

Grahamstown,  
January 18, 1955.

From January 12th to 17th an inter-racial Moral Re-Armament Conference took place in the historic Cathedral and University city of Grahamstown.

A hundred delegates, Africans, Coloureds and Europeans from every corner of the Union of South Africa as well as from South West Africa, Kenya and Rhodesia took part. Among them were professors and students from three universities, clergy, businessmen, journalists, farmers, educationists and housewives.

During the conference there was a special presentation of the play "The Man with the Key" in the City Hall. The distinguished inter-racial audience included the Bishop, the Dean, the Member of Parliament, and the President of the National Council of Women.

Introducing the play, the Hon. Mr. Justice C.J. Claassen of the High Court of South West Africa described the delegates to the Conference. "They represent most of the races and colours on this subcontinent," he said. "They have come together at great sacrifice to pledge together their lives, their careers, their fortunes to remake Africa under the guidance of God." "The truth about Moral Re-Armament," he continued, "is that it makes the leader really tough, it puts moral backbone into him which is steel in itself. What has been wrong with leaders of both left and right? The answer is that they have been soft. There are many exceptions, but there are some leaders who would not be able to say no to the temptations of money and corruption, to the temptations of power and sex, drink and indulgence. Some of them cannot say no to flattery. I have known men who have had the courage to risk their lives to storm into the mouths of guns but lacked the guts to admit that they were morally defeated. It takes real backbone for any man to admit that he has been morally defeated."

Welcoming delegates to the conference at a reception on behalf of the city, the Deputy Mayor, Mr. R. Nunn, said the aim of Moral Re-Armament was to restore the leadership of God and to have a hate-free and fear-free world.

Speaking together at a conference session, the Rev. George Molefe, Headmaster of the Newell Bantu School, Port Elizabeth, and Mr. George Golding, Chairman of the Coloured People's National Union of South Africa, made a deep impression on the conference with their assessment of the situation in South Africa as seen through Non-European eyes. They each told how they had found a new hope for the future of their country in the ideology of Moral Re-Armament. "If we can only get ten Africans who would really live this ideology, racial tension in South Africa would cease," declared Rev. Molefe. "As a Minister of the Church I was a signpost pointing

the way, but I was always careful not to follow those I showed the way. MRA is the only global ideology meeting the deepest needs of South Africa," he concluded.

Aged, grey-haired and measured in his speaking, Mr. Selope Thema, for 20 years editor of the "Bantu World", pledged himself to fight with Moral Re-Armament for the remaking of Africa. "I was one setting the fires of racialism ablaze," he said. "Since coming to the home of Moral Re-Armament I have discovered that the man who fights for freedom must fight for it for all people, irrespective of race, colour or creed."

"Unless Christianity in South Africa joins in the battle of ideologies and comes out victorious, this country is lost," declared Mr. Bigvai Masekela, Secretary of the Donaldson Community Centre, Orlando, Johannesburg.

Professor Barend Nel, Dean of the Faculty of Education at Pretoria University, said that Moral Re-Armament was not an alternative to the churches but that it had made him a better churchman. "Moral Re-Armament could be the hinge round which a new renaissance of the church could swing," he said. "MRA is an overarching ideology by means of which all the churches of all nations could co-operate and fight for a new world."

Dr. Herman Malan, Lecturer at Stellenbosch University, said that as a scientist he was interested in facts and that the conclusion he had come to was that history had been made in South Africa during the conference. "For the first time Bantu, Afrikaner, English and Coloured people are here to plan together for the future of this country. How can South Africa once again become the Cape of Good Hope? Only by extending to the various groups that love and caring and responsibility which has become so clear at this conference; no longer loving each other sentimentally, but soberly, intelligently and sacrificially."

From Kenya came Mr. Mitford Bowker, pineapple grower from Kitale, Rev. Raymond Silberbauer of Nairobi, and Mr. Ian Maclean, Executive Officer of the Kenya Coffee Boards. Mr. Maclean reported that the day previous to his flying to South Africa he had visited the Athi River Camp, the detention camp where some 1500 of the hard-core leaders of Mau Mau are detained and there met some of those who have renounced their Mau Mau oaths and accepted a new way of living and who have been trained to go out to other camps to pass on what they have found. "These men are not only different," said Mr. Maclean, "but they have a sound plan for the future of Kenya on a basis of co-operation of all races." Outlining this plan, the men themselves state, "Kenya must be under the leadership of God; its leaders must try to follow absolute moral standards and His guidance, all races must pull together for the good of the country; each section of the community must be understanding of and sympathetic to the needs of the others; as a country we must similarly be mindful of the needs of other countries; we must have a government by democracy - no system of dictatorship or Communism."