepped forward, the lights went out. That was clever, because there would be a riot if the film could not be shown. But our speakers continued to address the audience, in the darkness. Meanwhile some detective work revealed that the electricity had been deliberately cut by a Communist switchboard operator at the power station. He refused to restore the power. Then my friend Malcolm Roberts remembered that his host in whose home he had been staying, happened to be the Manager of the power company. A phone call to him restored the electrical supply immediately, and together with a technician he came to the cinema to ensure no further trouble. The lights came on at the precise moment our Zengakuren student leaders stepped forward on the stage as one man – God's miraculous timing. Each of them spoke with fiery conviction and the audience was captured.

There was tremendous applause, and even tears, at the end of the film. They streamed out and crowded around us to talk – for hours. One student told

me that he was the Chairman of the Communist Party branch in his faculty. "*Most students here today are members of our organization*," he said, "*but your ideology is superior to ours.*" Someone else who responded was a man who had sat quietly and unobserved in the audience. We discovered that he was Saburo Chiba, a senior member of the Japanese Diet (Parliament) and former Security Council member. He had come from Japan for one week-end especially to see *El Tigre* in action. He was deeply impressed, and told the President of Peru, (Prado) what MRA was doing. Apparently Prado then told U.S. President Kennedy.

A direct result of this meeting with the San Marcos students was a request from them to do a performance of *El Tigre* for the university. We did. People in Lima found it hard to believe that this was possible. There was a tremendous response to the play and students emptied their pockets to donate funds totalling $1000 for us to continue. That same night I had arranged a one-hour programme on the national radio. The timing was perfect, as I was able to get five San Marcos students who had just seen the play to speak on the programme. The radio staff could not believe what was happening – no San Marcos students had ever dared, or wanted, to speak on the government radio before. The next morning I went to see the director of the station. He had already had 50 telephone calls from listeners, asking for more information about MRA.

Naval Academy

In Lima we were, as usual, accommodated in hotels or private homes, but a few of us accepted an invitation to stay in the Naval Academy at the port of Callao. As Lima is a short distance inland, there was an enjoyable tram ride through the desert between the two centres. This establishment was the last word in luxurious accommodation – bathrooms *en suite* and meals in the officers' club. The cadets were all sons of cabinet ministers, members of parliament, generals, etc., and a first class bunch of rascals. All 350 of them came to see *El Tigre* in their very smart naval uniforms, and we showed them the film *Men of Brazil* one night. They had a good rowing team, and when

they discovered that two of our number were Olympic rowing champions, they asked for a demonstration, which took place at 6 a.m. one morning. We challenged them to clean up their own lives and the life of the nation. Many accepted that challenge, crowding around us every night after our return from Lima, to find out how to start.

One morning a cadet marched into my room. He introduced himself as Schutz! (This confused me, as I thought we originated from Germany, but perhaps instead we were descendants of one of the kings of the Inca Empire!). Later I discovered he was actually of Swiss descent – what a relief. He said that his father, the owner of a coffee estate in the jungle on the other side of the Andes, had been carefully following our moves in the newspapers, and wanted to talk to us very badly. He was certain that by this time we would have moved on to Chile, but as his son had written to him about having seen *Men of Brazil,* in the Academy, he decided to rush over the Andes to meet us. So we had lunch with the family in their Lima home. Señor Schutz was very worried about the situation in Peru and was convinced that MRA offered a solution. He returned to his farm to round up all the coffee farmers and workers in the district, and asked us to please bring films. Sadly we could not fit in a visit due to the tight schedule to which *El Tigre* was already committed in the weeks ahead. It was sad that so many similar requests could not be responded to. Even more unfortunate was the pressure we were working under, which inexcusably prevented me from maintaining contact with such wonderful people and therefore unable to possibly follow up later. I regret this terribly.

We had quite a long stay in Lima, as we were determined to consolidate the gains made with the students of San Marcos University.

Cuzco

Taking three San Marcos students with us, we flew to Cuzco, the ancient Inca capital high in the Andes. At about 4 000 metres this was not a good place for people with breathing or heart problems, and some of our team had to return to the coast for their health. Until we became more used to the

altitude, taking a mere three steps up a staircase was enough to make one quite breathless.

Cuzco is the oldest town on the American continent, dating from about 1200. It was the capital of the Inca Empire and 90% of the population are "Indians", as is the population of the entire Andes region. The local language is Quechua (to translate and sing some of our songs in that language was quite a challenge for us). People, particularly children, dress in brightly coloured clothes, while many women wore bowler hats. In some ways I felt as if I was back in Natal, as the town reminded me of Ixopo or Kokstad, surrounded by similar high mountains of rounded rock and short brown grass (in August), with bright sunshine and afternoon thunderclouds. The typical snow-covered peaks of the Andes were actually not visible from the town, but the countryside was extremely beautiful, with ploughed fields and small clusters of houses as in the former Transkei.

The cathedral and many of the government buildings were built on the ruined walls of the old Inca temples, which had been destroyed by the zealous Catholic invaders from Spain. As the Incas had not known or invented the wheel, nor had cement, nor had they invented any form of writing, it remains a mystery how they had managed to transport and carve huge rocks to fit one on another so perfectly that the blade of a knife cannot be worked between the blocks.

I read the standard work on the history of the Inca Empire. They were a peace-loving, civilized people who worshipped the sun. They had built amazing road systems of thousands of kilometers in the Andes, but had not invented the wheel. Steep-sided mountain slopes had been terraced with stone walls, for crop production. Although unable to write, they had developed a numerical system. Their beautiful gold ornaments were their downfall, as this is what the Spanish *Conquistadores* wanted, plundering with unbelievable cruelty and melting down into gold bars for easy transport back to Spain. They completely destroyed the empire. Small wonder that there is so much bitterness among the inhabitants, even to this day. In fact, it was said that 80% of the population were Communists or sympathizers.

Our main thrust here was to mount an outdoor demonstration and performance of the play in the ancient fortress of Sacsayhuaman outside Cuzco. This was the last stand of the Incas in their defence of Cuzco against the Conquistadores. They failed. All that remains of the fortress is a large, flat plain the size of a couple of rugby fields, between two steep, rocky hills, with the ruined walls around the perimeter. Once again I marvelled at the huge rocks cut to fit one another perfectly.

Sacsayhuaman Fortress

By 3 p.m. 40 000 people, mostly Indians, had arrived from Cuzco and surrounding villages. Dressed in their typical bright colours, they covered both hillsides like ants. It was an amazing sight. The demonstration opened with a cavalry parade by the army. The flags of our nations followed (including the South African flag as usual). One addition to our international line-up was Mitchell Bingham, the son of Hiram Bingham who had discovered the lost city of Machu Picchu. *El Tigre* was simultaneously translated into Quechua over a public address system. When it came to the riot scene, we demonstrators were still not acclimatised. So both before and after the riot we had to inhale oxygen from cylinders behind the stage. As we did this, the Indians sitting on the rocks above us had their eyes on stalks, wondering what kind of weird ceremony this was!

The audience mostly comprised rural people, probably semi-literate. We tried, through this demonstration, to give them a vision of what they could do to build a new nation based on a God-led unity. How far we were successful in achieving this was hard to evaluate, mainly due to the language problem. But the Head of Indian Affairs said, "*Your philosophy is going to change the face of the earth, bringing justice, bread and an answer.*"

Machu Picchu

The next day was an unforgettable one. Arranged by our Peruvian hosts, we took the narrow-gauge train from Cuzco north-eastwards down the Urubamba Gorge to visit Machu Picchu. The railway line hugged the foot of the precipitous mountain slopes on the right, with the raging torrent of the

river uncomfortably close on the left. The further we progressed down the gorge the more awe-inspiring the scenery became. At first reminiscent of Du Toit's Kloof, the mountain tops soared steeply higher and higher until they reached the glaciers and snow-covered peaks above. We were descending through the Andes towards the Amazon jungle.

The train stopped at a siding to allow another train coming up the line to pass. While waiting for its arrival, I climbed down from the coach to have a closer look at the river. Suddenly I saw a totally unexpected sight – a small tree seemingly straight from the Knysna forests. To find a Real Yellowwood (*Podocarpus latifolius*) so far from home brought on an immediate bout of homesickness. Until I realised that because of the theory of continental drift, it was not unlikely that some species of *Podocarpus* would exist here in South America, as they do in New Zealand.

The other train soon arrived. It was headed by a wonderful American-built steam loco of 19th century vintage, complete with the large chimney typical of wood-burning firing, seemingly straight out of an old cowboy movie. A lovely sight. As we resumed our journey, the vegetation became more subtropical and the peaks seemingly higher. After four hours and a 650 metres descent from Cuzco we arrived at a station from where we transferred to buses. They zig-zagged steeply up an almost vertical mountainside until suddenly the lost city of Machu Picchu lay before us.

We stared in awe and wonder at the remains of this terraced city clinging to a steep slope at the top of a high mountain. Mitch Bingham, whose father had discovered the place in 1911, showed us around and explained the structures, many of which were still standing.

The Incas had a very high standard of civilization and we were amazed at the plumbing and irrigation systems, the sewerage systems, the sun clock, the temple where they worshipped the sun, and the precision of the carved stonework. The wild, mist-shrouded mountain peaks soaring vertically from the jungle-choked gorges below, which surrounded Machu Picchu, made me wonder just how many other lost cities still remain undiscovered. Too soon we had to return to our buses and the train trip back to Cuzco.

Across the Altiplano

We left Cuzco by train the next day for the twelve hour trip to Puno on Lake Titicaca, traversing the *Altiplano* (= Highveld), a high plateau bounded by snow-covered mountain peaks. The train climbed steadily for half the day until the highest point was reached at La Araya, nearly 4500 m above sea level. It was freezing cold, but a steaming hot spring provided some interest. Everywhere there were herds of woolly alpacas grazing. They are common at middle altitudes. The llamas (pronounced "yama") are more at home at lower altitude, and are used as beasts of burden, while the vicuña, which has the finest wool, can only exist at high altitude. As already mentioned, while in Lima I had arranged for a tourist shop to pack and send an alpaca fleece to my parents for Christmas. Different colours of wool had been sewn together in the form of a picture of an Inca playing his flute – a common sight in the Andes. More about this later.

At every stop we got out of the train to sell MRA magazines and books to the crowds that gathered. They were so desperate for something new in their personal and political lives that by the end of the train journey we had sold 5000. At Juliaca we sang for them in Spanish and Quechua, on the station platform.

Finally at the end of the day we reached the terminus of the railway at Puno, a fair sized town on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world. Some 4800 sq. kilometres in size, the lake with its many islands (some floating) was at that time still uncharted.

Here there was 40% less oxygen to breathe than at sea level. The next day it snowed. This did not stop 12 000 people from jamming the public square in front of the cathedral that night in the biting cold wind, to watch the film *Men of Brazil.* A military band was in attendance. The Governor and the army commander sat on chairs, but the crowd stood. Every town, no matter how small, has an army, with automatic weapons (not rifles), such is the fear of a Castro-type takeover targeting the Indians of the Andes. One could feel the tension and dissatisfaction of the masses. But that night the crowd were

enthralled, and wanted a positive alternative. So the next day we performed *El Tigre* for them.

At the end of the day we embarked on an incredibly beautiful old steamer for the overnight trip across Lake Titicaca to Bolivia. The ship must have been built at the turn of the 19th century or soon after. It had a long bowsprit, a tall funnel and masts. It was fun looking through a hatch at the steam reciprocating engine hard at work. The interior décor was all teak and brass fittings. After a good dinner we retired to our smart cabins for the night. The only sound to come through the open porthole beside my bunk during the night was the gentle swish of the bow wave. I was spell-bound next morning at the view through my porthole, of snow-capped peaks reflected in the flat calm of the waters of the lake. Surely one of the most beautiful sights in the world. But it is very sad that the old steamer has since been replaced by a hydrofoil ferry.

CHAPTER 11

BOLIVIA AND CHILE

Bolivia

The sun burst forth on the surrounding snowy peaks as we docked at the Bolivian port of Guaqui. All the portworkers immediately crowded round to see who we were, so we climbed onto a railway truck and held a meeting. We sang songs in Spanish, Quechua and now Aymara, the language of the Bolivian Indians. The train soon left and we travelled across the Altiplano until late morning, when we began to descend into the basin of La Paz, the capital city, at the foot of snow-capped Mt Illimani. It was like dropping down into Pietermaritzburg. It was built there to shelter from the cold winds of the Altiplano.

Bolivia has an excellent railway system. The surrounding countries had repeatedly annexed portions of Bolivia in many wars. Chile wanted the copper deposits on the coast, resulting in Bolivia's loss of a coastline. They built a railway in compensation. Brazil wanted more forests with rubber trees, and took Bolivia's eastern territory. They built a railway line in compensation, as did other countries. Not surprisingly Bolivia is still resentful.

Indians form 90% of the population. There has been a long history of instability and revolutions. There had been a feudal system until ten years before our arrival. This had led to the defeat of the army by mineworkers (with dynamite), and now only a small, powerless armed force and police force remained. Lawlessness abounds and we often heard gunfire in the streets at night.

As soon as we had arrived, President Estenssoro asked to meet us. We were received in the gilt presidential reception chamber. All had a chance to address him, Andrew Peppetta (who had rejoined us) and I telling him about MRA in Africa. He was very moved when we sang the national anthem. He outlined major problems of the country and said that fifteen previous presidents had been assassinated in that very same room. Pointing to a

lamppost outside, he told us that his predecessor had been killed and his body hung upside down for three days on that lamppost. He said, "*Bolivia has reached the stage in her history in which she needs the things you are fighting for. You must go to all parts of Bolivia. The people are prepared and wait for an answer.*"

The next few days the bus and taxi drivers were on strike, marching through the streets shouting, "Down with the government." But this did not stop thousands from coming to see our play and films, night after night. I have never known so many so hungry for something new other than continual chaos and confrontation. They began to realise that violent revolutions would never answer the real problems of the nation, only a revolution that can change human nature. Even the transport workers who were on strike sent a bus to fetch us, so that we could address their union – the only bus seen in the city.

On "Air Force Day", in the midst of parades in the stadium before the Minister of the Air Force, General Bethlem, uninvited, marched us into the stadium, grabbed a band on the way, then took two loudspeakers and proceeded to deliver a fiery speech at the Minister! Bethlem's passion and conviction completely won that man as well as the audience.

Led by a band and guard of honour with fixed bayonets, with our national costumes and bearing our national flags, we marched through the streets to lay wreaths at three statues of national heroes. The streets were jammed with crowds. At each statue we addressed them and they hung on every word. Most of us were quite hoarse! We then continued our march, to receptions in parliament and in the senate. We also held talks individually with seven cabinet ministers. Practically to a man they said "*MRA is the obvious next step in the Bolivian revolution.*" The Minister of Transport arranged a special train to take us through the country.

But before that could happen, trouble was brewing. A professor from the university tried to stage a coup to take over the government – it failed and he was shot. A performance of *El Tigre* was scheduled at the university a few hours later. As we were about to start, a student jumped onto the stage and shouted that the play was cancelled because of the killing of their professor.

He was greeted with an immediate uproar and demands that the play proceed. Next day the students paraded the professor's body through the streets. That night we were preparing to show the film *The Crowning Experience* in the university auditorium for leading people of the city, when the supporters of the failed coup blocked the door and would let no one enter. There was nearly a riot caused by the cabinet wives who were determined to see the film, but we were able to persuade them rather to wait until an alternate venue could be found. No one left, and after an hour we found a suitable hall. The crowd was completely won by the film.

Our last engagement in the La Paz area was a performance of the play in the Aymara language, in the pre-historic town of Tiawanaco near Lake Titicaca. But it was not easy to get out of La Paz, as the streets were full of marching demonstrators. All shops were closed. The demonstrators invited us to join them! Things got out of hand with cars being overturned and set on fire. I will not forget the appearance of the traffic cop on point duty. While stones were whizzing through the air he stood at his post with his arms folded and a bored expression on his face, patiently waiting for the interruption to pass and traffic to resume. Unfortunately many people were injured and a state of emergency had to be declared.

Eventually we were able to leave the city and drive the 100 km to Tiawanaco. We attended a special Mass in the old church and our chorus sang for them. Then there was a physical training display for us by one of the schools. Just as we started *El Tigre* in the middle of the crowded public square, there was a commotion on the opposite side. A troupe of Indian dancers with strange musical instruments, costumes and masks, marched in front of the stage to perform in our honour. They were then followed by *five* other dancing and musical groups, each excelling the previous one in perfection. It was a real spectacle. In our response Rei Jones, a New Zealand Maori, performed a *haka*, to the great delight of the crowd. (It must be stressed that the *haka* was virtually unknown outside New Zealand as the All Blacks had not yet adopted it as a match opener). A similar response greeted Niketu Iralu, descended from the former notorious tribe of head-hunters from

Nagaland in India, when he gave a blood-curdling war cry (I have recently re-established contact with Niketu, who has retired to his Nagaland). Only then were we able to resume the performance of the play. After viewing the pre-Inca ruins nearby, we returned to La Paz.

The next day we left La Paz in a special seven-coach train (including dining car), provided by the Minister of Transport. It was just as well that we did, as the continuing street demonstrations were leading to loss of life. We would have been confined to our places of residence had we delayed. Communism was hard at work to make the country "ungovernable" so that they could take over. But we had presented our challenge very clearly, and it was now up to those who had responded to take action.

The train was to be our home for several days as we traversed the country in a westerly direction. The railways are of a slightly narrower gauge (1metre) than our South African system, but the carriages were very similar to our old wooden, clerestoried coaches with open balconies at either end. The compartments had bunks for sleeping, also similar to ours. I really enjoyed this means of travel through the rather sparsely populated country. As we proceeded from town to town the train was drawn by an interesting variety of locomotives: Big engines, small engines, Garratt steam engines, diesel electrics and even a big tank engine.

At 10 p.m. on the first day we arrived at the town of Catavi at the end of a branch line through mountainous country. Catavi was the home of the biggest tin mine in the world. It was very cold, but hundreds of people were at the station to welcome us, so of course we sang for them. The town and the mine were run entirely by the workers. They did this without the support of the police or the army, who were simply not allowed in the town. The populace was violently anti-North America, the last American family having been shot a few years previously. None had dared to enter the area since. Yet here we were, with about twenty Americans in our group. Their nervousness was, however, quickly dispelled by the great welcome we all received. More than half the population of about 60 000 came to see the play and films. One

shift missed their lunch in order to do so. Many of us (but not me) went underground to talk to the miners.

Then the leader of the trade union, Sr Escobar, (Communist) invited all of us to a meeting in their hall. He was a really nasty looking individual, accompanied by his bodyguards, who looked like pirates, as well as other union officials. Escobar immediately launched into a bitter tirade against American imperialism, saying that Fidel Castro was their only hope. I had seldom heard a man speak with such passion and hatred. All around us the miners were shouting "*Viva Cuba!*" with fists in the air. I must admit I was becoming nervous. When the time came for us to reply, we did so with as great passion and conviction. I think that we would all have been killed had they felt that we were an anti-Communist movement. Instead we gave evidence of a greater revolution that changes the hearts of people. The climax of our presentation came when one of our Americans, Stuart Lancaster, got up to speak. With great humility he admitted America's faults and apologised for the arrogance of his country. Escobar was pole-axed. It was a tense moment. Anything could have happened. After an awkward silence Escobar spoke. *"We respect your idea,"* he said. *"The hearts of the workers are with you."* We parted friends. The next evening some of us were invited to a meeting with the 26th July Youth Group (date of the Cuban revolution), and we had a similar positive response.

We had completely won the hearts of this poverty-stricken town by the time our train began its slow climb back up the mountain at dawn. But suddenly the train was stopped by mineworkers blocking the line. We were told that the train would not be allowed to move until the government in La Paz had met their demands. They appeared to have a legitimate gripe – the hospital had run out of medical supplies and the authorities were doing nothing about it. So we were now being used as hostages. There was nothing we could do except speak to the crowds and sell literature. After four hours of waiting, the train manager came to us and said, "*We railway workers are not going to be pushed around by these mineworkers. We are going to depart. I have arranged for a railcar to travel in front of the train as a safety measure –*

if the line is blown up or if there is an ambush, the railcar will give us plenty of warning. We also have our weapons. We leave in half an hour."

Exciting stuff! As we tensed up for the departure, suddenly Escobar appeared. He apologised for stopping the train, and said that we could now depart, and that he was certain that the next town would respond in the same positive way as Catavi had done. We never found out what caused this about-face, but God was certainly looking after us.

This all caused much confusion in the next big mining town of Oruro, as they were expecting *El Tigre* that afternoon, but we only arrived in the evening. We had expected the audience to have become tired of waiting, and gone home. Instead the audience had doubled in size, as they had had heard what happened in Catavi. Apparently the previous night there had been huge riots in the town, with the miners throwing dynamite at the army and the students fighting both. But here they all sat in the stadium, although they had placed themselves in three separate groups. What an audience! They refused to leave after the performance and just wanted more. Sadly we could not then show films, as we had arrived too late to unpack them from the train, which was scheduled to leave shortly.

For two more days our train moved westwards across the sparsely populated Altiplano, showing films in mining towns and railway junctions *en route*. As we approached the edge of the Andes, the train wandered around between many extinct volcanoes. One was still smoking contentedly in the early morning sun as we moved past, with bright yellow sulphur on its slopes.

By now we had travelled many thousands of kilometers across South America at an extremely fast pace. We were so rushed and involved in trying to meet the moral and spiritual needs of the vast numbers of people hungry for something new to live for, that there was not really enough time to get to know one another's backgrounds very well. I got on well with the Japanese students, who were totally committed and very serious about it, but there were opportunities to just "chat." They called me "Chris Schutz*san*", the "san" being a polite form of addressing someone older by name. "*Japanese students fear three things*," they told me, "*Earthquake, Fire, and Father*" (!). But their

"*fear of Father*" goes, they said, when through change, honesty and apology new relationships are born.

I will never forget my favourite senior Japanese character, Takasumi Mitsui. He was a retired, well-known member of the massive Mitsui business and industrial organisation, who, with his round face, spectacles and perpetual smile, endeared himself to all. He had a knack of conveying much in few words. He would use every opportunity to tell all who met him about his family and the importance of family unity. In broken English he would say:

"*My wife, she is like peach. You know peach? Outside soft, inside too hard. But she say, I am like coconut – outside too hard, but inside soft. My son, he like banana. You know banana? Inside, outside soft, - and very slippery. My daughter, she like chestnut – inside hard, outside very prickly, and when heated, POP! But if we all change, then good fruit salad.*"

It was only later that I discovered his background. Before the Second World War he had studied in England. There he met MRA and he, his wife and children were baptised as Christians. Returning to Japan they were watched by the police because of their association with MRA, but as members of the powerful Mitsui family they were not arrested. During the war they lost everything and had to live in a concrete store-house. One of their children died of starvation. After the war he brought delegation after delegation of the leaders of Japan, including the Prime Minister, to Caux. They played an important role in re-building unity between Japan and the USA.

Chile

Our train crossed the border and descended into northern Chile. First stop was Chuquicamata – the world's largest copper mine, which was run by the USA. Our engine was shunted off the train at the entrance to the town and an enormous, wide-gauge diesel locomotive coupled on. We were still on one-metre gauge, but there was now a third rail to make it wider. Our new loco ran

on the wide gauge, towering over our little train, pulling us still on the narrow gauge – an interesting spectacle.

The mine management looked after us well for the three days of our stay, as we presented the play. Sadly we now had to say good-bye to our train, as Chilean Army buses were now allocated for our transport. After visiting the big nitrate mines of Maria Elena and Pedro de Valdivia, we arrived at Antofagasta on the coast, which is total desert. From here the buses conveyed us through harsh desert country on our way to Santiago, a long way to the south. It was a hair-raising trip. The road was narrow, often skirting steep mountainsides, with awesome drops nearly vertically to the sea 500 m below. The buses hurtled along at breakneck speeds – I admit I was scared. Occasionally the desert was traversed by a large river flowing from the Andes to the sea. The irrigated farm lands formed pleasant oases. But as we travelled south, the desert gradually gave way to a greener environment as the rainfall increased. Santiago, on the same latitude as Cape Town, is indeed a beautiful city, at the foot of green, snowy mountains.

My host for our stay was the retired head of the Chilean armed forces, General Jorge Escudero. He and his wife were very kind to me, and I enjoyed being their guest. But I was not impressed with the citizenry of Santiago. After Bolivia, where everyone seemed to take a personal and passionate interest in the future of their country, it was a bit of a let down to find the Chileans so self-centred, materialistic and unmotivated. The men seemed to be weak and the women dominating. Perhaps this was due to the men not getting enough sleep! Theatres, cinemas and concerts had their matinee performances at 8 p.m., with the main events at midnight. The men then had to rise early for work the next morning, while their wives could sleep late! Strangely this was also the only country we had been in where an afternoon *siesta* was observed. Neither did I appreciate their version of Spanish. They seemed to have a lazy habit of not pronouncing the last syllable of most words, which made the language difficult to understand. People also had an indifferent attitude towards the threat of Communism, which we found was a very real danger. In fact some years later a Communist dictatorship was indeed established, which

plunged the country into chaos, persisting long after it was eventually overthrown.

After some performances of *El Tigre* in a theatre, in a stadium and in the port city of Valparaiso, the President of the country thanked us. Also after seeing the play, the South African Charge d' Affaires invited Andrew and me to lunch. This was quite something, given the political situation back home in 1961. We were fetched by a chauffeur-driven black car.

We then departed for Brazil via Argentina. I enjoyed flying in a BOAC Comet aircraft, the first passenger jet aircraft ever invented. It was a Mark 2 or 3, the Mark 1's having all exploded in mid air until the design fault was discovered and rectified. I was relieved.

CHAPTER 12

ASSEMBLY OF THE AMERICAS

By now, we had travelled 50 000 kilometres in seven months, and 1 500 000 people in Brazil, Peru, Bolivia and Chile had attended performances of *The Tiger* and seen MRA films. The response had been overwhelming. The time had now arrived to consolidate and build on that response, as well as to use it to challenge the USA, who still believed that the answer for Latin America's problems was to pump in dollars.

Assembly of the Americas

This was the title of the conference which had already been planned to achieve this. From the 1st to the 11th December 1961, it took place at the Hotel Quitandinha in the mountains above Rio de Janeiro. The hotel had been closed for a long time, but we opened it up and restored it to its former glory. One thousand delegates from five continents and 35 nations came to the Assembly, including the leader of 78 000 Bhuddhist monks in Burma (Myanmar). The Brazilian Air Force planes flew in delegations from Bolivia and North East Brazil. A reception was given by the President of Brazil. It was really impressive! So much happened here that I stood in awe of what God can do through changed lives.

Unfortunately we received the sad news that Moise Tshombe, President of Katanga, the province which had broken away from the Republic of Congo, could no longer come. He was on his way to the Assembly and had reached Paris, when the United Nations declared war on his state, so he had to rush back. A real tragedy, as a solution to the division between him and the President of Congo, Joseph Kasavubu, who was very supportive of MRA, would have been possible at the Assembly.

Early on during the Assembly there was the dramatic and historic reconciliation between Marshal Tàvora and Marshal Lott. Both had been

Presidential candidates and were bitter political adversaries. As Minister of War, Marshal Texeira Lott had put Marshal Tàvora under house arrest. The photo of them shaking hands made headlines in the national press – "JUAREZ E LOTT AGORA JUNTOS!" (Juarez and Lott now together!). Standing beside Tàvora, Lott said,

"As an old soldier I will do everything that is within my power to help this force of Moral Re-Armament. I am convinced that from this Assembly where you have united all people under God, very definite results will arrive."

Then there was a big delegation of dockers from Recife. On the third day, one of them got up and said,

"I have been a militant Communist for 22 years. Today I have lost my lust for massive assassination, and have decided to leave the Party and return to my Catholic faith. MRA is a superior ideology to Communism."

Then he read out a very moving letter to his wife, apologising for the unhappiness his bitterness had caused in the home. Most of us were in tears by the time he had finished.

133 trade union leaders and workers from five continents present at the Assembly issued a proclamation to the workers of the world, stating:

"In this nuclear age the concept of class war is out of date and suicidal. Greed and selfishness, hatred and bitterness are the real causes of our divisions and exploitation....We can build a new world in which everyone cares enough and everyone shares enough so that everyone has enough..." And *"It's not **who** is right, but **what** is right."*

The San Marcos students from Lima wrote and produced a dynamic drama in three days, called *El Condor* (the large raptor bird of the Andes). The mother of President Nixon of the USA mounted the platform afterwards to

accept the apology of the students for stopping his visit to Peru. One violently anti-American student was so shaken by the change in the capitalists from USA that at the close of the Assembly he led the USA delegation carrying the stars-and-stripes flag.

There were so many simple stories of change, like that by Fr Otte, Chaplain of the Port of Rio, who told that before MRA came to the port he was unable to visit the dockers' homes because of the extreme hostility. "*Now,*" he said, *I can't keep up with the demands to visit them.*"

These are just little snippets of events that made the Assembly truly historic.

We also used the opportunity provided by the presence of so many full-time workers from different countries to seek God's guidance for what the next moves should be. Should we respond to the requests from so many other Latin American countries for *The Tiger?* What about Europe and Asia? And the next step for the San Marcos students with their play *El Condor?* The decision reached was that *The Tiger* with a strong team should proceed to Caux, and then to Asia, which would be a real challenge for the Japanese cast. An equally strong team should remain in Brazil to help the San Marcos students perfect *El Condor,* enlarge the cast, and take it to the USA via other countries *en route.* I was asked to help with *El Condor.*

Post conference action

Before these plans could be put into action, there were still some engagements for the whole team.

Firstly, something needed urgent attention. In the midst of the extensive positive press coverage of the Assembly there appeared a negative article on MRA in a popular weekly magazine. In true style, General Bethlem immediately took a bus load of us, marched into the Editor's office unannounced, and raised the roof. That poor guy didn't know what had hit him, but he soon found out. General B blasted away at the top of his voice for 15 minutes, with everyone in the building rushing along to see what was happening. Then he gave each of us a turn to speak. The result: Their top

reporter was sent without delay to interview us, and the magazine then gave a lunch for 100 of us with opportunities for further speeches.

During our earlier visit to Rio at the start of our offensive in Brazil, we had performed *O Tigre* in the Maracanàzinho football stadium as already described, "-zinho" meaning "small." Next to this "small" stadium was the big one – the Maracanà. With Christmas only days away, we mounted a "*majestic Christmas spectacular*" which drew a crowd of 50 000. Following a performance of *O Tigre* and a stirring address by Marshall Lott, we presented that wonderful musical play *A Cowboys' Christmas,* with Roy Rogers (famous Hollywood singing cowboy film star) in the lead role, with American Indians, and lots of horses, after which there were carols by candlelight. I loved it: so did everyone.

Then after a special open-air midnight mass to which we had been invited (all 210 of us from 35 nations) we were received by the Cardinal of Rio, who met each one of us.

After Christmas we were back in Sao Paulo. At last the socks which my parents had promised to send me when I was in Lima, had arrived, and I was summoned to the post office to collect. This proved to be an unforgettable experience – My letter home:

Sao Paulo
31 / 12 / 61

Dear Mom,

I marched into the post office with a parcel slip, the day before yesterday. I handed it over the counter to a man. He dug around in a pile of parcels, and eventually produced the right one. He handed me back the slip to sign. Then he said "Come with me." We went to another room. There a man behind a book filled in the details. Then he went to another man who stamped the slip. Then he opened the parcel. O.K., so he closed it up again and tied it with string. Then he took the slip to an impressive lady behind a desk. She filled in details in a book, and on the slip. Then my first man asked me to come back to the other room with him and the parcel. There he filled in some details in a book, then he asked me to sign another slip. Then

I was asked to take the slip to another room down the passage. There another lady filled in something in an enormous book and asked me a question I could not understand (my Spanish is better than my Portuguese). Eventually she gave up when she realised my Portuguese was bad, and I was invited to return to the original room. There my friend (by now) added up some figures and announced "110 Cruzeiros please – stamps over there." So I went 'over there' and bought stamps, and returned to my friend. He stuck the stamps on many different slips. "Now at last," I thought. But no. "Your passport please," he said. Well, I didn't have my passport. Confusion. They didn't know what to do. Not only were my hopes of ever getting my hands on that parcel fading, but also I was late for lunch – all this procedure had taken ¾ of an hour. Finally they seemed happy when I told them the number of my passport. I grabbed the parcel and walked quickly out before they could call me back.

So thank you for the 2 prs socks posted 6 months ago! It's great to have them. If you haven't already sent the others, please don't.

Love, Christopher.

Another worry for me had been the non-delivery to my parents of the alpaca pelt I had bought in Lima months ago. I urged my parents to write to the shop to ascertain the reason for non-delivery. This they did, and eventually received an interesting reply:

CASA INCA S.A.
15 de Enero de 1962
Lima – Peru
Dear Mr Schutz

We received your letter yesterday.
I am sorry very much the succeed. When I had received your letter, I in ediatelly had write the post investigate what has happened?. When the post write me informing the motives of this large mistake, I will write you newly

inform you oll. You please disculp me but has been for motives foreign to our goodwill. I am sure that it not will succeed never for never. an We are inquiring here to find out why they are so slow, but feel certain they will soon arrive.

I promise you that I will know soon on your parcel and it will be in your place as soon as possible.

Yours very truly
José Pinto N.

I am in no position to comment on Sr Pinto's English, as my Spanish is not as good! The pelt duly arrived at home, and after my parents passed away it adorned our home for many years.

The Tiger force now departed, and *El Condor* became our commitment. As the pronunciation of Spanish is very similar to that of Afrikaans, I found myself on stage with a speaking part, in the role of a police constable in an amusing episode. I can still remember my lines, although it was a while before I even knew what they meant!

At the end of one rehearsal late at night in Sao Paulo, I suddenly felt very faint and nauseous. I was helped to the toilet, where I would rather not describe how sick I was. In a state of collapse I was installed in the Hotel Gloria in the centre of the city, to await X-rays at the hospital next morning. Our travelling doctor had already guessed what my problem was, although he did not tell me until the X-rays confirmed a badly haemorrhaging duodenal ulcer. I had lost a lot of blood and was immediately given blood transfusions. What interested me was the Brazilian law compelling the family or friends of a blood recipient to donate twice as much blood as the amount received by the patient. I was therefore very grateful to my team mates who unhesitatingly trooped into the hospital to obey the law. Brazil never has to appeal for blood donors!

I was now confined to bed in my hotel room for a long rest and good food, quickly mastering the necessary Portuguese for ordering scrumptious room service meals. This was absolute luxury and after a couple of weeks I began to feel a bit better. Naturally I used the time to try to understand what had caused my ulcer. Some say that ulcers are caused by "hurry, worry and curry." I may not have had much curry, but there had certainly been hurry and worry. The pace at which we had moved over the previous months meant that I had seldom got to bed before midnight, and then up early in the mornings - there just wasn't time for enough rest, and this had taken its toll. Then God gently spoke to me about the task that I had taken on to collect the newspaper articles and mail them around the world. With the press coverage we were getting, this proved to be a job too big for one man, yet I carried on doing it, out of a sense of "duty" – everyone was so busy that I did not feel I could ask for help (secretly I prefer to work alone anyway). Somehow I was not hearing God speak to me about this matter – my pride and my sense of duty deafened me to His voice. I now realised that I should have asked for help, and if it had not been forthcoming, I should have simply dropped the job. This was costly self-will – I had lost a lot of blood and could have lost my life. But Jesus was merciful in His forgiveness, and with a lesson learnt, my health was improving. I had many visitors, and was honest with one of the leaders about the cause of my problem. He in turn felt convicted that they had left me alone in my task and apologised. The care and encouragement which I received speeded my recovery.

I also used the time to think deeply about the action we had taken over the last seven months. Had we really been guided by the Holy Spirit? Did we move too fast? Should we have spent more time at each place to train people whose lives had changed? The fact was that God opened the doors and we simply had to move fast to go through them. The result was miracle after miracle, overshadowing mistakes that we as humans may have made. Certainly for those of us involved, the building of the film studio on Mackinac Island had been a valuable training experience for the campaign in South America. And the Assembly of the Americas was certainly the right move to

build on the foundations laid so rapidly. I had the same sense of wonder as I had had at Caux – that it is indeed possible to begin to change the world, for which Jesus told us to pray, through men and women wholly committed to this task under His guidance. And there is the *snowball effect* when someone, often just an ordinary person, in simple obedience to God's guidance, does something like inviting General Bethlem to attend the conference in Miami – and look what happened as a result. Also we had seen what can happen when people are prepared to step out of the comfort zones of their churches to move as a united international force.

A major problem for many of us had been the language barrier. The pace at which we were moving left insufficient time to become fluent enough in Portuguese and Spanish to be able to do effective counselling of people who wanted to change their lives. We were completely dependant on the few of our number who were fluent, and they were in great demand. It was nevertheless amazing what could be achieved with a few words like "*Honradez*", "*Pureza*" "*Deus*" and a few others. But in trying to evaluate what God had done, I felt that we had indeed taken the right action. This was confirmed by what Marshal Tàvora told Pope John XXIII in an audience with him, that it was due to the work of the MRA group that Brazil had been saved from civil war.

CHAPTER 13

SOUTH AFRICA

When I had recovered sufficiently in 1962 to be able to travel, I departed from Sao Paulo on my way back to South Africa for the necessary long term convalescence. It was a slow flight across the Atlantic to Africa, as jet planes were not yet the norm. At the airline's expense I had a pleasant overnight stay and most of the next day at a hotel in Dakar, waiting for my connecting flight. Arrival in Johannesburg was at 2 a.m. the next day, where I had the great pleasure of being met by my brother, Bill. After I had had a good rest, he drove me to Cape Town. I admit I was uncertain about the reception I would receive from my father, whom I had not heard from for three years. But to my relief I was given a warm welcome.

Bill soon set off on his return trip to Johannesburg, in his left-hand drive Volvo. But disaster struck just north of Beaufort West. He lost control of the car when a freak wind forced him off the road and rolled the car. With a broken back he was hospitalised in Beaufort West, from where he was flown to Victoria Hospital in Wynberg. In very great pain he lay there for many weeks, suffering greatly every time he was turned over in a Striker revolving bed. But through the Lord's intervention he was not crippled, and after many months in a back brace he was able to return to work, although suffering discomfort. I told Bill that I felt convicted that I was at least partly to blame for his accident, as it was because of my ulcer that he undertook this trip. The cost of sin. When I told him this he urged me not to think of it that way, because he had never thought that way about it, although it did cause a great interruption in his life.

My recovery was slow but sure. My progress was very much due to the loving care of my parents. My MRA friends suggested I write to Peter Howard (an MRA leader) to inform him of my illness and what I had learnt through the experience. His reply was immediate :

"Thank you so much for your good letter of 31st March. Don't get your pride involved with your ulcer. If we all get what we deserved we should be a mass of ulcers! But God is merciful.

"I agree that too many people of every kind are driven by duty, which really means they are driven by a lust for appreciation and affection in every relationship that only Christ can answer.

"I shall think of you at home and you will be mightily used with your family if you live the life and don't argue. 'In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.' You are a God-picked man for the battle.

"Keep in touch with your health and maybe when you are fully restored we shall have the chance of working together.

"Your sincere friend,
Peter"

This gave me much food for thought, and was a real challenge. Other letters from Peter Howard (for extracts see Appendix 1) repeated the invitation to come and work with him. I never did, and I still do not know why not. To this day I regret it.

When I had recovered sufficiently, I joined Bremer Hofmeyr, George Daneel, Ken Gladwin, Philip Vundla and other full-time team in Johannesburg. We were working on a production of Peter Howard's inspired and challenging one-act play *The Ladder,* in which the hero climbs the ladder of success, aided by unscrupulous businessmen who control him for their own ends. There are numerous bystanders (*"In the fight to right what is wrong, a bystander is a betrayer…."*), and a strange man with a bag who repeatedly warns the hero about his motives and actions. Intrigued by the bag, he asks if he can look inside. He is shocked by what he sees inside. "*Shut it. Shut it quick. There's only a wooden cross inside!"* There is an interesting interplay between the hero, his mother (who also controls him), his mistress, the man with the bag, and the businessmen. Eventually the businessmen get rid of the man with the bag, "*It only cost us thirty pieces of silver.*" The bystanders

separate into those who go towards the crucified man with the bag and those who go in the opposite direction. Philip Vundla played the role of the man with the bag.

Those members of the cast who were not full-time, participated when they could, as we took the play across the country, to Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) and Zambia. A key member of the cast was John Trengove, who had been an advocate at Mandela's treason trial.

It was a hard-hitting play and affected audiences deeply.

It was hard working in South Africa at that time. There was opposition from the government and the Dutch Reformed Church on the one side, and black nationalists on the other, as neither side liked our frequent interracial meetings and conferences. Nevertheless, there were many miracles.

Philip Vundla wanted the film *The Crowning Experience* to be shown in Soweto. After the necessary permission had been given by the authorities, Dave Beal (from Minnesota) and I organised weekly showings in many of the "suburbs" of Soweto. We mounted loudspeakers outside the halls and played recordings of *Kwela* music (pennywhistles with background music), which was the rave at the time. This certainly caught people's attention, and children flocked to dance to the wonderful music.

A number of teachers, businessmen, nurses and young people responded. They decided to mount one of Peter Howard's plays, *The Dictator's Slippers*. With an all-black cast we took this play to many centres around the country, when the cast were available. This was quite remarkable, as something like this had never been done before. Many difficulties had to be overcome, such as fighting for special permission to have blacks perform in whites-only halls, and the continual opposition from the Dutch Reformed Church in spite of having Dominee George Daneel travelling with us. Nevertheless the cast grew spiritually and in stature, and there were good responses from audiences. Before a performance in Stellenbosch I organised a showing of a newsreel film about *The Tiger* in South America for the residents of Wilgenhof, the oldest mens' residence at the university. They refused to

believe what they saw! Nevertheless after the performance of *The Dictator's Slippers* some students joined us in their holidays.

I was privileged to be with George Daneel on some of his interviews with people in connection with *The Dictator's Slippers.* I don't think it's right to say that he was "persuasive", but people responded to him in such a way that their lives changed. I learnt so much from him.

Then in 1963 my brother Bill, and Fred Rubidge's second sister Stella, were engaged to be married. The wedding took place on the Rubidges' farm Zoetvlei, and it was an honour for me to be Best Man. There was a huge crowd, and the ceremony took place in the shearing shed, with chickens joining in. Rain came down and interfered with the outdoor reception, but as rain in the Karoo is always welcome, this was a significant blessing!

Early in 1964, however, the ulcer which I had thought was healed, flared up again. There being no medical cure such as there is today, the standard treatment was rest and a bland diet of fish and milk. So I returned home for a long and frustrating period of rest. But the pain just would not go away. It was really depressing. Then one day after many weeks I received a visit from Dr Bill Close, an American doctor full-time with MRA. (His daughter later became the famous Hollywood film star, Glenn Close). Bill studied my X-rays, and without hesitation urged me to immediately pack my bags and go to America for the opening of the *"Conference for Tomorrow's America"* at Mackinac! This was a mighty big surprise, but I felt that God was clearly showing me the right course of action. It was indeed the case, as the pain left me as soon as I got moving!

CHAPTER 14

CONFERENCE FOR TOMORROW'S AMERICA

As the most powerful nation in the world, America has a responsibility to give the right kind of moral and spiritual leadership to all nations. Peter Howard was convinced that America's future leaders needed to be challenged to commit themselves to bring this about. A "Conference for Tomorrow's America" was therefore planned to take place at Mackinac. Youth from America as well as from many other nations were invited, and the response was such that it would have been impossible to accommodate all applicants in one session. It was clear that two sessions would be needed, and that many of the full-time workers would have to assist. Consequently several of us departed from Johannesburg for this purpose.

We were to join a planeload of youth that had been chartered to depart from London. This meant an overnight stay in that city, and it was a great joy for me to be able to spend it with my brother Bill and his wife Stella. Bill's engineering firm had sent him to England for a year to familiarise himself with certain techniques. Also by this time my ulcer had completely disappeared, for which I was really grateful.

Before our departure from London there was a briefing session, addressed by Peter Howard. What stuck in my mind was one bit of advice to the young people about to visit a foreign country. He said, *"Live in the USA on a basis of appreciation and not comparison."* Wise words.

We duly arrived at Mackinac, to find the place jam-packed with some 1000 young professionals and students from universities and high schools. What really interested me was the cross section of American society present - a large delegation of Native Americans or Indians, as well as both black and white people from across the nation. We full-time workers had our hands very full in organising and leading the conference. Such was the demand by American youth that the conference had indeed to be split into two sessions of several weeks each.

The young people really responded to the challenges put to them in several addresses by Peter Howard and other speakers. As a newspaper man Howard had a graphic, picturesque style of speaking that gripped everyone's full attention, as did his disarming honesty, his straight talk, and a wonderful sense of humour. He challenged them to build "*an America morally rearmed that will capture the allegiance of the entire world and lead it into an age of justice, sanity, freedom and lasting peace.*"

Getting to the root of the problem he said:

"America needs a passion for what is right, rooted in absolute purity. Otherwise she may succumb to the passions of those who are wrong, rooted in impurity. Don't fool yourselves. No man or woman run by sex can answer the needs of somebody run by hate of colour, class or race. It takes a passion to cure a passion and only a passion for the will and way of God in our personal life can meet the passion for the will and way of the anti-God of Communism and Fascism in our national life..... If we decide to pay the price of a new society, to be honest about where God's will crosses our will in sex, home-life, career, ambition, relationships with other colours and nationalities, and to choose God's will, then we can together turn the page of history and usher in the greatest revolution man has ever seen."

There was a lot of music in these assemblies, and the Colwell brothers entertained with amusing but challenging songs, like *"You can't live crooked and think straight, whether you're a chauffeur or a chief of state....."* Then there was the negro spiritual :

"*Re-e-e-stitooshun, re-e-e-stitooshun,*
It's a great, great doctrine like the –
Con-stitooshun.
If you stole any gold, or told any lies,
To get that peace you gotta –
'pologise."

The attendees were divided into teams who competed in the afternoons in sport, for which the open fields between the centre and the lakeshore were well suited. In the evenings the teams worked hard on the production of plays and music. The TV studio which we had built provided ample space and equipment for this purpose.

The National Steel Band of Trinidad and Tobago was a great hit. The 20 to 30 players were the best selected from all the many bands across their country. They played the most unexpected, beautiful and very loud classical music which thrilled me to the core. We also watched MRA movies, and Sydney Poitier came along with his latest and famous Oscar-winning Hollywood hit "Lilies of the field" about the black man who helped the nuns at a remote convent in the desert. After his visit he phoned Peter Howard to say *"I cannot get out of my mind, that you have the living demonstration America is seeking."*

The Native American Indians produced a very moving play about their long history of suffering. They asked me to play the role of an "Indian agent", but as I am not a very good actor it is doubtful whether my participation added much. The Indians have a very sad history, and with their culture almost destroyed, alcoholism became a huge problem. But I found them to have a quiet dignity that demanded respect, in contrast with many other Americans. We all felt that with the right kind of leadership and the right big purpose to live for, they would be able to transform American society. Peter Howard felt strongly about this vision and gave them special attention.

On the last night of the conference a *"Hootenanny"* took place. This was a type of variety show featuring the best musical talent that had arisen and songs written over the preceding weeks. It was a wild, fast moving production that got everyone on their feet. I don't think we realised it at the time, but the seeds were being sown for the development of the great Sing Out movement, which was launched a year later.

Altogether 2400 youth in two sessions had attended the conference. There were many whose lives had drastically changed and were committed to

following God's direction. As the delegates prepared to depart, Peter Howard gave a final challenging address, saying:

"You have caught the vision of a revolutionised America and a revolutionised world. You are ready to back it with the discipline of your lives. That is what counts. You ought to be so different when you go back home that every dog in the hometown bites you. A lot of you are. But some of you are not. I say to those who have just a few more hours of battle preparation before you go where the bullets fly, big doors swing on little hinges. Remember that. Sometimes the hinge on which a big door swings is just about the size of a cigarette, sometimes it may be a relationship, sometimes a habit, sometimes that hinge is just that 5 or 10% that we still hang onto. I'll say one thing from my own knowledge. If you have a 5% or a 10% which you still hang onto, that is what runs your life. The thing we hang onto and will not give up is the thing that runs us... ."

We full timers were then assigned to different parts of the country to work with the youth as they began to apply what they had learnt and committed themselves to. The conference newspaper "*Tomorrow's American*" now became a national weekly publication that sought to maintain contact and unify their efforts.

New Mexico

The Indian delegation had invited Peter Howard to New Mexico, and a large number of us went along. I immediately felt at home in this state which was so much like the Karoo. We based in Santa Fe, the oldest town in America and very much like a Karoo town. The Indians live on "reservations" – the equivalent of South Africa's "homelands" under apartheid, with a similar history. This was an eye-opener. We were invited to many meetings with tribal elders, and were the only "palefaces" ever to have been taken into their council meeting place – a large tank-like structure with ladders to get down

into it. I was very impressed by the response of the elders to the vision and challenge of MRA.

In New Mexico Indians no longer live in wigwams, but in mud houses in small villages called *"Pueblos"*, which is why they are known as the Pueblo Indians. The most famous village is the Taos Pueblo – informal mud houses built randomly on top of one another up to four storeys high. I was privileged to be invited to lunch by one family there whom I had got to know.

Some of us also visited Los Alamos, the research facility where the first atomic bomb was developed. They seemed to be a pretty independent bunch, as they had changed the time of the town to an hour earlier than the rest of the state, in order to give themselves an extra hour of daylight in the afternoons so that they could play more golf after work!

All too soon I was asked to go to Florida to support the team based in Miami.

Florida

I joined a small group of full-timers based in Miami, who were supporting local young people who had been at Mackinac. We were accommodated in the spacious home of Mitch and Frannie Bingham. Mitch was the son of the discoverer of Macchu Picchu in Peru and had taken us there when we were with *The Tiger*. Their home was in a large estate between the busy Brickell Avenue and the intra-coastal waterway, with coconut palms along the shore. I frequently saw foxes on the lawn in the early morning, which was very surprising in view of the short distance from downtown Miami.

With the exception of this parkland oasis, Miami was (and probably still is) an ugly, featureless city with no character. Most houses in the suburbs were single storey with low–pitched roofs, apparently as protection against hurricane damage. The climate was awful, hotter and muggier than Durban. There was a huge population of Cubans, who had fled from Castro. We got to know quite a few.

We made frequent trips far across the state, to hold meetings and show films to support students who wanted to apply what they had learnt at Mackinac. We spent time in Tallahassee (the state capital) in the far north, a beautiful town with a cooler climate. I enjoyed a visit to Cape Kennedy (previously and also later called Cape Canaveral). I sent home a postcard showing a rocket launch, saying *"Hi Ma! I won't be home for dinner!"*

Disney World had not yet been built, but the Everglades traverse the centre of the state. In effect it is a river, a few centimetres deep and many kilometres wide, flowing south. Alligators frequent the deeper pools and swamp cypresses grow happily in the water. We crossed the Everglades many times to visit the west coast of Florida. At Fort Myers Beach I met Jim and Ellie Newton, retired full-timers. He had returned to his profession as a well-known "realtor" (estate agent). They were a wonderful couple, very caring and full of fun. This was the beginning of a long term relationship which I really valued.

In other parts of the state there were large citrus orchards. I was intrigued by the measures to prevent frost damage to the crop. Two methods were employed whenever a cold front threatened. One was to ignite huge oil-burning smoke pots. The other was to start up aeroplane propellers mounted on top of poles, to keep the air circulating.

Back in Miami I often watched high school football matches, played at night. To a South African, American football is very boring to watch, which is probably why they have to have side shows for entertainment. The match always started with the bands playing the national anthem, while a huge electric fan blew the stars and stripes flag so that all could see it. There were dancing cheerleaders, and at half time the bands competed with music and marching configurations.

I particularly enjoyed a huge advertisement on the wall of a high rise building overlooking a gas (petrol) station. The most advertised gas in the country at the time was Esso – "*Put a tiger in your tank*", and cars had tiger tails stuck on at their tank caps. This garage, however, was selling "Cities

Service" gas, and the ad said "*We clean tiger hairs out of your tank free of charge.*"

A visit to Key West via the Overseas Highway was amazing. The sea is shallow, with a few tiny islands, and a 15 km highway (formerly a railway line) was built over the ocean to connect the larger island of Key West with the mainland.

Inevitably a hurricane was approaching Florida. Local radio stations broadcast warnings as it drew nearer, like "*Residents of Zone X should now remove the coconuts from their palms....*" (Flying coconuts can be lethal). And "*Open all windows....*" (The air pressure drops so suddenly that a closed window will burst outwards). The rain pelted down in sheets, driven by gale force winds. I think we were only on the edge of the hurricane, but it sure created a mess of uprooted trees and fallen power lines.

But back to the reason for our presence. The Native American Indians of New Mexico were organising a MRA conference to which they were inviting Indians from across the country. During our campaign in Florida I met a university student, Billy Cypress, who was a Seminole (the main Indian tribe in Florida). He was keen to attend the conference, but neither he nor I had the necessary finance. So I approached the Palm Beach Rotary Club, who then invited me to address them. Quite a lunch. They responded to my appeal, and Billy was on his way. I cannot remember what happened at the conference, but when Billy returned to Stetson University he organised an assembly which was made compulsory for all first and second year students. The Colwell Brothers, the Olympic oarsmen and other young MRA full-timers led the assembly and "the students went wild with enthusiasm" says my postcard home. After this, the same programme was presented in a number of Florida universities in which we had done the groundwork.

But I was not enjoying my time in Florida. I felt that there were too few of us to make real inroads into society. We were wearing ourselves out with excessive travel and scattered effort. I often had to work alone (not good), because there were so few of us. Perhaps I was mistaken. But I was frustrated

– to the extent that my chronic ulcer was once again playing up and limiting what I could do. From this situation God mercifully rescued me.

CHAPTER 15

CONRAD HUNTE

Early in 1965 a phone call from the Newton's summoned me to Fort Myers Beach. There I was introduced to Conrad Hunte, Vice-Captain and opening batsman for the West Indies cricket team. He was on his way to the West Indies for the test series against Australia. I was immediately drawn to this energetic, eloquent, disarmingly honest and committed Christian sportsman. He had an infectious enthusiasm and was full of fun. He was visiting "with" (as the Americans say) the Newton's for briefing by them on the situation in the Caribbean and for MRA contacts there. I was excited when Conrad invited me to accompany him and Dickie Dodds, a former county cricketer who was travelling with him, and just knew that this was what God wanted of me.

We would naturally be visiting all the countries where test matches were due to be played, but we planned to visit other islands as well. First port of call was Jamaica, via British West Indies Airways to Kingston. This was where the first test was to be played, and the country was at a fever pitch of excitement. In fact, the whole of the British West Indies was cricket mad. Everyone was playing cricket, on the beaches, in the streets and in clubs, from the youngest to the oldest. Not being a brilliant player myself, I felt a little inferior. Especially when I had to confess that at boarding school I was made captain of a team comprising all those boys too hopeless to be part of any other team, as already described. Once I went into a post office in Kingston to buy stamps. When I emerged back onto the street, there was a crowd of schoolboys eagerly waiting for me with their autograph books at the ready – they were convinced that I was a member of the Australian test team! My confession was a disappointment to them and an embarrassment to me!

This was not an easy time for Conrad. All West Indians, including Conrad himself, had expected him to be appointed captain of the team for the series, as he had on previous occasions been captain. He was stunned when

Garfield Sobers was given that post. For months Conrad had been so upset that he wanted to resign from the team. He asked God what he should do. In Conrad's own words (from his book *Playing to Win*):

"His reply was clear and simple, 'Stay on and serve West Indies cricket team as number two'. I accepted. Then God spoke further: 'Apologise to Sobers for your bitterness against him because he got the captaincy'. 'Oh no, I won't,' I replied. God did not argue. For six long weeks I wrestled with my conscience. Finally I accepted the fact that, however wrong I thought the selectors were, my bitterness was wrong and would make me ineffective."

Now that we were in Jamaica, the opportunity for him to put things right with Sobers was there. It took real courage on his part to be honest with Sobers and to apologise. This he did, and they became united. They then had a long talk about how they were going to beat the Australians. Which, of course, they did. Conrad was truly a humble and courageous man.

Jamaica was typical of the British West Indies. Each of these countries had a Prime Minister, but also a British Governor as they were not yet independent from Britain – "dominions", I think. Their main industries were sugar and tourism, which were not enough to support the large populations and there was much poverty. Most were descendants of slaves brought from Africa to work the sugar plantations. Britain had not yet closed the door to immigrants, so the West Indians were flocking there. But I found the people to be cheerful, friendly and with a love of music (after cricket). I loved the West Indian accent, so different having just come from America.

Although closer to the equator than Miami, I found the climate much cooler and breezier. Jamaica is quite mountainous and beautiful. The roads are so narrow that American cars were prohibited, only the smaller English models being allowed.

My hosts were the Hart family, with a teenage son eager to go to the next Mackinac conference. I was also cared for by Trevor and Joy de Casseres, a wonderful couple with a little girl whom I enjoyed teasing. They took Conrad and me to visit their special friend, Minnie Simpson, who ran a large farm "*Bromley*" in the centre of the island. She was a highly-respected

grandmother living in a large, rambling, old house. To quote from Trevor de Casseres's autobiography (unpublished), "*She was a hostess in the old tradition. There were maids, cooks and gardeners. Tea with honey, scones and Devonshire cream. The dining room was immense and the bedrooms had four-poster beds... The whole house was run on the principle of giving God a chance to speak, and the staff, Minnie and the guests were all part of this together. This led to a wonderful spirit which seemed to permeate the whole property. In fact, Bromley spearheaded many quiet social revolutions to better the lot of the country folk, which even affected the island. It was a place of love and caring, but also of deep thought for the country. To many Jamaicans it gave hope that things could be different in their own and their country's life.*" I counted it a privilege to get to know Mrs Simpson, an acquaintance that was to be renewed in the future.

While Conrad was busy with cricket, the de Casseres's showed me some of the sights of the country, including their holiday shack "*Up Top*" high in the Blue Mountains. They were concerned about some invasive pine trees in the indigenous forest surrounding the house, and I offered to fell them. So I returned by car the next day armed with a power saw, a bow saw and an axe. I couldn't get the power saw to work, so had to use the other implements to fell these quite large trees. Hard work, but thoroughly enjoyable after long physical inactivity.

Ever since, we have maintained contact. They later emigrated to Canada, where Trevor became a pastor in the Baptist church. I have longed to visit them, but the west coast of Canada is financially too far away, so we have to be content with exchange of e-mails.

When Conrad had free time from his cricket commitments, we had open doors to address high schools. Conrad was, of course, a hero in the eyes of the students, which enabled him to do some straight talking. His enthusiasm and fun won them hands down. We had a one-day meeting attended by those who wanted to know more about MRA. Conrad and Dickie also had interviews with the Prime Minister and the Governor-General.

We then drove over the mountains to visit Montego Bay, a popular tourist resort on the rocky north coast. Here we met Sir Francis Kerr-Jarrett, who lived in a huge mansion on a private estate. He was the "Custos" of the County of St James and had been showing MRA films.

After the test match, which the West Indies won, we visited San Juan in Puerto Rico. The contrast with Jamaica was surprising. All the British West Indian islands were poor countries. As a state belonging to the USA, Puerto Rico appeared to be a very wealthy country, and apart from the language, it felt like being back in Florida. We spent time with a Spanish student who had been at Mackinac.

Then on to Antigua, and also Barbados, sugar islands with beautiful old English buildings and stone churches on hill tops. We repeated our speaking programmes in schools, and Conrad met the Heads of State. In Barbados I was privileged to meet Conrad's parents. I was interested in the surnames of people. They had obviously taken their names from their original slave owners, so there were some difficult names like Cholmondeley – pronounced "Chumley."

My favourite island was St Vincent. It is really a volcano, rising straight out of the turquoise sea, and with little level ground for human habitation or crops. It is an island of great beauty. The airport runway juts out into the sea and is crossed by the main road around the island, so gates are closed against the traffic when an aircraft lands or takes off. Regardless of wind direction, landing or take-off is at the sea end of the runway, as the mountain starts at the other end. This can sometimes be a bit hair-raising. The port has a jetty to accommodate regular cruise ships.

We were the guests of Rannie Russell, owner of Russell's Cinema (no TV) in Kingstown. Over the two days of our stay we spoke in schools and met the Governor-General. Businessmen were keen to finance young people to the upcoming Mackinac conference. I was sad to leave this jewel of the sea. Also the volcano, Mt Soufrière, was asking to be climbed. It would have to wait till later.

We had brief stops in St Lucia and the French islands of Guadaloupe and Martinique, then on to Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad exports asphalt from an asphalt lake which seems to have an unlimited supply – as fast as the stuff is dug out, it is slowly replaced by oozing up from below. But what really makes Trinidad famous are their steel bands. They were invented here. Every village has a steel band, and they compete at a big festival every year. The most talented players from these groups are selected for the National Steel Band. We were fortunate to be there for their performance in the Queen's Hall, where they played only classical music, in an amazing way. What an indescribably wonderful sound. It was great meeting them individually afterwards as they had been to the Conference for Tomorrow's America at Mackinac.

We were the guests of the Mayor of Port-of-Spain, Eddie Taylor. As usual we gave talks in the schools. The city was cricket mad. In the middle of the city was an open area a bit smaller than Rondebosch Common, divided into 40 cricket pitches, each rented by a club which played every weekend.

The final test match against Australia duly took place, and I went to watch. The crowd went wild when the West Indies beat the Aussies and won the test series, unofficially making them the world champions. Sir Errol dos Santos, President of the Trinidad and Tobago Cricket Association, presented Conrad Hunte with the trophy "For the player who has done most on and off the field to foster better relations between Australia and West Indies." "Hunte did it mainly because of his training in Moral Re-Armament," he added.

British Guiana (now Guyana)

At this moment Conrad received a request from the Governor of British Guiana (as it was before independence), Sir Richard Luyt, for an urgent meeting. Sir Richard was a friend and supporter of Conrad, and knew about MRA. So off we went to Georgetown, British Guiana. We were immediately received by Sir Richard at Government House. Walking up the stairs I was impressed with all the paintings and prints of previous governors, many of whom had served in the Cape Colony and Natal, such as Sir Benjamin

D'Urban. It made one realise the vast extent of what the British Empire had been. Sir Richard was a South African by birth, and was serving in the British Colonial Service. Everyone in the British West Indies referred to their Governors as "H.E" (His Excellency), but I found it funny that the Governor was addressed as "H.E" even to his face, instead of perhaps "Y.E" (*Your* Excellency)! Certainly Conrad always made this mistake.

British Guiana, situated east of Venezuela on the South American continent, was trying to recover from serious race riots that had cost many lives. The population comprised mainly blacks and Indians (from India), with smaller groups of Portuguese, Chinese and the indigenous Amerindians from the forests of the interior, but the conflict was mainly between the blacks and Indians. As a keen cricket supporter Sir Richard felt that cricket could play a significant role in healing the divisions. He urged Conrad to spend a bit of time in the country, playing with various cricket teams. As Conrad had some time available, he felt that this was what God wanted him to do, and we felt the same. Sir Richard also asked us to address the high schools in Georgetown. Many people knew about MRA, as the movie "*The Crowning Experience*" had been on the commercial circuit throughout the West Indies.

The country had originally been settled by the Dutch, and there were Dutch names everywhere. Georgetown, at the mouth of the Demerara River, was below sea level as the Dutch had built dykes to reclaim the land. There were many drainage ditches with rather unhealthy looking stagnant water. Apart from being a favourable breeding ground for mosquitoes (nets essential at night), this was not a health problem. The standard of hygiene was very high, and tap water was perfectly safe to drink. I found this to be the case in all the British West Indies, while in the French and other countries only bottled or boiled water was safe.

The dykes had cut off the sea breezes, so many houses were built on stilts in order to catch more of the pleasant cool air blowing in from the sea. Most houses were built of wood, which was in plentiful supply from the forests (jungle) of the interior. The Anglican Church is apparently the tallest wooden church in the world. Another product of the forests is Greenheart, an

extremely durable wood, much sought after worldwide for harbour and jetty construction, as it is resistant to marine borers. Its botanical name is *Ocotea rodeii,* which makes it an unusual brother of our indigenous Stinkwood *(Ocotea bullata).*

British Guiana (before independence called "B.G.") was dependant upon the export of sugar, rice, bauxite and timber, especially Greenheart. With the spectacular Kaieteur Falls in the interior, I felt that the tourism potential was high, but that it was not being exploited, probably because of the unrest in the country.

In between many one-day cricket matches for Conrad, we visited many of the high schools in Georgetown to address them. I usually spoke about the problems of Africa and in particular the problems of South Africa, and how we were finding answers to racial divisions through MRA. I would always relate how I became a Christian and how this affected my relationships with my family and with other races. Having just been through serious race riots, the boys and girls responded enthusiastically to the challenge to play a role in healing the divisions of their nation.

We met several business leaders, and Conrad and I (Dickie Dodds had returned to England) held a public meeting in the beautiful wood-constructed town hall. Government officials took us on a tour of the rice growing areas.

But what was really memorable was our trip to Bartica for Conrad to play in a one-day cricket match. We crossed the Demerara River by ferry and took a little narrow gauge train to the Essequibo River. Then it was a ferry trip up the river for a whole day, with the jungle gradually closing in from either side as the river narrowed. Bartica is a small town that can only be reached by river. We reached the *stelling* (Dutch word for jetty) in the late afternoon and were accommodated in the government guest house. The next day the whole town turned out to watch the cricket match. The two teams were immaculately dressed in white shirts and white longs. This seemed so incongruous in the tropical climate of this jungle-surrounded town. The match went well and Conrad was the star in more ways than one. While his side was batting, instead of sitting with his fellow batsmen watching the progress of the match,

he went behind the grandstand to meet the large crowd of children eagerly waiting with their autograph books. For Conrad this was too good an opportunity to miss, and he soon had his admirers spellbound as he talked to them about matters spiritual and moral, challenging them to make Christ's standards their own. I must confess, I was equally spellbound!

The next day we returned to Georgetown. We were now due to leave B.G. to proceed to Mackinac for the 1965 youth conference. At dinner with Sir Richard and Lady Luyt we talked about what had been achieved during our visit. We felt that in spite of the constraints of time, we had made a contribution towards the process of reconciliation in the country. There had been a huge response in the high schools, which I felt needed to be followed up, but we had committed ourselves to assist at the Mackinac conference and had to leave B.G. I was quite concerned about this.

I had so enjoyed and appreciated working with Conrad Hunte. He was what one would call "all out." His commitment, fearlessness, enthusiasm and sense of fun were so infectious. I found his disarming honesty a real challenge.

CHAPTER 16

PETER HOWARD

While all this was going on, Peter Howard was responding to invitations by 73 universities and colleges to speak on their campuses. He could only manage 17, travelling more than 30 000 km to do so. As one leader said, "He had the ear of the up-and-coming generation in America as no other man has ever had it in the world."

But Peter never lost his sense of humour. In a letter to his wife, Doë, he wrote:

"Last night at Tecoma was one of the best presentations of the tour. The questions were fast and funny. My best shot was when a professor, trembling with rage, challenged me to name any two well-known literary works that supported my views. I said, "The Old and the New Testaments," which made him hop higher and sparkier than ever."

He was frequently interviewed on TV, and I was fascinated to watch how he responded with a loving challenge to some notorious interviewers who tried in vain to trip him up. He often referred to the fact that more and more world conferences were achieving less and less – "*because the problems **on** the table are not as big as the problems **around** the table, and that is what has to be tackled first ... ."*

Meanwhile many of the full-time team in the U.S.A. were focussing on the recruitment of youth leaders for the next Mackinac conference. But Peter Howard cautioned:

"It is fine to have a conference of a thousand picked youth, but we must not make ourselves into a youth movement. We must move all the time with the leadership of our countries. The point of moving with youth is that it is an instrument to affect the thinking, living and planning of the leadership, but we must not avoid the hard crunch of materialism in mature, cynical minds by merely sliding along with the joie de vivre of the young."

Howard's next move was to South America, travelling with a party of fifty, including Rajmohan Ghandi. Thousands of Latin Americans, including Communist workers, shanty dwellers from the *favela* slums of Rio, militant students, industrial and political leaders and the Presidents of Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, talked with him. His challenge to all was the same. The Brazilian Government awarded him the *Cruzeiro do Sul* for his services to the nation, but the British Foreign Office refused permission for it to be granted. This did not trouble Howard, as he was accustomed to opposition from those who were unable, or unwilling, to grasp the truths for which he strove.

But in Lima, Peru a great tragedy occurred. Peter collapsed and was rushed to hospital with viral pneumonia. Doctors tried in vain to save his life, and he died two days later. He was 56.

The charter of his life had been **"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven"** – in his words, *"not as a pious drone but as a passionate commitment."*

The students of San Marcos University escorted his body to the City Hall where the President of Peru and the Lord Mayor of Lima arranged for him to lie in state. The San Marcos students cabled Mrs Howard:

"Peter Howard gave his blood for Latin America. He was the most revolutionary man we ever knew. His passion was as strong as his integrity, his love as wide as the world for which he fought. Complete men like that never die. The whole history of humanity will be upturned because we of the young generation have decided to take on the work of Peter Howard and make it our own."

This was echoed by youth in Britain, America and elsewhere.

Messages were sent to Mrs Howard by Presidents and Prime Ministers of countries around the world, with many tributes from the world press. They poured in from the Secretary General of the Arab League, the Delai Lama, and Cardinals. From Sante Fe, Native American Indian leaders cabled *"Peter Howard was the first man to unite the Indian people of America with a great purpose....."*

The Brazilian Government once again decided to award him the *Cruzeiro do Sul,* posthumously to his widow. The British Government again refused.

He was buried near his home in Suffolk, where he had farmed for thirty years.

The story of his life is told in Ann Wolrige Gordon's book "*Peter Howard – Life and Letters*" (1969). I have chosen some quotes from his letters in Appendix 2. Peter's book *"Frank Buchman's Secret*" (1961) is as much about how Buchman trained Howard as it is about Buchman.

He devoted himself entirely to the work of MRA without salary, and turned over the royalties on his writings estimated at that time at over $1 250 000, to its advancement. He was the author of 12 books which have sold over four million copies. His 16 plays were produced in the major cities of the world, seen by an estimated 450 000 people in the three years before his death. He had travelled ceaselessly on every continent, planning with national leaders the application of Moral Re-Armament.

For me and all his friends, his passing was a very great loss indeed. But I look forward to meeting him again after my life ends on earth.

CHAPTER 17

SING-OUT '65

A new weapon

Back at Mackinac, the youth conference was in full swing. There was a great deal of musical talent among the young people, which was channelled into an amazing and powerful stage production, called S*ing Out '65.* It was not just a show. Songs were written and choreography developed to fit the words. With two hundred on stage, led by the Colwell Brothers on their electric guitars (quite a new phenomenon at the time), and above all the passionate conviction with which the cast performed, this was indeed a new type of weapon with which to challenge and inspire people. There were some outstanding solo singers as well as small ensemble songs and the rousing full cast choruses. The pace was impressive, with the cast running onto the stage and with no gaps between songs, creating a non-stop performance. Lighting and sound effects added to the professionalism of the show.

One of the choreographed songs which had a big impact was "Up with people", the chorus of which was:

Up, up with people,
You meet them wherever you go.
Up, up with people,
They're the best kind of folks we know –
If more people were for people
All people everywhere,
There' be a lot less people to worry about
And a lot more people who care!

And another:

What colour is God's skin,
What colour is God's skin?
I said it is black, it is brown,
It is red, it is white,

Every man's the same
In the Good Lord's sight.

There was a small group song about a little girl asking her parents, "*How do wars begin*?" Father and mother begin to discuss causes and their disagreement becomes more and more heated until the little girl cries

"STOP!
You have shown me plainly how,
All our wars begin!"

With the cast fully rehearsed and the show perfected, now was the time to launch out and take it to the nation. I was a member of the support staff so I would be travelling with them. I would not see Mackinac again. Only recently I heard from Dave Beal (he and I had worked together showing the movie "*The Crowning Experience*" in Soweto, as already described) that my portrait has joined others on the mural painted by Erling Roberts at Mackinac. I am at loss to understand why, but perhaps Andrew Peppetta and I are depicted together.

On tour

Sing-Out 65 and support staff left Mackinac bound for Los Angeles, taking the ferry from the island to Mackinaw City on the mainland. Waiting in the station was our *Santa Fe* chartered train to take us all the way to L.A. This was a great experience. I was allocated a single berth compartment with a long window on the upper floor of a double-decker coach, so I had wonderful views of the countryside. There were no showers on the train, which was strange. But under my seat was my private loo! There was a dining car which served reasonable meals. It was a long train, hauled by five coupled diesel locos. As passenger trains no longer operated on this line between northern Michigan and Chicago, the track was not in good condition and our speed was very slow. It took a whole day to reach Chicago. Our speed picked up on the mainline from there, but what was disconcerting was to find that the joints in the track were not opposite each other as in all civilized countries, so the clickety-clacks were continuous. But having said that, it was a wonderful four-

day trip to L.A. The cast used the opportunities that arose when the train stopped at major centres like Kansas City, to present extracts of the show to fascinated audiences. At Santa Fe it was good to renew friendships with the Native Americans, who treated us to lunch in one of the pueblos. Finally we arrived in L.A., where most of us were accommodated in the hotel-type building owned and run by MRA, called "The Club."

The next weeks were crowded with many performances of Sing-Out 65, with receptions and meetings. We were amazed at the huge response to the show. Typical was the reaction to a performance for the cadets of the Air Force Academy. They stood and cheered for 25 minutes! Long, standing ovations from audiences young and old were the norm. Everywhere young people wanted to be involved, so they were encouraged to start their own Sing-Outs. We even published a manual on "How to start your own Sing-*Out.*" This was in great demand all over the country, until we realised that the uncontrolled development of Sing-Outs made it fairly impossible to make the necessary moral and spiritual inputs. So eventually we stopped doing this. But *Sing-Out '65* continued, taking the country by storm.

With such a large-sized group of people travelling, health became an important consideration. As a trained nursing sister, Erica Silberbauer (now Knight), my future wife's sister, took on the health care of the cast. She published a cheerful booklet with cartoons on how to keep healthy while travelling, called *"Don't Stand Still" (*the title of one of the songs in the show). Exercise was important, and I enjoyed taking part in the game "*Capture the flag*" which involved all of us under the age of 35. We went up into the forests on the slopes of the mountains and had a good work out. There is no limit to the number of people who can play the game, and 200 was ideal.

For recreation some of us were taken to the Yosemite National Park with its magnificent scenery and giant Redwoods (*Sequoiadendron,* not the Coastal Redwoods). One tree was so thick that there was a road through it! But this tree has since fallen down. There were visits to Universal Film Studios and to Knott's Berry Farm, similar to Disneyland.

But in the midst of all this frenzied activity, something was worrying me. We had reached many, many people (particularly youth) in British Guiana, and just when they wanted to become involved, we left the country. I began to feel that we had forsaken them. While it is true that there is strength in moving together as a large united team, as we were in the USA, nevertheless God had laid this concern on my heart. I wrote to Conrad Hunte, who was in London, but he did not seem to share my concern. Eventually I raised the problem with the leadership in LA. After a while their guidance from the Lord was that two of us should go there and fight for the youth of British Guiana in whatever way God directed. As I was not deeply involved with the Sing-Out, I was in any case feeling a bit underemployed, so this seemed to be the right thing to do. A young man from Sweden, Björn Ryman, was assigned to go with me. He was as excited as I was.

CHAPTER 18

"GET GOING GUYANA"

Very soon Björn and I set off for Florida to confer with the Newton's. We had fruitful discussions and really appreciated their friendship and support. (More about this later).

From Florida we flew to Jamaica to meet the young people who had responded to our earlier campaign. We explained that our mission was British Guiana., but that we would keep touch and include them in any future action that might be planned. It was great to meet the de Casseres family again, and we had good fellowship with them. I borrowed their car to take Björn to meet Minnie Simpson on her farm. She was so fascinated to hear of our plans to follow up on the work done previously in B.G. that she gave a generous financial contribution.

Next port of call was St Vincent. A young man, Anatole Scott, whom I had met on my previous visit, was thrilled that we had returned, as he wanted to work with us. We extended our stay in order to spend more time with him. He became honest about sin in his life and made a commitment to put right what he had done wrong. I prayed with him as he made a decision to let God run his life. He had leadership potential and we felt it would be right for him to join us in B.G. after he had made the necessary preparations.

Meanwhile Mt Soufriére beckoned. Now was the moment to fulfill my dream of climbing my first volcano. With Anatole in the lead, we climbed through the forests at the base and up the steep higher slopes devoid of vegetation. After a long, sweaty slog we finally reached the sharp rim of the crater. It was huge. Fortunately it had been dormant for fifty or more years since the last eruption which had killed 1,680 people. Far below was the crater lake, a rather sinister looking expanse of yellowish water, dead calm. I had wanted to climb down to the lake, and have a swim in it, but the sides of the

crater were impossibly steep. Just as well that we were not there a few years later when it erupted, as it caused huge devastation on the island.

Port of Spain in Trinidad was the next stop. Another young man who wanted to work with us was Philip Musgrave. He, too, decided to let the Lord run his life, and as with Anatole Scott, he also committed himself to join us in B.G.

My previous visit to British Guiana.had been in the company of Conrad Hunte, which made entry into the country quite easy in spite of being a white South African. Now, however, it was not so simple. But I needn't have worried, as Sir Richard Luyt had instructed the officials at the airport to allow me entry without question. As I subsequently had to pass in and out of B.G. a few times to visit other countries, this was much appreciated. I met Sir Richard and told him that we planned to visit all the schools again to seek out those students who sincerely wanted to do something for their country. He strongly supported this strategy.

Soon it was Christmas, and I received an invitation from the Luyts to join the family for Christmas dinner. It was a great time, as their two children had come home from school in England.

Our immediate need was for a projector to show the films which we had brought with us. Fortunately the Philips Co. of Holland had an agency in Suriname, the Dutch colony east of B.G. Frits Philips, the founder of the world famous company, was an MRA man, so it wasn't long before a sturdy 16 mm Philips projector arrived by ship from Suriname for our cost-free use for as long as we required it. Praise the Lord!

Soon after our arrival we had been joined by Anatole Scott and Philip Musgrave, so we were now a team of four. We immediately made contact with the businessmen and other leaders whom I had met with Conrad Hunte, and re-visited all the high schools as well. Once again there was a huge response to the speaking programme by our team of four. We invited all those students who were serious about wanting to do something for their country, to meet with us on a given date. The venue for this, and all subsequent meetings, was Queen's College, the biggest (and best) high school. The Principal, Mr

Ishmael, was so enthusiastic about what we were trying to do that he offered the use of the school's facilities for our use for as long as necessary.

About fifty young people pitched up for our first meeting. They repeated that they really wanted to help to heal the wounds of the country. When asked what they thought were the root problems, they were emphatic that they were the low standards of morality, particularly the corruption and lax sexual morality which characterised the leaders of the country. They quickly got the point that before they could be part of an answer for the nation, they would have to straighten out their own lives first. For example, if you were cheating in exams at school or shoplifting, you could not challenge a cabinet minister on corruption, and if you wanted to build a united country, you would first have to put right any wrong relationships in your own life. They agreed that the country should be led by men who are led by God, and this could only come about when you are sure that God is in control of your own life. This began to happen as we had life-changing talks with them individually. About seven or eight boys and girls began to emerge as leaders, with whom we spent a great deal of time over the next months training them and seeking God's plan.

What happened next began to catch the attention of the community. Students apologised to their teachers for cheating in exams, and expressed their readiness to rewrite. Shops couldn't believe it when stolen items were either returned or paid for by many, many students. It wasn't long before we were contacted by businessmen to find out what was going on. We told them. The Lion's Club asked how they could help. We said that we would come back to them shortly.

One teenager, Amar Singh, decided to clean up his life, making a bonfire of all his dirty books. He was so different that his parents invited the four of us to move into the flat attached to their house. What a faith-building way for the Lord to have provided us with accommodation! This was the beginning of a wonderful relationship with the large family who were Dutch-speaking Hindus, the father being a medical doctor. We joined the family for a scrumptious main meal each day, while we catered for ourselves for the other

meals. We got on particularly well with Granny, who loved to hear about everything we were doing.

While all this was going on, we discussed with the youth how they wanted to take this answer to the nation. They were unanimous – *"Let's create a Sing-Out! We'll call it "GET GOING GUYANA"* (Guyana was to be the new name for British Guiana after independence, only months away). This was certainly feasible, as the numbers of youth who were meeting frequently with us had grown to about 100. They immediately began to think through what they wanted to say through song and choreography. A Sing-Out needs three electric guitars, as well as microphones and sound equipment. These were immediately supplied by the Lions Club. I found myself being the musical director, while Anatole directed the choreography.

Now there was a real incentive to get started. The talent and determination that emerged was really quite amazing. The theme song which they wrote was "*Get Going Guyana*", of which a typical verse went:

Forget the hate, forget the strife,
Decide to live a new and better life.
Love your neighbour as you love yourself,
Take Guyana right off the shelf!

Another song was "*No time to lime.*" "*Liming*" is a local term to describe a common problem among West Indian youth of loitering aimlessly on street corners and doing nothing. It was sung as a Calypso, starting off with the chorus:

We have no time for liming,
There's too much work to do!

There were several verses, the last of which went:

The road will not be easy,
But we'll struggle day by day
To clean up our nation
And let God lead the way.
Why can't Guyana demonstrate
To people everywhere,

Diversity in races
Is an asset to us here.

There were many superbly choreographed songs, interspersed with solos such as "*Joan of Arc*", sung by wonderfully talented singers, a Hindu song, a Portuguese folk dance, and a couple of short skits. Several songs from Sing-Out 65 were included, such as "*You can't live crooked and think straight*", "*Up with people*", and "*What colour is God's skin*?" For the finale they adapted another Sing-Out song, the chorus of which became:

Which way Guyana,
Which way to go?
This is my country and
I want to know,
Which way Guyana
Is going to go.

There was an excellent tenor who sang the solo parts of this song in a challenging and moving way.

Gradually *Get Going Guyana (GGG)* grew into a great and challenging show, with numbers on stage steadily increasing to about 180. As there were so many small high schools in Georgetown, each with colourful and distinctive uniforms, they agreed to perform in those uniforms. It was quite a spectacle, but considering the recent history of the country, what made a really special impact was the representation of the different races – black, Indian, Chinese, Portuguese. There were Hindus, Muslims and Catholics.

At this stage we did not feel that the cast was ready for public performance, but as their confidence and state of readiness grew, we began to allow the cast to perform extracts from the show. John Fernandes (pronounced „Fernànce'), the leading Catholic layman, had a weekly programme on National Radio, which he regularly used to inform listeners about what we were doing. The National Radio (no T.V.) wanted us to perform, but they had no studio big enough, so we sang outside, drawing quite a crowd of onlookers in the process.

The cast now felt it was time to invite some key individuals of the community, one at a time, to attend "command" performances of *GGG* and meet the cast. Björn and I decided that he and I should be very much in the background (Anatole and Phillip were members of the cast), and train the leaders to manage such events on their own, using the opportunity to express their convictions in a statesmanlike manner.

First on the list was Sir Richard Luyt, who had given us moral support and needed to know how we were progressing. So I went to see him, and invited him and Lady Luyt to such a "command" performance and to address the cast. Sir Richard agreed, and offered me a lift back home. What fun that was - he and I sat on the back seat of the big black car, driven by a uniformed chauffeur. The car stopped at the gate of Government House to allow the sentries to crash to attention and present arms before we could proceed. I reached home safely.

I think Björn and I were as nervous as the cast was when the day of the performance dawned, but our green-room meeting with them before the start helped them to focus. Two of the leaders met the Luyt's at the door and escorted them to their seats. The instruments started the music, which brought the cast running onto the stage. After a brief introductory speech, the show opened with a powerful singing of the national anthem, and the performance was on the way – non-stop, with no breaks between items, and sung with tremendous conviction – not a single "dead" face on stage. Addressing the cast afterwards, Sir Richard was full of praise and encouragement. He and Lady Luyt stayed for a long time chatting with the cast. It was a great event which really built everyone's faith tremendously. Thank You, Lord!

Next on the list was the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Ptolemy Reid, who was also Minister of Education. Another great performance, and a real friend was won. Next came the Minister of Forests (guess who invited him). There was no doubt that the Prime Minister, Forbes Burnham, knew all about what the youth were doing, but he could not be reached. It was possible that the presence of a white South African in his country was an embarrassment, but as he had not even received Conrad Hunte during our earlier visit, we suspected

that he was against MRA for moral reasons. He certainly looked as if he had problems of that nature.

Frequently after events such as these, I would rush to the Western Union office to telex the news to the London MRA centre, from where it would be disseminated to other centres around the world. In similar manner we were kept informed about events elsewhere, so we never felt that we were operating in isolation.

Next on the list was Conrad Hunte himself. He paid us a surprise visit while in the West Indies on other business. What a joy it was to do a "command performance" just for him. He spent a lot of time with the cast, who took to heart every word he said. Unfortunately he could not spend long with us, but what a breath of fresh air he brought.

I received an invitation from the Swedish Consul-General to attend a dinner party. I forget why I had been invited, but I accepted. I was met at the front door by the butler, who removed my jacket and hung it up (a normal procedure in the tropics). Upstairs I was introduced to the other guests having drinks. My soft drink raised some eyebrows. We were then ushered into the dining room and seated at a long table. The air was cooled by a slowly turning ceiling fan. I began to feel that I had stepped back into the Victorian era! Uniformed waiters served us various exquisite courses. At the end of the meal, at a discreet signal, the ladies rose from the table and left the room to be on their own, or to "powder their noses" (which was usually given as the reason), I didn't know which. The gentlemen then gathered at one end of the table and cigars were passed around while coffee was served. Regrettably I cannot remember how the conversations went, but it had certainly been a remarkable evening!

Although *GGG* had not yet had a public performance, through press, radio and the Lions' Club most citizens of Georgetown knew what was afoot. The CEO of a large company offered us the free use of a newly-constructed house which was unoccupied. A young newly-married couple, both of whom were members of the cast (they were older than most), were so grateful when we offered this accommodation to them.

Plans were now being laid for the launch of *GGG* in a series of public performances. It must be stressed, however, that our aim was not just the creation of a powerful weapon with which to reach the heart of the country, but also to use the show as a means to recruit and train youth leaders (a "net to catch fish"). Our plan was eventually to take a group of the most committed ones to join the Sing-Outs (now Sing-Out 66) in USA, not just for their own further training, but also because we felt that they could make a great contribution there. We were already re-visiting Trinidad, St Vincent and Jamaica where there were people who could not be part of *GGG*, but who were keen to be part of the team that would be joining the American Sing-Outs.

With so much at stake, for us as a team of four it was imperative that we remain united and in touch with the Holy Spirit for guidance. Being human, there were times when the Devil would try to render us ineffective through secret narks, feelings of jealousy or temptations. We decided that we would always be honest about these stumbling blocks. I remember that when one of our team was in top form and giving an inspired lead to the cast, I felt jealous. I was honest with him and apologised, and we became united once more. Then one day he came to me and shared that he had given in to a temptation, and although he was honest about this, he remained very depressed about what he'd done. I shared with him what Frank Buchman had once said: "*Man-like it is to fall in sin, fiend-like it is to dwell therein, Christ-like it is from sin to rise.*" Fortunately he was soon back in action, fighting for the cast. Naturally they too were subject to the same reactions, temptations and mood swings, but because of our unity we were able to help most of them to change and to remain focused.

It was only after we had left Guyana that I had to face the fact that I had made a serious blunder. One of the leaders of the cast had not pitched up for a rehearsal. In fact, he simply disappeared, missing all subsequent rehearsals. Then one day while I was directing a rehearsal, he suddenly appeared and said that he wanted to talk to me. I reacted angrily, because I could hardly be expected to hold up 180 people just to talk with him. So he left in a huff, and

we never saw him again. What I should have done was to stop the rehearsal briefly in order to discuss with him a better time for us to meet. My problem was that I was more focused on a project than on a person, an attitude which is a constant challenge for me – to put people first. Jesus forgives the sin, but there is always a cost.

Next I came down with a bout of ‚flu. The Singh's insisted on my moving into their home so that they could look after me, which they did wonderfully. Such a caring family.

A huge event in the history of the country now arrived – INDEPENDENCE. There was much excitement and celebration. Sir Richard Luyt, on behalf of the Queen, formally handed over power to the Prime Minister in a colourful public ceremony. Sir Richard was dressed in full ceremonial uniform with sword and cocked hat topped with ostrich plumes – an impressive sight. I counted it a privilege to witness this historic occasion. British Guiana now became Guyana, and Sir Richard departed from the country. He had earlier said to me that he had no desire to remain in the British Colonial Service merely to supervise the independence of more countries from Britain. I was sad to lose him as a friend and supporter, but was able to meet him again some years later in his new position as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town. Meanwhile I felt a bit insecure with regard to my stay in the country, but I had no trouble from the new government, as I believe the Lord wanted me to finish off what He had called me to do.

By this time the cast were ready and eager to present *GGG* to the public. A date was set for three performances on consecutive nights. Publicity was launched with great enthusiasm and everyone sold tickets. Hari Singh (not from the family of our hosts), a 15-year old member of the cast, went to sell a ticket to a friend working at Freedom House, the headquarters of the official opposition People's Progressive Party, headed by Dr Cheddi Jagan, a notorious and committed Communist. Inside the building Hari was spotted by Janet Jagan, Dr Jagan's wife. She asked him into her office and questioned him about MRA. After a while she telephoned her husband to come and join

them. Together they fired questions at Hari, who afterwards admitted that he was very nervous. Hari did the inspired thing at this point. Instead of trying to answer their questions, he simply told them how he had changed. Janet then said, "*Where do you think I need to change*?" "*On your hatred*," he replied. She smiled, then bought a ticket for *GGG*. Dr Jagan, who most of the time had left the talking to his wife, then told Hari that he was opposed to MRA but would have liked to have seen the show and to meet the cast, but that he would unfortunately be away.

Hari came and told us, and together we sought God's guidance. We felt that it would be worth the risk to do a "command performance" for Jagan and possibly our only chance of hitting him really hard. We found it interesting that while the Prime Minister was refusing to meet the youth, Jagan asks to do so. So we let Hari invite him.

Jagan arrived half an hour early, no doubt hoping to catch the cast unprepared. All other Guyanese usually arrive half an hour late. But our youth were ready. They gave him a wild welcome and launched straight into a 40 minute performance, their best ever. Several of the cast gave their passionate convictions, without being anti-Communist. The cast took their seats and Jagan rose to speak. He expressed appreciation for several songs which had impressed him. "*I agree that there is a need for moral standards*," he said, *"but Communism goes beyond Moral Re-Armament because we are out to change the system."* This was the theme of his one-hour speech, which everyone found very boring. He bitterly attacked the USA's exploitation of underdeveloped nations. Twice he referred to the failure of Christianity because the Christians never live it. "*That is where MRA comes in*," he said. Several times he referred in a positive way to points made in the songs, but it was clear that he was stubbornly committed to his ideology.

At the end he invited questions. Everybody was on their feet in an instant, all trying to get in their questions at the same time. Clearly no one had been taken in by what he had said. They asked questions like *"How do you deal with division within cabinets and within families*?" Jagan was very evasive in his answers and really did not really answer a single one. We

adjourned the meeting, but half the cast surged around him to continue the discussion. He did not budge on any of his points, and it was clear that although committed to his ideology, he was actually not a clear thinker. This was rather a disappointment to the cast, and finally he was allowed to depart. He had arrived at 5-30 p.m., and it was now 9 p.m.!

Hari Singh's mother had been present at the meeting. As one of Jagan's supporters she was so upset by what had happened that she immediately pulled Hari out of the cast – a great loss for *GGG* as he was playing an important part. She would not even allow him to leave the house. But one morning in his quiet time Hari had guidance from God for his mother: "*It is wrong for you to keep your son tied to your apron strings...*" She changed, and allowed Hari to rejoin the show, where he was doing an impressive Indian dance interlude.

What struck me was that Jagan was so completely out of date in his beliefs, and that MRA-trained youth were far ahead of men like him. I think he had come hoping to win converts, but the reverse actually happened. One of our older members of the cast who had been a follower of Jagan, now understood what his commitment really was, and could no longer support him. It is difficult to say what had been achieved by the event, but the cast certainly now realised that Communism would never solve the world's problems and that only a passionate commitment to the Christian revolution could do so. It was nevertheless disappointing that we had been unable to change him. We felt that Jagan could perhaps one day be won through his family. Clearly he was being run by his wife, and had no answer for his morally defeated son.

In our moral and spiritual training of the cast we were somewhat limited by the fact that the four of us were all men, and thus not easily able to help the girls in the cast with matters best dealt with by someone of the same sex. We were therefore thrilled when a married couple from the American full-time team arrived to help. This was particularly important as preparations for the public performances of *GGG* were now going ahead in earnest.

The news from the outside world was a great inspiration. *Sing-Out 66* had been invited to Germany, resulting in the immediate creation of "*Sing-Out*

Deutschland." Andrew Peppetta had started "*Harambee Africa*" in Kenya. "*Springbok Stampede*" was on the move in South Africa. *GGG* was not operating in isolation.

The cast worked hard on publicity. John Fernandes provided a big truck to transport them singing through the streets with a large banner. Members of the cast were on National Radio five times. Businessmen financed press adverts to run every day for the week before the opening. There were announcements in the cinemas. The cast sold tickets, with our host, Dr Singh, selling 100. The printing of tickets and programmes were paid for by a businessman. As usual, the Queen's College school hall was made available for the three shows

Opening night duly arrived, with the cast fully motivated and eager to demonstrate what had taken many months of dedication and hard work. We were thrilled when the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Reid, agreed without hesitation to give his patronage.

In the introduction to the programme notes the cast wrote:

"We decided to call this show 'GET GOING GUYANA.

"We are sick of the apathy and immorality which are embedded in our people. We want every Guyanese to be equipped to fight progress-killing complacency and put character back into our nation.

"However, we realised that if we wanted our nation to go straight, we must start with ourselves. We decided to clean up our lives where needed, and face our selfishness, for together we must all aim at a national clean-up.

"We must build an incorruptible Guyana that will set the pace for the rest of the West Indies.

"Let us join forces with others around the world and put our shoulders to the task of remaking it..... into one that works. GET GOING GUYANA is the way we want to take this country. Will you come with us?"

Given the history of unrest in the country, the audiences were deeply moved by the 180 youth of all races and from all schools. The audiences grew each night until there were 1000 by the third performance. Many came all three nights. Guyanese do not know what a standing ovation is, otherwise they would have been on their feet, like a group of American nuns who were at all the performances and stood cheering. But the Guyanese did react in a different way – they were in tears after songs like *"Which way Guyana*?" As powerful, were the convictions given by members of the cast who spoke of the change in their lives and their commitment to building a new country and world governed by people governed by God.

Immediately there were requests for more shows. This was awkward, as we were due to leave Guyana for the USA with our youth leaders very shortly. The CEO of the Demerara Bauxite Co. asked for a show at the mining town of Mackenzie, quite a distance up the Demerara River, all expenses paid. Similarly the Lions Club wanted a performance for New Amsterdam, the second biggest town, in the province of Berbice. The Deputy Prime.Minsiter wanted a showing of MRA films in his home. The cast were keen to do these shows, and we felt that there would be just enough time to fit them in.

We set off on the ferry trip to Mackenzie, armed with a new song especially written for the miners. Surprisingly I found my "guidance book" for that time, in which I had recorded my thoughts and guidance from God. I had written: *"Let the cast organise everything. It's the kind of training they need.....From the minute we step onto that boat, we move as an army. Absolute discipline. And we move at the pace of a rocket. No "liming" or even walking. We run. The battle starts on the boat – sing for the other passengers. No one off alone when we reach Mackenzie..."* Whether this actually happened, I cannot recall. After the show that night our accommodation was provided by the mining company. Next morning, before we boarded the ferry

for the return trip, I had written the following in my quiet time: "*We certainly struck a blow last night and in the afternoon. It's not possible to gauge the effect. The speeches by the cast were awful, but the message was unmistakably clear. On the boat call the speakers together and deal with them.*" (!!) Next, a special train was organized for us to travel to New Amsterdam for the show there. No details in my memory!

The film shows for the Deputy P.M. did not work out, as his wife was ill, and our imminent departure made a postponement not possible.

We were now ready to depart for America with a delegation of 12 prayerfully selected youth leaders. The finance for the trip had come from the proceeds of the show ($ 3000) and the generosity of the business community. I was very sad to leave Guyana after all that had been achieved. The Lord had something to say to me about this, as I had written in my guidance book, "*You are constantly seeking some recognition or praise for what has happened. In actual fact I did it all, through the obedience of your team. Give them the credit.*"

There had certainly been miracles aplenty. But I was convinced that the best investment for the future of the country lay in the training that the young people would get while involved in the Sing-Outs in America.

As we flew north, we picked up others from Trinidad, Jamaica and Puerto Rico. During our flight I was puzzled why many of the Guyanese expressed such surprise at the sea below, until I realised that they were seeing clear, blue sea water for the first time in their lives – the coastal waters of Guyana were a permanent, muddy brown colour from the outflow of the Amazon River!

We linked up with *Sing-Out 66* (but now with its new name "*Up With People*") in Pennsylvania, where they were performing in Allentown (Frank Buchman's birthplace). Our West Indians were integrated with three separate casts, travelling in different parts of the USA. According to all reports they were doing very well. In fact, after a few months Anatole Scott became one of the leaders of cast „B', which went to Brazil.

As there was now no longer a need for me to stay with our West Indians, I felt that the time was right to accept Nico Ferreira's invitation to come to South Africa to help with "*Springbok Stampede*."

Before departing from the USA I went to Tucson, Arizona, to brief the *Up With People* leadership on our time in Guyana. While there, NBC broadcast *Up With People* on national TV, in colour – a new development for TV, in contrast with South Africa where we still had no TV at all!

On my way back to South Africa I was able to spend some time with Conrad Hunte in the U.K.

(Later that year he was playing for West Indies in the second test match against India, in Calcutta. At the start of the second day, play was stopped by a huge riot, cause unknown, but seemingly well planned. In his book (C. Hunte, 1971) Conrad vividly describes what happened. Thousands invaded the field, setting the grandstands on fire, burning buses and police vehicles. The riot squad, with clouds of tear gas, were ineffective. With the cricketers fleeing for their lives from the stadium, Conrad sought God's guidance. The thought that came was to seek refuge in the pavilion, which was not yet on fire. He was joined by a plain-clothes policeman and some others. Here he noticed the flags of the two nations still flying, but threatened by the advancing flames. "*I started to climb up to get the flags and avoid surrendering them, the symbol of sovereignty of our two nations, to 'mob rule'. The plain-clothes policeman said, 'Don't you go. I'll get them.' He went and brought the two flags down, and gave them to me.*" Eventually order was restored by the army and fire brigades. The next day the press announced, under the heading, "*True Cricket*", that "*Hunte, who is a member of Moral Re-Armament, saved the nations' flags.*"

Over the next days the team was confined to their hotel, fending off threats of violence and warnings to "*Leave India - we don't want you.*" This was exactly what the team wanted to do. In his book Conrad relates the remarkable steps of God's guidance that led to the team deciding to stay and continue the test match. This can best be described as a diplomatic masterstroke in relations between the two nations. The army provided the

necessary security, and the test continued. Needless to state, the West Indians won.

After farewell to Conrad, I proceeded to Germany, where I had been invited to see "*Sing-Out Deutschland*" before returning to South Africa. I was greatly impressed with *Sing-Out Deutschland*, at the time on tour through the Ruhr industrial area. With all the equipment which we lacked in *GGG*, particularly lighting effects, it was very professional. I was presented with the long-playing record album of the show, which I still have.

As Caux was in session, it was great spending a day there before resuming my travel to South Africa.

GGG ready
for rehearsal

Phillip Musgrave

Some front-liners of GGG

Anatole Scott

Our hosts,
the Singh
family.
Dr Singh left,
Amar
behind him

Special train for GGG

Street parade

GGG leaders with
Sir Richard Luyt

Conrad Hunte meets GGG

CHAPTER 19

"SPRINGBOK STAMPEDE" - AND TWO OF US

It was wonderful to be reunited with family and friends in 1966 after such a long absence, and particularly with my brother Bill. But there was much work to be done in helping with the "*Springbok Stampede*" programme, which had been launched by Nico and Loël Ferreira (Loël was Fred Rubidge's sister, and had been in my class at school).

It was at an MRA conference in Lusaka, Zambia, in 1953, that Nico met Dr William Nkomo and some of the other black leaders of Africa and South Africa. As a result he made a conscious decision to let God use his life for whatever task. This led to a new relationship with people like Philip Vundla, as already described. Later he and Loël spent a long time in Nigeria, meeting African leaders and working on the filming of "*Freedom.*" With this background Nico realised that South Africa would one day have a vital role to play in the development of the continent, especially with regard to moral and spiritual values. It was therefore clear that this challenge needed to be given to the leaders of the future.

Young people responded and a musical "demonstration" similar to *Up With People* began to take shape. They called it "*Springbok Stampede.*" It just grew and grew, as more and more young people clamoured to be part of the programme. In their own words:

"The Stampeders are young people with a goal. We love our country and want to build it up. We also believe that South Africa has a special part to play in Africa's future. For these tasks we feel that our generation needs training educationally, technically and above all in faith and character. We sing, drum, speak and work with zest to get across our ideas as fast as possible to as many as possible... ."

Songs were written in English and Afrikaans, including some taken from the *Up With People* show, and with expressive choreography to match. Soon the cast realised that this had to be done full-time, which they did without salary. For those youth who were still at school, a travelling school ensured that they all successfully passed their matric. For travel across the country and further afield, a bus and fleet of vehicles were acquired.

Apart from Nico and Loël, leadership and back-up was provided by a team of full-time MRA workers, for example Rev. George Daneel, who opened up many of the country towns where he was well-known and held in great respect by the Dutch Reformed Church. Milly Silberbauer and other teachers successfully ran the travelling high school. But it was the young people themselves who were responsible for costumes, backstage, setting up the show in different towns, finding places to sleep and places to eat, raising funds, PR work and all the tasks necessary.

Over the next few years the show was seen by 75 000 people in 90 towns in South Africa, the then Rhodesia, Moçambique and Swaziland. Performances were given in 120 schools and universities, and were on four TV shows in Rhodesia (South Africa still had no TV). They travelled 50 000 miles and stayed in 4 000 homes. They met many leaders and influential people. Dr Chris Barnard, who had performed the world's first heart transplant operation, told the cast *"I transplant hearts, but you transform them."* A song about this was included in the show.

During a series of performances in Cape Town some of the cast visited my parents' home to enjoy a ride on Dad's model train.

Eventually it was time for the cast members to move on in life and put into practice what they had learned, thus concluding the programme. Forty years on there was a reunion, followed by another some years later. Former cast members came from as far afield as Australia, Canada, USA and locally. Many told how their time with *Springbok Stampede* had equipped them throughout their lives. In her book (2006), Loël Ferreira vividly describes some of their stories.

Although I was privileged to be involved in this programme, it was not an easy time for me. I found that my energy levels were very low, and mostly I was tired. There were two possible reasons for this, one was burn-out after my demanding time in the USA and Guyana; the other was the possible onset of the early stages of *Post Polio Syndrome* (PPS), a fairly recent medical discovery that children over the age of 9 who had suffered from polio, develop extreme fatigue and other symptoms in later life. I was also beginning to wonder if it was perhaps time to consider returning to my forestry career. This I eventually did in 1970.

Be that as it may, the high point of my time with Stampede was meeting Milly Silberbauer again. The first time I had met her was when Bill and I had given her a lift from Stellenbosch to Zoetvlei ten years previously. Since then we had just missed each other every few years without realising so. When I was in Switzerland and America, she was in South Africa. When I returned to South Africa, she was in Switzerland. For a while we were then both in S.A, but unbeknown to each other. She went to Mackinac in 1965, but by the time I arrived there she had already returned to S.A. to teach at Epworth in Maritzburg. Finally we were both involved in *Springbok Stampede.*

I telephoned Milly's father, Raymond Silberbauer, to seek his permission to ask his daughter's hand in marriage. This was quite daring, as I knew, and he knew, that I had had no salary for the previous ten years. Neither did I have any investments. But he had no hesitation in approving the proposal. He himself had previously worked full-time with MRA (the whole family had lived at Caux, in the former Maria Hotel, just after the Second World War, Milly attending school in the village of Glion lower down the mountain. Raymond's autobiography is full of wonderful stories and miracles). So I think he knew from personal experience that "*when God guides, He provides.*"

Now a problem arose. Travelling and working with the cast of *Springbok Stampede* was rather like living in a fish bowl – privacy was a scarce commodity. Soon a solution presented itself. We were doing a show in Paarl, with our temporary headquarters in a prominent local citizen's home – a

beautiful and rare double-storied Dutch-style house, where Nico and Loël were staying. I was able to contrive a reason for Milly and me to go there on some pretext or other, and I offered to drive her there (in her own car!). I was quite nervous, and according to Milly afterwards, I kept opening and closing the window for no apparent reason. Eventually I managed to pop the question. Her immediate reply was - "*CRUMBS!*" Rather chastened, I parked the car and we entered the house, going in different directions. I found a corner where I sat down, wondering whether God had given me the wrong guidance, but knowing in my heart that I loved her and that He did want us to team up in His service. It wasn't long before Milly came into the room and said "*Yes - if you will have me.*" I was so relieved and excited that I dashed into the lounge to tell Nico the great news – I just couldn't wait. But Nico was busy being interviewed by a newspaper reporter, who must have wondered if this sort of thing was normal in *Springbok Stampede* – clearly I should have been more sensitive to the situation, but fortunately the article which subsequently appeared in the newspaper made no mention of this crazy guy who interrupted the interview. What happened next was that Milly naturally phoned her Mom. She was on the phone for so long, conversing in French, that I became worried that she might have changed her mind. But fortunately this was not the case.

We were married on the 1st of June 1968, in the Yeoville Presbyterian Church in Johannesburg, by two ministers, one Presbyterian, one Anglican. Most of the Springbok Stampeders were there. With four groomsmen in pin-striped suits and top hats, four bridesmaids and two flower girls, it was a great occasion in spite of two problems: The minister of my mother's church in Bergvliet which I attended when at home, refused to read the banns, because I was "of no fixed abode" (I was always travelling). Then a second problem (for me) that arose was from the generous donation of shoes from a shoe company for all the men of *Springbok Stampede* earlier. I carefully kept my pair for the wedding. During the service when Milly and I kneeled down at the altar, I was unaware of the fact that clearly stamped on the underneath of my shoes was the word "*REJECT.*" This caused much amusement from the congregation, and Milly afterwards said "*I married a reject man of no fixed*

abode!" But Danie Gerber, our brilliant *Stampede* musician, saved the day. He had composed a really beautiful piece for clarinet, especially for the occasion. This he played with organ accompaniment, during the signing of the register. I regret that it was not recorded.

The reception took place in the church hall (as was the custom in those days). After the speeches, due to my forestry background I was given a saw with which to cut the cake. Eventually we were able to set off in a Volkswagen „beetle' for our honeymoon in the Drakensberg.

We lived happily ever after.

CHAPTER 20

.....AND AFTER

I had been keeping touch with Dr Lückhoff, my immediate superior when I had been working in forestry (Ch. 6). He was delighted when I applied to return to forestry research, and he went out of his way to ensure that I obtained all the necessary help and guidance to find my feet in the profession again. (We still have contact with Mrs Helena Lückhoff).

Pietermaritzburg

He had arranged for me to return to my former position in Natal, so early in 1970 Milly and I set off for Pietermaritzburg. After being kindly accommodated by our good friends the Schroeders, we moved into a flat on the 12th floor of "Silent Heights" (!). The work went well, and we enjoyed re-establishing contact with old friends and the Gurney family on their farm.

I was keen to take up music again, so traded in my flute for an oboe.

George

But at the end of the year I was unexpectedly transferred to the research station at Saasveld, outside George. We moved into our first house, in pleasant surroundings on the forest station. My work covered a wide area from Cape Town to Humansdorp. Our son Pierre was born that year (1971). Milly's sister, Erica, and hubby Geoff Knight also settled in George, so it was a good year – until I was informed that I had to transfer again. This was very upsetting, but I had to accept what the authorities had decided.

Sabie

So early in 1972 I was put in charge of the D.R. de Wet Forest Research Station (not a nice name), located in the forests 16 km outside Sabie in the Drakensberg Escarpment area of Mpumalanga. It wasn't long before we began

to really enjoy our new home in idyllic surroundings, and the work was challenging but exciting. Reinet was born at the end of that year. We appreciated visits from our parents, who enjoyed many walks through the forests.

But just as we were beginning to really settle in, making many friends and even acquiring a cow, we had to transfer again! The Department felt (rightly) that if I was to work effectively I needed further academic qualifications. So they arranged for me to study fulltime for a forestry honours degree in 1974, funded by the Department.

Stellenbosch

We were allocated a pleasant little labourer's cottage at Jonkershoek forest station outside the town, and when the southeaster wasn't blowing too hard, I cycled daily to the Forestry Faculty on my bicycle (sedan model – no gears). Carrying bread, milk and other supplies back up the long hills at the end of the day was really strenuous.

Milly loved staying at Jonkerhoek, but for me the year of intense study and classes at age 41 was very difficult. I was beset with doubts about whether I would succeed. But encouragement came from Sir Richard Luyt (Ch's 15 & 18), then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, whom we visited. But there were good times with the family, and my parents often came to visit. Carol was born in June and Milly had her hands full.

Early in the new year I wrote my final exams and we were able to visit Milly's parents at their new home at St Francis Bay, while awaiting graduation. Then to my amazement I was awarded my degree *cum laude,* confirming that with the Lord's help all things are possible!

I was "head-hunted" by Sappi Forests with an attractive job offer, but God said "*No.*" He knew what I didn't at that time, that within two years the post would be scrapped and a friend who had taken the job, had to leave.

Sabie

Back at Sabie it was a relief to get back to the real work and the application of what I had learnt. The staff was growing both in numbers and scientific expertise, and we all worked well together. There was a constant stream of overseas visitors to study our work. Good international contacts were made and I was sent to Norway for the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO) conference, which took place every five years in different countries. Milly joined me there afterwards and we visited her family in Switzerland, also friends in a castle in Austria.

Now armed with the knowledge acquired at Stellenbosch, I started work on an important research project on the site requirements of the pine species growing in the Escarpment region. I had to study tree growth across the whole area and as a result got to know the mountains and valleys very well, leading to a new appreciation of God's creation. Most of the scenery that so inspired me was not accessible by the public and I wished that I could share it with others through the medium of art. But I was reluctant to start without tuition and time, neither of which was then available. Most of my work was in majestic, mature stands of pines over 40 years of age. They produced a really good echo, as in a concert hall, when I whistled as I walked, assuming that wildlife would appreciate my favourite Rossini overture (Ch. 4) as much as I did.

D.R. de Wet Research Centre was a wonderful place to bring up children. The houses were far apart and unfenced. A stream ran through all the gardens and our toddlers loved to play in the water. The view across the wide lawns to the hills and forests was magnificent. There were other families with young children and we helped one another with baby-sitting when it was necessary to go to Sabie, or the monthly shopping trip 84 km to Nelspruit.

We had frequent visits from our parents, my brother Bill with his family from Namibia, and other friends like John Mallory (Ch.6). I took John, his wife and children hiking. (One, or maybe two, of his children were later to summit Mt Everest in the footsteps of their grandfather). My old school pals

also visited. On holiday trips we visited cousin Willem Loock on the farm, Aunt Hetty in Graaff-Reinet, and Fred Rubidge, farming Zoetvlei.

Soon after my return from Norway I was given permission to visit the south-eastern USA to learn more about the forestry field in which I was specialising, linking up with colleagues I had got to know at the IUFRO conference. But the high point of my tour was a visit to the Newton's at Fort Myers Beach, Florida (Chapters 14, 15, 18). It was great to see them again after ten years. They invited me to visit the Thomas Edison Museum, as Edison had lived at Fort Myers Beach. Unfortunately I was booked to fly back to South Africa the next day, so I declined. This later proved to have been a huge mistake. Some years later Jim Newton sent me a copy of his newly-published book "*Uncommon Friends*", in which he describes his friendship as a young man, with Thomas Edison, who had lived across the road from him. Not only that, Newton had also been a friend of Henry Ford (who frequently came to visit Edison), and also Harvey Firestone, (for whom he worked for a while), and Charles Lindbergh.. I was astounded. How was it possible that I had known the Newton's for so long, and never knew about these fascinating relationships? The answer was simple – my relationship with people was too superficial to really get to know them. This is still an unfortunate trait of my character, but with God's help I am trying! Soon after this episode the Newton's were feted in the media for having turned 100, and having the book "*Uncommon Friends*" adapted for national television. They have since passed on, but I will never forget them.

After four years of happiness at the D.R. de Wet Centre, the hammer blow struck – another transfer! So in 1978 we had to move.

Pietermaritzburg

The decision had been taken to create a new research centre in Natal to cope with the growing demand for research in the fields of plantation forestry, nature conservation and conservation planning. I was given promotion to take charge.

We bought a house in Clarendon for the exorbitant price of R 27 000 and settled in.

I plunged into my work at the deep end. At that time the Natal Drakensberg was mostly under the control of the Department of Forestry and had to be managed for the conservation of nature and water resources. But the priority was to demarcate and fix a more logical boundary line between the reserve and the farmlands below. There was a staff of experts involved in this project, so my role was simply supervision and support. This was very interesting work indeed.

Apart from the usual plantation research, the project which I had started in the Sabie area enabled me to register part of it for a Master's degree at Natal University. To my great surprise the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, who would be my promoter, turned out to be none other than my school friend forty years earlier, John de Villiers!

The children were all at school, but many week-ends we drove up to one or other of the beautiful places which I had come across during the course of my work in the Drakensberg. Our favourite destination was Highmoor. There was an inspection quarters which we could hire for our visits, and many horses available for riding. The children were in their element. They rode everywhere in this beautiful wild mountain country.

On the music front I was able to have useful oboe lessons from Gerrit Bon at the university in Durban. He played 1st oboe in the Pietermaritzburg Philharmonic Orchestra and got me to play 2nd. This gave me huge enjoyment and relaxation from the heavy work load, but I found it stressful on odd occasions when I had to play 1st.

The children all started music lessons. Pierre started on the trombone, Reinet on piano and Carol on „cello. We also had a family quintet with recorders of all sizes, and enjoyed playing in church and especially for the Gurney's, who always invited us for Christmas on the farm. Our major achievement, however, was a "family music" concert which Milly organised. She recruited many family groups for this concert in the Cordwalles school hall. By this time we were a family ensemble with Pierre on trombone, me on

oboe, Millly on recorder, Reinet on piano and Carol on cello. The Musical Director of the Philharmonic Society lauded it as the best concert ever.

My parents

Sadly in 1977 Dad died after a long illness. He had grown in faith, and had Mom read for him from the Bible every day.

My mother came for visits and we all enjoyed her piano playing for us. She remained a very talented accompanist, and was practising with singers for a concert at her retirement home in Cape Town on the day when she passed away at age 83, in 1984 (Her father had died in 1962, aged 92, and her mother in 1958, aged 89. There are memorial plaques to them and to my parents in the garden of St Martin's Church, Bergvliet). Mom used to play the hymns for the monthly church services at the Tokai Reformatory. At her memorial service the minister of her church (St Martin's, Bergvliet), Rev. Harry Wiggett, related what happened one Sunday: "*Jessie came up to me after the service to remind me that I had to take the service at Tokai. To my embarrassment I had clean forgotten. But Jessie said "Don't worry, I'll drive you there and play the hymns." So we got into her little Mini and hurtled up Ladies' Mile* (Mom thought that 60 kph was the minimum speed*). I was worried, because I had not prepared a sermon, but Jessie said "Don't worry, let's pray!" and put her head down. In a panic I said, "You* ***drive – I'll*** *pray!"*

Sabie

In 1984 the government decided that all mountain catchments that had been managed by the Forestry Department should be made the responsibility of second tier government, so our mountain work came to an end. Our other work was also scaled down, so it was time for a transfer again, and early in 1985 it was back to Sabie!

It was now the third time that we had moved back into our same government house at D. R. de Wet (all my attempts to have the name changed had failed). It was a spacious house, but with its wide lawns and views we loved to spend a lot of time outside.

Schooling was not easy. Having to catch two school buses meant early departures for the children. Pierre opted for the Afrikaans medium high school rather than boarding school in Nelspruit. But for his music lessons on trombone we had to drive the four hour trip to Pretoria once a month. The same applied to Carol, until her cello teacher urged us to send her to boarding school in Pretoria for more serious tuition. Reinet and Carol then became boarders at the Pretoria School of Music, Art and Ballet, Reinet majoring in art and Carol in music. We were extremely grateful for the way they were "parented" by Erica (Milly's sister) and Geoff, who then lived in Randburg.

To help meet all the extra expense Milly decided to teach. She taught at the local Afrikaans high school, then at the black teachers' training college a long distance away in the Lowveld, and when this became too tiring, a post at Memezile Secondary in Sabie. She had amazing stories to tell about that time. She also did a stint as Librarian in Sabie, and as Assistant for the local optician.

My work load became quite heavy. The staff grew to the point where there were not enough houses on the station and many had to live in Sabie, being brought to work by bus. I would go to work early so that I could spend time praying for each member of staff by name.

My thesis was taking up a great deal of my time, but overseas trips to the five-yearly IUFRO congresses were welcome interludes. I especially enjoyed the meetings in Japan and in Slovenia (then part of Yugoslavia). I became the leader of an international research working group. My final visit was to the congress in Montreal, Canada, and it was wonderful having Milly with me on this occasion.

Milly's parents were regular visitors to our home. Ray loved to hike frequently up to the fire look-out, a one-hour climb to the top of a mountain. There were many others, including Bill and Stella and family, and the Wilson's.

A surprising visitor, who stayed overnight, was Conrad Hunte! It was a wonderful renewal of our friendship. Ali Bacher, then Chief of S.A. Cricket, had asked Conrad to help develop an interest in the sport amongst the

previously disadvantaged section of our population. He spent several years doing so, and became well-known. Later my daughter, Reinet, had enlisted with the Hatfield Christian Church's "*Year of Your Life*" programme. At the passing-out ceremony, which was also the graduation ceremony for the students who were awarded degrees, she was excited when the guest speaker turned out to be Conrad.

Week-ends and holidays were wonderful times for the children. There were mountains to climb, trails to hike, our private swimming pools in streams to enjoy, many caves to explore, white-water rafting, local train rides, and long distance riding on the forestry *Percheron* logging horses. They regularly brought these huge animals virtually to the front door, where they annoyed me by munching the leaves off my tree ferns. Their friends often came to stay. Pets included the usual dogs and cats, and a delightful miniature motherless bush-baby which our dog gently brought home for our attention. In the garden there was an old mine trolley ("cocopan") with a table on top. We acquired some railway lines and sleepers, and Pierre and I spent a year constructing a track to run in front of the house and over a bridge across the pond. When children were not riding up and down on the trolley, we attached a table top and had our lunches off it (sometimes with the horses grazing our lawn next to us). Pierre and I had in the past enjoyed wonderful "footplate" rides in steam engines on the Weenen and Mid-Illovo narrow guage lines. From Sabie I took Pierre out of school to do the same on the Harding – Port Shepstone line.

We had fun with music. Our favourite and finest piece on the five recorders was an excellent arrangement of Bach's *"Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring."* One Sunday we played it in the Sabie Methodist church, after which the minister asked us to play it in the Pilgrim's Rest church the same morning. I was doubtful about the children's energy levels to drive all that way and play again, and said "*No.*" But they outvoted me and said *"Let's do it!"* So we did, and got terrific applause from the congregation. This led to further invitations to play in other churches, including the faraway Catholic church at Bourke's Luck. The Lowveld Eisteddfod was next, and later we entered our other combination of oboe, trombone, cello, recorder and piano for

the "Family Music" category, together with other family groups. Afterwards the Adjudicator announced that all family groups which included the father would be awarded an A plus!

I was also made chairman of the Lowveld music society, called "*Viva Musica.*"

Although Milly and I were members of the Anglican church, we wanted the children to be part of a church which they would want to be involved in. So we ended up in the newly-formed charismatic church, "*Living Waters.*" As the church grew, we became part of the worship team with all our instruments. Pastor Phil Robson and family became good friends, to this day.

A sad thing happened in 1989. Fred Rubidge went into hospital for a heart operation but did not survive. We were devastated. I had not seen much of him since my return to forestry, partly because of distance, work and raising a family. My time with Fred at school had changed the direction of my life, for which I will eternally be deeply grateful. I had last seen him when we spent a night at Zoetvlei with our young family while on one of our frequent holiday trips to Cape Town.

But usually we travelled via Bluegum House to stay with cousin Willem and family. Also we always called on Aunt Irene who was in a retirement home in Colesberg. She was very proud of us when we played our five recorders for the residents.

At long last I completed my thesis and it was submitted to the external examiners. During the years of hard work I had been very conscious of God's guidance and encouragement, and under the heading "*Acknowledgements*" at the beginning of the 334-page volume I had written *"I wish to thank the good Lord for revealing some of the knowledge of His creation and for solving numerous problems with this study.*" It was a real honour to be awarded a Ph.D, without the need to have done a Master's degree first. We went to Pietermaritzburg for the graduation ceremony. The forest industry could now apply the results of what I had researched. That my years of effort were now over was a huge relief.

Pierre finished high school and joined Safmarine as a cadet officer. After matric Reinet enlisted in the "*Year of Your Life*" programme run by Hatfield Christian Church. Carol did the same the following year.

Reinet was now engaged to Ross Blignaut, and the wedding took place in Sabie. They were married by our pastor Phil Robson, with whom they have remained friends and colleagues ever since.

Carol enrolled at Rhodes University to study Science, but the following year switched to a Bachelor of Music, majoring in cello.

In 1990 our organisation, the Forestry Research Institute, joined the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). I was privileged to have Di Verhaeghe as my Personal Assistant, as she was (and is) a committed Christian. Three years later I retired. As a parting gift from the staff, Milly and I were given a free trip on the Blue Train to Cape Town.

Retirement

For another year I remained at D.R. de Wet as a part time consultant to the CSIR. But due to my interest in, and some experience of, foot path planning, I was asked by the forestry office in Sabie to plan the upgrade of the Fanie Botha hiking trail, which was in a serious state of deterioration. Ever since this five-day trail had been opened in 1973, I had been critical of the routes chosen, and with my intimate knowledge of the mountains, had always longed to plan reroutes. So now was my chance! I planned and marked new routes for three of the five days' hiking, exploring wild scenery and indigenous forests in deep kloofs. I was in my element. The Dept of Forestry approved my proposals.

We moved into our new home in Barling Crescent, Fish Hoek, with its lovely view across the valley, early in 1994.

Pierre was with us at home between his voyages, but soon moved into his own flat. He eventually became Captain of a Maersk container ship, but after marriage to Charlotte, a medical doctor, the long absences at sea were problematic. After a spell as a harbour pilot in Cape Town, he joined the S.A.Marine Safety Authority (SAMSA), having obtained an M. Phil. Degree

from the University of Cape Town. With their two children they live in a home on Wynberg Hill.

Reinet has been home-schooling her three children in Pretoria, has obtained a B.A.degree and is studying for an Honours in Psychology. In rare spare moments she enjoys her art for which she is professionally qualified. Ross is the I.T. Manager and a staff member of Hatfield Christian Church.

Carol was at home with us until her marriage to Alastair Thorns, an architect. She has achieved international fame with her music, both for her Coda group and her solo "*Red Electric Cello*" performances with visuals created by Alastair. They are moving to Franschhoek.

A year after our arrival in Fish Hoek I was asked by the Forestry office in Sabie to do the construction of the new routes which I had surveyed for the Fanie Botha Hiking Trail. Taking our family dog "Grandis", I spent five months on the job with a team of labourers. It felt strange lodging at D.R.de Wet again, but Forestry paid for Milly to make two trips from Fish Hoek to look after me. Completion of this work led to other hiking trail consulting jobs – an upgrading plan for the Tsitsikamma Hiking Trail, trails for the Sutherland Municipality, and others.

A great source of inspiration for me in all this work was *Proverbs 3:6 – "Acknowledge the Lord in all your ways, and He will direct your* ***paths****"*, for me, meaning *foot* paths. This worked out in amazing ways and there were many miracles in finding routes in difficult terrain. Typical was the occasion when I was searching for a route through a steep mountain barrier. The only possible route was up a deep, thickly forested kloof through high cliffs. I tried the river bed, but higher up the way was blocked by a waterfall. Next I tried the left bank terrace, but a long walk brought me to cliffs barring the way. The right bank was choked with thick bush and forest, and obviously also impossible. I climbed out of the kloof and high up the slope to where I could look for other possibilities. There were none. Very concerned, I sat on a rock to think. Remembering Proverbs 3:6, I prayed for guidance. Suddenly I jumped. It was as if I was hearing a loud voice, saying "*Go to the terrace above the right bank.*" Too often my immediate reaction to God's clear

guidance is to argue with Him if I disagree or don't understand, so I thought "*But I know that the right bank is like the left bank, with thick forest and undergrowth....*' Well, the Lord had nothing more to say on the subject (rightly so), so I set off back down the long slope into the kloof, crossed the river and climbed up onto the terrace. I pushed my way through dense thicket under the trees. Suddenly I found myself on an old footpath running up the kloof, but so overgrown that I had to crawl along it. To my amazement the route cleverly bypassed the waterfall and eventually came out in open country beyond. Obviously this was an old prospectors' trail, as there had long ago been some gold mining exploration in these mountains. "*Thank You, Lord! Sorry for my unbelief* ." Now I knew that He is interested in footpaths that give people enjoyment and an appreciation of His creation.

For the next eight years I lectured on the planning and construction of hiking trails at the then Cape Technikon. Currently as a Volunteer for S.A. National Parks I am monitoring their path network at Cape Point, with great enjoyment.

Retirement gave me the opportunity I had longed for – to learn art. I wanted to paint landscapes, seascapes, fynbos and steam locomotives, in the medium of pastels. I am grateful to Ian and Yvonne Currie who guided me and whose advice I still appreciate, although Ian sadly is no longer with us. My medium of choice is chalk pastels, and the market for my work has been good. Several times I won trophies in the local art society competitions and twice I was awarded bronze medals at the Kirstenbosch Biennale exhibitions of botanical art – all credit to the Lord. I am so grateful for this medium of expression that when I finish a painting, I say "*Lord, look what you and I have created together – thank you.*" And I see Him smile! I also appreciate "crit" from Milly and advice from Reinet.

Musically I found myself chairman of the Fish Hoek Friends of Music, "appointed" by the committee, but after ten years I retired. I continue to enjoy playing my oboe and cor anglais in small ensembles with Carol and friends, and in occasional solo concerts. My favourite composer remains Josef Haydn

– his choral and orchestral Masses bring tears to my eyes. Haydn once said of his composing "*When I think of God, the notes just bubble up inside me….*"

Milly and I used to attend services at the Valley Christian Church, and I especially enjoyed the men's camps (80 of us) in the Cederberg, but later we moved to the Presbyterian Church, where I became an elder. But now we really appreciate having returned to the church in which we had both grown up – the Anglican church, in which. Milly's father had been a minister.

From the time we arrived in Fish Hoek, Milly worked hard at getting to know people, as the suburb had a reputation for being a fairly closed society. She was, of course, very successful, as sometimes we now feel that we know almost too many people! But she also cast the net wider and established contact with missionaries at work in various parts of Africa, linking them with our church for support. The Silberbauer families have mostly been Cape based and she has re-established contacts with relatives in the area. We really appreciate them as good friends. As a Swiss citizen she has made trips to visit family in Switzerland, and I have grown to love that country – its people, the mountains, trains, fondues and chocolates!

As our Barling Crescent house was now too big, we moved to 14 Banks Road, within walking distance of shops, beach and mountain.

Friends and relatives from the past – from school years, university and from MRA – are still greatly appreciated. My cousins the Gurney's in Natal and the Loock's in the Karoo are in close touch, as are the Wilson's. We kept touch with the Malan's, who had so kindly supported us with their care when we were students, until they recently passed away, she at 97. We also went to Franschhoek to meet George Daneel, whose wife Joey had passed away many years before. He had always put the needs of other people before his own, and to us it was a real challenge that at age 96 he was no different. With a smile he said that the Lord had told him that he would live to be 100!

That was indeed the case, and we were invited to his 100th birthday celebration. It was a major event for Franschhoek. Crowds from all over the country gathered in the big church. Oom George, now in a wheelchair, was presented with an illuminated address expressing the appreciation of the Dutch

Reformed Church for what he had done for the country. After a function in the hall, invited guests gathered for lunch in a huge marquee. In front of the large crowd, people were spontaneously standing up to relate what Oom George had done for them personally.

One man of colour rose to speak. In summary he said,

"When I was a young man I was so bitter about the evil of apartheid that I went to see Oom George to vent my frustrations. I poured out my heart in anger for a long time. Oom George just sat quietly but said nothing. Eventually I ran out of steam. After a moment's silence Oom George quietly said, "Are you willing to let God run your life?" I was shocked and surprised that this was his onlyresponse. I thought to myself, if I say 'no', I can continue with what I'm doing, but if I say 'yes', then my life will have to change. So I started ranting and raving again, while Oom George continued to say nothing, as before. Finally I had nothing left to say. Oom George quietly and simply repeated his question. I said 'Yes'. Oom George said, 'Then we had better tell Him so, on our knees.' Which we did, and my life changed."

The man who told this story was Franklin Sonn, whom Mandela appointed as South Africa's new ambassador to the USA. Franklin continued, *"As ambassador I was often asked how the miracle of South Africa's peaceful transition had come about. I told them 'It was because of men like Oom George."*

Franklin Sonn we had last met when he was a teacher in George and we were living at Saasveld outside the town, so we enjoyed chatting with him again.

Soon after this event and tribute to George Daneel, he passed away peacefully. We shall never forget him.

My brother, Bill, through his personal experience of repenting for his racial prejudice against black people in his youth, had taken courageous and determined action to bring about reconciliation between bitterly divided blacks

and whites, often among the leadership of churches. He had won the confidence of leaders like Bishop Patrick Matolengwe of the Anglican Church, Dr Daniel Maluleke of the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa, as well as leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church. These men became his personal friends. Bill was appointed to represent the Methodist Church of South Africa on the Healing and Reconciliation Committee of the S.A. Council of Churches when this committee was formed at the close of the official Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996.

Both Bishop Matolengwe and Dr Maluleke were among the guests at Bill's 70th birthday celebration in 2001. I was privileged to be present and hear Dr Maluleke speak on that occasion. He said, *"Bill is not limited by the different denominations of the churches, because he seeks to bring acceptance, understanding and love into the tensions that sometimes divide them. If there were 10 men like Bill, South Africa would be a different place..."*

In recent correspondence with Andrew Peppetta who had been full time with me at Caux, Mackinac and with *The Tiger*, he wrote:

"What I remember about you and our time with MRA is that you made a very radical decision to help save our country from destruction. Your parents were not happy for you to be working with black men on an equal basis but you as a man, had a vision for a new South Africa that would include all South Africans regardless of race, colour or creed working together. It was very encouraging to work with a man like you, who, under God, was willing to obey Him and make the necessary sacrifices for the sake of our country.
. Congratulations for writing a much needed book. The battle is still on for our country!"

Carol, Reinet, Milly, self, Pierre in our garden at D.R.de Wet, 1986

Dad's class 16DA with a load of Springbok Stampeders

Chris & Milly, 2012

Ancestral home, Graaff-Reinet

Sabie station

Sea and Mountain, Cape Point

Some of my paintings

Watsonia, Cape mountains

King Protea

CHAPTER 21

CONCLUSION

At the time when I was working with MRA, there was world-wide concern at the advance of Communism. MRA was never anti-Communist, but it was a challenge for Christianity, with its moral basis, to be lived as an ideology, thus a superior revolution. Now with the demise of Communism the challenge is no less if the current problems of the world, and particularly of South Africa, are to be addressed by incorruptible, God-guided leaders. Certainly God has a plan for each man and nation, which can be found through honest consultation with Him.

What a privilege it was for me to have been part of the MRA programme and to have caught a glimpse of the kind of new world that God wants us to build through His direction.

I am so grateful for the fulfilment of Jesus' promise to me when I made that difficult decision at Caux in 1959.

The way God has guided me through my life overwhelms me. I have tried to live in such a way that He can speak to me at any moment of the day, but I know that I have failed more than succeeded. Yet His forgiveness knows no bounds, and together with David in Psalm 139:17, I can say, *"How precious are your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!"*

Then I have been blessed by a wonderfully caring and supporting wife. She has done so much for me that I can never equally repay. We have both put God first in our relationship and share an equal commitment to Him.

He has blessed us with three committed Christian children, all of whom are happily married. We are so grateful for their care for us. The grand-children are a great joy.

My brother Bill has remained a supporter and friend throughout my life.

Other family and friends are too numerous to mention – some of whom I have known since school days and are still with us.

My prayer is that of David's in Psalm 71:18 – "*Now that I am old and grey-headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare your strength to this generation, your power to everyone who is to come.*"

APPENDIX 1

SOME EXTRACTS FROM PETER HOWARD'S LETTERS TO ME

"I believe that the simple issue before all of us is this, "Do we depend on the behaviour of other people for our pace, and power, and purity in Christ?" It seems to be normal Christianity if in life we are surrounded by people who do not behave as we like, do not appreciate us enough, and generally make life difficult for us. I am surrounded by such people all the time. And it is what we are here to tackle. We must prepare for buffets and glory."

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"I think the simple thing is honesty. I find so many of our people talk about Moral Re-Armament but are never daylight honest from point to point on all points. How they breathe, let alone live, I know not"

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"I am not a great example for young or old, but my own life would be impossible if I had not decided to give my best to everybody, regardless of their response or their reactions, and to let God worry about the results, if any. After all, God is there to worry, isn't He? That's what it means when it says: "casting all your worries upon Him, because He worries about you", or words to that effect."

****

"Take from our lives the strain and stress,
And let our ordered ways confess
The beauty of Thy peace"

****

"Chris, never forget that you are one of God's great men for your continent and you must rest in the Lord and the power of His might, and move forward ever at the heart of the battle as you do"

****

"The first thing, of course, is to get well. Be sure that you have medical advice and do what you should and not what you shouldn't. My own belief is that if

we give our very best to all people all the time regardless of how we are feeling or of how they are behaving or how they respond; if we live in the daylight so that there are no secret narks, criticisms or reservations about anybody; and if we shun every negative note like the devil, our health and strength and penetration will improve.

You are one of God's best men and I hope one day we may move together because I think, though not a medical man, I could help your health"

APPENDIX 2

EXTRACTS FROM PETER HOWARD'S LETTERS TO OTHERS (Wolridge Gordon, 1969)

Aboard ship: It is interesting how all would-be dictators offer to trade men's personal liberty for material well-being. This spirit of greed is fatal for democracy and the dictators know it and use it. .....
The opposite of Moral Re-Armament is demoralisation. And demoralisation is hurrying on the march through Europe and the world. Nations will go down more swiftly before the march of demoralisation than they did before the march of armies.....

Rome, 1950: William Penn's words that ring down the ages : "Men must choose to be governed by God or they condemn themselves to be ruled by tyrants" He knew this to be true not only for nations struggling to keep their freedom, but also for every man who wants to be free from the tyranny of dictatorship in the home, or the thraldom of defeat by vice or habit.

Washington, 1968: America is the land of freedom. The root of freedom is the choice to do what is right. For the choice to do what is wrong does not issue in freedom but in exploitation, and finally in enslavement. I believe that compromise with moral standards is the mortal enemy of freedom.

Rome, 1950: Thinking of the future I know that an experience of the Cross is the only cement of our work. Any splits in our own or any other work have come through a refusal to face it. It ends fear and favour. We need men now who will do nothing except provide a nucleus for God for the rest of their lives, men who will do everything together and nothing alone.

Rome, 1950: I have been thinking a lot about youth. My heart is very much with them. I feel that many of them, if not most, have never known this deeper experience of the Cross where their self-will is handed over…
We must change this spirit in some of the young who think that it is rendering the world a pioneering service by rebellion and brashness.

Miami, 1952: MRA is not an idea that one promotes. It is people with a revolutionary passion to put right what is wrong…….

Miami, 1952: We still have to fight a deep-seated organisational mentality. There is a curious conviction that by organised activity people will change and nations will change. If organised activity would do it, the UN would have been effective long since. Of course it is a far cheaper procedure than the Cross.

Underlined by P.H. in his copy of *The Greatest Thing in the World* by Henry Drummond (a widely read book published long ago) :
Next to losing a sense of a personal Christ, the worst evil that can befall a Christian is to have no sense of anything else. To grow up in complacent belief that God has no business in this great world of human beings except to attend to a few saved souls is the negation of all religion. The first great epoch in a Christian's life after the awe and wonder of its dawn, is when there breaks into his mind some sense that Christ has a purpose for mankind, a purpose beyond him and his needs, beyond the Churches and their creeds, beyond Heaven and its saints – a purpose which embraces every man and woman born, every kindred and nation formed, which regards not their spiritual good alone but their welfare in every part, their progress, their health, their work, their wages, their happiness in this present world.

Undated: I am quite opposed to those Christians who say that because Christ redeems we can go on being disinvolved with history and living much as we are.

A great society will never come to birth by good works that hope to use industry and agriculture to fill belly and hand, plate and purse, but leave self-will unbroken and hearts empty of love and faith. Political, economic, social action will never touch the centre of the evil. Nor will sluggish and surly self-satisfaction at our personal and national perfections.
We are in the midst of a struggle without scruple for the soul and character of the world. The question to be decided this century is whether it is to be God's earth or man's hell.

Los Angeles, 1962: Events seem to hint that it is not always wise to regard a public man's private life wholly as his own affair..... The answer is honesty. Men with secrets to hide are not always able to keep, when under pressure, secrets of state.

Undated: I want MRA to be a keg of God's ants in the nation's pants, not a secret chrysalis behind the closet door.

Delhi, 1963: One thing clear to me is that fellowship without the salt of absolute moral standards is the downslide of every great movement of the Spirit of God. Putting plans of action before people is no more virtuous than putting profits before people.

Delhi, 1963: I wish we could help sentimental Socialists to feel as concerned about hatred as they feel about hunger. They get all upwrought about material misery and completely ignore the spiritual starvation of the man next door to them. In the mind of God a dead conscience is, I believe, more damaging than a half-empty belly. Naturally, we have to fill the stomachs. But these sentimentalists spend their lives fussing about things which are not the essential things in the modern world.

Delhi, 1964:
Moral Re-Armament is for everyone everywhere. It is not, has not been, and never will be "another religion." Nor will it ever be segregational.

It is true that a Christian believes that absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love are Christ's standards and that the guidance of God is the way Christ calls His followers to live. It is also true that Moral Re-Armament holds all Christians to living the standards of Christ, which he professes, and that most non-Christians rejoice when they see an effort made to help Christians live what they talk about.

Absolute moral standards represent a common battleground and common step for the whole of humanity. Many agnostics and many atheists, in my experience, have begun to take their stand in the moral re-armament of the nation when they make an experiment here.

Change is for everyone. It begins when these standards are applied drastically. Men with this experience have something real which they can pass on to others.

A colonel from Korea asked me once, "Are you a Christian?" I said "Yes." He said "I want you to know what many Christians are like in South Korea. I have a nation on my hands. We are in desperate straits morally and industrially. I need help so much, but these Christians are not a bit interested in the problems on my cabinet table. They are only interested in getting Christians from one church to another. They are the most self-righteous, divided, and divisive group we have in South Korea. "
I said, "We are sorry." Then I began to tell him what I thought Christians could do in a country like Korea if they were revolutionaries. He said, "Of course, if they were like that, the whole country would be with you."

The way to change people on a massive scale is to change some individuals deeply and permanently. It takes time, it takes trouble, it takes prayer, it takes imagination. But there is no short cut to it.

London, 1963: God is colour-blind but character conscious. Man is character-blind but colour conscious.

American Labour, 1964: I rejoice at the prosperity of American unions. I know the struggle you have had. But I beg you all, by the mercy of God, do not forget the people who do not have unions. Do not forget the people who this day as we sit here are going to bed hungry, and waking up tomorrow without hope. If we forget those people for one instant, the world we create is going to be destroyed.

Letter to one of his children: I do not forget the force and rancour of the enemy, but millions are hungry for what we believe. I am resolved to put on a new spring coat of Christ and never take it off again.

I am a shabby fellow. My handwriting is hard to read. My books and plays are second-rate. I do my work in MRA in a way that is so far from what would satisfy me. My failure is apparent. But God loves me, and He even uses me, and though I should not be, I am happy. My eyes are sore and my heart aches from many hours of toil…..

APPENDIX 3 : FAMILY

RECOMMENDED READING

Buchman, Frank N.D. 1961. *Remaking the World.* Pocket edition. Blandford Press Ltd, London.

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